

"THERE IS IN MY  
HEART AS IT WERE  
A BURNING FIRE  
SHUT UP IN  
MY BONES..."

# THE COMMENTATOR

The Independent Student Newspaper of Yeshiva University

"...AND I WEARY  
MYSELF TO HOLD IT  
IN, BUT CANNOT."

VOL. LXXXIV

MONDAY, DECEMBER 17, 2018

ISSUE NO. 6

## Leaked Survey Results Reveal a Concerned and Dissatisfied Faculty

By SHOSHY CIMENT

Results from a survey conducted by the Yeshiva University Faculty Council reveal a faculty that feels largely underappreciated and distressed about the future of the university. The survey, which polled 211 faculty members across all of YU's graduate and undergraduate schools, consisted of 16 questions screened by the Faculty Council with

Commentator was able to confirm, but who wishes to remain anonymous. The survey covered topics such as the faculty's perception of the university, how the university views them, confidence in YU leadership and recommendations for future action.

On average, 68 percent of faculty reported that they liked coming to work at YU (either "somewhat agreed," "agreed" or "strongly agreed" with the statement). Only 32 percent said they would

*"Faculty at Yeshiva University have not received regular raises, nor cost of living increases, for the past ten years."*

Official YU Faculty Council Statement

response possibilities on a scale of 1-7 (1=strongly agree, 7=strongly disagree).

The faculty survey was conducted in May 2018 and was presented to the administration the following June, before being presented to the faculty. The results were sent to The Commentator via an anonymous email address on Thursday, Dec. 13. A brief investigation revealed that the email was sent by an associate professor who teaches at the Wilf Campus whose identity The

recommend YU as a workplace. Only 23 percent said that they "have NOT considered a job in another institution."

Less than 50 percent reported feeling like valued employees and that their professional contributions were valued by the university.

Of those surveyed, 35 percent agreed that they felt YU cared about them as

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## Alge Makes History

By CHANA WEINBERG

While going in for the rebound, a round object slammed into Michal Alge's face.

"Hey ref, she punched me!" shouted Michal, looking for a foul call.

Anyone who knows team captain Michal away from the basketball court would think this aggressive proclamation to be out of character, as Michal is known to be soft-spoken and constantly smiling. But to those who have gotten to know Michal on the court during her four-year career at Yeshiva, this intense sort of emotion is typical of the history-making Mac.

When Michal sank her one-thousandth point, a free-throw in a game against The College at Old Westbury on Dec. 14, she became the first female athlete at YU to reach the 1000 rebound/1000 points threshold. And, with these career accolades, she will be remembered as "one of the best to ever play" at YU according to Athletics Director Joe Bednarsh.

"I don't think she knows she is 5'6"," commented Chana Boltax (SC '20), Michal's teammate for both this season and last. "She plays like she is at least six feet tall."

Averaging a double-double since the start of her Yeshiva career, Michal has been acting as Boltax described her, reaching far above her listed height to grab rebounds. She had her best rebounding year during the 2017-2018 season when she averaged 15.1 rebounds-per-game, good for fifth in the nation. After breaking 1000 in a game against Purchase on Dec. 6, Michal sits at 1072 total career rebounds at the season's

midpoint.

Michal became the second athlete in program history to reach 1000 points by averaging 12.5 points per game in her first three and a half seasons. Her scoring game is mainly in the paint, with her trademark left-handed drive and spin move earning her the majority of her points. And because of her size, Alge found herself on the free-throw line over 600 times, scoring 368 points from the charity stripe because she drove into traffic against bigger opponents.

"She is now setting the standard for people to beat," said Bednarsh.

How does Michal feel about her accomplishments?

"Honestly, I'm just glad it's over," she told The Commentator. "It was good to get it over with just so I can go back to just playing the game."

Michal's first year as a Mac, the 2015-2016 season, was also the first year the women's team played in the Skyline Conference. In that first year playing in an established Division III conference, the Macs had just one win in 22 games. In the following two seasons, the team won another seven. This season, the team is playing noticeably better, already winning five games. Their 3-1 start to the season was the best in YU women's basketball history.

"You have to focus on each game," said Alge about her experiences with losing. "You try to forget about those big blowouts, but you also cannot be joking around and chilling after losing by twenty or thirty points. You have to strike a

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## Annual YU Hanukkah Dinner Raises Over \$5 Million, Over \$20 Million Pledged in New Commitments

By BENJAMIN KOSLOWE

The 94th Annual Yeshiva University Hanukkah Dinner and Convocation on Dec. 9 raised over \$5 million from the dinner journal, marking a 16 percent increase over last year's dinner and constituting the largest sum in at least six years. The dinner, which is the University's primary yearly fundraising event, was held at the New York Hilton and hosted over 650 attendees.

In addition to the money raised from the dinner journal, Yeshiva University also raised over \$20 million in new commitments during the past several weeks leading up to the Hanukkah Dinner season.

The annual dinner, which dates back until at least 1928 (see below for a fuller discussion about the history of the Hanukkah Dinner), always takes place at a midtown hotel such as Hotel Astor (which closed in 1967), the New York Hilton or the Waldorf Astoria. Dinner funds over the years have



President Berman conferring an honorary degree upon J. Philip Rosen.

YU NEWS

been directed to student scholarships, raising faculty salaries and projects such as building the Wilf Campus Max Stern Athletic Center and creating the Albert Einstein

College of Medicine. Funds from this year's dinner are being directed towards student scholarships.

"The Jewish people and broader society need our students,"

remarked President Ari Berman in his address at last week's dinner. He noted that the Hanukkah Dinner "helps us ensure we get those students." President Berman

also emphasized that "an investment in Yeshiva University ensures a strong and vibrant future for the

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# FROM THE EDITOR’S DESK

## What YU Loses With Its Open Door Torah Policy

By BENJAMIN KOSLOWE

Yeshiva University is astonishingly generous in providing Torah to the broader world, and nowhere is this generosity more evident than YUTorah. For almost two decades, YUTorah, coordinated by YU’s Center for the Jewish Future, has made thousands of *shiurim* accessible to millions of listeners around the world. YUTorah has increased the quantity of *talmud Torah* and enhanced the reputation of Yeshiva University. And YUTorah has also lost YU many of its potentially strongest students, who, due to the proliferation of Torah recordings, can effectively benefit from a strong *Torah Umadda* education at prestigious secular colleges.

From the time it was founded and for much of the postwar years, Yeshiva University served as the only realistic option for Modern Orthodox college-bound students who sought both a strong secular education and a vibrant religious Jewish community. Even in more recent decades, which witnessed the booming successes of organizations such as Hillel and Jewish Learning Initiative on Campus (JLIC) and their associated strong Orthodox communities on secular college campuses, there was no question that Yeshiva University still uniquely offered a stellar Torah studies program for the modern college student.

Today, though, students are able to pursue both secular academics and serious *talmud Torah* without enrolling at YU. Some students at colleges close enough to Washington Heights schedule their courses such that they can physically spend their mornings in YU’s Yeshiva Program, and then return to their home base for secular studies in the afternoon. One such student, in a well-read article from this newspaper’s last issue, publicly offered his gratitude to YU for opening the doors of its *beit midrash* to him, even though he was not enrolled in the University.

Those diehards who physically commute from secular college campuses (typically from Columbia) essentially freeloard off of YU. From an economic standpoint, it is not the most prudent move, in the midst of an institutional epoch of financial difficulty, to permit students to fully participate in YU programming without paying.

By the same token, though, those diehards who physically trek on a daily basis between Yeshiva University and nearby college campuses can probably be counted on one hand. Additionally, those students would likely earn merit-based scholarships even were they to attend YU. For both of these reasons, these students’ presence is hardly a financial burden.

Moreover, most similarly-minded students, who number in the dozens (if not hundreds), do not show up in person; rather, they link in virtually from some Hillel *beit midrash* or dorm room, via YUTorah, to YU’s sanctuaries of learning. In universities like Harvard, Princeton, Penn, Maryland, Rutgers, Queens and beyond, students on a regular basis plug in their earphones and enjoy a solid morning (or afternoon or night) *seder*, from the Torah that YUTorah offers.

The phenomenon of serious Torah engagement at secular college campuses, in itself, is quite positive. It is indicative of an Orthodoxy that does not throw out its essence at the entrance of adulthood. It speaks of Torah that is valued, even after high school and *yeshiva*.

And yet, the wide accessibility of serious *frumkeit* on college campuses necessarily renders Yeshiva University less relevant. It is no secret that YU, despite a respectable college ranking all things considered, still pales in comparison to the

quality liberal arts educations offered by Ivy League and other prestigious colleges across America. YU’s main niche is, and has always been, its unique Orthodox community and Torah studies programs. Once vibrant Orthodoxy and *talmud Torah* are possible at secular college campuses, how can YU compete?

It is most likely the case that YU would gain back only a small handful of students if it would shut down its liberal dissemination of Torah. The vast majority of secular college-bound Orthodox students would still attend secular colleges, albeit with fewer Torah resources. But that small handful of interested students who would indeed attend YU given alternate circumstances is very significant.

These students, were they to attend YU, would most likely be admitted to the selective Honors Program. These students, rather than simply networking virtually into a YU *shiur*, would fill up the ever-diminishing seats in the *batei midrash*, and actively contribute in a serious way to *seder* and *shiur* culture. These students would be the types to contribute to student lead-

*The top students whom YU needs, who can make significant impacts in both the beit midrash and the classroom, are few and far between. And, ironically, it is YU’s open doors that turn them away.*

ership, write intelligent senior theses, and dedicate themselves to serious discussion-based Honors courses. These students would make a good name for YU by pursuing impressive graduate degrees after college.

It is not as if YU has no such students who take both their academics and their Torah studies seriously. But it is a difficult balance, where even the strongest, most capable YU students inevitably sacrifice some Yeshiva at the expense of University, or vice versa. The top students whom YU needs, who can make significant impacts in both the *beit midrash* and the classroom, are few and far between. And, ironically, it is YU’s open doors that turn them away.

YU’s Torah policies turn away — at least in the strictly physical sense — older members of the broader Orthodox community as well. It is hard to imagine the hundreds of seats in Lamm Auditorium ever filling to maximum capacity like they once did on a not infrequent basis during the lifetime of Rav Soloveitchik and during the presidencies of Rabbis Belkin and Lamm. Even if YU today were to boast another massively eminent and articulate Torah scholar, it seems likely that many potential attendees would choose to listen to his *shiurim* only after the fact from the comfort of their homes.

None of this analysis is intended to invalidate YUTorah and other open door Torah policies. On the aggregate, such policies probably yield a greater amount of *talmud Torah* in the broader community than would be possible without such policies. Though the argument has been made that the YU *batei midrash* lose out due to the accessibility of YU *shiurim*, it still seems correct to estimate that overall, the wide dissemination of Torah leads to more Torah learning. At the end of the day, YU’s open door Torah policies should not be limited.

But this analysis should raise some serious existential questions: Is Torah an infinite good whose flowing springs should never be plugged, or might there sometimes be a time to legitimately limit Torah offerings? Given the contemporary feasibility of benefitting from a YU education without attending YU, is YU still the beating heart and epicenter of Modern Orthodoxy that it once was? If the answer to the last question is yes, then just how thin can YU spread itself before it loses its status as a crucial and necessary citadel of wisdom, without which the wider community could not survive?

# THE COMMENTATOR

2018-2019

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The Commentator is the student newspaper of Yeshiva University.

For 84 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 Umadda, and a commitment to journalistic excellence.

Visit us online at  
www.yucommentator.org.





HELLO  
MY NAME IS

Hater



## 1 "Avengers: Endgame" Trailer

"Part of the journey is the end." — Every yearbook quote this year.

## 2 Our Haters

But you don't understand ... We do this for YOU.

## 3 George Bush Passing Michelle Obama a Mint at His Father's Funeral

One more time and it's a *chazakah*!

## 4 Conflicting "Manifest" Reviews in The Commentator and Perspective

Still waiting for Yitzchak Yiranan's riveting review of the show. One more review after that and maybe we can put it in 4-square!

## 5 The Paper Covering the Floor of the Heights Lounge Foyer

Why is this here? Are we renovating the space to accommodate another Arch of Titus replica? A women's pool? A *minyán* where women can speak? A minyan where only women can speak? A women's pool where they can speak? It's a slippery slope, pals, but honestly, this weird floor-paper feels pretty nice underfoot, so maybe things should just stay as they are forever?

## 6 The Greatest Showman: Reimagined Soundtrack

In all my million dreams, I never could have imagined something as great as this.

## 7 168th Street Station Closing for a Year

As if adorable subway rats aren't enough incentive to pass up on the shuttle, the ride between Penn Station and 181st Street now just got even shorter than the 1.5 hours it takes to ride the 5:00! Cheers to an eternity of dual-campus efficiency.

# 7 UP 7 DOWN

## 1 Commentator Meet and Greet

Okay, whose genius idea was it to schedule this event the same night as Chanukahfest? I bet The Observer wouldn't be so obnoxious. And there weren't even any Key Food grapes at the event.

## 2 What is a Management Major?

I really don't understand what this is. If I manage my local NSCY chapter, am I destined to be a management major? What if I manage my own email account? Does that also count?

## 3 Cuffing Season

"During the Fall and Winter months people who would normally rather be single or promiscuous find themselves along with the rest of the world desiring to be 'Cuffed' or tied down by a serious relationship. The cold weather and prolonged indoor activity cause singles to become lonely and desperate to be cuffed ... It's a despicable practice and I don't suggest anyone doing the aforementioned, especially since during this time of year, emotions are extremely high and you risk getting your tires slashed (men). But when it's mutual and both parties are knowledgeable and complicit in the act, it can be worthwhile." - Urban Dictionary

## 4 Beren Students Bringing Suitcases to Thursday Night Honors Events

Please don't be so painfully in-town in public. It's just the worst.

## 5 All The Elevators Uptown Are Breaking

THIS IS WHAT YOU GET FOR TAKING THE ELEVATORS FROM THE FIRST TO THE SECOND FLOOR, YOU SELFISH, EMPOWERED YET HORRIBLE ALIENS.

## 6 The Crocs Store by Penn Station Having a 40% Off Sale on Everything (Excluding Accessories)

BUT. EVERYTHING. THIS. STORE. SELLS. IS. AN. ACCESSORY. SO. WHY. WOULD. THEY. SAY. THIS. Why? WHY? WHYYYYYYYY!!!!

## 7 Silence

Happy one year anniversary everyone!!! Who feels good? You feel good? I feel good. You feel good?

LEAKED SURVEY,  
continued from Front Page

a person, and only 31 percent think YU treats them in a fair manner.

"Faculty at Yeshiva University have not received regular raises, nor cost of living increases, for the past ten years," expressed an official unanimous statement crafted for The Commentator by the Faculty Council in their closed session of the most recent Faculty Council meeting, which concluded this past Friday afternoon. "In addition, retirement and medical benefits have sunk far below industry standards, including what was meant to be a temporary reduction in employer contribution to pension plans that has yet to be fully restored."

Overall, faculty confidence in the university's leadership and Board of Trustees was low. An overwhelming 85 percent did not report to have confidence that the Provost's Office is transparent and provides all information to faculty. Selma Botman has served as Provost since July 2014. She left her previous position as President of University of Southern Maine in 2012 after four years, following faculty clashes that ended with a vote of no confidence in May 2012.

Only 40 percent of faculty surveyed reported to have confidence in President Ari Berman.

President Emeritus Richard Joel received a vote of 80 percent "no confidence" in 2015 from the then full-time faculty teaching at Yeshiva College. The vote was organized by the Yeshiva College Executive Committee, the board for faculty governance of Yeshiva College.

"We value the feedback of our faculty members," Provost Selma Botman remarked to The Commentator. "They are Yeshiva's most important resource. We will continue to work side by side with the faculty to develop programs, launch new initiatives that support the university's vision for the future, and educate and mentor students."

*Only 40 percent of faculty surveyed reported to have confidence in President Ari Berman.*

The confidence in the deans of various schools was higher than the Provost's and President's offices, on average. Sy Syms deans had the highest confidence rate at 88.2 percent, followed by Cardozo deans at 87 percent. The lowest confidence levels in the deans were evident in the Yeshiva College and Stern College for Women deans, at 53 percent and 64 percent, respectively.

Only 20 percent reported to have confidence in the Board of Trustees, while 11 percent agreed that they have confidence in the university's expertise in financial management.

The Yeshiva University Faculty Council, which was founded in 2012, is a forum with faculty from across the institution that resolves issues related to governance and education. The Council formulates university-wide academic policies.

"It may be a good idea to conduct surveys on a regular basis, but this is the first time the faculty council has decided to do that," said S. Abraham (Avri) Ravid, co-speaker of the Executive Committee of the Faculty Council and chairman of the finance department in Sy Syms School of Business, in an email.

"The objective of the survey was to work with administration to identify and address areas of greatest concern," read the statement from the Faculty Committee. "It is our hope that the administration will be forthcoming in the near future with a plan and timeline for addressing these issues."

The Faculty Council intends to survey the faculty annually.



YU's Wilf Campus

THE COMMENTATOR



# Berman’s Letter to the Editor Published in New York Times

By SHAYNA HERSZAGE

On Nov. 12, Gal Beckerman’s book review article “American Jews Face a Choice: Create Meaning or Fade Away” was published in The New York Times. On Dec. 7, President Ari Berman penned a response as a letter to the editor in the newspaper.

Beckerman’s article was inspired in part by the recent shooting in Pittsburgh, which, as Beckerman observed, brought the American Jewish community together through finding meaning in the tragedy. The article presents Beckerman’s belief that if

American Jews do not look into and adapt the Jewish lifestyle to be something meaningful — however unorthodox in practice the adjustments may be — the Jewish people will ultimately assimilate and disappear within a few generations.

Beckerman’s article furthered the ongoing dialogue in the Orthodox Jewish community about the state of Modern Orthodoxy. Following publication of the article, Jewish readers across the internet discussed certain

*In the response, President Berman stated his opinion that “meaning is not a strategy, it is our calling.”*

questions: As a denomination that has always made great efforts to stick to tradition, rather than changing and choosing for the purpose of meaning, can Orthodoxy survive? With increasing changes and subdivisions within the general Orthodox Jewish community, such as Modern Orthodoxy, Open Orthodoxy and egalitarian *minyanim*, are we already witnessing the downfall of Orthodox Judaism in America?

In the response, President Berman stated

his opinion that “meaning is not a strategy, it is our calling.” While Beckerman believes that finding meaning is the way to preserve Jewish people and their survival, with the latter being an end in itself, Rabbi Berman believes the opposite — Jewish survival is meant to serve the purpose of Jews continuing their search for meaning. He claimed that in today’s “changing world filled with dilemmas as well as unlimited opportunity,” Torah and tradition have even more ability than ever to provide essential meaning by “elevating our lives and enriching the global moral discourse.”

HANUKKAH DINNER,  
continued from Front Page

Jewish people.”

The dinner took place on the heels of shakeups in Institutional Advancement that resulted in Julie Schreier’s appointment as Interim Vice President of Institutional Advancement. The dinner also marks the second dinner after President Berman took office.

In addition to the annual Hanukkah Dinner, the Office of Institutional Advancement is responsible for other large-scale fundraising efforts, including the annual Day of Giving. The Day of Giving, which began in 2017, raised \$6 million in 2017 and \$4.5 million in 2018.

Paul Singer, founder and president of Elliott Management Corporation and president of The Paul E. Singer Foundation, served as the keynote speaker at the recent Hanukkah Dinner. Yeshiva University must “be the bridge between America and Israel; between the world of Jewish tradition and the larger Jewish community; and between the Jewish people and the non-Jewish world,” Singer said in his address.

Honorary degrees were conferred upon Hadassah Lieberman and J. Philip Rosen. Lieberman is a public advocate for Israel and has assisted several nonprofit organizations. In 2000, Lieberman was actively involved in the vice presidential campaign for her husband, former Sen. Joseph Lieberman. Rosen, who received his B.A. from Yeshiva College in 1978, is a senior partner at the international law firm Weil, Gotshal & Manges LLP, a member of Yeshiva University’s Board of Trustees and vice-chair of the Birthright Israel Foundation.

“Your leadership has helped guide Yeshiva University in so many ways, and specifically with our relationship with the State of Israel,” said President Berman to a visibly touched J. Philip Rosen. President Berman also thanked Rosen for his pledge of \$1 million to the fund.

This dinner also marked the inauguration of The YU Shield Award, an award created to reward service to the University. Bennett Schachter, a managing director in the investment banking division of Goldman Sachs, was the inaugural recipient. “Bennett Schachter has offered unparalleled advice to our students, in finance and beyond,” said Lance Hirt, a major YU donor who has served as a YU trustee. “Bennett is the perfect inaugural recipient of the inaugural YU service award, The YU Shield.”

Past honorees of the dinner include American politicians such as Adlai Stevenson, Richard Nixon, Ronald Reagan, George H.W. Bush, Jack Kemp, Colin Powell, Joseph Lieberman, George W. Bush, Hillary Clinton, John McCain, Mike Bloomberg, Al Gore, Kirsten Gillibrand, Cory Booker, Jack Lew and Andrew Cuomo; Israeli politicians

such as Rabbi Isaac Halevi Herzog, Chaim Herzog and Nir Barkat; and philanthropists such as Ghity Lindenbaum Stern (the widow of Max Stern), Sy Syms, Philip Belz, Ira Mitzner, Stanley Raskas and Laurie Tisch, as well as columnists such as David Brooks and Bret Stephens.

The chart below indicates the amount of money raised at the past nine Hanukkah Dinners (based on approximations reported by YU News).

Hanukkah Dinner (Year)	Total Raised
2010	\$4.1 million
2011	Unable to obtain
2012	\$3.8 million
2013	\$3.5 million
2014	\$4.2 million
2015	\$4 million
2016	\$4 million
2017	\$4.3 million
2018	\$5 million

Records from Commentator archives indicate the amount of money raised at several other Hanukkah Dinners over the years. While the chart below presents the amount that was reported by the newspaper, it should be noted that some of the larger amounts raised were most likely due to the fact that those numbers included not only funds raised by the dinner journals, but also by funds pledged over the course of larger fundraising projects:

Hanukkah Dinner (Year)	Total Raised (unadjusted)	Total Raised (adjusted for inflation)
1952	\$100,000	\$1 million
1982	\$8 million	\$21 million
1983	\$10 million	\$25 million
1985	\$17 million	\$40 million
1988	\$84 million	\$180 million
1993	\$74 million	\$130 million
1994	\$65 million	\$111 million

## Some Notes on the History of the Annual Hanukkah Dinner

The precise origins of the Annual Hanukkah Dinner are lost in the mist of time. The current count of “94” suggests, assuming that there was one Hanukkah Dinner per year, that the first dinner took place in 1925.

While there appears to be no record of an inaugural Hanukkah Dinner in 1925, there is documentation of a dinner that took place in Dec. 1915. At this dinner, according to Yeshiva University Libraries, Yeshiva Etz Chaim (founded 1886) and the Rabbi Isaac Elchanan Theological Seminary (founded

1897) formally joined forces, and Rabbi Dr. Bernard Revel was inaugurated as Rosh Yeshiva and President of the institution. The 1915 dinner, which is Yeshiva’s earliest on record, took place “in a small refurbished building on Montgomery Street” on New York’s Lower East Side.

Other early dinners on record include a 1924 dinner where plans for the institution’s Washington Heights campus were revealed, and a 1928 dinner which celebrated the dedication of the building currently known as Zysman Hall.

Yeshiva College opened its doors in Fall 1928, and The Commentator’s first issue hit shelves in March 1935. Commentator archives from as early as 1938 document instances of an “Annual Scholarship Fund Dinner of Yeshiva College,” with numbering that would place the inaugural dinner in Dec. 1929 (again, assuming that there was one such dinner per year). For example, an article from 1938 reports about the “10th” annual dinner, and an article from 1944 reports about the “16th” annual dinner.

Records show that following Yeshiva’s accredited university status that was achieved in Nov. 1945, the dinner was called the “Annual Yeshiva University Dinner,” and kept to the same count dating back to 1929. This title was short-lived, as by the early-1950s the dinner was called by the name of the “Annual Scholarship Fund Dinner.” Only by the late-1960s do records indicate that the dinner was called the “Annual Chanukah Dinner” (note the spelling).

Commentator and YU Libraries archives indicate that in the years 1946 through 1957, two YU dinners took place each December — the Annual Scholarship Fund Dinner and the Charter Day Dinner, with the latter commemorating the achievement of Yeshiva’s university status. Notable honorees at the Charter Day Dinner included “John F. Kennedy, who received the University Award at the 1957 Charter Day Dinner.” According to YU Libraries, “the Charter Day dinner and the Hanukkah dinner seem to have joined forces and united to become one event after 1958, presumably since both events occurred at the same time of year.”

The count that dates the Annual Chanukah Dinner back to 1929 persisted through at least 1974, which witnessed the so-called 46th Annual Chanukah Dinner.

In Oct. 1975, President Samuel Belkin, who had served as YU’s President since Fall 1943, announced that he would resign from his position due to ill health. That December, a special dinner was held where Belkin was formally invested as “Chancellor of Yeshiva,” a role in which Belkin described himself as a “watchdog, in order to make sure that the ideals of Yeshiva shall not be watered down”

*“[A]n investment in Yeshiva University ensures a strong and vibrant future for the Jewish people.”*

President Ari Berman

and that “the foundation and central part of the University be preserved, namely the Jewish Studies Program of Yeshiva.”

Belkin died only four months later in April 1976, and Rabbi Dr. Norman Lamm was invested as the University’s third President in Nov. 1976.

Library records show that in Dec. 1976, Yeshiva University hosted its “52nd” Annual Chanukah Dinner. This count, which ostensibly calls back to some inaugural 1925 dinner, persists to this day.

One of YU’s current archivists suggested several explanations for the numbering. One possibility is that the current count may have been calculated in the late-1970s by taking the old number and tallying up to account for several other dinners, whether those that took place before the founding of Yeshiva College, or perhaps some of the Charter Day Dinners that took place in the 1940s and 1950s. It also may be that the updated count, which began in 1976 — at the start of President Lamm’s administration — was intended to link back to the significant 1924 dinner, counting a dinner every year from 1924 through 1976 besides for one (perhaps skipping the year 1975, which technically did not have a Chanukah Dinner).

Another possibility that the archivist did not suggest, but which seems probable, is that one year, someone simply miscalculated the count, perhaps due to changeovers following President Belkin’s death, and the mistake went unnoticed.

The only other relevant change noticeable between 1976 and the present is that at some point in the late-1990s or early-2000s, the name became the “Annual Hanukkah Dinner and Convocation.”



## Day of Giving Initiative Procures Funds for Students in Need

By YITZCHAK CARROLL

In an effort to raise funds for needy students, Student Organization of Yeshiva (SOY) coordinated a *tzedakah* drive, dubbed “A Day of Giving,” on Dec. 5. Coinciding with the third day of Chanukah, the ongoing initiative has raised more than \$1,000 to date, according to organizers.

*Mashgichim* approached SOY President Moshe Spirn with the idea of taking up a collection for students in need of financial assistance. To best raise funds and awareness of the cause, Spirn suggested establishing a designated “Day of Giving.”

According to SOY Vice President Micah Hyman, Mazer Yeshiva Program (MYP) *shiur* assistants collected funds via envelopes from their respective *shiurim*, while Rabbi Eitan Schnall and SOY Stone Beit Midrash Program (SBMP) Representative David Nissanoff collected from SBMP classes and Hyman himself collected at IBC and JSS courses. MYP *mashgichim* also made announcements in the *batei midrash* to

support the effort.

The initiative will continue throughout the year and beyond, as each *minyan* on the Wilf Campus will have one *tzedakah* box earmarked towards the fund.

initiative.”

The funds raised will be used to financially assist undergraduate students on campus “with basic day-to-day needs,” MYP *Mashgiach* Rabbi Elisha Bacon said. “We

Hyman explained. “That maximizes the utility of the money that goes into those *tzedakah* boxes, and hopefully encourages people to give more since they know where the money is headed. This initial Day of Giving was supposed to launch that program with an initial bang.”

“Chanukah is about Jews fighting for the values they hold dear,” said Undergraduate Torah Studies Dean Rabbi Menachem Penner. “I am very happy to see students taking the initiative on Chanukah to help their fellow students. The needs are very great in some cases and I hope that students will give — and continue to give — generously.”

*Rosh Yeshiva* Rabbi Jeremy Wieder added his support for the initiative. “This cause is incredibly important. It is unconscionable that we should be oblivious to the struggles of those immediately surrounding us,” he said. “From a *halakhic* perspective, there is a clear imperative to give priority in *tzedakah* to ‘*aniyei irkha*’ (your local poor), and there’s no [one] more ‘local’ than your fellow students.”

*“I am very happy to see students taking the initiative on Chanukah to help their fellow students. The needs are very great in some cases and I hope that students will give — and continue to give — generously.”*

Undergraduate Torah Studies Dean Rabbi Menachem Penner

“*Baruch Hashem*, a nice amount of money was raised on Giving Day,” Spirn said, noting that students can still donate to the fund in the designated *tzedakah* boxes. “I hope that this fund will enable students who need financial assistance get the help they need, and I think that the Day of Giving was definitely a great start to a really exciting

hope students feel a sense of kinship and *achrayus* (responsibility) to helping their fellow students,” he added, noting that rabbinical sources assert the importance of giving charity on the holiday of Chanukah.

“We wanted to marshal the random *tzedakah* boxes that exist in the different *Minyanim* behind one coordinated effort,”



The Glueck Beit Midrash on the Wilf Campus

YU NEWS

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# A Comprehensive Analysis of Which Yeshivot and Seminaries YU Students Attend

By JACOB ROSENFELD

*Note: This article appears on The Commentator's website with more visual-friendly charts.*

Yeshiva University undergraduates are a diverse group of students. Students hail from all over the world and have many diverse backgrounds. One important point in students' backgrounds is where they studied in Israel *yeshivot* and seminaries. Women who attend Stern College for Women (SCW) or Sy Syms School of Business (SSSB) have attended 53 different Israel schools, while men currently enrolled in either Sy Syms School of Business or Yeshiva College (YC) have studied in 46 unique *yeshivot*

for a grand total of 99 different institutions.

The dataset for the purpose of the analysis was provided by YU's Office of Institutional Research & Assessment (OIR). The dataset was a total of students who are currently enrolled in the Israel Program (IP) and those who have transferred credits from an Israel school through the Israel Program. Students who may have switched Israel schools after the first year in the Israel Program are counted

only in their school in which they accrued their IP credits. The data is accurate for this Fall 2018 semester.

The S. Daniel Abraham Israel Program is "an educational partnership between Yeshiva University and more than 45 *yeshivot* and seminaries in Israel," according to Yeshiva University. The program allows students to be enrolled in Yeshiva University and accrue college credits while studying in Israel schools throughout Israel

on diverse campuses.

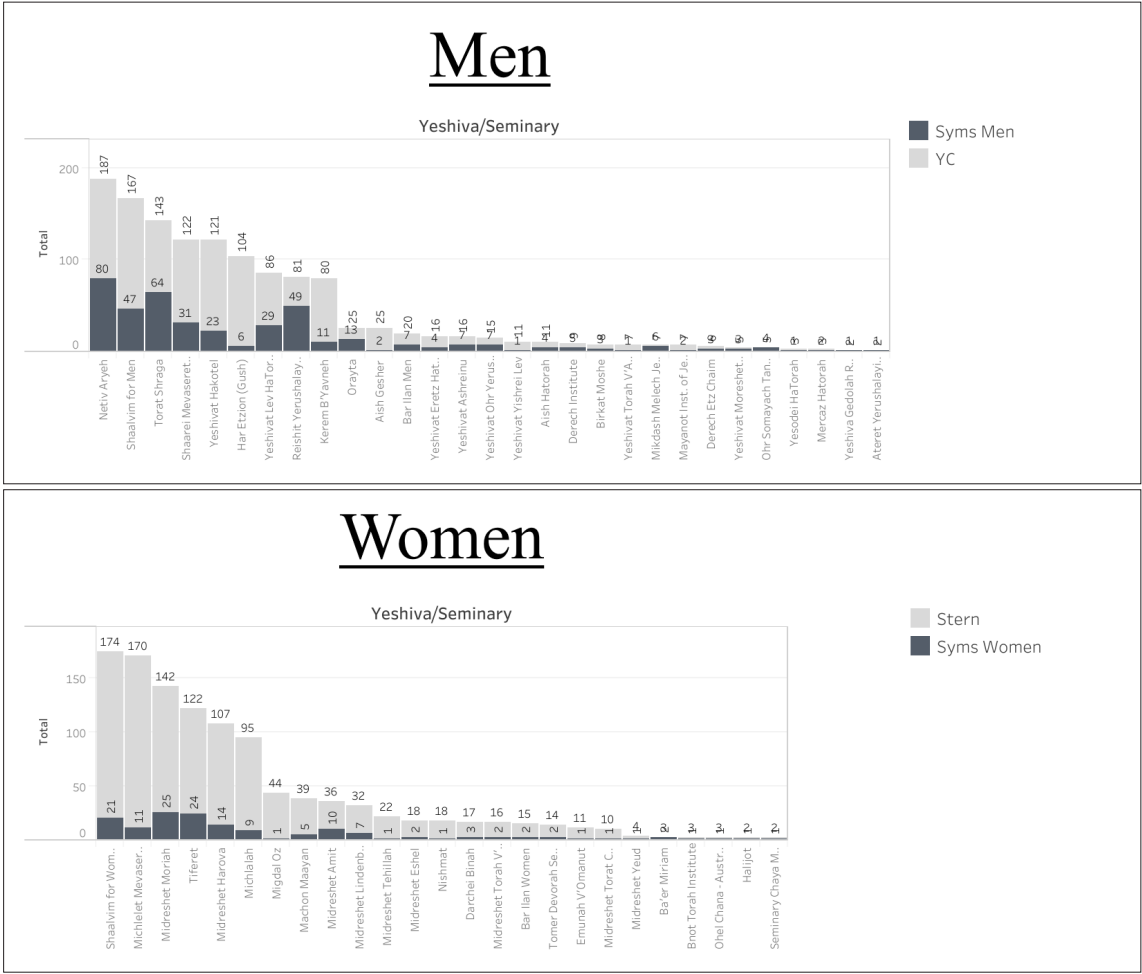
According to the Fall 2018 Yeshiva University Fact Book (also prepared by OIR), there are currently 2,727 undergraduate students enrolled at Yeshiva University. The Israel Program (IP) dataset shows a total of 2,955 students for this Fall 2018 semester, less than a 10 percent difference. The differences are due to the difficulty in maintaining up to date records of all of the students in Israel, as they sometimes switch

by 170 former Michlelet Mevaseret Yerushalayim (MMY) students and then 142 Midreshet Moriah students.

The average number of students per seminary in Israel and New York is 21.7 students, with a median value of two. Each men's *yeshiva* sent an average of 29 students, and a median value of six students.

The dataset lends to some interesting takeaways. Netiv Aryeh has 80 alumni enrolled in SSSB, which is double the 40 Netiv students

*The top five seminaries — Sha'alvim for Women, MMY, Midreshet Moriya, Tiferet and Harova — whose alumnae make up the downtown campus population have a total of 715 students, which makes up about 65 percent of the total 1,140 female students in the dataset.*



between programs and take leave.

Currently, there are 2,727 enrolled undergraduate students at Yeshiva University. 622 of those students are currently studying in Israel, and the remaining 2,105 are studying at the Beren and Wilf campuses. On Wilf Campus, there are 554 students enrolled in the Sy Syms School of Business, which is 5 percent larger than Yeshiva College's 527 currently-enrolled students.

On the Beren Campus, Stern College for Women heavily outweighs Sy Syms School of Business enrollment, with 808 women enrolled in SCW and only 164 students in SSSB.

According to the Israel dataset — which documents 2,955 students and their whereabouts this Fall 2018 semester — 255 women and 242 men "never went to Israel."

Of the top seminaries and *yeshivot* represented on campus, there are several who maintain the largest contingencies. On Wilf Campus, Netiv Aryeh has 187 alumni on campus, followed by Sha'alvim for Men (167) and then Shaarei Mevaseret Zion (122). On Beren Campus, Sha'alvim for Women's 174 alumnae take rank, followed

enrolled YC. Yeshivat Har Etzion (Gush) has only six students in the business school, compared to 52 enrolled in Yeshiva College. Reishit Yerushalayim students were over five times as likely to attend SSSB compared to YC.

16 percent of women are enrolled in SSSB. This percentage is relatively consistent among seminaries, with Tiferet and Midreshet Moriah being outliers, as 38 percent and 24 percent, respectively, of their alumnae are enrolled in SSSB.

The top five seminaries — Sha'alvim for Women, MMY, Midreshet Moriya, Tiferet and Harova — whose alumnae make up the downtown campus population have a total of 715 students, which makes up about 65 percent of the total 1,140 female students in the dataset. The alumni from the top five *yeshivot* — Netiv Aryeh, Sha'alvim for Men, Torat Shraga, Shaarei Mevaseret Zion and Yeshivat Hakotel — make up a similar 55 percent of the 1,308 male students from the dataset.

As with other data-driven Commentator pieces, explanations for *yeshiva* and seminary sizes are beyond the scope of this article.

## Wurzweiler Partnership With Sara Schenirer Institute to Begin in New Year

By SARA MARCUS

Beginning in 2019, the Wurzweiler School of Social Work will be partnering with the Sara Schenirer Institute to offer master's degrees in Social Work for Sara Schenirer students.

The Sara Schenirer Institute is an educational program for Orthodox women located in prominent Orthodox Jewish neighborhoods such as Lakewood and Crown Heights, according to its website. While not a college program in of itself, Sara Schenirer offers credit and degrees via partnered programs with accredited colleges and universities. They offer BA degrees in Social Sciences and Social Work, and MS degrees in Education and Special Education through a partnership

with Concordia College, a Westchester-based liberal arts college.

The Master's in Social Work program will be designed to be accessible to the specific expectations and standards of the Ultra-Orthodox community. "There is a tremendous need for qualified social workers who possess a deep understanding of the Charedi community ... we've reviewed the syllabi to ensure their suitability and established protocols to ensure that internships for these students take place in environments that conform with their standards," concluded a Wurzweiler spokesperson.

Rabbi Elazar Meisels, Dean of the Sara Schenirer Institute, said in a prepared

statement, "We are very excited by our partnership with Wurzweiler. Their faculty and administration have worked tirelessly with our team to develop a customized program that guarantees a first-rate education and

*"There is a tremendous need for qualified social workers who possess a deep understanding of the Charedi community."*

Wurzweiler Spokesperson

an environment in which our students can feel comfortable. The Wurzweiler staff has gone above and beyond in their efforts to understand what our community requires in every sense."

Another program in development at Wurzweiler is an 18-credit program in elder care and end-of-life care, which will be geared to rabbis, to endow them with "the ability to understand psychosocial and developmental issues around aging and serious illness, promote healthy aging in the community, initiate and sustain difficult conversations about aging and dying, and provide guidance that is both holistic and spiritual, while also being uniquely Jewish," the spokesperson said.

Specific skills to be taught include counseling for the elderly or the sick and their families, to provide support systems for those struggling and for the rabbis themselves to better understand the aging process and the unique needs that come with it.



## New Student Committees On Wilf Campus

By YOSEF LEMEL

The Office of University Housing and Residence Life on the Wilf Campus will establish a “Resident Council” commencing in Spring 2019. According to Director of University Housing and Residence Life Jonathan Schwab, the purpose of the council will be to “serve as an important sounding board for new ideas and initiatives, give helpful feedback, and raise issues that need our attention.”

Elections for the Resident Council will either be held at the end of the fall semester or at the beginning of the spring semester. The elections will be building-wide. Each of the three residence halls will be electing two representatives. In addition, the Head Resident Adviser of each building will choose an additional person to sit on the council. The total number of representatives on the Council will be nine.

The Council will not be making any policy decisions regarding housing. However, “they can voice the feelings of students they represent by agreeing with an idea we have, or disagreeing,” Schwab said.

Schwab further stated that he thinks the Resident Council “can allow even more opportunities for students to get involved, empower themselves, and gain knowledge and experience ... It expands the

Another committee in development on the Wilf Campus is the Shabbos Enhancement Committee (SEC). The Wilf Campus SEC was officially established by the Student Organization of Yeshiva (SOY) in October 2018. SOY President Moshe Spirn announced in an email that Noah Shapiro will be the head of the panel. Spirn anticipates that the committee will “hear the voice of a diverse group of students regarding how to improve Shabbos ... to try and enhance the Shabbos experience on campus.”

According to Shapiro, the committee is comprised of five members. These members were selected after they responded to an email sent out by Shapiro which called for volunteers for the SEC. Shapiro stated that these members “represent a spectrum of YU students and interests.” The SEC is currently in the initial stages of developing programming.

A Shabbat Enhancement Committee was created on the Beren Campus in Fall 2014 by Esty Rollhaus and Jonathan Schwab, the campus couple at the time. “SEC’s job on campus is to make Shabbat enjoyable for everyone,” said Current SEC President Rachel Zakharov (SCW ‘20). “We make sure that Shabbat runs smoothly and that programming is exciting and interesting for all.”

Some students, such as Tani Polansky (YC ‘19) are unsatisfied



Morgenstern Hall

THE COMMENTATOR

## Veteran YU Employees Honored

By BENJAMIN HALPERN

As part of an annual tradition, several Yeshiva University faculty members were honored for their years of service on Nov. 28. Honorees were chosen if they were in a year of employment that was an increment of 5. In total, 70 employees were honored for their commitment and dedication to YU. “Each of you is essential to the University’s growth and prosperity, and I thank you all for that,” President Berman stated at the event.

Celebrating 10 years at YU, Rabbi Yosef Kalinsky, Associate Dean of Undergraduate Torah Studies, remarked, “My favorite part of working at YU is the ability to work with wonderful colleagues and to collaborate across many different departments on a daily basis. The more we work together, the more we able to take a holistic approach to our students in order to better serve them.” Offering words of advice to his fellow colleagues, Rabbi Kalinsky hopes that they “take every opportunity to work beyond your specific department and to branch out to see where you can assist others in our collective work together for the university.”

Jacob Herman, a chemistry laboratory technician who has worked at YU for 35 years, was another employee honored at the event. Mr. Herman expressed his gratitude towards the University. “As I mentioned in my speech on employee appreciation day, the university put me up in one of the dormitories during Hurricane Sandy for several weeks. I’m not sure if this would have happened someplace else,” he stated. Additionally, when asked what YU means to him beyond a place to work, Mr. Herman said, “YU is a place where people work with and care about each other.”

Five employees celebrated tenures of 40 years or more at the event. Edith Lubetski, head librarian of the Heidi Steinberg Library celebrated her 55th anniversary and told The Commentator, “I look forward to the growth of YU, to the recognition far and wide of its value and mission.”

As the longest tenured employee honored at the event, Lubetski commented that while “YU has grown considerably in the last 55 years ... some things do not change. We’re a mission-driven institution and so many who work at Yeshiva equally share its mission and vision for the future.”



YU Faculty were honored at the event.

YU NEWS

*“I look forward to seeing the ideas, suggestions, complaints, advice, and more that comes from the Council.”*

Ben Strachman, Rubin Head Resident Adviser

number of students who can get involved and make a difference beyond the RAs, and I think it could provide a really valuable learning experience for students who want to represent others, work together and think about complex, far-reaching issues.”

Ben Strachman, the Head RA of Rubin Hall, has a favorable opinion regarding the Resident Council. “The new Resident Council is just another in a string of initiatives in recent years, including the annual housing open forum and weekly open office hours, intended to give residents an opportunity to participate in the process and to make their voices heard,” he said. “I look forward to seeing the ideas, suggestions, complaints, advice, and more that comes from the Council.”

Students such as Dovid Mirsky (SSSB ‘21) believe the Council will have a positive impact on the housing experience at Wilf. “As many Yeshiva University students use housing services, it is important to have additional perspectives during important housing discussions,” Mirsky said. “The ability to talk with students outside of the housing department will allow for students to be more open when discussing various concerns.”

with the current Shabbat experience at Wilf. “I think that one of the major issues with the Shabbat experience on campus is that it’s just not geared towards people who are not in the more mainstream *yeshiva* community,” Polansky stated. “I just don’t see your average JSS or IBC guy connecting to one of the *roshei yeshiva’s shalosh seudos drasha* as beautiful as they may be.”

Polansky thinks that a solution to this problem is “for the student body to really push for students in the various programs to have authentic positions of leadership regarding Shabbos, to create programming targeted at providing a spiritually fulfilling experience for all students.”

Shapiro stated that the purpose of the committee “is to make small, but impactful enhancements like [providing the student body with] extra programs and interesting diverse guests.” According to Shapiro, these programs will “spice up the *Shabbos* experience and add a little diversity.”

“The diversity of the guests we hope to bring in and the out-of-the-box programming will hopefully be appealing to a wide range of students,” Shapiro said.



# UTS Updates: Undergraduate Chaburah, Masmidim Honors Program

By SHLOMO DEUTSCH

The Undergraduate Chaburah — formally known as the BA/Semicha Program — and the Masmidim Honors Program have undergone several changes recently in order to cater to the needs of students and create a vibrant afternoon *seder* atmosphere for those who wish to learn at that time.

The undergraduate chaburah is a four-year program with an optional additional two years that allows students to maximize their learning *sedarim* during the Yeshiva University experience. Students enlisted in the program spread 96 course credits — standard for three years — into a four-year period which alleviates time for a daily afternoon *seder* focused on halakhic topics. After four years, an undergraduate chaburah student has the opportunity of pursuing *semikhah* by learning an additional two years in the Rabbi Isaac Elchanan Theological Seminary (RIETS). Chaburah students may also begin Jewish educational coursework as an undergraduate, simultaneous with *semikhah* to complete a master's degree in Jewish education from YU's Azrieli Graduate School of Jewish Education and Administration by the end of the six year period.

Several changes have been made to the Chaburah in order to improve the experience for its students. Two years ago, realizing that many students in the undergraduate chaburah chose psychology as their major, Assistant Dean of Undergraduate Torah Studies (UTS) Rabbi Yosef Kalinsky and the UTS faculty developed the Psychology and the Community Major that focuses on preparing future rabbinic students for the intricate psychological topics that educators and community leaders frequently encoun-

Chaburah seeks to cultivate. "The undergraduate Chaburah has allowed me to grow in YU in ways I didn't see possible before joining," said Ariel Brudoley, a Chaburah participant. "Each week I am presented with opportunities to make [connections] with great Rebbeim like Rav Cohen and Rav Sobolofsky who give shiur. This Chaburah allows me to take full advantage of the Torah that YU has to offer. [The undergraduate Chaburah] almost makes me feel like I never left Yeshiva in *Eretz Yisrael*."

*"Each week I am presented with opportunities to make [connections] with great Rebbeim like Rav Cohen and Rav Sobolofsky who give shiur."*

Ariel Brudoley

ter. In addition to the electives unique to the Psychology and the Community major, the course also broadens participating students' undergraduate experience by permitting students to take two graduate level courses as part of their undergraduate degree.

Additionally, last year, the chaburah added Rabbi Tanchum Cohen to improve the growth-based environment that the

This year, the Masmidim created a "web of connections" for its students by splitting its participants into three groups depending on class standing, which are assigned one of three *roshei yeshiva* — Rabbi Schechter, Rabbi Willig or Rabbi Twersky — to meet weekly over dinner. This opportunity permeates a unique connection between student and rabbi, as Masmid Matan Friedman

related, "Dinner with Rav Schechter affords us the opportunity to fulfill Chazal's dictum that even the mundane conversation of *talmidei chachamim* needs to be studied. Being in a smaller environment enables us the ability to ask the *rosh yeshiva* all of our questions on a wide variety of issues. I am very grateful that I can have this connection with one of the *gedolei Torah* of our generation." Additionally, each group has a *Kollel Elyon* fellow who serves as a mentor for the students.

Students participating in the undergraduate chaburah and masmidim honors program are benefiting greatly from each programs respective improvements. However, in order to help the general afternoon learning experience, Rabbi Kalinsky encourages other YU students to join them in afternoon learning. "Even people who aren't part of the chaburah are welcomed and encouraged to join with the seder halimud at whatever points they are free during the afternoon," he said. "By making the chaburah an inclusive group, the hope is that more undergraduates will take the opportunity to carve out time in the afternoons to learn in our *beis medrash*, in addition to the many *semikhah* students participating in the Kollel Seder."



The Glueck Beit Midrash on the Wilf Campus



ALGE,  
continued from Front Page

balance where you have fun but still take it seriously. It also allows me to better appreciate the games where we are competitive.”

Alge’s teammates applied her attitude to her even-keeled style of play.

“She always keeps you hype and tells you to keep your head up,” said Lindsay Brandwein, a sophomore guard and Michal’s teammate for the last season and a half. “Michal always knows exactly what to say to you to keep your head in the game.”

“She is an unselfish player and is always picking her teammates up when they get down,” said co-captain and senior point guard, Nikki Bick.

To Bednarsh, what stands out about her attitude is how “you never see her glare or stare at the next player or referee. Even if she knows it is a bad call, she jumps up and dusts herself off and goes to the free-throw line.” And if you do see Michal upset at a call, it is usually because she is upset with how she handled the play.

As a student who arrived in school a sophomore, playing for a fourth year is rare. Rebecca Yoshor, who is now second on the women’s all-time rebounding list behind Michal, finished her career with 831 rebounds after three years.

Guided by rule 14.1.8.6.7 in the NCAA handbook, the Athletics Department determined that

Michal could play another year if she was taking a class that was necessary for her to graduate and if the national tournament for the season finished within sixty days of the class’s completion. Along with her full-time job with NCSY Summers, Michal is taking a speech class in Stern College to complete her psychology degree. The final

to play in college for another year. It’s awesome.”

Growing up in Brookline, Mass., Michal first started playing basketball in her backyard with her two older brothers. She attended basketball camps as a ten-year-old and started playing for her Maimonides’ team in sixth grade. She joined the high school

commander of the defense, always talking, getting her hands in the face of a shooter and helping her teammates be the best that they can be on the court. As the athletics liaison for the Student Life Committee as well as a representative on the Student Athletics Committee, Michal shows that her leadership extends off the court as well.

“Playing with someone like Michal is an honor in itself,” said Brandwein “When you learn how humble she is you really take step back and think ‘wow there really is no other player like her.’ She plays her game and doesn’t talk. She just loves the game and that is a true honor to see.”

“Her effort, passion and love for the game are like no other,” shared Bick. “She is not only an exceptional player but an exceptional human being.”

“One of her teammates told me that they love coming to games just to watch her play,” said head coach Michael Alon of his athlete of three seasons. “She has such an unbelievable attitude — the only thing greater than her accomplishments is the way she plays. Michal is very soft-spoken off the court but leads by example.”

The story that opened this article is true. The round object that hit her in the face was not a fist, but rather a basketball and mild-mannered Michal’s exclamation had her teammates laughing on the bench. After all, that is sometimes what happens when you work hard and play hard in a game of basketball.

NOTE: All stats come from YUMacs.com. Special thanks to AJ O’Hagen who assisted in research for this article

### *When Michal sank her one-thousandth point, a free-throw in a game against The College at Old Westbury on Dec. 14, she became the first female athlete at YU to reach the 1000 rebound/1000 points threshold.*

day of the fall semester is Jan. 9 and the NCAA tournament is on March 15, within the allotted sixty days. Both of these criteria make it possible for Michal to play this season.

Though the Athletics Department worked with Michal to find a way for her to play, the conversation was initiated by Alge.

“I knew I wanted to play basketball for another year,” said Michal. After deliberating with her parents, she and decided that “there would be nowhere comparable to [YU] in terms of being *shomer* Shabbat or in terms of being a legitimate team. Being a Maccabee for one more season felt like the right option.”

“It is a little bit crazy this year — I’m working full time, and living all the way uptown when practices are downtown [at Baruch], I get home late. But you’ve got to work hard for the things you love. I’m still able

team in seventh grade, becoming a starter for the varsity high school team in eighth. When asked what she remembered most about those games, Michal immediately mentioned how when she played in Brookline, her family came to watch every game. Obviously, college is away from home, so Michal’s parents attend only one or two a season.

“I wish they were there to watch me, but I know that it is just a different reality now,” said Alge.

One way that parents of athletes could watch games is to live-stream them. Always an advocate for female athletes on the Beren Campus, Michal mentioned that the men’s team has all of its home games live-streamed and she wishes that it can be that way for the women too.

As the captain of the team for a second straight year, Michal is

“It’s kind of symbolic,” said Michal of her legacy as a Maccabee. “For the past years we have been doing a lot of losing. I’m 5’6” and people said all the time that I am not big enough to succeed. Seeing how the team is winning this year reminds me of the way that I got here, always underrated because of my size. And the legacy I want to leave behind is one of hard work. We are finally winning a little now and we are doing that through hard work.”

Her devotion to hard work turned heads of opposing coaches and players who often comment about Michal’s hustle and rebounding skills.

This author can continue to extrapolate from quotes about Michal’s legacy, but it seems more authentic to hear about it directly from her teammates, coaches and friends.



YUWBB celebrates Michal Alge (55) scoring her 1000th point versus The College at Old Westbury.



## Law Review

# The Mysterious Case of Birthright Citizenship

By PHILLIP DOLITSKY

President Donald Trump recently announced his intentions to end birthright citizenship, the policy that grants citizenship to anyone born in the United States. The President has come under fire from Democrats and Republicans alike, with both sides arguing that doing so would violate the 14th Amendment. The question then arises: Does our Constitution automatically grant every child born in the United States citizenship? I believe there is a strong legal case to be made in favor of President Trump's intention. Birthright citi-

make no policy prescriptions. The intent of this article is to simply convey my understanding of what the 14th Amendment does or does not grant.

Prior to the adoption of the 14th Amendment, citizens of states were automatically considered citizens of the United States. But as the Dred Scott decision made clear, black Americans were not considered citizens of the United States. See *Dred Scott v. Sandford*, 60 U.S. 393 (1856). Four years after Dred Scott, the nation would be ravaged by a civil war in the hopes of ensuring that all Americans would be treated equally under the law. In 1866, the Civil Rights Act was

that all persons “born or naturalized in the United States” are automatically citizens. In doing so, birthright citizenship advocates argue for a common-law understanding of citizenship. In Justice William Blackstone’s 18th-century *Commentaries on the Laws of England*, Blackstone writes that “the children of aliens, born here in England, are generally speaking, natural-born subjects, and entitled to all the privileges of such.” See *Blackstone Commentaries* \*373. If the 14th Amendment only included the birthplace clause, American law would indeed recognize this common-law understanding of citizenship. But what is meant by

and owing them direct and immediate allegiance.” See *Elk v. Wilkins* 112 U.S. 94 (1884). Understood in this way, tourists and visiting diplomats, while they are subject to following our penal laws, are not *completely* subject to American law, which is why we don’t sign them up for jury duty when they enter or have them file papers with the Selective Service System for military conscription. Illegal immigrants, however, remain subjects of their home country and cannot be viewed as owing “direct and immediate allegiance” to the United States.

Interestingly, the Court's perspective in *Elk v. Wilkins* was

to parents who have *complete allegiance* and are *completely subject to the jurisdiction* of the United States. Children born in the United States to illegal aliens would not be granted citizenship.

Advocates of birthright citizenship often point to the Supreme Court's 1898 ruling in *United States v. Wong Kim Ark*. The Court's opinion in *United States v. Wong Kim Ark*, however, only granted citizenship to a child born of lawful, permanent residents. See *United States v. Wong Kim Ark* 169 U.S. 649 (1898). Permanent residents, such as Wong Kim Ark's parents, enjoy many rights that citizens enjoy, but are still limited



## The United States Constitution

GEORGE FOX UNIVERSITY

zenship is not as clear-cut a legal issue as it is often portrayed; it is a highly contested element of the Constitution.

In order to properly understand the 14th Amendment, a quick word about the legal philosophy that follows. In the following article, I will take a textualist approach to the Constitution. As the late Justice Antonin Scalia wrote, textualism is the “oldest and most commonsensical interpretive principle.” Namely that “in their full context, words mean what they convey to reasonable people at the time they were written — with the understanding that general terms may embrace later technological innovations.” I reject the notion of a “living Constitution,” namely, the theory that the Constitution is to be interpreted in light of current events, society and culture. As such, this paper will analyze, first and foremost, the language of the law and only then consider its intent. Furthermore, this article seeks to

passed to achieve that goal and two years later, the 14th Amendment was added to the Constitution. The purpose of the 14th Amendment, which was essentially a reproduction of the Civil Rights Act, was to unequivocally transform the former slave population into citizens of the United States and ensure

the second, often less-discussed, clause? What does “subject to the jurisdiction” of the United States really mean?

Senator Lyman Trumbull, who authored the Civil Rights Act, noted that “subject to the jurisdiction thereof” meant that the individual must be “subject to

echoed previously in the 1873 Slaughterhouse Cases, the first set of cases to deal with the 14th Amendment. There the court noted that “the phrase, ‘subject to its jurisdiction’ was intended to exclude from its operation children of ministers, consuls, and citizens or subjects of foreign States born

in certain areas, such as being unable to vote in federal elections. In Justice Gray's opinion, there is certainly room to argue that the 14th Amendment grants citizenship to children who have parents illegally in the United States. Nevertheless, there has never been a Supreme Court case that has upheld that reading of the opinion. The Court's standing in the case seemingly does very little for the birthright citizenship argument.

When the President recently announced his intention to end the birthright citizenship policy, cries came in from both sides of the aisle that doing so is not only bad policy, morally and strategically, but also wrong constitutionally. While people of good faith can argue about the propriety of birthright citizenship as policy, I hope to have demonstrated here that the President would not only be in Constitutional bounds for ending this policy, but would be in line with a strong history of American jurisprudence.

*Birthright citizenship is not as clear-cut a legal issue as it is often portrayed; it is a highly contested element of the Constitution.*

that it would take a Constitutional Convention to reverse that reality. This brief history is necessary to properly understand the 14th Amendment and its purpose.

The 14th Amendment says, “All persons born or naturalized in the United States and subject to the jurisdiction thereof, are citizens of the United States and of the State wherein they reside.” Advocates of birthright citizenship give significantly more weight to the first clause of the amendment;

the complete jurisdiction thereof.” See *Congressional Globe*, 39th Congress (1866) p. 2893. Furthermore, Senator Trumbull’s understanding of the language of the amendment was shared by the Supreme Court in *Elk v. Wilkins*. There, the court held that being subject to the jurisdiction of the United States meant that one is “not merely subject in some respect or degree to the jurisdiction of the United States, but completely subject to their political jurisdiction

within the United States.” See *Slaughterhouse Cases* 83 U.S. 36 (1872). Two years later in *Minor v. Happersett*, the court noted that there were legitimate “doubts” if there was automatic citizenship for “children born within the jurisdiction without reference to the citizenship of their parents.” See *Minor v. Happersett* 88 U.S. 162 (1874). These monumental decisions demonstrably show that citizenship is only granted to children who are born in the United States



FROM THE COMMIE ARCHIVES

**Editor's Note:** Over three decades ago, Yeshiva University presented Vice-President George H.W. Bush with an honorary degree at the annual Chanukah dinner. This reprinting is intended both to highlight the history of the Chanukah dinner and its associated fundraising, as well as to serve as a tribute to the recently deceased George H.W. Bush.

From the Archives (January 6, 1986; Volume 51 Issue 4) — Bush Addresses Chanuka Dinner, Record Amount Raised

By JOSHUA KAPLAN

On Sunday, December 15, Yeshiva University held its sixty-first annual Chanukah dinner. Honorary degrees were granted to the Vice-President of the United States, Mr. George Bush, the Israeli ambassador to the United States, the honorable Meir Rosenne, and five prominent business leaders. Preliminary reports indicate that a record-setting \$17,000,000 in the form of gifts and pledges was raised for the University.

In his address during the convocation that preceded the dinner Vice-President Bush denounced international terrorism as evil, and expressed concern for anti-semitism, both in the US and abroad. "The Soviet Union has joined other nations in using the United Nations as a forum for anti-semitism," said Mr. Bush, citing the "Zionism is Racism" resolution as an example of the tactics used to oust Israel from the United Nations. He expressed particular concern over the plight of Soviet Jewry, and on the national level, the threat posed by neo-Nazi groups and the rising popularity of Louis Farakhan, who Mr. Bush named, "the best peddler of anti-semitism." Mr. Bush also called Israel "our foremost strategic friend in the Middle East." Addressing the issue of peace in the Middle East, Mr. Bush assured his audience that the United States would only try

to facilitate negotiations, but will never attempt to impose a settlement.

The Chanukah dinner, held this year at the Waldorf-Astoria hotel, has traditionally been the fundraising event of the year. According to Mr. David Zeisman, Vice-President of Development, this year's dinner was the most successful ever. "The dinner was the most outstanding fundraising event in the history of the University. It broke all records." He attributed the dinner's success to the "devotion and dedication on the part of University officials," and to the "tremendous benevolence" of the Jewish community leaders.

The University officials most directly responsible for the dinner's success were Dinner Chairman Mr. Sy Syms, a member of the University's Board of Trustees; Mr. Stanley E. Stern, Vice-Chairman of the Board of Trustees and Chairman of the convocation; and Mr. Jay Zises, a member of the Board of Trustees who also served as Chairman of the Dinner Executive Committee. Mr. Zeisman did not attribute the dinner's success directly to the Centennial celebration already under way, stating, "Next year it will be even greater." Rumors abound that to mark the University's Centennial year, President Ronald Reagan will address the participants at the Chanukah dinner next December.

The keynote speaker at the dinner was the Honorable Meir Rosenne, Israeli Ambassador to the United States. In his

address, Mr. Rosenne hailed the achievements of the Jewish people throughout history. The dinner was also highlighted by the showing of "Yeshiva University: A Century of Achievement," a video presentation produced by a professional company and narrated by Mr. Syms. Student leaders attending the dinner felt that the production was an excellent way of bridging the gap between the benefactors and the students. Mr. Abe Peller, Vice-President of YCSC, commented that "The production was a great success as it enlightened the people to the ideals and goals of the students they are supporting."

Keynote Address

Ambassador Rosenne delivered a highly charged address telling of his flight from the hands of the Nazis at the age of ten. In addition, he spoke of the importance of Jewish pride and the uniqueness of the Jewish people. "Never has there been another instance in recorded history of a people whose political state and religious center were destroyed, its land devastated, its members driven off and dispersed to the far corners of the earth, only to survive in creativity and dignity, to retain their faith, and to return to their land and rebuild after nineteen hundred years." He linked the survival of the Jewish people to their faith in G-d, steadfastness to Torah, to the memory of Jerusalem and the determination to return and rebuild their ancient capital.

The Galaxy

By NATANIA BIRNBAUM

My eyes were met with quite a sight  
When I one night entered my room  
A galaxy upon the floor

It was a round rotating plume  
That glowed with an unearthly light  
So bright my eyes are yet quite sore

So after my initial fright  
I stepped inside and closed the door  
And watched the galaxy illumine

And then, once that began to bore,  
I crawled up to that disk of white  
That opened to me like a bloom

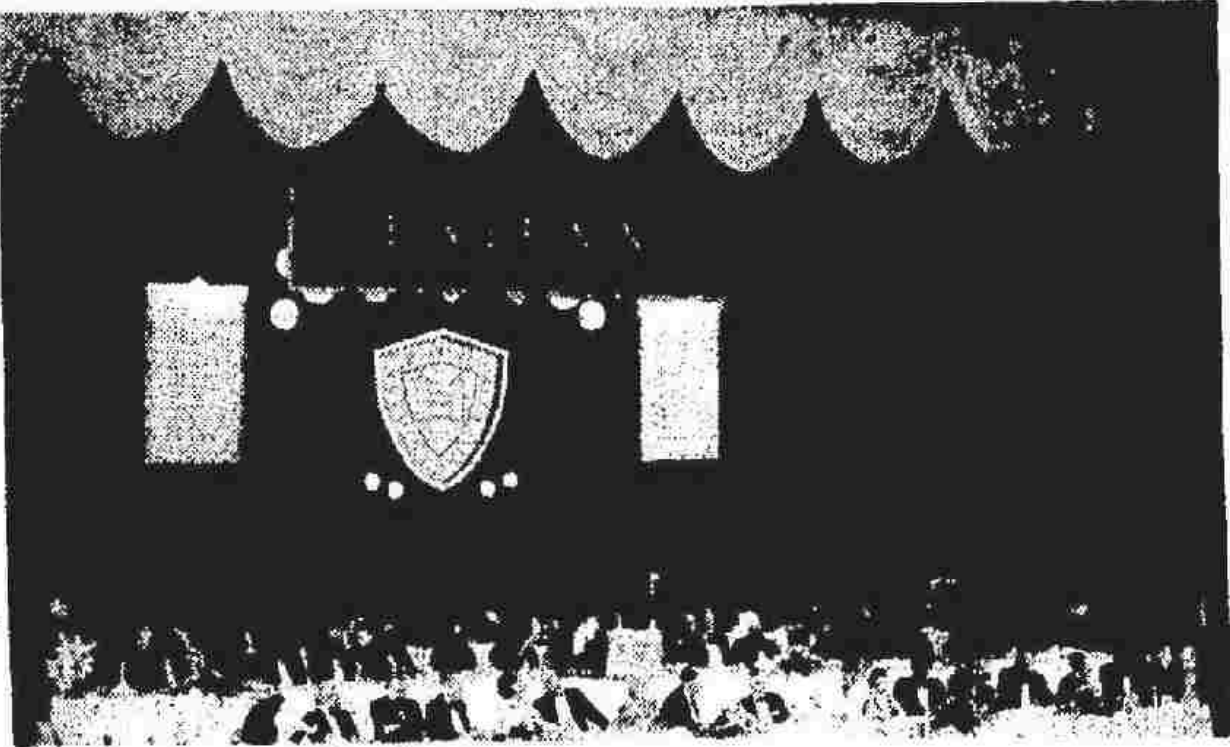
My fingers brushed its blinding core  
And if it thought me to consume  
I would comply without a fight

It failed to grant me blessed doom  
It faded and then was no more  
All that was left was deepest night

COURTESY OF THE YU POETRY CLUB



NASA



Bush Addresses Chanuka Dinner  
Record Amount Raised



## Bioethics in Practice

# FDA Restrictions: How Strict Should They Be?

By **SETH HIRT**

In May 2012, Mayor Michael R. Bloomberg proposed the “Sugary Drinks Portion Cap Rule” in an attempt to ban sweetened drinks larger than 16 ounces in New York City. Bloomberg reasoned that it was necessary to remove the sweet “hazard” from public consumers. Although the regulation was eventually repealed in June 2014, it prompts the following ethical question: How involved should the government be in protecting people from health-related risks?

The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) requires a tobacco seller to have the following warning on a pack of cigarettes: “Smoking Causes Lung Cancer, Heart Disease, Emphysema, And May Complicate Pregnancy.” Yet despite these warnings, approximately 15.5 percent of adults smoke, according to a 2016 poll conducted by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). From an ethical perspective, it seems that the FDA believes it is acceptable to sell cigarettes, as long as they display a warning for buyers to see. It is possible that, ideally, the FDA thinks that people should not buy cigarettes, but if people want to exercise their right to harm themselves, the FDA wants to make sure that people are informed.

When is it right to continue to sell a dangerous product with a warning, and when does it become necessary to completely outlaw the product? The United States was founded on the ideal of providing liberty to its citizens. Preventing access to drugs, even dangerous ones, could be infringing on that liberty. After all, even suicide is legal in the United States. If people have a right to end their own lives, they should certainly have a right to purchase drugs with high risk.

One could argue that each person should be able to decide everything for his or herself without governmental restriction. By this argument, the FDA should simply require that all risks be listed on the label of a product, leaving the consumer to evaluate the risks on his or her own. By the same token, a person who is in a dire health situation could easily gain access to a potential cure, even if it were a risky one.

A sick patient with no feasible recovery plan may prefer to take the risks that come with a clinical trial. One can claim that the FDA should simply work as an informative agency to document and record the risks of all available treatments.

On the other hand, one may argue that it is immature and dangerous to allow unsafe drugs to be released to consumers. To allow unregulated drugs to be sold in stores is to remove the comfort and trust that American citizens have when they enter a drug store. Currently, a person does not necessarily need to be concerned for his life when he buys an Advil. In a world with lax regulations, it is possible that people could accidentally harm themselves.

*The United States was founded on the ideal of providing liberty to its citizens. Preventing access to drugs, even dangerous ones, could be infringing on that liberty.*

From a Jewish ethical perspective, this question may fall under of the domain of *Vayikra* (Leviticus) 19:14: “Do not place a stumbling block in front of a blind man.” The Talmud in Tractate Avodah Zarah 6b explains that this *pasuk* is not limited by its literal meaning. The *pasuk* also implies that one may not intentionally help someone perform a sin. Rabbi Shlomo Yitzchaki (Rashi) explains that the *pasuk* also hints to the prohibition to give intentional bad advice. If selling an unstable product can be defined as bad advice or a transgression of some Jewish commandment, then the sale may be prohibited according to traditional Jewish Law.

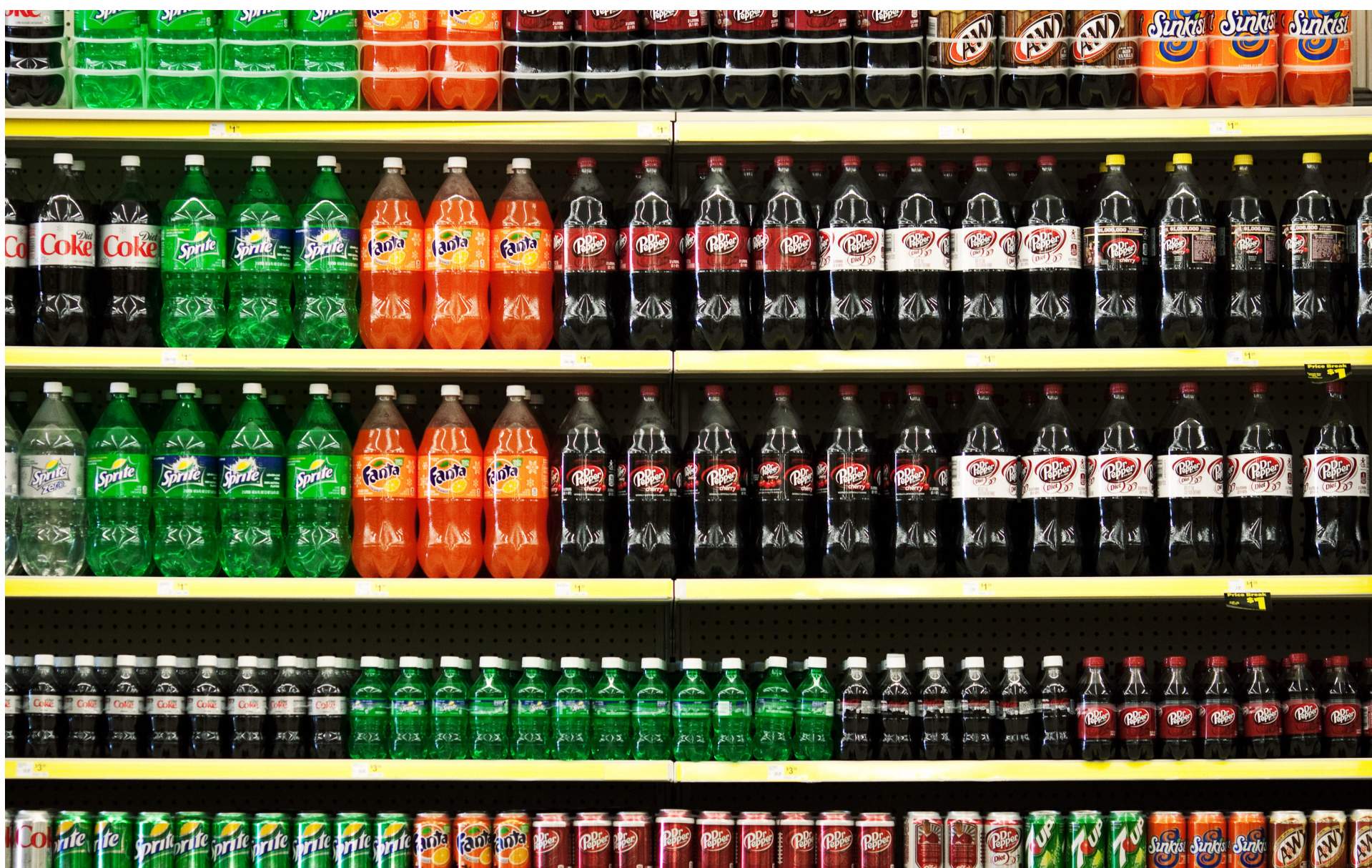
Smoking, it seems, does not pose a lethal-enough risk for the FDA to completely outlaw it. Traditional Jewish ethics may not agree with this American legal practice. According to many Jewish authorities, smoking is prohibited under Jewish

law because it presents a serious health risk. If smoking can be classified as a sin (because of the detrimental health effects), then according to the Talmud, selling cigarettes can possibly fall under the category of “placing a stumbling block in front of a blind man.” Unlike the FDA’s solution to give a warning, Jewish ethics may claim that you are still helping someone transgress a commandment to take care of one’s health. Theoretically, then, Jewish ethics would be at odds with the FDA when it comes to cigarettes.

This question also can also apply to clinical trials. On its website, the FDA states, “Recently, unethical behavior on the part of some researchers has shaken the public trust and prompted the federal government to establish regulations and guidelines for clinical research to protect participants from unreasonable risks.” This unethical behavior includes unsafe procedures performed on, or medications administered to, patients in clinical trials. Here too, one may wonder whether providing a warning to the patient is enough action to call a potentially unsafe clinical trial “ethical.”

On the one hand, one can argue that a patient who has no other option to survive might as well increase their chances of survival and participate in a knowingly risky trial. Yet, one can imagine that without regulation, it is possible that an unregulated clinical trial could be misrepresented to the patient, or maybe not fully understood by the clinicians themselves, leading to potential harm to the patient.

The guidelines for regulating health-related remedies present an ethical dilemma which requires more analysis than one short newspaper article to be resolved, but is nevertheless worth considering. The FDA must find a balance between keeping people safe, while also giving them access to potential innovative cures to difficult illnesses. From a Jewish perspective, it seems that a seller needs to figure out if providing the treatment could be labeled as “bad advice,” which may bring us back to the same issue as the FDA. Without an absolute answer, it seems that this issue needs to be judged on a case-by-case basis.



Soda

GETTY IMAGES





# Thank you!

To the hundreds of Yeshiva University students who form the core of our amazing staff this, and every summer. Yasher Koach on your dedication, commitment and leadership!

Thank you to the prominent leaders of the YU Community who visited us and addressed our staff & campers this summer - Your presence added so much to our program.

*We are proud to be your partner and are honored to work together with Yeshiva University in serving our community.*



Rav Moshe Weinberger



Rav Menachem Penner



Rav Yaakov Glasser



Rav Aharon Kahn



Rav Mordechai Willig



Rav Baruch Simon



Rav Yehuda Willig  
Camp Rabbi



Rav Moshe Zvi  
Weinberg



Dr. Steve Glicksman



Rav Shimon Schenker



Rav Yosef Kalinsky



Rav Ari Sytner



Rav Simcha Willig



Rav Jonathan Cohen

## Wishing you all a wonderful Winter Zman!

Shmiel Kahn Camp Director & Rav Judah Mischel Executive Director

*Where Lives Are Changed & Miracles Happen!*  
[www.CampHASC.org](http://www.CampHASC.org)



# Israel Is Not a Birthright: Why We Should Stop Investing in American Jewry

By **ARYEH SCHONBRUN**

Over the past few years, the rift between the American diaspora communities and the Israeli government has grown and deepened. Issues with the Israeli rabbinate, Israeli politics, heritage sites (e.g. the Kotel) and religious practices have developed to an extent that coexistence between the American and Israeli Jewish communities has become quite difficult to maintain. American Jews feel alienated and disenfranchised from Israeli society and political decision-making and have begun to ask why.

While some Israeli figures and politicians have responded with calls for outreach and understanding, the overwhelming consensus here in Israel has emerged as defiant disaffection and apathy. The far left, influenced by the New Israel Fund and other American-based NGOs, routinely brings up the issues as broadcasted by the leaders

Jewry; they have been left behind. American Jews have withered away, intermarrying and hellenizing. They also remain adamantly against the idea of moving to Israel, and do not consider themselves likely to even refuge in her borders in the event of rising anti-Semitism.

This cultural gap, language dissonance, political discord and national fissure took their toll on our ability to bridge the two different traditions of Jews, and I don't think we can possibly succeed in repairing the damage.

For too long we let our relationship with American Jewry waste away, for too long we forgot to involve them in the progress of Israeli society. For too long we waited for the day that we could call ourselves a functional, modern democracy and finally reach out to our fellow brethren who remained unwilling to sacrifice their Western comforts for *aliyah*. We waited for them and for us, and, in the meantime, we lost them.

*Israelis, unlike Americans, don't approach the Jewish identity in merely Western terms ... Israeli society, owing to its distinct makeup, defines Judaism in an intrinsic, intuitive way.*

of liberal American Judaism, and cries of solidarity in support of Haredi draft protesters do sometimes reach the ears of the Israeli religious population, but they are easily drowned out in the mundane disaster of Israeli political muckraking. Though I have lived with Israelis these past few years, I hardly remember hearing such issues arise in discussions, and even if some of my friends showed interest, they would have been considered renegade liberals in the main corpus of Israeli Jewry. To put it bluntly: Israelis don't give a damn about American Jewry, and we can do very little to ameliorate the situation.

Over the years, Israeli society has diverged from traditional Ashkenazi Jewry in many ways. The nascent state took in nearly a million Jewish-Arab refugees in the 1950s, and the internal dynamics of Israeli society have changed with them. The elitist Ashkenazi *halutzim*, the forebears of modern Israel, slowly made way for the new arrivals, and, after years of infighting and strife, lost their previous-held status. The Mizrahi Jews themselves underwent Ashkenazification at the hands of the Israeli "melting pot" and the conflict between East and West. As a result, Israelis have forged a new Jewish identity for themselves. We have returned to our fatherland, we have reconnected with our long-distant cousins and have started to regroup and grow after the horrid conditions of a long exile. Our language is Hebrew, our religion is Masoretic Judaism and our consciousness embodies the millions of Jews who yearned for Zion and dreamed to call this small country their home.

American Jewry, on the contrary, never experienced the internal struggle of contradicting cultures, and thus does not share the experience or history that has so altered Modern Israeli Jewry's course. American Jews today look and act much like European Jews on the eve of the Holocaust: Yiddish-speaking Hasidim on the one hand and ultra-secular/Reform non-practicing Jews on the other, both anti-Zionist. The Western mentality, split between fundamentalist spirituality and secular emancipation, lives on in our American communities. The tribal Arab persona, so vital for our continued presence in the Middle-East, has not met American

Western society, acutely felt in the dominating power of American society, has corrupted and destroyed most of the Jews remaining in her grasp. Liberal Jewry has bled itself to near-death, losing most of her sons and daughters to the banality of suburban luxury, while the neo-Hasidic communities of (mostly) metropolitan New York have, in their crazed obsession to repopulate following the calamity of the Holocaust, forged for themselves independent identities completely distinct from those of Zionist Israelis. The Israeli Hasidim, under great influence of Israeli society, have made great sacrifices in their beliefs, practices and identity in order to remain at one with other Jews, but no such pressure existed outside the confines of the modern Jewish *kibbutz*-state. America offered them safety and serenity and, unwilling to relinquish their chosen identities, they chose to disconnect hermetically from most of their fellow American Jews.

This, sadly, describes the reality of my experiences as a young Modern Orthodox Jew. I grew up in New York, the haven of post-WWII Jewry, and I had next to no interaction with either my reform or Hasidic neighbors. When I grew older and sought out a community of Jews large enough to satisfy my communal needs, I never once considered joining the ranks of *Hasidim* or registering as a member at a Reform temple. For me, I understood intuitively that my allegiances lay with the Modern Orthodox/Yeshivish communities and Israel. With that in mind, I studied Hebrew with the expectation that someday I might immigrate, and prepared spiritually for the ensuing culture-shock.

Israelis, unlike Americans, don't approach the Jewish identity in merely Western terms. We are not Jews as a result of direct biological (maternal) lineage, nor do we fantasize about Jewish culture or our shared Jewish heritage. Israeli society, owing to its distinct makeup, defines Judaism in an intrinsic, intuitive way, one based on shared histories, beliefs and practices. The main uniting factor in Israeli society remains military service, traditional religious rites and taboos and the irrational, innate knowledge of knowing that we are all family. We rise together, suffer together and share our experiences as a united people, and no newfangled definitions

of Judaism or hollow gestures of familiarity can change that!

Israelis bear resentment over the inaction of American Jewry at our times of need (remember the Intifadas?), and though we appreciate some of the political support and money that we receive from our brethren overseas, we now feel that we can fend for ourselves. We have accomplished the Zionist dream of developing a functional society out of the sand dunes of Tel Aviv, and we can manage ourselves relatively well even without AIPAC's support. American Jewry has become obsolete for most of our most pressing needs, and has recently become a liability.

Instead of recognizing the waning power and influence of American Jewry in Israel's political sphere, instead of quietly resigning to the overwhelming feeling of disaffection that most feel towards the state, leaders in American non-Orthodox communities decided to call for reinforcements. They decided, against the interests of both American and Israeli communities, to reopen the wounds of a deeply divided diaspora and actively seek out conflict and strife in the smallest of issues: conversion, the Kotel and the army. These topics do not bother the average Israeli, but by offering an ultimatum to the Israeli people, American rabbis have reminded us all of what we have tried to repress: much of American Jewry has gone.

Not all, surely, but major portions of American Jewry will not and cannot take an active role in the future of the Jewish people. Having decided years ago to forego their natural birthright and move to Israel, they have lost their ability to fully adapt and integrate into the dynamic Israel, and have thus been faded the continuum of Jewish

history. I do not wish to delve into speculation regarding the actual numbers, but it would surprise me if even 10 percent of American Jews showed any sign of willingness to move, even upon the arrival of the long-awaited Messiah.

*"Ki akhlu et Ya'akov, va'akhaluhu vayekhaluhu."*

*"For they have eaten up Jacob, and devoured him, and consumed him." (Jeremiah 10:25)*

This further complicates matters for American Modern-Orthodox/Yeshivish Jews. We do not want to suffer antagonism from our fellow coreligionists, but we must make ourselves aware of our divergent paths. We have maintained contact with our Israeli brethren, thus granting us an incalculable advantage to our eventual integration in Israeli society. Our religion and our general mentality has been redefined by our dialogue with Israeli society, our constant presence as *olim hadashim* and our true yearning for our return to Zion. We must not disconnect from our fellow brothers and sisters in America — there may yet lie among them those who will want to join our ranks — but I insist on calling upon the Modern Orthodox community to refocus on ourselves. We cannot risk the expenditure of energies, money, vitality and religiosity on large swaths of Jews who cannot, through worldly means, be redeemed. We can only hope that our communities do not suffer the same Americanized fate of the others. We must hold on tight and prepare for our eventual departure.

*Bimhaira beyamainu!*



President Trump at AIPAC.

POLITICO



# Graduate Program Spotlight: Offerings at the Katz School

By ELLIE PARKER

The Katz School at Yeshiva University gives students the opportunity to further their intellectual and professional pursuits in courses focused on science, technology and health. In an effort to enhance its grasp of these core programs, the Katz School has developed four new graduate programs over the past few years, namely speech-language pathology (SLP), cybersecurity, data analytics and visualization and biotechnology management and entrepreneurship (BME).

“Our faculty design graduate programs that make students market ready for high growth, high wage careers in science, technology and health,” said Paul Russo, Dean of the Katz School and vice provost at YU. “It is a joy for me every time I meet with students — they are doers, intent on making an impact on the world, whether it’s protecting sensitive data and networks as a cybersecurity analyst or bringing life-saving drugs to market as a biotech manager.”

Established in 2016, the speech-language pathology track is a medically focused graduate program catered to a niche field of students, specifically those who are interested in working in the medical field but don’t necessarily want to go onto medical school. The program is one of only two medically-focused speech programs in New York City, but what makes this program even more impressive is its breadth of course options. “A typical Speech program has one class on swallowing. We have three and they span every kind of patient, from infants to the elderly,” said Marissa Berrera, the speech-language pathology Department Chair. “This isn’t only an offering, it is actually a part of our core curriculum. The program is intensive — 66 credits over 5 semesters — which allows students to have a comprehensive understanding of their focus as whole by graduation.”

“The medical Speech-Language Pathology program at the Katz School provides students with a clinical toolbelt of knowledge to treat and diagnose every disorder within a Speech-Language pathologist’s scope of practice,” said Marsha Pinto, a second-year SLP student currently completing her clinical placement at a District 75 school setting treating medically fragile children. “With this degree, I’d like to combine my developed

skills with the mission of my non-profit organization, and change the way schools evaluate and treat students with communicative disorders. The ability to communicate is something we often take for granted. My goal is to amplify every voice because we all deserve to be heard.”

Speech and language pathology is a highly in-demand career choice, “with projected job growth at 21 percent through 2024,” according to healthcare staffing service AMN Healthcare. There is reportedly a huge need for professionals in the field, and the career itself is very flexible. “Most speech pathologists have multiple jobs and can choose their own hours, which makes it very appealing to young families,” commented Berrera.

Now in its third year of operation, the Katz program currently has 70 students across the two cohorts enrolled, with approximately 30 students graduating this fall. The speech students hail from countries all over the world, including America, Canada, the Philippines and Russia. When asked what types of careers graduates go on to pursue, Berrera responded that the opportunities are endless. “While most graduates go on to work in hospitals and nursing homes, some choose to work from home while others go

on to teach in pre-schools. Students who graduate from this program leave with the advanced training necessary to work in almost any setting.” She also noted that the medical focus allows students to gain “a greater skillset.”

The biotechnology management and entrepreneurship graduate program has met similar success since its launch in Fall 2018. Dr. Rana Khan, the founding director of the BME graduate program, joined the Katz team at the beginning of the year after having spent 15 years as Vice Dean of the Graduate School at the University of Maryland. “The Mayor of New York invested \$1.5 billion in biotechnology in an effort to make New York a hub for the life science industry,” Dr. Khan explained. “Based off of this investment and conversations with professionals in the field, we understood that there is a need for graduates who can turn an idea into a business venture. We do this by enhancing their

scientific knowledge and building a structure of business and management and ethics and commercialization.”

Course offerings for BME range from biology to marketing to patenting to financial management. This wide array of classes teaches students how to capture an idea and turn it into a business model.

“While BME students delve into the coursework, we also immerse them in the biotechnology industry through internships and our Israeli Biotech project,” explained Khan. Students in the BME project are also given the opportunity to collaborate with Israeli biotech companies. Students work with these companies to help them integrate into the American biotechnology industry and then team up with them to solve real-world business and technical problems. Once the project is complete, it is sent back to Israel for feedback from the student’s Israeli partners or “coworkers,” as Khan put it.

Avi Strauss (YC ‘18) is currently pursuing his master’s degree in biotechnology management and entrepreneurship. Though a new student, Strauss has already seen the benefits of the BME program. “I certainly feel the program has given me a strong understanding of the business aspects of this

which is why a degree like this opens many career doors for students.”

Since this is the first year of the program, the cohort is fairly small, with eight participants. However, the class is very diverse with two international students and one out-of-state student. The program can be finished in three semesters by full-time students (four courses), but students are given up to five years to finish. Some students don’t feel that the program is lacking anything despite its infancy. “Although only in its first year, it is clear the program’s administrators take its success seriously and want to continually improve it. Dr. Rana Khan, the program’s founding director, sat in on classes all semester, taking notes and even participating, almost as if she was a student with us. It’s clear she’s committed to weeding out the kinks in the new program — and, frankly, there were very few to begin with,” added Strauss.

Khan emphasized that “BME is really a program for students of any background, although the current cohort is all biology majors. Business school graduates would integrate nicely into the program as would students pursuing other sciences.” Khan added that graduates can go on to work in

*“I certainly feel the program has given me a strong understanding of the business aspects of this industry. I’ve already seen how my coursework can inform my work as a healthcare consultant and how it will be invaluable throughout my career.”*

—  
Avi Strauss (YC ‘18)

industry. I’ve already seen how my coursework can inform my work as a healthcare consultant and how it will be invaluable throughout my career.”

“This program is designed to give students fluency in the topics, issues and solutions happening today in the biotech world,” said Josh Lankin, another student pursuing a master’s degree in BME. “The program focuses on the latest developments in a myriad of topics including research and clinical trials, intellectual property and patent law, strategic considerations of everything from ‘big pharma’ to small biotech start-ups and many others. Most people do not receive this type of understanding of the industry unless they have several years of prior experience,

a wide variety of fields, including business development, product development, project management and technical settings, as well as in offices such as the FDA. “Since we give our students the advantage of developing a wide professional network, the job opportunities are endless,” said Khan.

“I can proudly say that I wake up every morning excited for what’s in store, whether it’s with my studies, or in my role as an on-campus employee,” remarked Pinto. “The Katz School staff are like my best friends — they’ve provided me with so many opportunities and I could not be more grateful.”



The first class of the speech-language pathology degree program.



# A Lingerin Silence: My Experience With Mental Illness

By CHANA WEINBERG

How big of a number is 9.8 million? With 9.8 million dollars I could buy a fancy house; I could measure the circumference, in kilometers, of planet Earth 2,450 times; in 2018, there are about 9.8 million people living in Michigan.

This year, there will be 9.8 million individuals in the U.S. suffering from debilitating mental illnesses. That means that 1 in 25 adults is experiencing a serious mental illness that substantially interferes with or limits one or more major life activities.

I cannot say a word about what it is like to live with a mental illness. Thank G-d, my brain's synapses and chemicals are functioning as they are supposed to: I am able to get out of bed, go to class, study for midterms, laugh with my friends and feel present in the moments I am living.

But I do know and love people who are suffering from the horrors of mental illness.

Though I'm not sure if "horror" is the word that a patient with, say depression, would use to describe his or her illness — nor have I directly asked — I, as a loved one and friend, think that horror is as precise a word as I can find. To me, horror connotes something haunting, that lingers in silence. What about the illness lingers within me? For me, what lingers is the desire to help, to do what is best for my loved one while at the same time feeling lost as to how to do give that help. What about it is silent? The topic itself feels taboo — what could be productive conversations about mental health awareness are hushed whispers.

Have you ever yelled into your pillow: WHAT IN THE WORLD CAN I DO TO HELP THIS PERSON?! How do I say or do the right thing? What if what I say or do makes things worse? Am I a bad person because I sometimes find my loved one's behavior frustrating? I have conversed (using choice words) with my pillow about this because I often feel that I could give more but don't know how.

If you see someone fall down on the street, you run over to them, offer your hand and help them on their way. If someone comes to you with a question about a subject you are really good at, you do your best to explain the information you know. A hand or an explanation of a subject are the physical indicators that you gave of yourself to help move the person along. They make you feel accomplished, like you did a good deed.



Mental illness affects millions of Americans.

HARVARD BUSINESS REVIEW

I just opened a new tab and googled "how do you help your friend who has depression," and a number of lists popped up. The common thread among these sources is a) to do some research and b) be there to listen to your friend. Knowing more facts about this subject can perhaps stop that lingering feeling of incompleteness. Learn about and research what the illness looks like in the brain as well as what the physical signs are. The obvious but more challenging solution is to listen; tell the person suffering that you are there if he or she needs you and then lend your ear.

In a similar vein, I asked a number of psychologists what the best way to help is and they all, in some way, said: "Just let them know that you love them and are there for them." OK, I can do that. But even when I do, there are few physical indicators that I am really doing anything. One solution here (which I and likely most of us have gotten nowhere near to) is to address the silence in that lingering shadow.

Depression sucks — I cannot begin to fathom what it feels like — and keeping it a hushed and whispered-about topic does it no favors. In searching for a way to see that what I do makes an impact, I've decided to start speaking up. I encourage everyone: speak to your parents, siblings, aunts, uncles, cousins

result in me seeing my friend feel better — only medication and therapy will really be able to help. Rather, in writing this, I have learned to shift my goal. I can only change myself, and I hope that by pushing for change in my community I can push away the presence of that lingering, silent shadow.

*What about it is silent? The topic itself feels taboo — what could be productive conversations about mental health awareness are hushed whispers.*

and friends about considering therapy — you don't need to have a specific issue to address to begin. Make an appointment at The Counseling Center and tell your friends to do so as well. Attend events such as Active Mind's yearly Stomp Out the Stigma, where our peers inspire by projecting their voices so everyone can hear their stories.

I am aware that this solution will not

9.8 million is a huge number. There are 9.8 million families affected by mental illness, and I would assume that number grows exponentially when counting the friends of these families. When I think about extrapolating a number like this across the entire world, it is crazy to think that mental illness is a topic that can be held in silence for much longer.

## A Safe Space of Our Own

By ELIYAHU SPIVACK

We attend a very unusual college. While most colleges have relatively diverse racial, ethnic and religious student bodies, we have little to no diversity in any of those areas. Given this reality, many of the social debates taking place on college campuses throughout this country aren't directly relevant to our lives.

Contentious issues such as affirmative action and intersectionality largely don't affect us. Despite our lack of exposure, many students here enjoy listening to social commentators who mock today's college students as soft and overprotected. Since YU isn't a typical university, perhaps those students think that we're less liable to be accused as such. After all, the so-called free speech social commentators get much warmer welcomes

here than at many other colleges. However, I'd like to suggest that we are no less prone to intellectual closed-mindedness than students at any other college. We simply operate in a different context.

One of a secular college's most important goals is to promote academic inquiry, debate and growth. This naturally leads to contentious debate, especially concerning topics which people are personally invested in. While nobody suggests that students should live their whole college career in a safe space, it doesn't seem ridiculous to have an occasional setting where one can feel validated and free from judgment. Students at secular colleges eventually have to leave their safe space and interact with the rest of the diverse student

body. YU, however, is very different.

While YU certainly takes academic inquiry, debate and growth very seriously, it is all done under the protective umbrella of Orthodox Judaism. Everyone is required to

*Students at secular colleges eventually have to leave their safe space and interact with the rest of the diverse student body. YU, however, is very different.*

take Judaic studies courses which promote traditional religious perspectives, and we're told that professors shouldn't make us feel uncomfortable about being religious Jews. We're also required to take Bible courses taught by committed religious professors

who obviously profess that the Torah is the word of G-d as given to Moshe.

If we prioritized academic inquiry over religious faith, we would also learn about the very different views which most Biblical scholars hold. To be clear, I don't think that YU should actually offer such a class; I'm merely giving an example of a topic which would "trigger" our student body. We just never get exposed to them because they may endanger students' religious beliefs.

Since YU only caters to such a narrow ideological range of students, there simply isn't much for us to disagree on. Debates about men wearing *kippot* and women wearing pants are a far cry from a debate about, for example, gender-neutral bathrooms. This homogeneity of opinion and protection of

*Continued on Page 19*



## Have You Experienced *Rumspringa*? — On the Jewish Cultural Parallels to an Amish Custom

By AVIV YARIMI

What if Jewish adolescents had the option to experience a similar version of the Amish practice of *rumspringa*? If you know what the obscure tradition is, then you are probably interested in finding out what I have to say.

But for those of you who don't have any Amish friends to tell you about this riveting experience, *rumspringa* is a time when young adults from the strict Mennonite sect get the chance to experience a world outside of the quaint community they live in. It is a rite of passage during adolescence that hopefully leads to a rejuvenated, wholesome Amish life as an adult. For the Amish adolescent who has been enclosed in an insular, technology-free environment his or her whole life, *rumspringa* is the opportunity to be exposed to the world outside of horse-and-buggies, candlesticks, plows and chickens. It's that exciting time to explore romantic relationships, alcoholic beverages and social media, amongst other modern activities.

*Rumspringa* is a time to leave the idyllic harmonious community where individualism is decried and collectivism is treasured and enter an individualistic world where a myriad of philosophies and attitudes exist. The Pennsylvania-German noun *rumspringa* is derived from the German verb "*rumspringen*," or "to jump around or about." Many of the Amish youth take advantage of their *rumspringa* time to party heavily and, well, go crazy. These young adults begin their — what Modern Orthodox Jews might dub — "gap year(s)" anywhere from age 16 to 21.

At the end of a few years spent "jumping around," perhaps with a beer in one hand and an Instagram-running iPhone in the other, the adolescents decide whether they would like to leave the church or not. If they are not interested in leaving the community and starting a new life, they stay for adult baptism into the Amish church. The alternative is marriage which officially marks the end of *rumspringa*.

The return rate for those who have left? More than 80 percent. Sometimes, over 90

percent.

So why do Orthodox Jews not have a similar system? Well, for starters, Orthodox Jews and the Christian Amish have very different belief systems. Intuitively, it seems rather obvious why Jews do not practice *rumspringa*: it is not consistent with Jewish theology and thought. Also, Jews do not believe any *rumspringa*-like ritual would actually yield a long-term appreciation for Jewish lifestyle and routine. To simply drop one's values for an extended period of time is antithetical to the daily, and ultimate, goals of Judaism.

But for some, Judaism actually does have a concept of *rumspringa*. Caution: read the previous sentence again, but with a humongous grain of salt.

Consider, for example, a fairly common Modern Orthodox situation: the case of a Jewish upbringing "gone wrong." A child raised in a sheltered suburb largely populated by American Jews makes the (sometimes conscious and other times subconscious) decision of bursting forth through the transparent bubble known as his community, synagogue and school or *yeshiva*.

On the other side of the bubble, he sees a

uncertain. We do not have an exact log of temporarily "off-the-derech" teens in *yeshiva* high schools, but it has become almost a cliché in various streams of modern Jewry.

Perhaps — just perhaps — the four years of high school for many teens in the Western world is just a watered-down, debilitated, lengthened version of *rumspringa*. Of course, many times students are not consciously aware of this. Some students do in fact make the conscious decision to be apathetic and passionless in their years of high school because they do not feel spiritually driven during that time. But many, if not most, are apathetic by default and do not feel motivated to get their religious, spiritual journeys on wheels until after their high school graduation parties.

So what happens next? Think about it: *yeshiva* and seminary. The students are aware that they will go to Israel, like most of their friends and peers, and undergo an enlightening experience through which they will realize that they actually appreciate the standards to which they were held in religious life. Many students prepare to engage in rigorous, passionate Torah study for a whole

faithful spiritual growth — although it is generally not a conscious life itinerary for most.

*Rumspringa* is experienced by many. We just don't know it sometimes. Needless to say, it is unwise to judge anyone who experiences their own customized form of a temporarily observance-free lifestyle.

Some of these experimenting individuals return to their original philosophies, more often than not with a more intense passion for the religion. Others either remain on the new path or naturally modify it slightly in an attempt to adjust their immature, adolescent approach as they grow older.

Is *rumspringa* the proper course of action? According to Orthodox Judaism, no, it is not right; it is far from ideal. However, is it a reality? Sometimes, yes. Ideally, life would function in a way such that one does not need *rumspringa*, which essentially is a way to look at one's religion or cultural identity through the negative component thereof — a *lav*, if you will, as opposed to an *asseih*. It is experiencing the world of don't's, in the hopes that one will appreciate the unique value of the do's.

It's always healthy to look at a religious situation as it is and to reassess a culture. Non-Amish people sometimes practice *rumspringa*. It's not proper, inherently valuable or in any *sefer halakhah*, considering Orthodox Jews' set of beliefs. But this comparison allows us to reflect on our values and our belief system and reevaluate what we are doing as we carry our identities with us through the outside world.

We have to ask ourselves: what are some of the reasons that Judaism has not and will not mandate a rite of passage that imitates *rumspringa*? Why is it not a tenable idea within Jewish thought? Why is it not an ideal avenue towards greater appreciation for Judaism? In other words, why do we fundamentally disagree with the Amish?

We'll share the top hats with brims and most of the beard. But we'll sit out *rumspringa*.

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*Perhaps — just perhaps — the four years of high school for many teens in the Western world is just a watered-down, debilitated, lengthened version of rumspringa.*

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restriction-free world offering various philosophies and — more excitingly, one can argue — physical felicity and gratification. Since birth, the bubble has set, at least what is perceived to be, limitations and restrictions on his life. Similar to an Amish young adult, he embarks on a divergent journey, one that is often stocked with alcoholic beverages and illicit substances; one that may include socially harmless sensual indulgence — or maybe none of that at all. The action may just consist of lighting a cigarette on Shabbat and puffing it with rebellious pleasure. This type of experience of going "off-the-derech" usually transpires during one's years in *yeshiva* high school. Empirically, the numbers are

year, sometimes two or three. They reconnect to their Jewish roots which for some amount of time had been covered with several layers of soil throughout the years.

This idea is not exclusive to Modern Orthodox high school students. It can be applied to secular Jewish students in college who enjoy themselves until they meet a rabbi later in their college experience who changes their religious life. Or a handful of the *Haredim* in Israel breach through the wall of Ultra-orthodox restrictions and find themselves taking detours during their religious journeys. On a different plane, the trajectories of *baalei teshuvah* follow the course of secular values sprouting into



Some Amish sects take *rumspringa*.





# NEVER. STOP. COMMENTATING.

Got something to share?  
Email [benjamin.koslowe@mail.yu.edu](mailto:benjamin.koslowe@mail.yu.edu)



# The Irony of Jewish Identity – A Response to “The Hypocrisy of Hanukkah”

By ELIMELEKH PERL

Recently, a friend shared with me an op-ed from The New York Times entitled “The Hypocrisy of Hanukkah,” written by a self-proclaimed assimilated Jew. In the article, the author describes the tension he feels in attempting to convince his children of the relative merits of Chanukah over Christmas while simultaneously grappling with the fact that the holiday, in his words, “in essence, commemorates the triumph of fundamentalism over cosmopolitanism.” The hypocrisy he is bemoaning is that “our assimilationist answer to Christmas is really a holiday about subjugating assimilated Jews.”

What saddened me most about this article was not the hypocrisy he refers to, but rather a different, while not unrelated,

contradiction. To understand this contradiction, we first need to ask the Gemara’s question in search of the quintessence of the holiday: *Mai Chanukah?*

The central focus of contemporary Chanukah observance is the lighting of

Seleucid army and the rededication of the Temple that followed in its wake.

This is evident from the text of *Al Hanisim*, the prayer meant to express the motifs of the holiday, which makes no mention of the miracle of the oil. The holiday was

be observed (*Rosh Hashanah* 18b). Several holidays marking similar achievements during the Second Temple period were discontinued after the destruction of the Second Temple, when such celebrations would have felt hollow; the conspicuous omission of

*While the Chashmonaim may not have been the paradigm of tolerance, [the author] is utterly missing what Chanukah really represents: an unwavering commitment to Jewish identity, and the determination to fight for the freedom to maintain it.*

Chanukah candles in commemoration of the single cruse of oil that miraculously lasted for eight days. However, the earliest historical sources clearly indicate that the holiday was originally established to mark the unlikely Hasmonean military victory over the mighty

enacted to celebrate the reestablishment of Jewish sovereignty and rededication of the Temple; as such, the Temple’s destruction and the ensuing loss of that sovereignty gave rise to a period of uncertainty as to whether or not Chanukah would continue to

the Chanukah festival and its laws from the Mishnah suggests that similar doubt existed regarding the continued celebration of Chanukah in the diaspora.

So how did the holiday of Chanukah survive? And once it survived, why has our infatuation with the miracle of the oil overtaken the military victory as the holiday’s central theme?

The victory of Chanukah needs to be qualified, as the Talmudic discussion indicates that it extended beyond the assertion of military supremacy and the reestablishment of Jewish sovereignty.

In the centuries prior to Antiochus IV’s reign, the Jews had been living peaceably in Israel under Persian and later Greek rule. Antiochus, in his attempt to propagate the Greek’s Hellenistic ideology and pagan theology, banned many central Jewish rituals. The revolt of the Chashmonaim was motivated not by political subjugation, but by the religious persecution of the Jews by the Seleucid ruler Antiochus IV that accompanied it. Only revolt and the reclamation of autonomy would enable them to freely practice the tradition they held so dear. Therefore, at its core, the Chanukah story is the struggle against the imposition of foreign religious practice by an intolerant entity, waged by those who sought to protect their own Jewish identity.

While the reestablishment of Jewish sovereignty and rededication of the Temple would, admittedly, have been difficult celebrations to maintain in the diaspora, the struggle to maintain Jewish identity remained relevant as Judaism settled into a long period of exile. How often have we, as

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Chanukiyot

SAFE SPACE,  
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religious practice is what makes our campus culture so different from those of other colleges. Hypothetically, if YU were to allow something that would make students strongly doubt their faith, we would be just as into safe spaces and trigger warnings as any other campus is.

For example, imagine if YU offered a Bible course surveying scholarly evidence for non-Mosaic authorship of the Torah. Many students would feel that it would undermine the whole reason they chose to attend YU. Also, many rabbis would announce that attending such a class is forbidden, a trigger warning that would top anything seen at a secular campus. Likely, many of the same people who decry coddled college students would now willingly be religiously coddled themselves. Analogously, if a firebrand antagonistic atheist was invited to speak on campus, our administration would shut it

down faster than any liberal arts college diversity board could ever hope to. We are no less susceptible to being made to feel unsafe or insulted than students at any other college. We have simply selected ourselves into an academic environment which doesn’t threaten a core aspect of our identities.

Given this reality, it’s inappropriate and hypocritical for any of us to think that we value free speech and academic freedom any more than students at other colleges do. While a student at another college eventually has to leave their safe space, we have decided to attend a college that is, by its nature, one large safe space. We are “protected” from exposure to critical perspectives of our own beliefs and from social and cultural mores that differ from many of ours. This is all a recipe for less diversity of opinion and freedom of inquiry, not more. Essentially, instead of having protests when someone speaks on campus, we cancel the event before any protest can even take place.



Safe spaces are places where students can talk without judging each other.

UMKC



## SCDS Steals the Show in “The Game’s Afoot”

By MATTHEW SILKIN

If I were to list things that are quintessentially British, somewhere among tea and crumpets, the Union Jack and brutal colonization practices in India would fall Sherlock Holmes. The fact that the character has been done to death is done to death in and of itself — indeed, Sir Arthur Conan Doyle’s detective of 221B Baker Street has been subject to over 200 years of take-offs and adaptations ever since he first appeared in 1887’s “A Study in Scarlet”. Since then, Holmes has been portrayed by thespian greats such as Basil Rathbone, Benedict Cumberbatch, Robert Downey Jr. and whoever plays him in “Elementary” (that CBS Sherlock show? Does anyone watch that?).

That being the case, in a time where Sherlock-ian whodunit stories have run the gamut of interpretations and reactions, it is difficult to envision a Sherlock Holmes story that feels... well, that feels its own.

Ken Ludwig’s “The Game’s Afoot, or Holmes for the Holidays,” is a murder mystery comedy, more similar to works like “Clue” than the classic Holmes story. William Gillette (Chana Weiss), famous for playing the detective on Broadway, invites his co-stars — old flame Aggie Wheeler (Sarit Perl), best friend Felix Geisel (Eli Azizollahoff) and his wife Madge Geisel (Daniella Miller), and simple yet excitable Simon Bright (Hannah Rosenbloom) — to a holiday party at his secluded home, at which point hijinks ensue. And there are a LOT of hijinks in this

play, from several onstage murders to Gillette’s nosy mother Martha, played excellently by Emily Ornelas, and they are all pulled off really well.

Speaking of the acting, all of the actresses embodied their characters well, and really brought Ludwig’s hilarious writing to life. Weiss’ Gillette was the quirky, taking-his-acting-abilities-too-seriously actor I had hoped for, Perl’s Aggie was a much-needed straight woman to balance out the litany of crazy from the rest of the cast and Rosenbloom’s Simon was a lovable idiot the whole way through.

Some of the funniest scenes of physical comedy came from snob-by Broadway critic Daria Chase, played by Tamar Guterson, including a seance gone wrong that left me doubled over in laughter. Shoshy Ciment’s Inspector Goring

was a delight; though the accent felt like it was slipping at times (which I understand — keeping up an accent for a continuous period of time is difficult), she brought a lot of energy to the character. Special mention has to go to Azizollahoff

has some surprises up its sleeve over the course of the show. There are also lighting and sound effects throughout, provided by Batsheva Lasky, Tara Janof and Honey Rogoff, which elevated the comedy and mystery throughout.

*They have not rested on the laurels of “Our Town” last year; instead, they have made something that I can say is completely different from everything done before.*

and Miller as the Felix/Madge duo — the pair’s personalities bounced off each other especially well.

Tech-wise, the show works extremely well. The set, designed by Zvi Teitelbaum and brought into existence by Rocky Pincus,

I already mentioned the writing, but I bring it up again because I want to emphasize just how much I was laughing throughout — not just at all the references to Shakespeare peppered in (fun fact: the title itself is a reference to “Henry V”), but also at the snappy dialogue and quirky characterizations. The physical comedy is a delight as well — this coming from someone who isn’t the biggest fan of physical comedy — and a lot of that is owed to Reuven Russell’s expert directing and blocking of each scene.

This is all to say that SCDS has done what I feel hasn’t really been done in a while — they have taken Sherlock Holmes, and they have made it their own. They have not rested on the laurels of “Our Town” from last year; instead, they have made something that I can say is completely different from everything done before. At no point during the show was I thinking of any other Sherlock adaptations or stories; this was SCDS’s show through and through, and they owned every moment. If I were you, I would go see this show as soon as possible, to not only witness a great show, but to see SCDS leave their indelible mark on the history of Sherlock Holmes, right up there with the greats.

*Upcoming performances of “The Game’s Afoot” will take place on Dec. 17, 19 and 20 at 7:30 p.m., and on Dec. 16 at 4:30 p.m. To purchase tickets for the show, visit <https://scds.ticketleap.com/the-game/>.*



SCDS performs “The Game’s Afoot” in the Schottenstein Theater in Washington Heights.

YESHIVA  
UNIVERSITY

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Jews, been confronted with enemies determined to snuff out our religion and replace it with their own? The message of Chanukah continues to rally us exiled wanderers, declaring, “You can burn down our Temple, you can kick us out of our land, but you can never stomp out our identity!”

Unlike the miracle of the military victory, the miracle of the oil and the mitzvah of candle lighting that memorializes it speaks much more directly to the persistence of Jewish identity in exile. This single, humble cruse of oil was by any natural means sufficient to sustain a burning flame for 24 hours. Yet miraculously, the oil burned for a full eight days, far beyond anyone’s expectations.

Upon the destruction of the second *Beit Hamikdash*, the Jews were unceremoniously cast out from their homeland, led away as slaves and deposited in an environment

fraught with hostile neighbors. By any reasonable prediction, the last Jew should have been swallowed up by the darkness of exile within just a few centuries. But with God’s help we defied the historical odds, and the flame of our Jewish identity burns bright to this very day.

Let’s return to the contradiction in the Times article.

On the one hand, despite the author’s misinformed reservations about Chanukah, he ultimately decides to suppress those emotions in favor of appointing Chanukah as his family’s official winter holiday — thereby championing Jewish identity to some degree.

On the other hand, he characterizes Chanukah as “an eight-night-long celebration of religious fundamentalism and violence.” While the *Chashmonaim* may not have been the paradigm of tolerance, he is utterly missing what Chanukah really represents: an unwavering commitment to Jewish identity, and the determination to

fight for the freedom to maintain it.

In the article, the author compares himself to one of the Hellenized Jews from the Chanukah story, highlighting their common disapproval of circumcision and willingness to eat pork. However, he may actually have more in common with the *Chashmonaim* than he realizes.

An obvious frustration of his centers around the inescapability from the Christmas spirit, as he says, “Most of the year, it isn’t hard for our family to feel both American and Jewish. But in December — when there are wreaths and ... inflatable Santas everywhere you look — that dual identity becomes more of a question.” From his perspective, the domination of Christmas in American culture threatens his Jewish connection.

He concludes the article by saying, “at the end of the day, it’s all about beating Santa.” If we can look past the cynical undertones and manage to ignore the flawed and, frankly, offensive interpretation which prompted this

attitude in the first place, we can appreciate his closing statement for what it is: a conscious decision to fight for Jewish identity.

Like the *Chashmonaim* of old, the author is making a courageous attempt to hold onto his Jewish identity in the face of an overwhelming cultural force that threatens it. Buying a few presents may not be on par with rededicating the *Beit Hamikdash* and carolers may not be as dangerous as a decree against Shabbat observance, but at the end of the day, this author seems to be living the Chanukah struggle in his own life.

The real tragedy here is that the author and countless assimilated Jews like him fail to recognize that Chanukah, with its message of religious freedom and the perseverance of Jewish identity, is both relevant and inspiring to contemporary Jews.

Ironic? Maybe. But certainly not hypocritical.



# Medical Marijuana: The Business Behind The Leaf

By AVI LEKOWSKY

The times are definitely changing.

Once tabooed in society, marijuana is starting to lose its stigma as a “stoner” drug and gain a reputation both as a recreational tool safer than alcohol and as a legitimate medical instrument.

The first important thing to note is the difference between regular marijuana and medical marijuana. While regular marijuana is primarily used for recreational purposes, medical marijuana can be used to help treat and soothe conditions such as glaucoma, seizures, anxiety and general pain. Even the FDA acknowledges that medical marijuana can be used to treat conditions like seizures and chemotherapy-induced nausea. Today, while regular marijuana is still banned in most states, you can purchase medical marijuana in some form in all the states but three: Nebraska, South Dakota and Idaho.

Medical marijuana is an extremely fast-growing and expanding market. The passing of a new law or the opening of a dispensary invariably makes news. According to Grand View Research, the global legal marijuana market in 2016 reached 9.3 billion USD, 80.3 percent of that representing the medical variety. This is expected to grow exponentially in the coming years as the few remaining states and countries around the world begin to legalize it.

Stocks are also promising large profits for the marijuana industry. According to the Motley Fool, this past year has been a major transitional time for these stocks. In their early stages, marijuana companies could only offer promises of

potential stock returns, but today there’s much hard evidence of strong returns.

Some stocks, however, have been falling due to the high costs associated with expansional resources, brand building and investments in infrastructure for international sales. However, a falling stock doesn’t necessarily mean that the industry itself is failing. Take Innovative Industrial Properties, for example. Their business revolves around buying medical cannabis development sites and then leasing them back to operators. They also marginally increase rent every year and charge a 1.5 percent management fee. They now own ten properties, up from five in the last fiscal year. Their stock has increased over 100 percent in value, launching at the end of 2016 at 18.19 and increasing to 50.74 in the beginning of Dec. 2018.

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*If a medical marijuana company stays on their toes and keeps acting in creative ways, they can be assured a solid stream of revenue for years to come.*

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Charlotte’s Web Holdings is a more traditional medical marijuana stock. They produce a wide range of cannabidiol-based products (products without the psychoactive effects of marijuana) and sell them in over 3,000 locations in the United States. Although they only started trading publicly three months ago, they have delivered solid profit gains

during this time. Upon the close of last quarter, they reported \$17.7 million in sales, while in the last fiscal year they only generated \$11.3 million. If a medical marijuana company stays on their toes and keeps acting in creative ways, they can secure a solid stream of revenue for years to come.

Lastly, medical marijuana dispensaries have been opening around the country to service the growing trend of assisting patients with various ailments. Today, there are thousands open around the country, with many plans to install even more. One of them, MedPharm Iowa, opened a new location right outside of Des Moines, Iowa on Dec. 1. Through an interview with the Des Moines Register, Lucas Nelson, general manager of the operation, stated: “The reaction we’ve gotten from the community about the opening has been amazing.” He also said “customers were ‘elated’ that they could finally get their hands on the product and even suggested this could help aid the opioid crisis through alternative uses of pain management.”

Many people today are affected or know someone who is affected by ailments that can be helped with medical marijuana. This helps inspire other locations to pop up and help people out. If the trend continues, medical marijuana dispensaries will grow in places wherever it becomes legalized, which helps grow small businesses — and, in turn, stocks.

Medical marijuana is no longer an unmentionable topic in society, and is now considered a legitimate way to help people with illnesses and disabilities. Many people report being able to lead a healthier, happier and more fulfilling life. Through new scientific discoveries and the creation of a large number of dispensaries, this industry is poised to grow, expand and ultimately improve the world.



In some cases, medical marijuana provides a suitable alternative to prescription medications.





Countries are producing millions of barrels of oil a day, affecting the industry's equilibrium.

## An Explosive Situation

By NATHAN HAKAKIAN

It feels as if each day a new story emerges about the oil market. Over the past few months, prices have been especially volatile, continuously dropping and surging. The question is, why? Why is there so much uncertainty around an ageless staple? What will the future of oil prices entail?

There are two main types of oil involved in today's production: crude oil, otherwise known as petroleum, and natural gas. Crude oil is a liquid that consists of hydrocarbons and other earthly compounds and is extracted through oil drilling. The main use of crude oil is fuel, often used for vehicles or airplanes. Natural gas, on the other hand, is a purer form of oil. Burning natural oil produces 30 percent less carbon dioxide than crude oil. Natural oil is mainly used at home for cooking, heating and cooling. While they fulfill different roles, both play an essential role in daily life.

The oil market is largely dictated by the actions of OPEC, or the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries. They account for 39.5 million barrels daily, or 40 percent, of the world's crude oil, according to statista. Saudi Arabia, Iran and Qatar are amongst OPEC's most prominent members.

On Nov. 20, 2018, the United States announced that it would enforce strict trade sanctions on Iran, which included the \$25.7 billion of annual crude petroleum exported annually. Many government officials worldwide were concerned that this sanction would create a global oil deficiency, causing an imbalance in the supply and demand within the oil market. The effects were felt immediately; in October, the price for a barrel reached \$85, a 4-year high. Many were concerned that prices would continue to rise to prevent further inflation.

The United States, led by President Trump, decided to take initiative when it announced in August that it would

increase crude oil production from 1.31 million barrels per day (bpd) to 10.68 million bpd to combat oil deficiencies. This caused a chain reaction, triggering both Russia and Saudi Arabia to increase its oil production to 10.7 million bpd, which sparked an increased in production in Angola, Nigeria and the United Arab Emirates.

But instead of fixing the problem, they worsened it. Once again, there was an imbalance in the supply and demand for oil, but this time there was too much oil and not enough demand. The price of oil plunged to \$59.30 on Nov. 23, which was a 22 percent cut in the month of November alone, according to seekingalpha. Many countries believed that modifying their oil production was the only solution to regulate oil prices.

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*There was an imbalance in the supply and demand for oil, but this time there was too much oil and not enough demand.*

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But not every country agreed with this course of action. Ahead of the upcoming OPEC meeting on Thursday, Dec. 6 in Vienna, President Trump pressured OPEC members to maintain production at the current rate, stating on Twitter, "Hopefully OPEC will be keeping oil flows as is, not restricted. The World does not want to see, or need, higher oil prices!"

Meanwhile, there was much disagreement within OPEC. While almost all countries believed that a cut was necessary, there was much debate as to how to best implement it. Saudi Arabia believed that it was only fair to mandate that all member-countries cut production equally. Other members, such as Iran and Kuwait, argued that the larger producers should bear most of the burden. Additionally,

many countries within OPEC were upset about the "favoritism" Saudi Arabia was giving non-member Russia, believing that the two oil heavy-weights were meeting in private and discussing a side agreement. Fed up with Saudi Arabia's leadership, Qatar decided it would leave OPEC in the near future. Although it ranks 11 out of 15 in crude oil production, it is the highest producer of natural gas globally, exporting 77.2 million metric tons in 2016, according to motelyfool.

After the meeting on Thursday, Dec. 6, Saudi Arabia agreed to slash oil production by half a million barrels a day, backtracking on an earlier announcement that stated it would not do so. Russia, although not part of the cartel yet still a major player, also decided to cut down oil production by 230,000 barrels a day. While many other OPEC members agreed to follow suit, some refused to cooperate. Iran, Venezuela and Libya were all exempt from the production cuts because of either sanctions or economic turmoil.

While individuals like Donald Trump are of the opinion that the U.S. should maximize its oil production, not everyone agrees. Some argue that oil prices must be regulated and that production must be carefully adjusted to ensure that oil prices remain at a steadier, more expensive price. For example, after the stock price of W&T Offshore, Inc. considered one of the international benchmark of oil prices, increased in September, there was much optimism. But as October began, the stock price began to decline. November was marked by more of the same, as prices plummeted to \$5.81 at the month's end. An increased or retained oil production would impact the value of oil, further worsening profits.

In conclusion, there is still much uncertainty about the ever-evolving oil market. Although OPEC seemingly agreed to cut oil production, it came at a cost of Qatar deciding that it no longer wanted to be regulated. Within the United States, there is still much disagreement, as the President's agenda clashes with that of many national oil producers.



## Bird Taking Flight?

By EITAN LAVIAN

When first introduced in 2011, Uber shocked the world with its convenient alternative to traditional taxi services. With the click of a button, anyone could summon a car and reach their destination with ease, oftentimes for cheaper than the price of a cab. “Ubering” has become a sensation — the go-to for anyone in need of a quick lift. That being said, even Uber enthusiasts would think twice before using the app to go somewhere just two or three blocks away. Enter Bird, the Uber of electrical scooters.

Bird, an electric scooter rental service, was founded in 2017 — quickly raising a total of \$400 million in venture capital, giving them a post-money valuation of \$2 billion. Bird’s application is a cross between Uber and CitiBike. First, the user creates an account, which requires validating their driver’s license and entering a credit card number. Afterwards, one simply uses their phone to scan the barcode on the scooter, allowing the user to begin riding for a \$1 base fee, and a \$.15 fee for each minute the scooter is being used. In addition to providing scooters, the app provides users with a map of unoccupied scooters in their area. Additionally, it shows the battery level of each scooter, which lets rider know how far this scooter can go before dying.

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*The scooters also offer a solution to those college students who’d rather not bring their bikes or skateboards to school, yet struggle with the fact that their classes are far from one another.*

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The scooters can reach a top speed of 15 miles per hour. At the end of the ride, users can scan the barcode again to deactivate the scooter, and then take a picture to confirm that it’s been left in good shape. At that point, they are free to leave the scooter wherever they please, so long as it doesn’t interfere with traffic or pedestrians.

As of September 2018, Los Angeles had at least 17,000 scooters on its streets, while San Diego had at least 13,000. Using Bird scooters is both fun and convenient — battery life lasts for about 15 miles of riding. Riding these scooters is not only an easier method of transportation, but it has also turned into a fun activity. Throughout the city of Santa Monica, CA, I have witnessed the sight of friends and families ride together, enjoying both the scenery and — believe it or not — the commute. As for myself, my friends and I have used it to weave through traffic and turn a potential 15-minute commute into a 10-minute one, for under \$3! The scooters also offer a solution to those college students who’d rather not bring their bikes or skateboards to school, yet struggle with the fact that their classes are far from one another.

Despite what you might think, it is very difficult to steal the scooters. Bird scooters are equipped with GPS chips and an alarm system; however, a recent problem the company has been dealing with is vandalism. Videos on social media show people knocking over rows of scooters and even throwing them off parking garages. Scoot

Networks, a competitor of Bird, recently released about 650 scooters in San Francisco. Unfortunately, within just two weeks, more than 200 scooters had been stolen or vandalized beyond repair!

Another issue Bird faces is the durability of their scooters, with a common complaint among users being that the scooters are prone to damage and break down quickly. Scooters typically last a mere two months, a fact which has worried potential investors. Bird, however, has assured its investors that they have rolled out more-durable scooters. Time will tell.

Bird has also had many legal issues to overcome, a noteworthy one being the problem of underage riders. A minor can simply add an eligible person’s information and

ride without the app knowing about the malfeasance. Another, bigger, issue sparked in June of 2018, when the City of Beverly Hills banned the use of Birds and other scooters for six months, the reasoning being complaints from residents about the noise and unpleasant appearance of scooters laying around the city.

As for the financial aspect of this unicorn, reports show that each scooter is able to make about \$20 a day, suggesting significant profit potential given the fact that they only cost about \$500 apiece. If the scooter runs out of battery, a nester — the term for an individual who signs up to charge these scooters — is notified to come and collect them. Nesters are paid an average of \$5 for each scooter they charge.

Unfortunately for Bird, an increase in competition and the regulatory barriers they face have caused them to decrease their pre-money valuation and temper their capital raising expectations.


That being said, Bird’s future looks bright and has high hopes of bringing their services to New York City. This will give them the ability to offer thousands of more scooters, not to mention the opportunity to expand to greater locations. Nonetheless, they have yet to be successful in legalizing this endeavor. Imagine how easy life would be if we could conveniently ride through the busy streets of Manhattan — with just the simple click of a button.



Bird scooters

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