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Dean Jacobson on the Revitalization of Minors & Cross-Listed Courses

By Elie Lipnik

There have been many drastic changes to Yeshiva University lately, some good and some bad, and others simply confusing. Whether it be the merge between Yeshiva College and Stern College faculty, the complete renovation to the Wilf Campus Library, or the removal of First Year Seminar from the Core Curriculum, there seems to be constant chatter around the Heights of what is coming next. Currently, murmurs of particular interest are the revitalization of minors and cross-listed core/major courses.

Ever since the core surfaced, but increasingly in recent months, students became aware of cross-listed core/major courses. That is, certain classes are listed both under a core requirement and a major. For instance, the course Intro to American Public Policy, taught by Professor Jamie Aroosi, is listed both under HBSI (Human Behavior and Social Institutions) and Political Science.

Seemingly, this is a great idea because it allows YU to offer one class for two separate and distinct requirements. However, some students are wary and apprehensive of this system for a myriad of reasons. Firstly, it allows students to circumvent the system, by allowing them to sign up for a course under the major CRN and then post-facto switch into the "full" core by way of a YU administrator. Although this may benefit that specific student, it limits the space in a class available to students within the major, who may now get closed out come registration. In addition, students in these courses who register for them as a major course gener-

ally feel that having non-major students dilutes the rigor of the course along with the in-class discussion. Students feel most upset because it appears to be yet another instance of YU negatively impacting their education due to budgetary constraints.

After relaying these issues to Yeshiva College's new Associate Dean for Academic Affairs, Dean Joanne Jacobson, she seemed to be acutely aware and responsive to the matter. Although she acknowledged that this setup was created in part due to YU's precarious financial situation, she truly believes that there are positives to the current manner in which core classes are cross-listed with major courses.

Dean Jacobson firmly believes that non-major students in cross-listed courses do not take

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Students Unite in Support and Prayer in Face of Terror Wave

By David Rubinstein

Yeshiva University held several events in connection to the recent surge in terror attacks in Israel. The violence started during the Sukkot break on October 1st with the murder of Eitam and Naama Henkin but has extended into the resumption of the semester, allowing students to respond on campus to the events in Israel.

A rally for the communal recitation of Psalms was called for October 12th by the Student Organization of Yeshiva, the student council responsible for religious student activities on the Wilf Campus. When the terror continued into the next day, a second rally was called for October 13th. Several leaders of the YU community led the prayers, which were held in the Glueck Beit Midrash, including President Richard Joel and Rabbi Herschel Shachter, Rosh Yeshiva. Between 300 to 400 students from across the programs of the Undergraduate Torah Studies attended each rally.

Students found the rallies to be a good way to feel connected to Jews in Israel. "It obviously can't replace what Israelis are going through right now," a junior in the Mazer Yeshiva Program reflected. "But it was certainly a helpful experience to turn to God in whatever way we could."

Psalms have been recited at the end of each minyan in addition to the formal rallies. These recitations are based on the belief that communal prayer, in the form of reciting Psalms, is particularly appropriate in times of collective trouble.

On the night of October 13, around 70 students attended a discussion titled "Jewish

Responses to Terror." Rabbi Dr. Jacob J. Shacter, University Professor of Jewish History and Jewish Thought, led the discussion together with Rabbi Gideon Black, who survived a terror attack that killed his cousin. SOY and the Torah Activities Council, the student council responsible for religious student activities on the Beren Campus, sponsored the event. The event was created "to provide opportunities for students to have their voices heard and their input valued," TAC President Talia Molotsky, '16, said.

Chaya Dachoh, TAC Vice President, thought the program "provided students chizuk and guidance on how to act as a nation and respond to the terror that is occurring in Israel." Rabbi Shacter stressed the importance of coming closer to one's neighbor and to God in the face of the attacks in Israel.

In addition to the psalms and discussion, The Shmira Project gathered much support from YU students. The project's mission, according to its Facebook page, is to "Join together as a community to fill every hour" of the week of October 11 to 18 with Torah study. Launched by former SOY President Jacob Bernstein, '15, the initiative was disseminated by Assistant Dean of Undergraduate Torah Studies Rabbi Ely Bacon in an email to student leaders in the YU Batei Midrash, including shiur assistants, many of whom forwarded the initiative to their shiur. "We must do everything we can to help klal Yisroel especially during these difficult times," Rabbi Bacon wrote in the email.

In addition to the psalms and discussion,

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Einstein Deal Helps Yeshiva University, Though Not Without Problems

By Yechiel Schwab

On September 10th, 2015 Yeshiva University and Montefiore Medical Health System finalized an agreement transferring operational and financial control of Einstein Medical School to Montefiore. In recent years Yeshiva has reported large and sustained budget deficits, attributing somewhere between 40 to 100 million dollars a year of those deficits to the Einstein Medical School. This deal, which originated in a June 2014 Memorandum of Understanding between the two institutions, marks a large and important step in Yeshiva's quest for financial stability.

Medical School Budgets

Though Yeshiva sought financial benefit by separating from its medical school, many universities profit from the sources of revenue brought in by their medical schools. In recent years, some universities have even sought to merge with medical schools because of the perceived financial benefits. Inside Higher Education, in a 2012 article entitled "Get Me a Med School! Stat!," notes this trend of universities merging with medical centers for monetary gains. "Health science centers offer several revenue streams, particularly research funding

and clinical fees... Medical schools and the hospitals attached to them also provide other potential sources of revenue, such as corporate partnerships, fees, government reimbursements, and philanthropic giving." According to the Association for American Medical Colleges (AAMC), in 2014 the average medical school earned over 700 million dollars in revenue. Among private medical schools the number shoots to 1 billion dollars in revenue.

But if medical schools bring in so much revenue, why are Einstein generating such large deficits? Because unlike almost all of these medical schools, Einstein does not own an affiliate hospital. Originally, Einstein housed and operated the Jack D. Weiler Hospital. However, in 1969, Montefiore assumed operational responsibility for this hospital. Inside Higher Education notes that a large portion of medical school revenue comes from clinical fees and hospital income. According to the AAMC, in 2014, 40% percent of revenue came from practice plans, which is revenue generated from patients treated at a medical center. An additional 18% of revenue comes from Hospital Purchased Services and Investments. This means that the average medical school earns over 400 million dollars from these two categories. In contrast, YU's 2014 budget

showed a comparatively meager 36 million dollars in patient care, and an additional 23 million dollars from all affiliation agreements.

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**"THOUGH THE DEAL ALTERS
THE NATURE AND OVERALL
STANDING OF THE UNIVERSITY,
IT REPRESENTS A HUGE AND
CRUCIAL STEP TOWARD FINANCIAL
STABILITY."**

The EDITORIAL

YU as a Financial Role Model?

By Dani Weiss

On an average afternoon between classes, students mill about campus, enjoying the last days of crisp autumn air before the forces of cold weather and the pressures of school necessitate indoor activities. The colors of changing leaves and the sun dipping behind the horizon of Amsterdam Avenue frame a scene of students in casual conversation, combining to form a picture of serene normalcy. An otherwise uninformed student might notice that class sizes are somewhat larger than expected, might notice the absence of certain teachers, but the scene observed at its surface could only be described as peaceful.

However, to characterize Yeshiva as an institution undergoing a peaceful time would be misleading. Years of budgetary deficits and poor financial controls have left YU with significant financial tension. Just last semester, the faculties of the Albert Einstein College of Medicine and Yeshiva College respectively passed a motion of no-confidence in President Joel, and – in response to rumors of sweeping cuts that were thought to affect the academic quality of Yeshiva College -- the men's undergraduate student councils held well-attended protests, expressing deep reservations in the university's leadership.

So YU's road to financial stability has been, and continues to be, a treacherous one. Whether the most recent victims of budgetary constraints – including several faculty members, the wrestling team, and the Core requirement First Year Seminar – will significantly affect the undergraduate experience is an issue that remains to be seen; nonetheless, there is unquestionably a subversive tension ever-present in the minds of students and faculty.

The good news is that YU's financial standing has improved considerably as of late. Between a recent agreement with Montefiore Health System which the administration insists will eliminate an annual deficit of \$100 million, cross-departmental budget cuts to the tune of \$30 million, and a generous donation rumored to approach a sum of \$15 million, the university should at least come close to balancing the budget for the first time in recent history.

Of equal significance to balancing the budget is the installation of Banner, a financial tracking system that will enable tighter management of the university's finances. In the absence of these controls, unexpected deficits led to a liquidity crisis in 2012 that necessitated the sale of several building in Washington Heights and taking out a line of credit to survive the short-term. The university has subsequently refinanced that credit, adding to an already-heaping pile of long-term debt that now exceeds a half-billion dollars.

But it would be wrong to classify debt as inherently "bad." In fact, given the almost ubiquitous reliance on debt in American society – 80% of homeowners owe more than 60% of the value of their home in mortgage payments[1], the cumulative national student debt amounts to more than one trillion dollars[2], and the federal government owes more than \$18 trillion[3] – one might think that debt is actually a good thing, and the truth is that under the right circumstances, it is.

Organizations can finance large, costly projects such as infrastructural improvements or business expansions with the governing principle that future returns must either match or outpace the cost of interest. Under the correct set of circumstances, debt can accelerate growth and improve long-term financial results.

Absent those future returns, however, debt can harm the long-term goals of individuals and organizations. While it allows for immediate gratification, interest payments to service that debt compound over time, diverting capital from more important ventures. In YU's case, the \$175 million of long-term debt obtained to cover deficits for the last few years will translate to nearly \$12 million of additional interest payments per annum for the next 10 years (not to mention having to allocate \$18 million a year to pay back the principal).

Though such figures highlight the need for major financial reforms at YU, the ubiquity of debt in the US would suggest that YU is

one institution that is merely "following the trend" (which, of course, does not exonerate those who made irresponsible decisions). At the forefront of setting the trend of accumulating debt with no clear plan to pay it off is our own federal government.

While many distinctions can be drawn between the debt associated with YU and the federal government, there are two ironclad similarities worth noting. The first is interest payments. While many have pointed to mitigating factors to justify the government's increasing deficit – such as the ability to borrow from the Federal Reserve, a non-governmental institution that artificially creates money to "lend" to the House of Representatives – the inescapable fact is that the government must pay interest on the borrowed money. Last year alone, the federal government paid a whopping \$400 billion in interest payments.[4] That's money that could have been allocated to infrastructure, social programs, military spending, and tax cuts (take your pick depending on political affiliation), but has not because

our elected representatives haven't had the courage to engage in delayed gratification in fulfilling the wants and needs of their constituents.

The second parallel is the lack of financial controls to effectively track spending. When the House of Representatives voted to conduct their first-ever external audit in 1994, the auditor (Price Waterhouse) concluded that "deficiencies in accounting and reporting, and in information systems... affect the reliability of the financial

statements.... [I]n the absence of an effective internal control structure, there can be no assurance that all House transactions were properly recorded...."[5] In 2014, not much has changed: the external audit concluded that the House has "Ineffective control over the financial reporting process" and "Ineffective control over Information Technology." [6]

So the strong parallels between YU and the House of Representatives include a long, sustained history of budget deficits, ever-increasing mountains of debt, hefty annual interest payments, improper financial controls, and inadequate reporting systems. The difference between the two is that YU is actually doing something about it.

Against the backdrop of the race for the presidential nominations, I can't help but notice a deep inconsistency. YU has received harsh criticism for its past mishandlings of finances from individuals and media outlets across the full spectrum of political affiliations. The unanimous consensus is that the university must curtail spending and install stronger financial controls. The administration has responded by articulating a plan that, if properly executed, should lift the university out of its current financial woes.

In contrast, the presidential debates on both sides of the aisle have virtually ignored the topic of spending cuts, favoring instead to trade meaningless jabs and propose fantastical policy agendas that completely ignore the question of how they will be paid for. Criticism could just as easily be levelled at elected representatives at all levels of the government, the American people for ignoring such fundamental issues, and many major media outlets for not allocating significant coverage for this issue.

Although there's a great deal of irony to this statement, it seems that YU would make an excellent financial role model for our federal government.

[1]<http://fivethirtyeight.com/datalab/how-many-homeowners-have-paid-off-their-mortgages/>

[2]<http://www.consumerfinance.gov/newsroom/student-debt-swells-federal-loans-now-top-a-trillion/>

[3] <http://www.treasurydirect.gov/NP/debt/current>

[4]https://www.treasurydirect.gov/govt/reports/ir/ir_expense.htm

[5]<http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/CREC-1995-07-18/pdf/CREC-1995-07-18-pt1-PgH7149.pdf>

[6]http://www.house.gov/content/learn/officers_and_organizations/ig_reports/FinalFY14FSARReport.pdf

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For 80 years, The Commentator has served students and administrators as a communicative conduit; a kinetic vehicle disseminating undergraduate social, religious, and academic beliefs across the student bodies; and a reliable reflection of Yeshiva student life to the broader Jewish and American communities.

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

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



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1 Mac N' Cheese

this popular dish from the YU caf has its own regularly updated twitter page @YUMa-candCheese

2 The Pope

you know you're a successful religious leader when you've made it to the cover of People Magazine

3 Comic Con

this year's nerd convention was as nifty as ever. My issue of Saga signed by Brian K. Vaughn more than speaks for itself.

4 Job prospects for Torah U'Madda exemplars

Um so we're kinda looking for a new president. Any takers? Anybody? Seriously, anybody?

5 The Cubs

Hopefully by the printing of this issue this won't be irrelevant and Marty Mcfly's prediction will actually come true.

6 Question Marks and Exclamation Points

apparently the more of these you use in a YStud, the more people will attend your club's event!!!!!!!!!!!!???????

7 Kvetching

It's that perfect time of year when the weather's starting to get worse, classes aren't going as well as you'd hoped, and kvetching just feels so right.

7 UP 7 DOWN



1 Ben Carson

Whether you're voting for him or not, you've gotta admit that the guy has the charisma of a damp rag.



2 The second floor of the library

Hit the button next time you take the elevator. It is not looking pretty.

3 Coming back to school

Nothing says welcome back like all of the work you swore you'd get done over break

4 YUPrint

Is this thing ever working? Has anybody used this successfully? And what, in God's name, is an Ephemeral Diffie Hellman Key?



5 Nagel Bagel

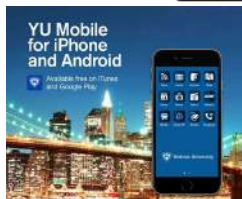
Walking all the way back to the caf to get a snack is no fun. Is this quaint snack shoppe gone for good?

6 Shuttle App

Getting to Stern inconspicuously should not be this difficult.

7 Annoying People on Facebook

Seriously, please keep your opinion to yourself. I don't care about how angry you are with the New York Times.



facebook

UNITE, CONT FROM FRONT PAGE

The Shmira Project gathered much support from YU students. The project's mission, according to its Facebook page, is to "Join together as a community to fill every hour" of the week of October 11 to 18 with Torah study. Launched by former SOY President Jacob Bernstein, '15, the initiative was disseminated by Assistant Dean of Undergraduate Torah Studies Rabbi Ely Bacon in an email to student leaders in the YU Batei Midrash, including shiur assistants, many of whom forwarded the initiative to their shiur. "We must do everything we can to help klal Yisroel especially during these difficult times," Rabbi Bacon wrote in the email.

A learning initiative was organized by the Rabbi Isaac Elchanan Theological Seminary for October 14 in the Glueck Beit Midrash. Rosh Yeshiva Rabbi Mayer Twersky spoke about issues in Jewish law related to the current crisis and Rabbi Meir Goldwicht, Joel and Maria Finkle Visiting Israeli Rosh Yeshiva, offered inspirational insights. Dr. Rona Novick, Dean of Azrielli School of Jewish Education and Administration, gave a talk entitled "Coping with the Matzav in Israel" as part of the Community Shabbat programming on October 17.

On the Beren Campus, several initiatives brought students together in response to the terror in Israel. The Israel Club organized a rally for the recitation of Psalms on October 15. Additionally, Aliza Chase, a senior majoring in biochemistry and the President of the TAC club Got Middot distributed the Hebrew names of Jewish victims injured in the recent terror attacks, encouraging students to recite Psalms for their recovery. Ms. Chase also organized a "Shemirat HaLashon" initiative, in which volunteers agree to be particularly mindful of preserving positive speech for one hour. The goal is to have volunteers for every hour of the week of October 18 through 24. "We can unite the Jewish people and foster love between us," Ms. Chase said, "through focusing on small changes we can make to be more caring individuals and improving our relationships with each other."

Off campus, a unity rally in solidarity with Israel was held outside the Israeli Mission to the United Nations in midtown on Thursday afternoon. Aliza Abrams Konig, Director of Student Life and Jewish Service Learning, sent an email to the student body urging their attendance. "We cannot remain silent," she wrote. "We must declare loudly and clearly: Israel, you are not alone - we stand with you!"

Despite the multiple events and ways in which Yeshiva University students have responded to the surge in violence in Israel, students felt "there is still more that we can do for our country," as senior Daniel Gofine, a former combat soldier in the Israel Defense Forces, said. A Yeshiva College junior studying philosophy commented, "Our complete duty as Jews is still unfulfilled; we must do as much as we can to help our family in Israel." SOY President Tuvy Miller encouraged students of both campuses "to approach student leaders with ideas they have with how they can get involved so that as a community we can support our sisters and brothers in Israel." He found the student response to the terror in Israel "very inspiring. It's heartwarming to see so many people caring."

As of press time, seven Israelis and 42 Palestinians, including alleged terrorists, have been killed since the beginning of October. Hundreds have been injured.

Overall, Yeshiva University's response has emphasized unity and a feeling of connectedness with Jews in Israel. "YU has taken many initiatives to show our support and solidarity for the people and State of Israel," Israel Club President Shlomo Anapolle remarked. Even among the gruesome images of violence that have been released recently, what sticks most with Mr. Anapolle are the images of Jews coming together to show strength and support, both in Israel and abroad.

9/11 Memorial Event

By The Commentator Staff

On the evening before the 14th commemoration of the tragic events of 9/11/2001, students gathered in Furst Hall for a memorial run by the undergraduate student councils. The event began with the United States flag at half mast and with a moment of silence for the innocent victims and first responders who

perished that day. Then, the student leaders presented a video with clips from morning news before and during the attacks, to get the largely-student audience to connect better to the events being commemorated--many were barely in grade school when the attacks took place. Dr. Karen Bacon, Dean of Undergraduate Faculty of Arts and Sciences, headlined the program, detailing what she remembered happening and the decisive action she took to ensure the student body at the Beren campus stayed safe. She also illustrated the scene as a thick cloud of soot blanketed

the city and people came to the Stern campus seeking refuge, food and water and means to contact their families. Dean Bacon was followed by student Baruch Schonbrun, who gave his account of the day and the week leading up to it. He told the story of his father's miraculous survival and how his father's experience changed his entire family's life. The event closed with the recitation of a chapter of psalms and closing statements from YSU President Noam Safier.

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Dean Jacobson on the Revitalization of Minors & Cross-Listed Courses

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away from the rigor or in-class conversation because the only courses that are cross-listed are introductory ones. And, even before the core curriculum was designed, non-major students would register for such introductory courses because they do not have any pre-requisites. Moreover, Dean Jacobson made it very clear that students attempting to maneuver their way into core courses after they register for the major CRN will not be allowed or tolerated in the future. In fact, during registration for the fall semester in the spring, e-mails from the registrar warning students such registration would not be granted “post-facto” switches and students would not be satisfying their core requirements if they registered under the major CRN.

Originally, Yeshiva planned to hire more faculty to staff the core, but obviously they were not able to do so. The core curriculum was the first major revision to YU’s general education in over 20 years. Dean Jacobson admits that there are issues with the core, but “even without the pressures from budgetary restraints, there is no question that [we] would have wanted to return and ask ourselves what problems have emerged and find solutions for them.” Next semester, things will stay, for the most part, how they currently stand. Beginning in the 2016-2017 school year, however, the core revision will be completed, with hopes that it will be even stronger than it is now and here to stay

for an extended period of time.

Another area that the dean’s office hopes to revive is the culture of having a meaningful minor. As it currently

“JACOBSON WANTS TO CREATE ANOTHER OPPORTUNITY FOR STUDENTS TO FURTHER DEVELOP THEIR SKILLS IN A PARTICULAR AREA, WHILE CHANGING THE ACADEMIC CULTURE ON CAMPUS TO ONE THAT EMBRACES MULTIFACETED ACADEMIC PURSUITS.”

stands, many students at YU do have minors and it certainly is not a requirement nor a dominant ideology of the institution. Dean Jacobson views this as a “missed opportunity,” especially because one of the goals of the core curriculum is for students to find hidden interests and pursue them. Dean Jacobson wants to see minors more as something “students want to think about” and hopefully “create a situation in which core classes can also count towards a minor requirement.” This arrangement could really allow students to develop the interest incited within them by the core and

give them a secondary area of expertise when they graduate.

Dean Jacobson believes that creating minors by combining core classes with a few classes in a certain sphere of study would be extremely beneficial to students. She does not want to create another requirement; rather, she wants to create another opportunity for students to further develop their skills in a particular area, while changing the academic culture on campus to one that embraces multifaceted academic pursuits.

Of course, as always, budgetary issues are at play in the conversation, so spending money to create completely new curriculum is unlikely. Therefore, what is great about this idea is that the university already possesses all the materials and resources that would be needed. Another advantage would be that students could get creative and construct their own, unique minor, tailored to their personal specifications and interests. Additionally, it would create more camaraderie among staff, since members of different departments would have to communicate and work together to create these minors. According to Dean Jacobson, “this could only be value added to a degree and to one’s college experience.” Although these ideas have not been approved by the faculty and administration yet, they will be under discussion during the current academic year. With the hope that these updates get passed, Dean Jacobson foresees great academic achievement among students in the near future.

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Finding Success: The Keys to Entrepreneurship

By Uri Shalmon

On Tuesday night, October 13th, Dr. Barry Libin has revealed how to start a business and achieve success in entrepreneurship. Libin is a successful entrepreneur, doctor, playwright, composer and author, and there is a story behind each of his achievements.

He received his DDS and MSD from the NYU medical school, and his M.S. in Management and Policy from Stony Brook University. Dr. Libin led a periodontics and oral medicine practice in New York before deciding to pursue his dreams and aspirations in pharmaceutical research. He was the founder and chairman of BML Pharmaceuticals before its multi-million dollar sale, but his big break was the project he started and saw to completion, the Sustained Nano Systems Company (SNS).

The concept behind SNS is essentially implanting compressed nanoparticles that contain some kind of medication into a patient and then letting the nanoparticle pill melt away, releasing the medication slowly but surely into the patient. Now, with this genius concept, a patient need not remember to take their prescribed medication. One implant can last weeks, months, years - virtually for as long as the medicine must be prescribed - based on how much the nanoparticles are compressed!

Dr. Libin came up with this idea like any entrepreneur would have. As he explained, an entrepreneur is constantly ruminating over whatever objective he or she has, always thinking how to capitalize and make the most out of available resources. "Entrepreneurship is an attitude," Dr. Libin said: "Taking the smallest thing and making something bigger out of it. Everything you see and hear, store, because you will most likely end up using it."

Between 35 to 40 students heard Dr. Libin tell his success story. Quite a few boxes of pizza and bottles of coke were served. It was a great showing and a great presentation, all thanks to TAMID, the Pre-Dental Society, and Entrepreneurship and Biotechnology Club. Co-Founder of the YU TAMID chapter (and Regional Director in NYC), Ezra Kapetansky, a senior, said, "Dr. Libin eloquently explained how entrepreneurship and innovation can come from the most unassuming places. Who knew a successful biotechnology was inspired by a melting snowman?!"

Kapetansky refers to an anecdote Dr. Libin told: one fine spring day, during the intermediate days of Passover, Dr. Libin was playing tennis with a few colleagues and was musing over this problem to which he had been introduced. Patients weren't using the drugs they were given. Anti-cholesterol medication is a stark example. After nine months, only 27% of patients were taking this sixteen billion-dollar pill! Similarly, glaucoma: a person with glaucoma must put 4 drops in each eye everyday for the rest of his or life. However, it is common that three out of four of the drops end up on the floor, especially for seniors. This means that three fourths of two and a half billion dollars

are being spilled on the floor.

Considering all the possible ways that doctors can remind their patients to take the medication, you would come up with only a few possibilities: pill boxes with calendars, maybe even color-coded, or reminder emails, texts or calls. The problem with all of these options is that the patient is still the deciding

"TO BE A SERIAL ENTREPRENEUR, AS DR. LIBIN CONSIDERS HIMSELF, ONE MUST BE CONSTANTLY CREATING."

factor as to whether the medication gets into his or her system.

While he was playing tennis, Dr. Libin, recounted, he looked at his front lawn. There was a man just sitting there, watching the match. He was a big guy, really round, and he had a nose like a bulbous carrot. Even in the seventy degree weather the guy looked cold. Dr. Libin had seen this man before, around January-February time, but now the man looked much thinner than he had in the winter. This man gave Dr. Libin the idea for his nanotechnology.

Dr. Libin looked at the snowman on his lawn--the snowman who was slowly melting away in the sun, and he realized that if he could create something that would allow the medicine



to "melt" more slowly into a person's body (like the water of the snowman), there will be no need for a pill once a week or drops every day--just a one-time installment would be enough.

At that point, Dr. Libin had a goal, an intention, and a concept. The next step for any entrepreneur would be to make some tough, critical decisions. Is the idea significant and important enough to drop everything and pursue that idea? Is it worth the time to follow the idea through to completion?

A budding entrepreneur must keep in mind two concerns. First of all, the return on investment; because research takes such a long time, you must be fairly certain of the success of the product. Second, patient care; the final product must be something useful enough for someone to purchase or invest in the product.

After establishing the idea's validity, the entrepreneur must check that no one else has come up with this idea before because the only thing protecting the idea would be a patent. Thus, entrepreneurs must make a visit to the United States Patent and Trademark Office website, hire the right patent attorney, and then form a support base and find investors. Dr. Libin said, "Try to use other people's money; It's cheaper than using your own!" Finally comes the complete the product.

The FDA had to approve Dr. Libin's SNS and then the drug had to complete the test trials. After a couple years, Dr. Libin put his drug on the market. The most amazing part is that this all came from a melting snowman while the good doctor was playing tennis.

While he was waiting for his product to pass tests, receive approval and make its way to completion, Dr. Libin wrote both a musical and a book. He explained that it is important to keep busy during the waiting period for a few reasons. Because, first off, if the product doesn't make it through to the end, the entrepreneur still comes out with something accomplished, even if it isn't what he or she set out to do. Second, although the excitement of a new idea coming to fruition is mind-blowingly awesome, the main part of the process is simple drudgery and it's easy to lose sight of the goal. That point is the most crucial and requires the most focus on the goal. It is important not to worry over every little thing that can go wrong as there is nothing that can be done. Third, to be a serial entrepreneur, as Dr. Libin considers himself, one must be constantly creating. Dr. Libin's compositions are the manifestation of that entrepreneurial drive.

Dr. Libin gave a few steps on how to create something, including being clear and specific about desired accomplishments, fixating on this project every day so that it permeates the entrepreneur's overall mental state, and knowing how far the entrepreneur is willing to go. Furthermore, Dr. Libin stressed, "Stay with what you know!" One of his biggest mistakes, he said, was going into the tech business without knowing much about it. The good news, he reassured, is that one can learn about anything and then it's time to rock and roll!

Yeshiva University Welcomes Brand New Roller Hockey Team

By Aaron Szydlo

As many of Yeshiva University's sports teams begin or prepare to begin their seasons, a new team has been added to the athletics department: the roller hockey team. The team, co-founded by Amir Gavarin (Syms '17) and Avi Margulies (Syms '17), kicked off its season with a weekend tournament in Rhode Island, and is formally recognized as a club team, not as a team of the NCAA.

And they started with a bang! Playing three games back to back, the team dominated in their opening performance, beating the club team from Niagara 23-5. Next, they beat Cornell 8-1. Finally, they wrapped up their impressive performance with a 9-0 shutout against Rochester IT.

The team got its start when Gavarin and Margulies, two students who played hockey together in high school, took the initiative after hearing about a large yearning for a team. "We knew how many guys in YU were good, so we figured why not see if we could compete?" said Gavarin.

And they certainly proved they could. With their breakout performance they definitely proved this is a league they were destined to play in.

The team belongs to the National Collegiate Roller Hockey Association (NCRHA). More specifically, Yeshiva University will be playing in the Eastern Conference Roller Hockey Association (ECRHA). Coached by a Yeshiva University alum, Elyashiv Gemara, the team hopes to make more headlines going forward. Yeshiva University finds itself in a tough conference, featuring schools such as Cornell University, York College, Vermont University, St Joseph's, and more, but the team did not appear daunted by those names in any way.

The team has been waking up at 6:00 AM to squeeze in two-hour practices twice a week to make sure they're ready. "It's tough to wake up early, but the guys are really into it and we're all planning on making the most out of this season" said forward Etan Bardash (YC '17). "It's a great opportunity that we're excited to have."

Much campus chatter has come along with the beginning of the season. "I cannot believe we have a hockey team. I hope they play nearby soon so I can watch them play," said Daniel Shub, a sophomore.

The hockey team is fortunate to have received a donation from an unnamed donor. However, while the generous donation was greatly appreciated, the donation alone was not enough to cover all the expenses of the team. Co-founder Amir Gavarin

said: "We really do need more funding though--pretty desperately." Due to the lack of funding, the players find themselves covering many of the fees that come along with the team. The eighteen-man roster willingly pays their dues out of their love for the game. But perhaps after their remarkable start, this will become less of an issue.

The start of the new season marks an era in Yeshiva University's history. This is the first time the school will have a roller hockey team and the future certainly looks bright for this new team.



Honors Program Marks Constitution Day with Illustration of the First Amendment

By Yishai Eisenberg

A few weeks ago, to mark Constitution Day on campus, the Jay and Jeanie Schottenstein Honors Program hosted reporter Ed Hammond of The Financial Times and Bloomberg LP to present to students on the topic of "How Reporters Protect Informants and Information." This topic is of special interest on this day, as the First Amendment of the Constitution includes freedom of the press, making it a basic freedom in the United States of America. However, informants can often be placed in jeopardy by other sources who would prefer that the information being shared not get out.

For example, a great deal of Mr. Hammond's speech focused on a certain businessman who was threatening reporters with hurting them for releasing bad material about him, and how this was—and could, legally, be—combated. However, those trying to keep the information from reaching the public can also use legal weapons, as did this man. This was a great financial blow to Mr. Hammond's paper.

Later in the talk, Mr. Hammond spoke about the trial of a different billionaire who was being prosecuted on what only the press knew to be extremely shaky claims. His paper was facing a serious dilemma: should it release the material and risk contempt of court, or keep the material, an obvious injustice to the taxpayers who funded the pros-



"THE DILEMMA OF FREEDOM OF THE PRESS; ON THE ONE HAND, THE PRESS SHOULD IDEALLY HAVE THE RIGHT TO REPORT ANYTHING, AS LONG AS IT IS TRUE, BUT ON THE OTHER HAND, INFORMATION BECOMING PUBLIC CAN ALSO BE DANGEROUS"

ecuting agencies? The paper did decide to take the risk and protect the businessman, who eventually countersued, and won. This story was very exemplary of the dilemma of freedom of the press; on the one hand, the press should ideally have the right to report anything, as long as it is true, but on the other hand, information becoming public can also be dangerous in many ways and can potentially even lead to a miscarriage of justice.

The talk was very stimulating for those attending, which included Professor Gabriel Cwilich, the director of the Honors Program, and Ms. Dina Chelst, the director of pre-law advising. The attenders were especially intrigued by the everyday dilemmas of reporters and newspapers, and asked Mr. Hammond to elaborate on many of these. However, the interest did not end there; many also wanted to know about everyday life as a reporter, what it entailed, and the benefits. Although, as Mr. Hammond stated, many reporters, himself included, do not cover exactly what they had intended to cover when they started reporting, being a reporter always has interesting questions and aspects one may not have anticipated upon going in either.

Although Professor Cwilich could not be reached for comment, there seemed to be a consensus among the audience that this Honors Program event was very popular and a large success, and all look forward to similar events in the future.

Alcohol Awareness Training Comes to Campus

By Eitan Lipsky

If a student were to sit down and write a list of all of the things that YU stands for, he or she would likely be able to spend a few minutes composing a wide array of flowery terms that reflected the university's essence. Some of these terms would likely relate to the idealistic merging of ancient values together with modern ones, while others would focus on the great tradition of Jewish leaders who have emerged from our quaint campus, and others might even relate to the inner network of students who look out for each other and help each other succeed. These, however, are some words that would probably not appear on that list: party school.

Last month, the YU administration sent out an email informing the student body that it had elected to begin a new alcohol awareness initiative. This initiative requires every student to complete an online course about the effects of alcohol consumption and is a necessary prerequisite in order to register for Spring 2016 classes. The course, which takes about an hour to complete, is composed of many different sections which enable students to acquire a thorough understanding of alcohol consumption's risk factors, with much of it focused specifically on college students.

Dating back several decades, alcohol consumption and possession have been prohibited on the YU campus. This policy is enforced fairly strictly, as even at the YU Purim Mesibah (festive meal), a time at which one might think the rules would be more lax, security guards dismiss any student suspected of having consumed alcohol. According to Dean of Students, Dr. Chaim Nissel, the administration is aware, based on previously conducted

research, that there are significantly fewer students at YU who consume alcohol regularly, save for kiddush on Shabbat, than in most other universities.

"MOST COLLEGES HAVE A MANDATORY ALCOHOL EDUCATION PROGRAMS IN PLACE AND WE FELT IT WAS TIME YU DID MORE TO EDUCATION OUR STUDENTS ABOUT ALCOHOL SAFETY,"
- DEAN NISSEL



If all this is true, why the move towards initiating a program about alcohol awareness? "We know that drinking does occur and at times can be excessive, leading to illness and potentially dangerous situations. Most colleges have a mandatory alcohol education programs in place and we felt it

was time YU did more to educate our students about alcohol safety," said Dean Nissel. After making this assessment, Dean Nissel, together with Rabbi Kenneth Brander, Vice

President for University and Community Life, secured the approval of several Roshei Yeshiva who reacted positively to the initiative.

Overall, the course is an informative, interactive way to become more attuned to real facts about alcohol consumption. As to what message YU students should be looking to take from this course, Dean Nissel explained, "We selected this course specifically because it does not deliver the "alcohol is evil" message. The course does, however, educate students about the potential danger of excessive alcohol

consumption and teaches them how to monitor themselves, their friends and to promote safety. These goals can be achieved by not drinking, by drinking moderately and by friends keeping an eye on each other. By completing this interactive course and sharing their own perceptions of alcohol use, they will become more aware of the effects of alcohol and learn about metabolism, minimizing high-risk drinking patterns and better decision making. The goal is really to help promote safety for all our students, while at YU and for the rest of their lives."

The administration welcomes students to offer feedback as to how they feel about this course. Dean Nissel can be reached by email at drnissel@yu.edu or found in Rubin Hall 106.

Students in need of emotional or psychological support should contact the YU Counseling Center at counseling@yu.edu.

Updates to Wilf Shabbat Programming

By Noam Feifel

Everyone looks forward to the weekend. YU students are particularly eager, since they consistently face the difficult task of balancing their personal lives and a demanding dual curriculum, leaving little time to just sit back and relax. The end of the work week provides a much needed break to recuperate and unwind.

Shabbat, the highpoint of the weekend, is especially anticipated. YU administrators know how much students treasure Shabbat and have attempted to create an experience that motivates students to stay on campus and bask in the Shabbat spirit right here in Washington Heights. Every Shabbat, one of YU's esteemed Roshei Yeshiva comes to the Wilf campus to speak at meals, lead singing, give Shiurim, and in a broader sense, augment the entire Shabbat experience at YU. Having a Rosh Yeshiva present each week was implemented in an attempt to invigorate the student body and create an environment where they are eager to take part in beloved Shabbat traditions.

But a Rosh Yeshiva presence isn't the only special part of

"FOR MANY SHABBAT AT YU IS LIKE AN EXTENSION OF THEIR EXPERIENCES IN YESHIVA"

Shabbat on campus. There is also an array of activities that occur over the course of the weekend including a Friday night Tisch with food and guest speakers, kiddush after Shacharit, and countless minyanim at various times to accommodate varying student preferences.

This programming appeals strongly to a large number of students, who, prior to coming to YU, spent a year abroad studying in Israel. For many, like sophomore Josh Perlman, Shabbat at YU is like an extension of his experiences in yeshiva. "Being in YU on Shabbat is like being in Israel for Shabbat," said Perlman. "On Friday night there's the Carlebach minyan

where they use the tunes that I love from yeshiva, and the zemiroth at the Friday night and Shabbat day meals are exactly what I need to make my Shabbat complete."

Although Perlman, who lives in New Jersey, has enjoyed spending Shabbat in YU, not every "in-town" student living nearby shares that sentiment. "After being on campus all week, I would just prefer to go home, spend Shabbat with my family, and be able to sleep in my own bed," said sophomore Evan Cohen. Cohen, also from New Jersey, who has yet to stay in for a Shabbat.

In addition to the aforementioned weekly Shabbat programming, the Wilf campus welcomes a new asset this fall semester, Jonathan Schwab and his wife Dr. Esty Rollhaus. Schwab, a former YU student himself, is the current Associate Director of University Housing & Residence Life on the Wilf Campus, and he and his wife are the new on-campus couple. After holding this position at the Beren Campus in Midtown, Jonathan and Esty hope to enhance Shabbat for students in a more casual way up in the Heights. "We loved our work the last couple of years at Beren, and we hope that we can bring uptown some of what we created together with the students there," said Schwab. "One of the many things we'll be working on is expanding Shabbat programming to include more students whose needs have not yet been fully met by the existing programs, whether they are living in apartments, looking for smaller meals that feel more like home, or looking for more informal games and conversations."

Beyond Schwab's aspirations this year, YU also has some novel ideas it would like to implement. Rabbi Eitan Schnall, Director of Wilf Campus Shabbat Programming, noted that "There has been discussion with administration about the possibility of holding a co-Ed Shabbaton in Washington Heights in an off-campus location." Such a Shabbaton would be the first of its kind, and would be a new change of pace from the frequent co-ed Shabbatonim held at Beren.

Perhaps the most appealing part of Shabbat at YU, though, is the impact it can have on students like Eli Profeta. Currently in his first semester at YU, Profeta didn't always have the luxury of experiencing the more traditional Shabbat ambiance while growing up. "There is simply nothing like Shabbat

at YU," Profeta remarked. He continued, "Growing up in Indianapolis and going to public school, it was hard to find that sort of culture. The moment I had my first Shabbat as a high schooler visiting YU, I knew where I would be going to college."

Heartwarming stories, like that of Profeta, lend credence to how important Shabbat really is at YU. The school has, and

"GROWING UP IN INDIANAPOLIS AND GOING TO PUBLIC SCHOOL, IT WAS HARD TO FIND THAT SORT OF CULTURE. THE MOMENT I HAD MY FIRST SHABBAT AS A HIGH SCHOOLER VISITING YU, I KNEW WHERE I WOULD BE GOING TO COLLEGE."

continues to, invest in countless resources which make the programming exceptional. Whether or not students partake in it, they must admire the school's effort to foster a meaningful, uplifting, and relaxing Shabbat experience for its students, when the tiring week comes to a close.



Director of Employer and Alumni Relations Jocelyn Coalter to Leave YU

By Benjamin Koslowe

Ms. Jocelyn Coalter, Director of Employer and Alumni Relations at Yeshiva University's Career Center for a little over four years, announced by email last month that she would be leaving her position on September 25. Her new position will be to serve as the Director of Career Services on the Staten Island Campus of St. John's University.

When asked about why she decided to leave Yeshiva University, Coalter emphasized that she "wouldn't necessarily call it a decision to leave so much as taking another opportunity that presented itself to me. I was actually approached regarding this new position. The position is a step up from my current role, and I will be overseeing all aspects of the office." Mr. Marc Goldman, the current Executive Director of Yeshiva University's Career Center, expressed similarly that "Jocelyn's decision was a tough one, and she really did not have any desire to leave YU or the Career Center. It was all about the new opportunity."

"I do not think her leaving is part of any trend or theme at YU," said Goldman in response to the suggestion that Ms. Coalter's departure is part of a trend of faculty leaving YU. "A four-year tenure in a college career office is far from uncommon, especially when someone is successful and still has room to grow and move up the ladder as a professional." Indeed, Goldman was clear about his positive sentiments toward his colleague as a professional. "I am disappointed to see Jocelyn leave the Career Center team after four years of making a strong contribution to YU," remarked Goldman, "but I know she is moving on to a better position for her at this point in her career and life. And how can the head of a career services office not be supportive of that?"

During Ms. Coalter's years at YU, her role involved increasing regular and consistent communication and collaboration with constituents beyond the Career Center team and employers. Coalter also noted that her tenure saw an increase in the number of fairs and on-campus recruiting opportunities for students. "Behind the scenes," said Coalter, "my role increasingly

entailed managing and analyzing information and overseeing the YU CareerLink system." Coalter added that "in addition, because a large part of my background is in counseling, I think I had increasing student interaction as time went on."

One of the other potential losses with Coalter's departure is the impact it will have on the employer relationships that she built over the years. Yet the Career Center is confident that it will be able to manage going forward. "Jocelyn did not build the employer relationships on her own," noted Goldman. "She was the point person for a team effort that included Career Center staffers as well as YU colleagues and external constituents. And her predecessor, Sarah Rosen, had laid the foundation for

"YU STUDENTS IMPRESS ME EVERY DAY WITH THEIR AMBITIONS AND DREAMS" **- JOCELYN COALTER**

our Employer Relations efforts from 2007 until Jocelyn's arrival in 2011."

Goldman and YU Human Resources are currently conducting a search to fill Ms. Coalter's position. Ms. Coalter pointed out that "although YU is in a hiring freeze, due to the fact that the Director of Employer and Alumni Relations is such an integral role within the Career Center, and we are already short staffed as it is (we have a counselor on leave and had lost a position within the office a few years ago), they will be filling this position." Goldman stressed that he is "confident we will find another great career services professional to be our next Director of Employer and Alumni Relations".

Since Coalter's departure, the various members of the Career Center have been managing different roles and aspects of

her job. Coalter advised students to "be aware that while the staff will be doing all they can to maintain the level of service we have always been proud to provide, there may be longer wait times for appointments for a few weeks after the [Sukkot] break." Goldman as well related how currently it is a crazy busy time for the Career Center. "Jocelyn's departure came at a peak busy time for our office," said Goldman. "I just ask that the students exercise a bit of patience and understanding with my team, who are working very hard to keep things going smoothly and successfully for them as always."

While Ms. Coalter is optimistic about her future, she noted that her leaving "was a very difficult decision to make. YU has been a wonderful place to work the last four years. I truly enjoy working with the current students. I am always amazed by the many alumni who want to pay it back and support YU, and I couldn't have asked for a better team to work with at the Career Center."

"YU students impress me every day with their ambitions and dreams," commented Coalter as a final message to students. "I wish all of you success, both for your remaining time at YU and wherever life after graduation takes you."



EINSTEIN, CONT FROM FRONT PAGE

YU is not the only University with a low-revenue medical school. And in terms of endowments and research grants, Einstein generates significantly above-average revenue. In documents about projected revenue for the UC Riverside Medical School, the plans optimistically predict 130 million dollars of revenue, a sum significantly lower than Einstein's budget. But UC Riverside directs far less funds towards research, and in 2014 received only three million dollars in funding from the National Institutes of Health (NIH), compared to Einstein's 158 million. To succeed with its low budget model, Einstein could have substantially cut its research funding. Indeed, after the original Memorandum of Understanding between Montefiore and Yeshiva broke down, many suspected Yeshiva would administer these cuts in order to balance its budget. It was these fears that led to a no-confidence vote from the Einstein faculty senate. In response, when announcing the finalization of the recent deal, Yeshiva emphasized that the strengths of this deal lie in its preservation of Einstein's vast and prestigious research endeavors.

On the list of high budget Medical Schools without a hospital, Einstein has only one complement: Harvard Medical School. While Einstein ranked 25th nationally with 158 million from NIH funding, Harvard ranked 21st, with 186 million. In Harvard's reporting of its 2014 revenue, its funding sources closely resemble those of Einstein: research accounts for almost half of all revenue and endowment gains account for another quarter but minimal reported revenue comes from hospital related costs. However, stark differences exist too. Harvard receives almost 80 million dollars in "other revenue," which includes services like continuing education and publications, sources of revenue that Einstein does not report. Further, Harvard's endowment is considerably larger than Yeshiva University's, and generates a great deal more revenue. Yeshiva's total endowment revenues for 2014 were about eighty million dollars lower than Harvard Medical School's share of its endowment.

Despite this greater revenue (Harvard's revenue for its medical school was over 600 million, almost equal to Yeshiva's entire budget), Harvard still reported a 40 million dollar deficit in 2014 and in multiple preceding years. Harvard credits these deficits to dwindling NIH funding and the rising expensive costs of modern day research. Due to the size and overall wealth of Harvard, though, the University was able to sustain these deficits, with aims to balance the Medical School's budget while maintaining its high level of research. In 2014, this option was no longer available to the comparatively small Yeshiva University.

Einstein's Deficits

For forty years after relinquishing operational responsibility of its hospital, Einstein operated successfully without this revenue stream. In 2008, though, in a now-clichéd Yeshiva University storyline, Einstein embarked on large spending expenditures, only to be met by an economic downturn and the disappearance of funds.

The Einstein website notes that "In 2008, the College of Medicine embarked on a major expansion program that effectively doubled the size of its campus." In the years since, magnificent and enormous "state-of-the-art" research centers have been built and renovated all over campus. While Yeshiva was updating and expanding the Einstein campus, and spending large sums to accomplish these goals, University revenue was decreasing in a number of areas. Einstein's largest source

of revenue comes from federal grants, specifically the NIH. After a twenty-year period during which total funding provided nationally by the NIH tripled, funding began to stagnate in 2008 and soon began to decrease. Einstein's other sources of revenue also decreased. Yeshiva's endowment shrank from 1.7 billion dollars to around 1 billion dollars. The economic crisis of 2008 somewhat curtailed gifts and donations to Yeshiva University. In 2013 tax returns, Yeshiva listed some of these reasons, noting that "recurring operating losses by the University are as a result of several economic factors, including:...Reduced research grant funding, Investments in faculty to enhance undergraduate education and medical research, Investments in facilities to support the growth needs of education and medical research." Like Harvard, Einstein reported repeated years of large budget deficits. But Einstein's deficits began earlier, lasted longer, and coincided with oversights of overall university budgeting.

In 2014, Yeshiva experienced well-documented and formidable economic struggles. To balance its 100 million dollar budget deficits, it sold off valuable real estate and took out loans. This process was unsustainable in the long-term, and Yeshiva received a number of credit downgrades at the time. When Standards and Poors (S&P) downgraded Yeshiva to a BBB, it noted that the termination of the original agreement between Montefiore and Yeshiva "further pressures Yeshiva's



bottom line given that about 40% of the deficit was generated from Einstein in fiscal 2014 and 60% in fiscal 2013...we are operating under the assumption that the university will maintain full control of Einstein, which we believe will prolong deficits at the consolidated entity."

After five years of budget mistakes and irresponsibility leading to an ever-increasing and unwieldy debt, Yeshiva needed to hastily balance its budget. Due to Einstein's responsibility for a large portion these deficits, Yeshiva was faced with a choice: either maintain the high-level research and run itself bankrupt, substantially lower the quality and quantity of Einstein's research, or let go of Einstein and allow a hospital with its own large sources of revenue to preserve Einstein and benefit from its prestigious research. S&P noted that "A divestment of the operations of Einstein or taking a minority partnership would be positive for the credit quality of the university given that Einstein has incurred significant deficits over the past few years." Therefore, on September 10th 2015 Yeshiva transferred financial responsibility of Einstein to Montefiore Medical Health System.

Details and Implications of the Deal

While this deal buys Yeshiva University financial stability,

Yeshiva loses out significantly with regards to its prestige and standing as a university. Yeshiva proudly boasts its consistent ranking in the top 50 of the US News rankings of National Universities. The website notes that the rankings give great importance to "groundbreaking research." Einstein's large sum of 158 million dollars in NIH research accounts for over 70% percent of Yeshiva's research grants. Einstein receives grants from other sources too, and in total Einstein most likely accounts for at least 80% of Yeshiva's 215 million dollar research budget. With its lowered research efforts, Yeshiva's place in these rankings will fall.

But the result of this deal is even more profound. Without Einstein, Yeshiva might not even qualify as a National University. According to US News's classification system, to qualify as a national university an institution must offer a full range of doctoral programs and must emphasize faculty research. Most of Yeshiva's doctoral programs and faculty research have occurred at Einstein, so YU's loss of Einstein might actually force US News to reconsider their classification of YU as a National University. Though Yeshiva's top 50 ranking often justifies comparisons to large universities like Columbia or Harvard, without its medical school Yeshiva might literally belong in a different category.

These effects though, depend on the exact nature of the continued relationship between Yeshiva and Einstein, a murky and hotly debated issue. Montefiore assumes financial responsibility, so Yeshiva will no longer list Einstein's research grants in its budget. Though Montefiore and Yeshiva agree on this point, their statements reflect less clarity about Yeshiva's future affiliation with Einstein. Yeshiva emphasizes in its statements that it will maintain a continued relationship with Einstein and will function as its degree granting institution. Statements from Einstein and Montefiore, though, make no mention of this continued relationship, noting only Yeshiva's temporary status as the degree granting institution. A statement from Einstein writes, "Einstein is seeking the authority to grant degrees (which is expected to be approved in approximately three years' time)," and Montefiore's statement echoes this claim. It is therefore unclear what, if any role and association, Yeshiva will have with the new entity of Einstein at that time. Yeshiva did not respond to requests for comment.

The exact financials of the deal also remain unclear. S&P notes that "As a result of the transaction, \$136 million in university bonds that provided financing for Einstein were defeased," or cancelled. Additionally, "\$42 million in mortgaged debt will be transferred to the new entity, as well as other liabilities associated with Einstein." Beyond the transfer of debts, Yeshiva will receive payment from Montefiore for the real estate assets of Einstein. New York property filings evaluate Einstein's real estate at 209 million dollars. S&P writes that these payments will be "rendered over the next 23 years," so the total payment will probably increase due to interest.

While exact payment remains unclear, the deal clearly delivers great financial relief to Yeshiva. Through the annual payments from Montefiore, elimination of debts, and, most importantly, the balanced budget this deal will hopefully help achieve, Yeshiva emerges a more healthy university. Though the deal alters the nature and overall standing of the university, it represents a huge and crucial step toward financial stability, securing Yeshiva's continued existence while preserving its undergraduate education, which is now undeniably its core focus.

Book Review: Purity By Jonathan Franzen

By Etai Shuchatowitz

When somebody reaches a certain level of acclaim, there comes with it backlash. Almost as if people don't want to believe that there exists a genius at the level he's touted. Jonathan Franzen is absolutely no exception to this. He came to the public's eye when in 2001 he published *The Corrections*, a novel sprawling many generations and multiple continents about a family in the modern age. It's a monumental work and in my opinion worth every bit of praise it received, and Franzen was seen as an author to watch. After a controversy involving Oprah's Book of the Month and many non fiction opinion pieces that portrayed him as a crotchety old man frustrated with the youth of today, he published 2010's *Freedom*, another pow-

erful look at family and idealism in the modern age. It too was met with critical acclaim and it's fair share of hate both for him and the book. Now, in September he released *Purity*, another lengthy book which delves into such prevalent themes as privacy, secrets and youthful idealism.

It's not like when I'm writing this I feel the need to defend or gush about Jonathan Franzen - there are already plenty of people way more qualified to review literature who do that for me - but, I do feel the need when reviewing *Purity* to stick up for the big guy who already has money, accolades and persuasion in the literary community. Not for his sake, not even for my sake, but for the sake of people who are pouring their hearts into work only for it to be met with what is, in my opinion, completely unfair and misplaced criticisms. It's one

thing to not like a book because it didn't speak to you, or to find it too long or complicated. It's another thing entirely to frame a whole critique on the book in an ad hominem attack on the author. So, here is my review of *Purity* as a critique of criticisms and defense of fiction and literature as an outlet for expression.

To talk about the plot of a Jonathan Franzen novel is hard if not impossible. The book details intersecting characters and the entire lives that hide behind them. We start with a 23 year old girl named Pip whose life is in utter shambles. She has \$130,000 in student debt looming over her, a very strange and complex relationship with her mother and a job she hates. Until one night she gets an opportunity to join the Sunlight Project, a

SEE FRANZEN, CONT ON PAGE 12



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FRANZEN, CONT FROM PAGE 9

Wikileaks type organization run by the very intriguing Andreas Wolf. Thus sets off a story that involves a murder, secrets, investigative journalists and a failed marriage many years ago. Like all of Franzen's work it spans decades and continents and presents a picture of life as a whole.

The thing that makes Franzen's writing so alluring and exciting is his characters. He is unlike anybody else I've ever read in how non judgemental he is of these characters and the choices they make. He presents such a rich, complex and full picture of these people over so many years that everything they do makes sense, even if you don't like it or agree with it. He gets into their heads and comments on things that make us human. And, he does it all without pausing for breath. He'll travel decades in one paragraph seamlessly and the whole thing slowly but surely builds to paint a full picture of all of these lives and what they mean. It's only through this strange but thrilling exploration that larger ideas themes emerge. But, he leaves it to the reader to discover and think without providing judgements beforehand.

A simple google search for Jonathan Franzen will bring up claims of misogyny and self importance. I'll even admit that he's really hard to like in interviews as he so clearly thinks himself to be the most important writer of our generation. In 2010, in correspondence with the release of *Freedom*, Time Magazine featured him on the cover with the headline, "Great American Novelist". He's also on record for contemplating adopting an Iraqi orphan simply to better understand millennials. He's annoying, pompous, arguably unfairly critical of twitter and our generation as a whole. But, none of that detracts from his writing.

It's very easy to call somebody a misogynist. It's very easy to sit in your armchair and use a reductionist term that attacks the author and his whole work. You bring up examples of his writing that somehow prove that he's not worth listening to. But, it's exactly not doing this that makes Franzen so effective. He'll have a character refer to herself as a

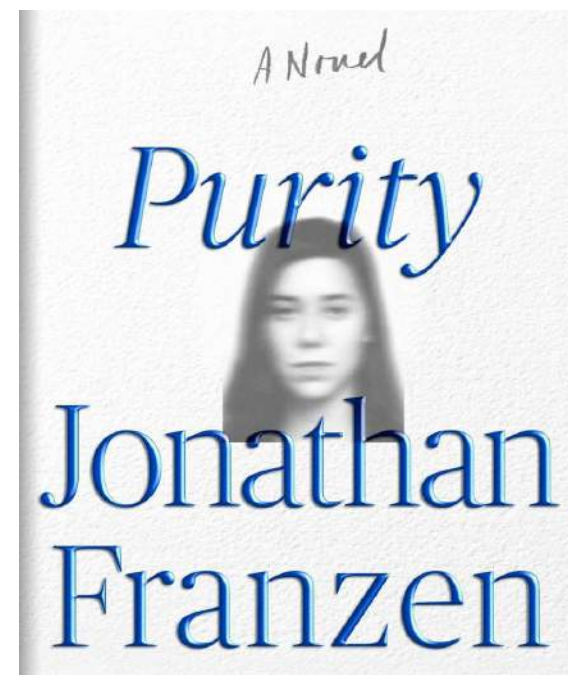
feminist, but the term doesn't matter because he's showing you such a complete and holistic picture of the person that no one term could encapsulate all that the person is. His writing is just like the world: complex, intriguing and leaves the reader with a funny feeling.

"FRANZEN IS SHOWING YOU SUCH A COMPLETE AND HOLISTIC PICTURE OF THE PERSON THAT NO ONE TERM COULD ENCAPSULATE ALL THAT THE PERSON IS."

Please don't take this to mean that you have to love his books. Criticism in all its forms is valid. After all, without it, we'd never get better. I just happen to think that there's too much of it nowadays. Too much cynicism. Too many people who are so easy to dismiss a work as "terrible" for no good reason. There are things that are in fact terrible, but I have a lot of difficulty believing that something that comes from such a pure place as a desire to tell an interesting story could possibly be as bad as people claim. I know that might be naive and overly optimistic, but I think it's true, if not fully then at least slightly.

I'll admit I didn't love the ending. I found that things wrapped up a little too nicely in contrast to the 560 or so pages that preceded it. I also found many scenes to be too gratuitously graphic for reasons I didn't understand and found unappealing. It's a book and it's not perfect. But, nothing is. Like any writer or college student who wants to come across as smarter and more worldly than he is, I'm going to quote David Foster Wallace who said, "Fiction is

what it means to be a (expletive) human being". Good fiction is not concrete. It's not black and white. It's not feminist or misogynistic. It simply is. It explores and delves and makes you think and feel and want and hate. And it's characters are not representative of the author as a person, writer or thinker. Just because Jonathan Franzen is annoying, or complicated, or famous, doesn't mean that he deserves that backlash he gets. Neither he nor his haters are intrinsically special, and neither of their voices intrinsically matter. Personally, I just happen to connect a lot more to a deep exploration than a one sentence tweet deriding him as hateful. Franzen himself says it better than I ever could when, in *Freedom*, he writes, "But nothing disturbs the feeling of specialness like the presence of other human beings feeling identically special."



Featured Faculty: Professor Ariel Malka

By Arthur Schoen

Professor Ariel Malka has been teaching in Yeshiva College since 2009. An alumnus of the University of Rochester and Berkeley, he has conducted extensive research in various fields of social science and has published a number of fascinating findings. He teaches in the psychology department and also offers a course in YC's Core Curriculum. Professor Malka recently was granted tenure, and in honor of this milestone The Commentator sat down (virtually) with Professor Malka for an interview.

I think a lot of people - myself included - walk into their first class with Professor Ariel Malka expecting someone with a thick Israeli accent. However, unless you hide it really well, you seem to be pretty American. Can you tell us a bit about your life story? Where are you from originally? Is there an Israeli connection there?

AM: My father is from Israel, and my mother lived in Israel for many years. My parents moved from Israel to the US in the 1970s, and I grew up in Levittown, Pennsylvania. I do have a good deal of family in Israel, but it has been quite some time since I've visited.

Could you tell us briefly about the different classes you offer in YU?

AM: For the last several semesters I have taught a course called "Psychology and Public Opinion", which is both a general education ("Core Curriculum") course and a psychology course. This course deals with theory, methodology, and findings from social scientific scholarship on the psychological origins of political attitudes. In addition to learning about scholarly research, we discuss "current events" articles and blog posts that analyze recent election and public opinion polls. I also teach courses in statistics and research methods, as well as social psychology.

What was the topic of your PhD? What else did you study in your six or so years at Berkeley? (or in undergrad at Rochester?)

AM: My research interests have really evolved over time. During graduate school I worked on research examining how goals and values relate to well-being, and also on research

examining different types of achievement motivation. I started learning more about political psychology late in graduate school, but my interest in that area really developed during my postdoc.

I saw on your CV that you spent around 5 years at Stanford as a Postdoctoral Scholar and a Research Affiliate. Can you tell us more about what you were working on there?

AM: During my postdoc I really delved into new topic areas and spent a lot of time reading and gaining knowledge of research on political attitudes. I began analyzing public opinion data on topics such as religion and politics, attitudes and beliefs about global warming, and the role of social identity in public opinion. In addition I worked on a large-scale survey methodology project that tested the effectiveness of a novel internet survey platform. Based on work conducted largely during this time, I subsequently published research on when and why religiosity impacts political attitudes, the influences of partisanship and trust in scientists on beliefs about global warming, and the possibility that self-identifying as "conservative" or "liberal" can lead people to adopt political attitudes merely because those attitudes are said to be ideologically appropriate.

Can you tell us about some projects that you are working on?

AM: I'm working on several projects at the moment. One project that I'm working on is a large-scale cross-national study of how political attitudes tend to be structured across different societies, and why. I'm trying to understand how cultural attitudes (e.g., sexual morality, immigration) and economic attitudes (e.g., redistributive social welfare policy, industry regulation) tend to be packaged together among mass publics in different kinds of countries. One key finding here is that – when one looks at a wide range of countries that vary in development, cultural characteristics, etc. – social conservatives are often more likely to lean left economically than to lean right economically. This runs against the conventional wisdom in social psychological studies of ideology and might be counter-intuitive for those who focus mainly on the American political context. My collaborators and I are interested in what these findings can tell us about the nature of right vs. left ideological conflict and how background characteristics

(like some personality traits and demographics) might exert opposite ideological effects across the cultural and economic domains. Other projects that I'm working on include:

- a critical review of the literature on psychological differences between the political right and the left
- a set of studies on European attitudes toward Israel, and how these attitudes relate to views about Jews, views about Muslims, and various background characteristics.
- A cross-national study of attitudes toward traditionally disfavored groups, such as women and religious and ethnic minorities
- Studies examining the effects of question wording and question order on survey responses.

Many of our students may have seen the piece you published in the New York Times in January along with Professor Michael Inzlicht, "The Paradox of the Free-Market Liberal." What led you to publish this work in the Times? You have published numerous articles and studies in a wide array of scholarly journals, but here you made your work available for broader public consumption. How did you decide to do that? Was there something about that topic in particular that you felt would appeal more to a broader audience?

AM: I'm generally of two minds about attempting to write for a wider lay audience. On the one hand I like the idea of contributing to a broader discourse about politics in whatever small way I'm capable. On the other hand I find it tricky to deal with the trade-off between trying to write engagingly for a lay audience but still conveying the appropriate qualifications and uncertainty that are inherent in science. For this reason, I don't often attempt to write for a broader audience. In the case of the NY Times piece, Michael Inzlicht and I thought that a recent paper of ours (published with Christopher Soto and Yphtach Lelkes) might be of general interest to readers curious about the psychological factors underlying political ideology, and that we might be able to describe our findings and their potential implications in a way that's understandable, accurate, and relevant to current political top-

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ics in the news media. So we wrote the piece and shopped it around, and were fortunate to have had it accepted to the NY Times.

What led you to come to YU? What do you like about working here? Have you noticed anything in particular that distinguishes the YU student (for better or for worse... :)) from students you have encountered in other settings?

AM: I really like the combination of seriousness about research and emphasis on undergraduate education, and the way research and undergraduate training mutually reinforce each other at the YU undergraduate schools. I appreciate that the student body is quite intellectually energetic, a characteristic that might be rooted in the Modern Orthodox community's approach to religious studies. I've noticed that the typical undergraduate I've taught here likes to carefully scrutinize social scientific findings, rather than take their conclusions at face value. That makes teaching here a distinct pleasure -- because this is a big part of what I try to nurture in the classroom. Also, I've noticed that while the students here are often described with the blanket term "conservative" many of them actually seem to combine many aspects of a progressive outlook with a reverence for tradition. For some populations those two ways of looking at the world would feel inconsonant, but for the students here those two attributes seem to co-exist pretty naturally.

What does it mean for you as a Jew to work at a Jewish university?

AM: I am a secular and non-practicing Jew, and I did not specifically seek out employment at a religiously affiliated university. That being said, a cultural identification with the Jewish people is definitely a part of who I am, and this influences my experience at YU. I am quite aware that I'm playing a role in the education of fellow Jews who are much more devoted to the religion than I am and who will often take leadership roles in the community. The best that I can hope for is that, in part as a result of my teaching, former students will seek out and open-mindedly interpret evidence when reaching conclusions about the social world.

A lot of your work deals with the interface between religious and political attitudes. From your time working here at YU, do have any particular insights about our student body - which is largely conservative, both politically and religiously - that you would like to share?

AM: I have two good reasons for not connecting my casual observations of the YU student body with the inferences I make from research on religion and politics. First, Modern Orthodox Jews are a unique group that constitutes a tiny proportion of the American and world populations. Second, casual observation of people with whom one interacts is not a good way to reach general conclusions about a population. That being said, one of the findings I've published is that it is only among politically engaged people that religiosity tends to go hand-in-hand with conservatism on many issues. That is, people who pay little attention to politics tend not to show much of a link between religiosity and conservatism (and,

"A CULTURAL IDENTIFICATION WITH THE JEWISH PEOPLE IS DEFINITELY A PART OF WHO I AM, AND THIS INFLUENCES MY EXPERIENCE AT YU."

- PROFESSOR MALKA



conversely, secularism and liberalism). Thus to the extent that the Yeshiva College student body is politically engaged, religious, and conservative, it would seem to "fit the data". But I would not make much of this casual observation.

Could you tell us about some of your mentors?

AM: I've been quite fortunate to have had really good mentors, all of whom have been generously helpful and supportive, and who, as a group, are quite diverse in terms of approaches and expertise. In graduate school, I worked with Jennifer Chatman (a scholar of organizational culture), Martin Covington (an educational psychologist) and Oliver John (a researcher in the areas of personality traits and personality perception). During my postdoc I worked with two mentors. One is Dale Miller, a social psychologist best known for work on social norms and the psychology of justice. The other is Jon Krosnick, known for research on political attitudes and survey methodology. My research interests are closest to Krosnick's, and he has probably had the greatest influence on me professionally.

You teach the class Psychology and the Public Opinion as part of YC's "Core Curriculum," in the Human Behaviors and Social Institutions (HBSI) section. What is your feeling about the Core curriculum? Do you see any particular advantages (or disadvantages) of this type of curriculum?

AM: As a multidisciplinary social scientist I love teaching a core curriculum class on psychology and public opinion. More generally, I see a number of advantages to teaching students about a broad topic from the standpoint of multiple disciplines. However, I do not have a strong opinion about whether general education courses should come from single disciplines or should be multidisciplinary -- it was never apparent to me that one approach is clearly better than the other for general education purposes.

How do you think that the fact that YC now is under a combined deanship (with Stern) will affect the YC student's academic experience?

AM: I'm really not sure and I think it's too early to judge. A unique strength of undergraduate education at YU is that students have direct involvement with professors who are active and successful researchers within their fields. In my opinion, this is a core aspect of the YU undergraduate experience, and it influences graduate school admissions. As long as the administration reinforces that strength then the student experience will be great.

From The President's Desk: YSU

By Noam Safier

A story is told of an FTOC (first time on campus) student at YU (me, of course) who spent the nights of his first semester holed up in his room with a computer and a different movie every night. As the HBOGo list of movies lessened, this FTOC wondered if he was missing out on something. Wasn't he supposed to be gaining more? Where was his exposure to different types of people and areas of interest? Where was his experience of the new and unfamiliar? The semester had just ended when the epiphany occurred: he wasn't doing anything outside of the requirements of his classes. He was lacking involvement on campus.

Diversity is not a word often heard at YU. After all, the YU undergrad system is composed of students primarily from the Modern Orthodox community of the United States, most having obtained similar educations from comparable institutions, creating similar experiences. Unexpected, however, is our diversity within the framework of Modern Orthodoxy and how we choose to spend our time. There are students who prefer to spend their days and nights in the various batei midrash and students who keep to the library. There are students who support the Democratic Party and those who support Republicans. Students who see Israel as their final destination and those who never want to leave America. And, there are, of course, students whose personalities mix and match the above values and practices. Out of all this diversity of interest arises a plethora of clubs and activities that fall on all parts of the spectrum.

Do you like learning Torah? The Yeshiva has daily shiurim and intermittent shabbatons and fabrengens with some of the top rabbinic personalities in the world. Want to learn how to present more clearly and comfortably when speaking publicly? There's a club for that. Perhaps you enjoy playing

water polo or hanging out in the hot tub and discussing important topics. Have no fear, because the YU Aquatics Society is happy to oblige your interests. Or maybe, you'd prefer to be involved in something more relevant to your major that will give your career path more direction and help you network with established professionals in the field. Almost every major has a specific club catering to the interests of those students. You never know where involvement in clubs will take you.

After the rejection of a (I concede, ridiculous) club application I submitted at the beginning of last semester that was aimed at allowing my fellow club members and I to create and eat sandwiches, I sought out my YSU predecessor, Natan Szegedi, to dispute (half-jokingly, of course) his decision. A friendship was born that later led me to run for office, giving me the opportunity to play a leading role in enabling others to explore their interests as well as serve as the representative of the student body. Involvement on

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- NOAM SAFIER

campus can lead to many positive opportunities, be it here on campus or beyond.

Whether it's political, academic, religious or plain old fun, now is the time to broaden your horizons and get involved with clubs on campus. When else will you ever have this much exposure to so many different ideas and interests?

A true college experience is created by the student acting on the opportunities presented before them. If a student spends 3 or 4 years studying with their head down, they'll miss it.

My plea is as follows: invest in your college experience. Pay attention to your Ystuds (not an easy thing, I know). Time is scarce here in YU. Make the most of it. We all hope to graduate with a degree that leads to a job, but shouldn't we be getting more for our tuition? The college experience can and should be much more than that. It's time to take an active role in our education instead of simply following the educational path that has been laid out for us since birth. The author Jayme Barrett said, "Expand your horizons. Move beyond the normal and mediocre to the extraordinary. Be daring. Ride the waves of life with enthusiasm, passion, and freedom in your heart." Broadening our interests and exposure is one of the greatest ways to learn about ourselves, our passions and our drives, and will help us lead more nuanced and fulfilling lives, in whatever way we plan on living it. College is an opportunity to be taken advantage of, but it requires an active student to seek it out. Time to start looking.

For a list of clubs on campus please see the Student Organization web page. For questions about clubs or suggestions for our school, please email YSUPres@gmail.com

Regarding The Building Of Bridges

By Doron Levine

Peace is unsettling; quiet is disquieting. We students are so comfortable, so at ease in our environment, that we yearn for discontent, for something to mutter about. Towards the end of last year, a group of student leaders took it upon themselves to compose and publicize a student petition in response to frightful injustices visited by the administration upon the helpless student body. The petition was essentially a call for transparency – the writers demanded that the administration heed the students’ collective voice when making changes to the curriculum. The petitioners were successful, not necessarily in influencing administrative decisions, but in creating the impression that student government at least pretends to be responsive to its constituency.

Towards the end of the petition was a request that the university preserve its Jewish studies requirements. To justify this request, the petition stated: “For an institution built on the values of Torah u-madda, academic Jewish studies serve as the bridge between our Torah study and our analytic methodologies of scholarship.” I myself have a tendency to assume that claims which involve architectural analogies and spiffy phrases such as “Torah u-madda” and “analytic methodologies of scholarship” are true, but when I inspected this one I was surprised to discover that it was false.

If there really is a separation between our morning Torah studies and our afternoon secular classes, academic Jewish studies are certainly not the bridge linking the two. Academic Jewish studies conducted in our university classes often operate under secular assumptions that are flatly rejected by our institution’s yeshiva component. And even when religious assumptions are put into play in the classroom, they are defended with wimpy apologetics rather than the bold assertions of a proud ideology.

Illustrations of this sad phenomenon in the bible department have been presented before, perhaps most strongly by a fellow who published an article in Kol Hamevaser two years ago entitled “Shut Down the Bible Department.” I will argue neither for nor against the specific details of his assertion to eliminate the bible department, but his basic observation has merit. Most Bible teachers at Yeshiva University do not publicly reject divine authorship of the Torah, especially in the context of an undergraduate class, but neither do they take a seriously strong stance for the biblical account.

Students are well aware of this reality. In one bible class that I took, any allusion to the issue of authorship elicited a collective nervous chuckle from the students as if to say that we knowingly avoid this forbidden yet alluring topic – we pay lip service to the doctrine of divine authorship but we all know that this belief, when subjected to rigorous scholarly analysis, does not hold water. What our community lacks is a strong defense of divine authorship. Instead of proudly defending authentic Jewish principles, our academics and students are nervous to take a bold stance on this issue because they fear being sidelined by the larger academic community.

The phenomenon is not limited to Bible classes. In a Jewish history class of mine, the professor flatly rejected the traditional Jewish presentation of history. The Talmud and other classical sources clearly state that the Septuagint, the Greek translation of the Torah, was translated by a group of great rabbis commissioned by King Ptolemy. Each rabbi was placed in a separate room, but God miraculously aligned their translations, with the stunning result that each rabbi composed the exact same translation. This story has traditionally been taken as an example of God’s providence for the Jewish people and his habit of interfering on their behalf when necessary. But apparently more comfortable with the modern scholarly consensus than with the traditional account of God’s miraculous providence, my professor adopted the apparently more prevalent view that this translation was simply authored by a community whose members had become more proficient in Greek and therefore sponsored a translation for the masses. No miracle, no providence.

This rejection of the Talmudic account caused me to scratch my head rather vigorously. I wondered, where does this impulse to deny miracles come from? The Bible is full of stories describing God’s hand in history. Is the countervailing evidence really strong enough to convince us that the seemingly historical account in the Talmud is a concocted tale? But regardless of which account is correct, and even if modern methods of analytic scholarship demonstrate that the Talmudic account cannot reflect accurate history, the fact remains that academic Jewish studies have not bridged the chasm between

the Yeshiva and the University. The student is left with a stark choice between tradition and modernity – his rebbeim would no doubt urge him to believe the words of our sages, but his academic history professor encourages him not to. Neither side offers a way to harmonize the two.

When my professors mention the traditional Jewish view of history, they do just that – they mention the traditional view instead of adopting it. They describe the traditional view from an objective third-person perspective, not from the perspective of an insider. It is as if this approach is strange and foreign to us. In some Jewish history classes, professors spend large chunks of class time trying to demonstrate that ancient texts which adopt the traditional view are biased and therefore deserve to be approached with the hermeneutics of suspicion. As far as I am aware, our Jewish history professors never interpret calamitous events as divine retribution and they do not present history as a linear progression towards the ultimate redemption. Even as I string together these words, I’m sure that many of my readers will bristle at the suggestion that history should be viewed this way. But why? Christian historians such as Christopher Dawson have developed serious historical narratives that are consistent with and deeply informed by church doctrine. Are we modern orthodox Jews too modern for the biblical view of history? Perhaps, but it is not my goal here to argue for the traditional view. My much more modest point is simply that a major rift separates our traditional Torah studies in the morning from our secular studies requirements in the afternoon. If there is any traversable ridge over this chasm, the student has not been shown it.

I don’t fault our scholars for this approach to Jewish

“EVEN WHEN RELIGIOUS ASSUMPTIONS ARE PUT INTO PLAY IN THE CLASSROOM, THEY ARE DEFENDED WITH WIMPY APOLOGETICS RATHER THAN THE BOLD ASSERTIONS OF A PROUD IDEOLOGY.”

studies. In the contemporary world of Jewish scholarship, as in most areas of modern scholarship, secular winds prevail. Mainstream modern scholars do not approach the analysis of Jewish texts and Jewish history based on orthodox Jewish principles. So this leaves orthodox Jews who wish to enter academia with a quandary. They must either jettison their orthodox assumptions when they enter the academy, or, if they wish to practice scholarship through the lens of orthodoxy, they must risk the opprobrium of others in their field. Whether consciously or otherwise, most understandably choose acceptance over exclusion.

The state of our academic Jewish studies is a symptom of a larger problem with modern orthodoxy. Our movement is not starved for intellectuals. We produce great Talmudists, the brightest of which go on to become Roshei Yeshiva and pulpit rabbis. And we produce academics in other areas as well, in academic Jewish studies, math, physics, and the liberal arts. We have legalists, mathematicians, and historians. But where are the theologians? Where are the people who, like the Rambam, explicate our core beliefs and defend them against objections? Where are the people who are clearly and proudly defending our way of life? We seem unable to produce the type of intellectual who would teach Jewish studies from a genuine Jewish perspective. The responsibility of developing a rich and systematic ideology should fall equally on our Talmudists, historians, philosophers, and bible professors, but unfortunately, with very few exceptions, our academics rarely bother to develop Judaism from within.

It is almost as if ideology doesn’t matter much. I have heard people claim that Judaism does not require its adherents to believe in any specific doctrines or creeds. I have heard defendants of this claim point out that medieval rabbis sometimes strongly disagreed about which principles should be considered core beliefs of Judaism. Setting aside the clear fallaciousness of this argument (in fact, a precondition for this type of dispute to arise is belief on both sides in the importance of doctrine), the example itself demonstrates the difference between our mindset and the medieval mindset. Our leaders rarely put forth proudly systematic defenses and explications of our core beliefs. A few centuries later, in the mid-17th century, Baruch Spinoza was expelled from his community

of Amsterdam for espousing heresy. Would anyone in our community even care enough about doctrine to be a heretic? And would our community care enough to expel him?

Instead, we seem to always take the defensive. We look to the right and see communities that shy away from the larger world but generate exponentially more Torah study than ours. Then we look to the left and we see people who, to varying degrees, embrace secular egalitarianism and thereby purchase membership in the academy and broader culture. But what do we believe? How do we modern orthodox Jews justify our way of life?

A defense is sorely needed, especially in areas where our practice starkly differs from what modern society considers acceptable. YU has come to be defined, in contradistinction to the open orthodox community, as clinging to traditional approaches to gender in Judaism. What justifies our condemnation of homosexual activity? What justifies our loyalty to sexist principles that clash with modern egalitarianism? Now that YU is commencing a search for a new President, I’m sure many have considered the fact that the search committee will almost certainly not consider a woman for the role. Is this the result of our leaders clinging to old-fashioned principles that the new generation will eventually rightfully reject, or can we actually offer a systematic defense of the way that our community discriminates between men and women? We can either stick to some form of empty legal formalism, or we can offer a real defense of our practice, but either way an explanation is in order. We need bridge builders, people who will reconcile and integrate our practices with our beliefs.

Do we have any bridges? Our philosophy department, with its deeply religious faculty and students, is a powerful paradigm of a rigorous set of courses where religious assumptions are highly respected. In fact, my philosophy classes are connected to my religious studies by more than a bridge – they are framed and intellectually enriched by our institution’s religious nature.

Where does this talk of “bridges” come from? I cannot pinpoint the origins of the specific imagery, but it is enlightening to notice how YU frames its mission of Torah U’madda. The “About” page on YU’s website states, “Since its inception the University has been dedicated to melding the ancient traditions of Jewish law and life with the heritage of Western civilization.” YU sees the two areas of study as independent fields that can be brought together.

Now contrast this with the mission statements of some serious Christian universities. Franciscan University of Steubenville, a Catholic university in Ohio, says that the university “embrace[s] the teachings of Sacred Scripture, Sacred Tradition, and the Magisterium with a spirit of Christian humanism that relates all learning to Jesus Christ... every honest pursuit of truth will begin with what God has revealed...and be consonant with what his Church teaches.” The mission statement of Biola University, an evangelical Christian university, says, “the mission of Biola University is biblically centered education, scholarship and service.” Grove City College in Pennsylvania promises that “the ethical absolutes of the Ten Commandments and Christ’s moral teachings guide the effort to develop intellect and character in the classroom.”

Religious differences aside, this kind of talk is totally foreign to YU. We talk about bringing together Judaism and western civilization, about unifying Athens and Jerusalem, but these other religious institutions don’t see any separation or deep tension – they directly apply their religious assumptions to their academic disciplines. Their Christianity dictates their intellectual life, delimiting and enriching all of their studies. I have no evidence on the matter, but I doubt that professors at these institutions hesitate to affirm the historical occurrence of miracles or shy away from viewing history as leading towards an ultimate redemption.

A more comprehensive comparison between YU and other faith-based universities is in order, but for now we must content ourselves with introspection. Whether we have dug a chasm or it exists naturally, many YU students seem to feel a disconnect between the Yeshiva and the University. And whether our academic Jewish studies faculty members are trying to build some sort of bridge or not, they clearly have not succeeded in integrating our institution’s two distinct halves in any meaningful way. Academic Jewish studies professors may analyze the same texts that the rabbis in the morning programs study, but this proximity just highlights their many fundamental divergences in methodology and conclusions. The deep chasm remains. And whether it is the fault of the administration, the faculty, or our lousy engineering program, we have yet to build a bridge.

Students and Politics: In the Same Sentence?

By Ari Tepler

Just over a year ago I attended an event in the US Capitol; a discussion between two highly esteemed former congressmen – Rush Holt, a Democrat from NJ, and George Nethercutt, a Republican from Washington State – on the topic of civic engagement. They specifically addressed the American public's participation, or lack thereof, in the political process and involvement in issues that affect the community. I walked into this event with the misguided belief that college students in today's society, with far greater access to a quality education and to political news through new avenues of media, are more attuned to political issues and to the way our government functions. Unfortunately, this discussion, coupled with my first year at Yeshiva University proved me very wrong. While participation in the political process among the general public is declining, the congressmen emphasized that this decline is most pronounced among students, the future of this country.

On the one hand, it was truly a breath of fresh air to observe two congressmen from 'across the aisle' join together, a seemingly rare occurrence. However, one statistic they quoted precisely highlights the issue today: only one in ten college students can name more than one US Senator. Only ten percent can name more than one even though each of our fifty states has two elected senators. This message they jointly conveyed to the audience was disappointing and, quite honestly, a bit frightening. As a country, our citizenry's engagement in American government is deteriorating and basic civics education is stalemating.

Former Congressman Nethercutt founded an organization specifically to remedy the decline in basic American civics. One project conducted by the foundation was a video interview of a random sample of students testing them on basic civics knowledge. It actually is quite comedic to see how many students cannot name the Vice President, let alone the (former) Speaker of the House and Senate majority leader.

During this presidential election year, it is therefore incumbent upon us students to become involved politically and to help educate the American public. Our government is designed to act based on the will of the people channeled through elected representatives. If the people are inactive and are unaffiliated with the decision making process, then this whole concept of government by the people fails. As students, we represent the future of the American public and we have to reignite the unique American spirit which favors great strides in political participation. Find a candidate that closely resembles your vision and join their student coalition. These elections can and

will have a substantial effect on our future.

It is for this reason, among several others, that I decided to get involved with the Marco Rubio campaign, becoming chairman of the inaugural NY branch of Students for Rubio. One area of public policy has clearly delineated Rubio from the plethora of other candidates in the Republican field – foreign policy. The current state of affairs in the Middle East is troubling for many voters including students. Putting the hot button issue of the Iran deal aside, ISIS and its extremist ideology



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is frighteningly rampant with no clear signs of abating. Our government invested \$500 million to train sixty pro-US rebels in Syria and a recent report revealed that only six fighters have been successfully trained and have not defected to ISIS. New troubling reports also indicate that Russia and Iran are now collaborating to assist pro-Assad forces in Syria, against the backdrop of US airstrikes.

Senator Rubio has repeatedly displayed his clarity and depth of knowledge with regards to foreign affairs. At the start of the summer of 2014, ISIS forces rose in prominence and surged ahead with its campaign to form an Islamic Caliph-

ate. At that time, President Obama referred to them as a "JV squad," perhaps echoing the opinions of the average American citizen. It was Senator Rubio who rose on the floor of the Senate (and as an intern in his office that summer, I remember this experience firsthand) to declare that ISIS needs to be cut off before it spreads its influence and becomes a threat to US National Security. Fast-forward the clock one year and the Rubio perspective seems to clearly have been accurate.

Just a few weeks ago at the second Republican Primary Presidential Debate, Rubio made a bold prediction by emphatically declaring "Here's what you're going to see in the next few weeks: the Russians will begin to fly combat missions in that region, not just targeting ISIS, but in order to prop up Assad." In the past few days, Russia has moved military warplanes to Syria and is conducting a bombing campaign there. Reports even indicate that US drones have had to be rerouted in Syria to avoid colliding with Russian fighter jets. Once again, Senator Rubio demonstrated his grasp of foreign policy issues.

I am also enticed to join the Rubio camp as a student with grave concerns over the future sustainability of our college education system. Rubio's own plight to pay off student loans was certainly unique in a Congress where the average net worth of freshmen representatives in 2010 was \$8,913,200 and in 2011 was \$7,835,242. Rubio finally paid off his more than \$100,000 in student loan debt only in 2010 as a United States Senator. Consequently, Senator Rubio has been working with Democratic Senators Wyden of Oregon and Warner of Virginia for the past few years to alleviate the problem of skyrocketing college tuition. This year, they introduced the "Student Right to Know Before You Go Act," which requires that critical information and statistics about a university be publically available and accessible. This bipartisan group of senators is working for transparency at the university level and for greater student awareness. Students should have clear knowledge as to what graduates earn financially based on their course of study in that particular institution.

This is just a snapshot of the policy proposals Senator Rubio has concretely laid out. This presidential election year brings us tremendous opportunities to get involved politically. It is not enough just to vote (though if you haven't registered yet, certainly do so); we must also take an active role in a campaign. Join a grassroots organization for any candidate, no matter the affiliation or ideology. Go help register fellow New Yorkers to vote. As the congressmen reminded all of us at the discussion, with so many youth today disengaged from the political process, our whole experiment in self-government fails.

How Not to Choose a President

By Joey Chessir

Much has been made of Donald Trump's surprising success in the polls concerning the 2016 Republican nominations. Despite making a number of highly controversial statements, Trump has risen to the top of the Republican polls, even overtaking political veterans such as Florida Governor Jeb Bush, Florida Senator Marco Rubio, and New Jersey Governor Chris Christie. Understandably, many, including Wisconsin Governor and recent election-dropout Scott Walker, are worried that if Trump succeeds in attaining the presidency, he will run the country with the same ruthlessness and impracticality exhibited when making some of his outlandish, derogatory statements about women and minorities. These statements include calling Mexican immigrants "rapists" in a speech in June, saying Fox News reporter Megyn Kelly "had blood coming out of her wherever" after Kelly questioned him during the first GOP debate, tweeting in 2012 that Huffington Post founder Ariana Huffington is "unattractive inside and out" while engaging in a feud with Huffington's publication, and saying in a campaign interview that German model Heidi Klum is "no longer a 10". While it remains comforting that Trump is devoted to tackling such important topics, there is no denying that Trump has absolutely zero regard for speaking appropriately and/or respectfully towards people who either challenge or disagree with him. Many essays could be written about why a man who feels the need to bully anyone who disagrees with him (or anyone else) should never be the president of United States, but in truth, the problem of a potential nomination for Donald Trump is much



greater than his hostile personality. The biggest problem with Donald Trump getting nominated is that from a practical and technical standpoint, he has said almost nothing about what he would do if he were elected president.

Trump, like many other candidates, has relied on blanket statements and unclear generalities in describing his plans if he is voted into office. In truth, it's almost a guessing game as to what his policies are towards issues that are actually important in American politics, such as healthcare, the crisis in Syria, (about which he has actually stated outright "I don't want people to know what my plan is" - at least that doesn't sound suspicious), gun control, and global terrorism (about which he was unable to identify several key figures when questioned by journalist Hugh Hewitt). Additionally, despite his financial background, Trump has failed to actually share his strategies for fostering economic growth in America, instead saying

things like "I will be the greatest jobs president God ever created" (whatever that means) and "I beat China all the time". In not being either knowledgeable or upfront about these topics, or both, Trump is showcasing a trait that many people fail to criticize him for: incompetence. Trump has attained his popularity by saying a wide variety of outlandish statements, none of which have any practicality for a politician, let alone the president, to actually do while in office. Even though we know now that Trump hates immigrants and Megyn Kelly, we still have absolutely no idea where Trump stands on the majority of key issues.

Unfortunately, the issue of vagueness is prevalent among other players in the election as well. Another candidate, former HP CEO Carly Fiorina, has been rising in the polls after strong showings in both GOP debates. Ms. Fiorina, while lacking a background in politics, has achieved some success in the polls by bravely calling out both Trump and Hillary Clinton, (particularly in the latest GOP debate) as well as making a variety of well-meaning statements, such as her correct claim that "women are not a special interest group". While a statement like that is true, it also shows very little about what she actually is going to do while in office, if elected. Other examples include Jeb Bush saying that America "Cannot do it (compete in the world) by lowering expectations and dumbing down everything," Dr. Ben Carson's claim that "there is no such thing as a politically correct war," and Marco Rubio's recollection of how he was "raised paycheck to paycheck". While these remarks are not

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Suicide and the California Bill: A Jewish Perspective

By Shmulie Reichman

Just a few weeks ago, Governor Jerry Brown signed a bill legalizing assisted suicide in the state of California. In other words, doctors are now allowed to prescribe medication to patients, knowing full well that the patient will use the medication to overdose, and commit suicide. This issue has created quite a stir in the secular world, and has actually been debated for decades. Secular society as a whole focuses largely on the concept of personal "rights." This focal point creates a highly autonomous attitude, in which every person is simply worried about him or herself. The question becomes, "What can the world do for me," instead of, "What can I do for the world?" It is therefore not surprising to see such a powerful claim: that people have the "right" to take their own lives if they so decide to do so. After all, every person has the "right" of choice! And doctors, governments, and policy makers have no right to withhold that right from someone who feels like ending their life.

However, as thinking religious Jews, we should have an elevated focus. We understand that there is a greater purpose to our lives, and therefore realize that life is not about rights, but about fulfilling our purpose in this world. Our religion is filled with obligations. This is not because God wants to make our lives difficult. The Rambam explains that the commandments are here to guide us through our lives and help us maximize our potential in this world to become the people we were meant to be. People rarely realize this, and the commandments become seen as a burden and nuisance. On the contrary, being a Jew, and being given the opportunity to live a life full of meaning and purpose are the greatest gifts one can possibly imagine.

Before we enter into our discussion regarding suicide, let us briefly try to understand a key area where Judaism veers from secular thought. R' Eliyahu Dessler beautifully explains that we often misunderstand the concept of love. We think that we should love those who give to us. However, this couldn't be further from the truth. For example, we often say that we "love" meat. However, if we truly loved the meat, we wouldn't have killed that lovely cow! In reality, we love ourselves. We love the way the meat makes us feel. The same applies to other people as well. We only love those who make us feel good. This is really only the love of oneself. True love can only result from giving to someone else. The depth behind this idea, is that when we give and devote ourselves to others, we see ourselves in them as well. This elegantly explains the deep love a mother has for her children. The more time you devote yourself to a project, and the more of yourself you invest into it, the more you see yourself reflected within, and the more you love it. This is of course the secret to the most meaningful friendships and marriages.

R' Dessler further explains that there are two kinds of people in this world. Givers and takers. Takers are those who confront every situation by asking what they can receive and take from everyone else. Givers however are always looking to help and improve the situation at hand. They always look to give themselves to others.

Western culture has become a society of takers. Luckily, you don't have to look too far to demonstrate this. Just look at the document our nation was founded on: The Bill of "Rights." People are constantly looking for what they can get and what they can take. This creates a society built on autonomy and individual rights. The Torah however is built on chiyuvim (obligations). We are always looking for what our job and purpose in this world is. At every stage in life, we stop, and ask God:

"What am I supposed to do now?" While Judaism certainly recognizes various personal rights, the real question is, where is the focus? For Jews, the focus is on our obligations and purpose in this world.

When it comes to many ethical issues, such as suicide, the secular opinion is almost always rooted in the "taker" mindset. People approach the issue from the vantage point of personal benefit and convenience. In contrast, the Jewish approach is to take a step back and ask: "What does God say about this issue?" As opposed to thinking about what we "want", we ask: what can we "do?" Having firmly established this fundamental principle, the first thing one must ask is: What it is the Jewish perspective regarding the issue of suicide?

The first set of questions we must deal with are: What is the value of life in halacha, and is suicide ever justified? For example, in worst-case scenarios, a person may be suffering from a terminal illness, depressed, or living a life full of suffering and pain. (To deal with the Halachic issues of the actual act of a doctor giving medication to a patient in the first place requires a lengthier discussion). To understand these issues, we first need to establish whether or not there is in fact any prohibition at all to commit suicide. Perhaps we are actually in control of our own lives. If this is true, then it would seem logical to

"EACH MOMENT IS FILLED WITH THE INFINITE POTENTIAL OF BECOMING GREATER. EACH DAY YOU CAN BECOME MORE THAN YOU WERE THE DAY BEFORE. GOD HAS GIVEN EACH OF US THE MOST PRECIOUS GIFT IMAGINABLE! SO HOW CAN ONE EVEN THINK OF THROWING THAT AWAY?"

allow each individual to decide how to live their life; and more importantly, whether or not to live at all. For example, just like the owner of a car can decide that the car is a nuisance, and is justified in discarding it, so too, one should be allowed to decide that his life is more cumbersome than enjoyable, and thus be justified in choosing to end their life. This assumption however is argued upon by many. Many infer from the Rambam (Hilchos Rotzeach 1:4) that we are not the owners of our own lives. The Radvaz (Sanhedrin 18:6) states explicitly that we are not the owners of our bodies or lives, and most poskim quote this li'halacha.

If this is the case, we then need to rethink this issue. If our body really belongs to God, then who are we to decide to discard it? Imagine you gave your friend a car, and told him to guard it for a few weeks. You also told him that he could use it as he pleases in the interim. Three weeks later, when you come back to pick up the car, he tells you that he apologizes, but he is sad to inform you that he didn't really enjoy the way the car rode, so he gave it away. This man is clearly a thief. If so, how is committing suicide any different? God granted each of us a body as a gift. We were put in this world on a mission to become the best person we can possibly be. We were given certain abilities and strengths, and given the opportunity to use those abilities to create ourselves. Furthermore, each moment in this world is of infinite value. So much so, that we are even allowed to violate Shabbos to save chayei sha'ah- as little as a few minutes of life. Each moment is filled with the infinite potential of becoming greater. Each day you can become more than you were the day before. God has given each of us the most precious gift imaginable! So how can one even think of throwing that away?

The commentaries discuss how to categorize the apparent prohibition of suicide. Based on our previous discussion, it shouldn't be surprising that many (Pesikta De'Rav Kahana, Beis Meir, and perhaps the Rambam as well) hold that suicide is in fact retzicha (murder). The logic is quite simple. Just like it's considered murder to kill another person, since you don't own his body, so too, it's murder to kill yourself, since you don't own your body either. Others consider suicide to be a lesser prohibition, perhaps of chavalah (wounding).

It is essential to understand that there are exceptional cases where suicide may be permissible. There is a Halachic debate whether someone is allowed to commit suicide in order to prevent himself from converted to Christianity. It is also important to note that some poskim allow Israeli soldiers to take their own lives when they are captured, in order to prevent themselves from revealing important and dangerous information while being tortured. While there are several other issues that require further discussion, the general consensus is that suicide is fundamentally prohibited. It is only in the most extenuating circumstances that an action with such severe implications would be permitted.

That being said, there is a much deeper idea here which merits discussion. The root of our issue is that people see their challenges and ordeals as a burden, which they cannot bear. While it is true that many of the cases of suicide involve people who are near death, or terminally ill, there are also a significant number of cases of people who refuse to go through the pain or suffering they are experiencing. They therefore decide that it would be better to die now, rather than live through such a painful experience. Such a person hasn't grasped the true purpose of the challenges we face in life. If you would ask any of the greatest people you admire, they would tell you that the reason they became the person they are today is because of the challenges they faced in the process. Not despite the challenges, but rather because of them! Challenges can have remarkable transformative properties. Some people will just put their life on hold until the ordeal passes. They view their ordeals as a burden, and can't seem to live with them. However, the true purpose of an ordeal is to use it as fuel to become the person you are supposed to become. In retrospect, you will look at the challenges you faced in life, and thank God with all your heart that you went through them. After all, a challenge is just another way of God telling you: "Grow!" A muscle can only grow when it's pushed against resistance. No one can build muscle if they lift weights that are easy to pick up. If you always lift 5-pound weights, you might feel good, and it might look like you're doing something, but in reality, you aren't accomplishing anything. The same applies to each and every one of us as well. The only way to grow is to push against resistance. Once the challenges you face become an opportunity instead of a burden, your life will never be the same.

While an all-encompassing Halachic ruling is beyond the scope of this article, a general point must be made. Whenever secular law clashes with Jewish law regarding the permissibility of an act, Jewish law takes precedence. Therefore, even if secular law seems to grant an individual the right to take his own life, a Jew is held accountable to a higher standard. Examining such controversial issues has tremendous value, as they compel us to grapple with different important values, and clarify what the Jewish perspective is. When all is said and done, we must realize that our way of life comes from the Torah, has always come from the Torah, and will continue to come from the Torah.

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nearly as bad as Trump's blatant offensiveness, they still fail to actually provide insight into what these politicians will actually attempt if they are elected, which is what, at the end of the day, will define their presidency. By making vague statements about what they hope to achieve in office and putting focus on less relevant aspects of their lives, these politicians are creating an environment where the public is essentially voting for whichever candidate they seem to like most as a person, which is ultimately the wrong reason to chose a President.

Many people may dislike Trump because of his remarks, but that's not why he shouldn't be the president. Trump shouldn't be president because he is an uninformed bully who has yet to prove he knows a single thing about politics, what the president

actually has to deal with on a day-to-day basis. Other candidates, like Bush or Rubio, who actually have successful backgrounds in politics, should be open and up-front about what they will actually plan to do if they are elected, because we as citizens will be voting for them on the basis of what they have done and will do, not who they are. Even if it's been the common practice in the past, it is simply unacceptable that the presidential election of the United States be little more than a popularity contest, where the candidate who gets the most people to like him or her wins. On any given day, the President will have to deal with any number of complex issues in any area of politics. Whether or not the President is liked by the public has little to do with actually dealing with those issues effectively in terms of actual political actions, because there is much more to politics than simply getting elected. There is

simply no way of knowing who the right candidate is until all of the candidates become open about what their plans are if they attain the presidency. Until that point, the only thing we'll know about a candidate like Texas Senator Ted Cruz is that "If you're looking for someone to go to Washington, to go along to get along, to get -- to agree with the career politicians in both parties who get in bed with the lobbyists and special interests, then (he) ain't your guy."

Candidates need to be upfront about their policies, so the public can elect them on that basis alone. Until they do, voters are playing a guessing game as to what each candidate actually brings to the table, and may end up with a president who's better at getting elected than actually accomplishing things in the political arena.

A Summary of the Syrian Conflict, Russian Intervention and What We Should Do About It

By Avi Strauss

As the horrific four year Syrian conflict trudges on with no end in sight, and the majority of the world is twiddling its thumbs and engaging in "pinprick" strikes to quell the violence, one world leader has finally taken decisive action to tip the scales in favor of President Bashar al Assad—Vladimir Putin, President of Russia. After several weeks of moving military forces and equipment to an air base in Latakia, an Assad stronghold, Russia has since struck over a hundred targets inside Syria by airstrike and cruise missile, under the banner of fighting Islamic State (ISIS or ISIL) terrorists. Yet, thus far, according to the US State Department, 90% of the Russian airstrikes have targeted Syrian rebel forces backed by the West.

Now, in a war that has claimed nearly 250,000 lives and displaced millions while tearing an entire country to shreds, the worst choice possible seems to be aiding the conflict's instigator and perhaps its prime violator of human rights. At this point it is inconceivable that Syria and all its sectarian divisions could ever be stabilized under the brutal dictator who has demonstrated such a callous disregard for human life. However, with no other countries stepping up with comprehensive plans to solve the intractable crisis, Putin's Russia looks like the only candidate to end the chaos.

This necessarily forces the United States into a particularly precarious situation. Can the U.S. backtrack on its condition that Assad must leave power as part of any resolution to the crisis? Should the US increase its support for "moderate" Syrian rebels to stave off their possible defeat in the face of an Assad-Putin alliance that may wipe out any chance of a rebel victory? With a war-weary American public and a presidential election on the horizon, is there any decisive action the US can take to counter Russia's aggressive posture in Syria?

For now, much of the official American response has been one of indignation and condemnation. Various American officials, including Secretary of Defense Ashton Carter, have gone on record calling Putin's efforts "doomed to fail". He added that while the Pentagon was willing to hold talks with Russia over how to settle the Syrian conflict, "Our position is clear, that a lasting defeat of ISIL and extremism in Syria can only be achieved in parallel with a political transition in Syria," effectively stressing the "importance of simultaneously pursuing these two objectives."

For its part, America has been launching airstrikes against ISIS and other extremist targets inside Syria for a year and has also allocated \$500 million dollars to train and equip 5,000 moderate Syrian rebels. However, testimony by General Lloyd Austin, commander of US Central Command, before the Senate Armed Services Committee revealed this effort had only trained "4 or 5" rebels who were fighting by the time of his testimony. While coalition airstrikes, conducted mostly by American forces, have killed thousands of ISIS militants according to U.S. officials, it is still unclear if they have had any serious effect on degrading their capabilities.

Some have argued that the strikes actually have had a net negative effect since they feed into ISIS' narrative in which they are fighting Western Imperialism in their bid to establish an Islamic caliphate. ISIS uses footage of the airstrikes in their propaganda to draw in new recruits from around the world. Although estimates tend to vary, it is typically suggested that ISIS has a fighting force of around 30,000 troops who are easily replaced by conscription and recruitment from around the globe.

Aside from claiming that President Assad must be removed from power for a peaceful solution to come to fruition in Syria and condemning Assad's attacks on his own people, the US has

yet to take decisive action to ensure his overthrow.

But before we can assess whether Russia's intervention is "doomed to fail", a wise seizing of opportunity or something else altogether, we first must gain a better understanding of the conflict itself.

Most people hear "Civil War" or conflict and assume there are two sides fighting each other. Not so in the case of The Syrian Conflict which has as many as 5 sides fighting, if not more:

First, there is president, Assad, his Alawite minority and assorted tribes (Druze and others) loyal to him and bolstered by Iran, Hezbollah and now Russia. This side is most prominent and is in a fight for its life given the stakes (automatic ouster from power) should it lose. Next, is the aforementioned Islamic State, fighting mostly in Eastern Syria and trying to wrest as much land and weapons as possible away from whomever they can. Bent on satisfying a warped view of their religion, they see no point in reconciliation and systematically target and murder anyone who doesn't submit to their conception of Islam (which may include subjugation or forced conversion).

The other main faction is comprised of the moderate, secular rebels who are loosely coalesced around the banner of the Free Syrian Army which operates mostly in northern Syria and areas near Damascus. The U.S. has pledged support for this group in particular, and they receive "aid" in the form of the previously described training and humanitarian assistance. For now, they are also the main target of the government forces and lack an air force to defend themselves against Assad's back at-

strating the two groups' ability to cooperate. In 2014, they declared the cities of Kobani, Efrin, and Cizire cantons in the new "Syrian Kurdistan".

Lastly, there is Jabhat al Nusra (a branch of al Qaeda) that many would just conflate with ISIS, but which disagrees with ISIS and is competing for the mantle of dominant Islamic fighting force. In fact, this group has sworn off any alliance with ISIS due to the latter's extreme methods.

For now, while the fighting rages on and analysts predict the long-term outcomes of the war, it is unclear which side will ultimately triumph, or what kind of power-sharing arrangement or division of land will be implemented as part of the solution to the crisis. This great unknown has paralyzed Western leaders who are either too timid or unsure to bring an end to the conflict.

With that being laid out, America needs to chart its best course of action in both the short and long term.

I think we've hesitated on what to do for far too long. Putin has stepped in to ease the discord and, more importantly to him, protect his regional allies as he continues to work to make Russia the superpower of the Eastern Hemisphere, challenging the United States' world hegemony. I think, regardless of his success, he certainly uses his military in a way that is far wiser than we have, dating back to the Vietnam War. He projects power without sacrificing thousands of soldiers' lives and trillions of dollars. He steps in to defend and support his allies, and he only gets involved (for now) in situations he knows he can handle at arms-length and in which he won't face substantial backlash.

He also knows he can operate freely in the Middle East without risking severe military backlash (as long as Russian involvement remains in the air), because his country won't be seen as the "Great Satan," thereby preventing it from becoming the top target for international terror attacks.

Let us not forget, Putin was a Lieutenant Colonel in the infamous Russian KGB, and while many analysts are quick to dismiss his actions as misguided and erratic, his service and experience certainly lends to a shrewder understanding of warfare than that of many analysts. So while it's possible his Syrian strategy may be plagued by folly, and while some perceive his involvement in the Middle East as a distraction from his alleged failures in the conflict in Ukraine, I wouldn't be so quick to dismiss his military and strategic acumen.

Which leads me to the Obama administration's completely childish responses. In my mind, this is the international equivalent of shouting and stomping your feet with a spattering of self-righteousness. People in the administration (and their backers) are so convinced "20th century" strategy and diplomacy are outdated because they studied diplomacy and strategy in the ivory towers of Ivy League colleges and not by actually serving

in the military. It pains me to listen to the press secretary comment on Russian moves and say things like they are "doomed to fail". Russia is running circles around them strategically, surprising them at every turn. We've gone from aimlessly bombing ISIS targets to arranging "de-conflict zones" with the Russians in order to prevent in air-collisions and accidental combat situations, while the Russians are mostly bombing the rebels we've committed to supporting. The administration seems to have no idea what Russian intentions are, so how can they call them doomed to fail? I'm not necessarily arguing Putin's intervention will be successful, but the fact that we didn't properly anticipate his moves and initiate proactive policies to prevent them is a testament to our disjointed strategy.

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"THE OBAMA ADMINISTRATION'S RESPONSES ARE THE INTERNATIONAL EQUIVALENT OF SHOUTING AND STOMPING YOUR FEET, WITH A SPATTERING OF SELF-RIGHTEOUSNESS. PEOPLE IN THE ADMINISTRATION (AND THEIR BACKERS) ARE SO CONVINCED "20TH CENTURY" STRATEGY AND DIPLOMACY IS OUTDATED BECAUSE THEY ALL STUDIED DIPLOMACY AND STRATEGY IN THE IVORY TOWERS OF IVY LEAGUE COLLEGES AND NOT BY ACTUALLY SERVING IN THE MILITARY."



tack helicopters and fighter planes.

Another well established, yet lesser known group is the Kurds operating almost exclusively in northern Syria. In the hopes of forming a new independent country, Kurdistan, where they can have political autonomy, they have mobilized to defend their territory and repel any encroachment on their land. They were forced into this position when the government troops left Kurdish regions when the war started. Kurds across the region have been moving and pushing for autonomy for some time now and tend to be marginalized in Turkey, Syria, Iraq and Iran. None of those countries like the idea of an independent Kurdistan, because it would probably motivate their Kurdish minorities to seek independence as well. For the most part, the Kurds have proven to be effective in combatting ISIS and have even taken back the city of Kobani, home to a large population of Kurds, in an effort backed by American airstrikes, demon-

Charity: Give and Let Live?

By Yadin Teitz

Go to any large synagogue in downtown Jerusalem on a weekday, and you'll be sure to see a similar picture. To an outsider, it's probably a strange sight. The congregants are in contemporary dress, wearing jeans and colorful polo shirts, pressed khakis and classic button-downs. They pray with their cell phones on the table in front of them, or with them clasped to the belt buckles on their waists. Listen, and you'll hear prayers conducted with the Sephardic pronunciation, the taf of modern Israel rather than the suf of Eastern Europe. You would rightly guess that these people are overwhelmingly professionals; doctors and lawyers, hi-tech workers and scientists, accountants and businesspeople (and retirees). Surely this is a Dati Leumi congregation.

But interspersed amongst these prayer-goers are dozens of other people, likewise in varying modes of dress and decorum. Some are attired in classic black coats from head to toe (although their socks do tend to be white), while others wear the signature gold and black striped tunics of their communities. These individuals do not seem to be members of the congregation- they are ultra-Orthodox. So what is it that these ultra-Orthodox people are doing? Have they come to join for early morning Shacharit prayers? Not quite. They pace up and down the aisles of the synagogues, hands outstretched as they jingle their fistfuls of coins and whisper "Gut Shabbes," "Gut Yontif," "Hachnasas Kallah", or whatever the appropriate greeting may be that inspires congregants to open their purse strings to these beggars. They go from person to person, with eyes cast downward and an occasional smile. They are unabashed at their requests of money, knowing that their modern (read "wealthier") brethren will assist them. Many of the individuals will spend their mornings going from synagogue to synagogue in order to raise as much money as they can. To cope with the onslaught of alms-seekers, several of the older congregants have a custom of laying out a pile of coins on the table adjacent to where they are praying. Rather than having to search one's pockets in vain or interrupt one's prayers to give charity, now the beggar can silently grab a coin and continue to the next person.

I was first bothered by this phenomenon in the aftermath of the gruesome murder of young Shira Banki, hy"d, at the Jerusalem Gay Pride Parade. While not intending to stereotype all

members of a particular society, I wonder how many of these charity collectors silently condone her death. How many of them believe that gay people are a curse and a disease and need to be obliterated or suppressed? How many of their rabbis and roshei yeshiva, perhaps without saying it, believe that Yishai Schlissel's actions were honorable and that the holiness of the city of Jerusalem was restored through the murdering of an in-

**"PERHAPS OUR PRAYER IS NOT THEIR PRAYER.
PERHAPS OUR TORAH IS NOT THEIR TORAH.
PERHAPS OUR BELIEFS ARE NOT THEIR BELIEFS. BUT
OUR MONEY? OUR MONEY IS THEIR MONEY, AND
OUR MONEY IS GOOD ENOUGH FOR THEM."**



nocent girl? How many of them came out and condemned the attack, or joined the subsequent protests that swept the city? And as I think back on those days and the mighty and outspoken divisions created between secular and religious, Dati Leumi and Hareidi factions in Israeli society and especially in Jerusalem, I know that these beggars kept coming through it all. To be completely fair, one could argue that these individuals are ill-informed and innocent members of a greater community, too caught up in their own hardships to worry about or to get involved with larger issues, but I find such claims too dismissive and forgiving to be truthful.

My uneasiness grew after reading a September 30th interview with city councilor Hanan Rubin in the Times of Israel. Born and bred in Jerusalem, Rubin talks about the importance of maintaining Jerusalem as a city that belongs to everyone, regardless of religious affiliation. While he himself is an observant Jew, he hails the rise of secular activity in Jerusalem because he understands the need for the city to be pluralistic and tolerant of all. He supported the opening of Yes Planet Jerusalem, a movie theater that is controversial because it is open on Shabbat. He applauded the decision to have a café that would be open on Shabbat located in the heart of Independence Park. Both of these endeavors were hotly protested by Haredim, under the guise that they desecrated the religious nature of Jerusalem. While I am sympathetic to their reasoning, and have personally found it difficult to watch Jews eat at restaurants and drive on Shabbat, my overwhelming feeling is that this is not my business. I cannot control other people, and it is not my place to do so. Each person is entitled to live life as he or she chooses, and a city cannot simply exclude or discriminate against a major part of its residents. The efforts of Haredi residents to restrict the freedom of other residents is simply deplorable to me.

But there is a full host of other issues that our two communities disagree on. What about mandatory army service, for example? Why is it that every Jewish male citizen of the State of Israel must risk his life defending the State and its inhabitants, except for members of the Haredi sector? Why are their 18 year old youths free to study and live with their families and relax and enjoy life whilst their counterparts suffer and toil defending these very people from our enemies? How do their leaders continue to besmirch the good name of the State and its army by refusing to force their students to enlist, and how dare they accept government money to support their yeshivot but deny the country any reciprocal payment?

And despite all the differences between us, they keep coming to our synagogues, and we keep supporting them. How do we explain this? I've watched as some of these individuals answer Amen, or murmur a prayer along with the congregants. This display of unity and love is truly heart-warming. But others, I've seen scamper away just before the start of Kedusha,

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Putin tends to say one thing and do another, and it's impossible to get a clear story amidst all the chaos. He imported supplies, troops, and planes and knew there was nothing we could do to stop him. Subsequently, he insisted he was only going to attack ISIS and pulled the military equivalent of "trolling" us when his first targets were secular rebels that we supported and aided. He knows the State department is only making empty threats when they question his moves. We're not going to do a thing that might upset him, but I must add, rightfully so. There would be no reason for us to start a huge war with Russia over the conflict in Syria. The problem here is we let the conflict simmer for too long without taking decisive action and allowed Putin to assume the primary role as crisis-solver even if his approach to ending the crisis involves a significant amount of bloodshed.

I feel that it's important to note how quickly Putin made an accord with Iran and Iraq over confronting ISIS. Iran and Iraq are two of our "allies" on which our two previous administrations (Bush-Iraq and Obama-Iran) expended TONS of diplomatic capital (and literal capital) to make them our regional partners. However, both IMMEDIATELY signed a deal with Russia after Russia took on an active role in the conflict. It just seems like Putin and the Russians are trying to get things done, while we sit on the sidelines and "lead from behind".

Which brings me to what should the US do?

For starters, I'm a big fan of the no fly zone over refugee

camp. We say we don't like Assad, and he's the only one with airpower in the conflict. He's barrel bombing the people he doesn't like including thousands of civilians. The least we could do with our superior air force would be to give the refugees (non-combatants) cover in designated areas (and who knows, maybe this would stem the tide of immigrants fleeing).

Next, we ensure that whatever air operations we conduct grants territorial integrity and protection to the stable countries around Syria (Israel, Jordan, Saudi Arabia and Turkey). We can't risk any of the turmoil spilling into their territories and causing more issues, so we should launch airstrikes on troops that attempt to disrupt those borders (ISIS doesn't recognize borders and seek to cause chaos and turmoil wherever they can, so this is mainly targeted at them.)

We should also start backing the Kurds whether our other "allies" (see above where they dropped us for Russia) like it or not. Kurdish territory is mostly stable and secure in a region becoming more and more defined by chaos. They display a degree of inclusion and tolerance not seen in the countries in which they have been marginalized. Their fighting forces include both women and men, and their land is inhabited not just by Kurds but by Christians and other regional minorities who are treated as equals. Helping them create an autonomous state would yield a stable country in a highly unstable region that would (should) be forever in our debt. Now is the perfect opportunity to help the Kurds of Syria, given the free-for-all that currently defines the country.

Lastly, we should probably look for some way out of the

conflict that doesn't include our explicit endorsement of Assad, but perhaps, an implicit one. If we aren't going to involve ourselves directly with boots on the ground, as I imagine no serious administration official, politician or military leader wants, our only option other than "pinprick" (in the words of the President) airstrikes is to sit out the conflict until Russia tires of it. We can never bring ourselves to support a murderous dictator and cannot come to his side. But realistically, he may be in the best position to recreate a stable government given that we'd never tolerate an ISIS or Al Qaeda backed regime. We've already given Putin the opportunity to seize control of the situation. It remains to be seen if he is doomed to fail or, what I suspect is more likely, capable of propping up Assad to the point that he can recreate a new Syria. This new Syria would consist of the Western regions of old Syria and turn Eastern Syria into some no-man's-land like parts of Iraq and Afghanistan and would ultimately get ruled by terrorists. But we must resign ourselves to the fact that there is nothing we can do about it.

The conflict in Syria is complicated and fraught. Long term solutions seem to be just that--long term and moreover, unknown. Russia seems to have some direction and is working to preserve its interests, yet we are hesitant to effectively defend ours. But for now, there are certain decisive actions we can take that would further our own interests, especially in the realms of promoting freedom and democracy. We can strengthen our allies' positions while working to build stability piece by piece in a conflict that has cost far too many lives.

United We Act

By Netanel Paley

It's no secret that our beloved Yeshiva University is in the midst of trying times. As it was five years ago, it is still difficult to merely mention YU in conversation without inducing a sarcastic remark about its notorious financial predicament. What may be less obvious is that this challenging period comprises a critical juncture in the storied history of the institution. If last year's academic "right-sizing" and the sudden appearance of YU Global were not enough to make this clear, President Richard Joel's recent announcement of his decision not to seek an additional term may be sufficient evidence that the university is at a crossroads. And as RIETS has not-so-quietly entered the storm of controversies swirling around the Modern Orthodox world, from the International Beit Din to women's Torah study, one has to wonder whether its leaders, too, smell urgency in the air. Yet neither the university administration's conservative actions, nor the yeshiva's reactionary statements, reflect a drastically innovative strategy appropriate for such drastically pressing circumstances. As allergic as it is to change, Yeshiva University needs to do something truly groundbreaking to restore its former glory.

To his great credit, it was the under the tenure of President Joel that YU last did something revolutionary. The founding of the Center for the Jewish Future in 2005, pioneered by inaugural dean Rabbi Kenneth Brander, represented YU's long-awaited commitment to the communal and educational needs of Modern Orthodoxy. To be fair, YU has long viewed its role as a bastion of Jewish communal work and cooperation as central to its mission. But it was only with the CJF's creation that the institution began to devote significant resources to the cause of the religious and social advancement of the greater Modern Orthodox community. The center's multitude of promising programs, from continuing education for rabbinic and communal leaders to leadership training for high school and undergraduate students, seemed to point to an abundance of creativity as well as cash. More importantly, though, the CJF successfully engaged Modern Orthodoxy, exciting its youth about Judaism, reinvigorating adults with hope for the future, and last but not least, advertising effectively on behalf of Yeshiva University free of charge.

Alas, how times have changed. The CJF, perhaps hit harder by financial cutbacks than any other division of Yeshiva University, is now a hollow shell of its former self. With many of its programs now defunct, it would be virtually unknown to undergraduate students were it not for the perennially successful Torah Tours and Counterpoint Israel programs, which it rallies around with great enthusiasm. Of course, this is not to be-

little the vital educational resources the Center provides Modern Orthodox congregations across North America. But with so little funds at its disposal, the CJF commands a fraction of the attention it used to. With no thriving gateway to its greater constituent community, YU finds itself drifting away, from both potential students and donors. Arguably, if the CJF was still operating at full strength, no reactionary declaration from any Rosh Yeshiva, regardless how outdated, would alienate Modern Orthodox people the way YU has in recent days.

So what will lessen that distance between YU and Modern Orthodoxy, and inspire new endowments? Though the expensive financial overhaul, courtesy of Alvarez & Marsal, and the academic restructuring brought the institution ever so much closer to solvency, the CJF is not receiving generous allocations anytime soon. Nor will any institutional change, like YU Global, prove relevant enough to the Jewish community to change their opinion about YU. And no, the Roshei Yeshiva

will not alter their hashkafic views to accommodate the shifting ethos of Modern Orthodoxy. Change in Yeshiva University needs to come from the bottom up, because, as we students know well, it will simply not happen otherwise. The answer, therefore, seems natural: a grassroots movement to connect YU with the Jewish community around it, serving not only as a replacement for the CJF's shuttered social programs, but as a reinforcement for YU's public image. Besides for reclaiming YU's position as the hub of Modern Orthodox communal life, such an organization can expand the university's reach beyond the Modern Orthodox community into other sects and denominations, generating a universal relevance not seen since the early days of the institution and possibly convincing non-Modern Orthodox people to donate.

Though it is only in its early stages, I can proudly say that the movement has already begun. Just a few weeks ago, I sent an email to the whole undergraduate student body about TheEruv, a new club I started to unite YU with the Jewish communities in Washington Heights and Midtown. Like most "[stud]" emails, mine were replete with exclamation points and corny lines and thus a ripe target for cynicism, but the responses I received reflected the exact opposite sentiment. Nearly 100 people signed up to receive weekly email updates about TheEruv's programs and events--which include after-school programming for day school students and Shabbatonim at senior centers and other colleges--and several of them submitted their own ideas. To me, it is a refreshing testament to the idealism that is still alive and well on campus, despite the pervasive negativity that has accompanied the difficult circumstances. Just as importantly, the community leaders whom I have contacted have all expressed the same enthusiasm as my fellow students, giving me confidence that there is a place for TheEruv in the Jewish community around YU.

To accomplish its mission of uniting the Jewish community, however, TheEruv must be more than a community chesed club. Chesed, while a fundamental value in its own right, is often a gateway to profound personal connections as well. The hope is that the personal relationships formed through TheEruv's

individual chesed opportunities, whether at hospitals, nursing homes, or less-attended weddings, give way to strong communal bonds. The same goal can hopefully be achieved through Torah study groups with students at other New York City colleges and less observant Jews. And by bringing together these bonds at community-wide events such as open panel discussions

and holiday chagigot, perhaps some sense of communal unity can finally be attained. It certainly will not be easy, but I believe the value of Jewish unity, especially in times like these, is well worth all the effort required.

This all seems very nice on a theoretical level, but will TheEruv's programs accomplish the club's greater goals in practice? The answer depends on us, the student body of YU. If we want to demonstrate that YU is part of the Jewish communal conversation in New York City, if we want to demonstrate that YU is relevant to the Jewish world at large, we need to create these connections ourselves. The future of YU as an inclusive center of Jewish life depends on our efforts as much as it depends on the efforts of the administration. With the current state of Modern Orthodoxy hanging in the balance, and with no plan in place to change that, we truly are the future of this institution.

CHARITY, CONT FROM PREVIOUS PAGE

so as not to be forced to join with the heathens in our holiest supplication. Still others will continue their journey in between congregants, oblivious to what passage of prayer the congregation has come to. Perhaps our prayer is not their prayer. Perhaps our Torah is not their Torah. Perhaps our beliefs are not their beliefs. But our money? Our money is their money, and our money is good enough for them.

And in most cases, we're happy to give our money. At my minyan one morning, a congregant assaulted a beggar by asking him, loudly, so that everyone could hear: "How old are you? Too old to work? Why can't you get a job and support yourself that way? Why do I have to pay for you?" The young man he was addressing simply smiled smugly, and said nothing. Maybe he acknowledged in his heart that there was something strange about this, that his livelihood depended on people he would otherwise have nothing to do with, but that wasn't going to propel a change in his actions. The young man walked away, and continued his collecting. Yet this type of outburst is rare. Most of us will give a coin and carry on, with our prayers, with our Torah, with our beliefs. I, for one, was embarrassed and ashamed at the boldness of my fellow congregant. This is not what we do. We give, and we don't think about it or ask questions. We give, and we don't question to whom we are giving to, and why.

It is laudable that we are willing to give to whomever comes to use with hands outstretched, and that we deny no one money that they so desperately need, especially when we have money for giving. But by supporting them, are we also approving their lifestyles and their beliefs? When we give a coin, are we essentially saying, "Here. Please continue to fight against the desecration of the Sabbath and against those who do not act in accordance with the Torah. Please continue to protect your children from the influences of the outside world and of the Modern Orthodox and to protest our community's values. Please continue to have nothing to do with us, except as your chief benefactors?"

Please don't take this as a call to action. What, indeed, would happen if we only gave charity to those of whom we approved? Would we give only to men, or only to women? Would we deny anyone who is in traditional dress, or who is modernly dressed? What about Democrats and Republicans, liberals and conservatives? Maybe we should only give those whose outlooks on life align with our own. Maybe we should only give people with families, and not those who are single. Maybe only older individuals are deserving of our money, and not the young, able-bodied ones. It is quick to see how this could get out of hand. And the bottom line remains the same: a needy Jew is a needy Jew, and we have an obligation to help those who are less fortunate. But perhaps we need to be more aware of what we are doing, and of the message we are sending. Should charity be given in a vacuum, or do we stop to consider exactly to whom we are giving our hard earned money?



The Executive Series: An Interview with Laizer Kornwasser

By Raymond Cohen

About The Executive Series: 'The Executive Series' provides access to the thoughts and experiences of highly accomplished individuals in the business world. Through its conversational style the column expresses the unique story of each business leader, including their motivations, struggles, successes and failures. 'The Executive Series' also serves as a forum for a broader conversation about leadership in business and in life.

About Mr. Laizer Kornwasser (Adapted from Bloomberg.com): Mr. Laizer D. Kornwasser served as an Executive Vice President and Company Group Chairman of Valeant Pharmaceuticals International, Inc. from February 1, 2013 to July 2015. Mr. Kornwasser served as an Executive officer of Medco Health from 2003 to 2011. Previously, he held positions at Merrill Lynch and Coopers & Lybrand and served as an Associate Professor of Yeshiva University. He is a Director of Everyday Health, Inc. and is currently advising various Private Equity investors in the healthcare space. Mr. Kornwasser holds a B.S. in Accounting from Yeshiva University in 1992 and a Master in Business Administration from Harvard Business School in 1996.

Mr. Kornwasser currently serves as a member of the board of trustees of Yeshiva University with the goal of assisting Chairman Moshael Straus, President Richard Joel, and the administration on thinking through the current situation from a business perspective. He is also teaching a course in SSSB called Managing a Growing Business.

RC: Who, would you say, had the greatest influence on you as an emerging leader?

LK: My biggest role model would be my father. I was blessed to be able to spend time with him on business trips. When he would be involved in negotiations, I would be the 'fly on the wall' observing his every move. He showed me what it means to lead with passion and to be successful. My father had founded, and was the CEO of, a Real Estate Investment Trust. He always taught me the importance of being kind to others. He would go around the office every day to say hello to everybody regardless of how busy he was.

RC: When was the first time you considered yourself a leader, and how did that experience help you as you advanced to more sophisticated leadership positions?

LK: My first leadership position was student council president of my elementary school. That experience taught me not to view my age as a disadvantage. I had skipped a grade and was the youngest in my class, so that role taught me that leadership can be achieved regardless of one's age. Another formative leadership position I held was as student president of the Sy Syms School of Business. I was very studious and was passionate about a couple of student issues regarding Sy Syms, and I learned that leadership is first and foremost about the ability to convince others to embrace change and recognize potential.

RC: Why did you choose to get an MBA? And how do you compare the experience with your original expectations?

LK: After college, I decided to go into accounting and went to work for Coopers & Lybrand (which later merged to become the 'C' in PwC). I spent two years there and then got accepted and decided to go to Harvard Business School. I always knew I wanted to get a business degree. I thought I was going to go into my family business and I figured that if I was going to join the company, I wanted to have some credentials behind me. I also knew that I wanted to broaden my horizons, I really wanted the experience of understanding the business world from a completely different perspective.

I had a great experience, and was fascinated by the case study method. Business school changed the way I

think. It changed the way I analyze; it changed the way I make decisions. It also broadened my horizons from a network perspective. The experience of Business School is not just what you learn; it's who you learn it with.

RC: What was the toughest moment of your career?

LK: After being laid off from Walker Digital due to the fact that the "Internet Bubble" had burst, I decided I wanted to return to investment banking. I was able to get to a position where Lehman Brothers made me an offer to join their Telecom, Media and Technology group.

**"WHATEVER YOU DO,
YOU HAVE TO JOIN
COMPANIES WHOSE
LEADERSHIP YOU HAVE
CONFIDENCE IN TO
ACHIEVE SUCCESS."
- LAIZER KORNWASSER**



The next day I got a call from Merrill-Lynch, who I had worked for previously, saying: 'we hear you're coming back to Investment Banking, why don't you come back to us.' I called Lehman Brothers and told them I would be going to Merrill-Lynch because I was more familiar with the people there. They said, 'once you give it up there is no turning back. I said 'That's ok.' The following Monday I came in to Merrill-Lynch and the head of the division says: 'I have your offer, but I can't give it to you - the Company announced a hiring freeze on Sunday. I told everyone about your situation but unfortunately there is nothing I can do.' This was a bump in salary, a bump in title and substantial equity.

The reason why I tell you this is because you never know how life takes its course; everything turns out min-Hashamayim. I would have spent the next 10 years becoming a Managing Director in either Lehman Brothers or Merrill-Lynch, with my compensation tied to their stock - and then when the mortgage crisis hit the financial markets my equity in either bank would have been wiped out.

RC: How did you end up in healthcare after accounting and real estate investment banking?

I got a call from a friend of mine who I had previously worked with who asked me to join business development for a company called Medco Health. Medco was being spun out from Merck and I liked the idea that it was being spun out as the "Problem Child". To me that meant

opportunity. I did not have any healthcare experience, nor did I think I was going into healthcare. I remember my first meeting with the CEO, David Snow - he asked me 'why should we hire you?' and I said to him 'I have no experience in healthcare, but if you want someone who is going to get you to the finish line first, then bet on me.'

RC: How were you able to compensate for your lack of industry expertise?

LK: Medco hired me for business development and internal turnaround. I had the ability to make deals, to understand numbers, problem solve and act as a business manager. You need to be able to communicate. You need to know when you know an answer, but also when you don't know an answer and get the right help to get there. So, in my mind, if you've got a good business sense, you can communicate and you can lead, you don't necessarily need to be an industry expert - that's not the case with all industries but with many industries it does apply.

The same thing happened at Valeant. I had industry exposure, but didn't grow up in the 'pharma world'. And most of the executives at Valeant did not grow up in the 'pharma world' either which allowed us to approach the marketplace with a different mind frame, with the inherent assumption that the current pharma process could be improved. It's a lot easier to improve upon a model if you're not in it and if you're coming from the outside. So to me the key was identifying what I know and what I don't know. In the areas that you don't know, you need to find people you can trust that you can lean on for advice. For example, research & development - I'm not a doctor - I'm not someone who is going to make those decisions, but it's about getting the right people at the table.

RC: What factors do you consider to be a must-have for any company worth joining?

LK: My philosophy is that you have to put yourself in a position to constantly grow and learn because that's how you get ahead. Another major factor is confidence in leadership. When I joined Medco Health, I knew that the executive team there had leaders whom I could learn from and I felt that they were going to be successful. The same was true with Valeant. Whatever you do, you have to join companies whose leadership you have confidence in to achieve success, otherwise you're just wasting your time.

RC: You've spent most of your career working for large corporations, could you explain why you prefer that setting a more entrepreneurial environment?

LK: Well, you could have an entrepreneurial mindset in a large corporation. When I was at Medco, one of the reasons we were able to grow from a \$6 billion company to over a \$30 billion was because we had an entrepreneurial frame of mind combined with the resources of a large firm. So, I very much consider myself to be entrepreneurial.

RC: What was the biggest obstacle you had to overcome to achieve success in your career?

LK: My biggest obstacle was that since I started out in Accounting and Investment Banking, it took me some time to step away and realize that while numbers are important in terms of making business decisions, they are only one data point in arriving at what is ultimately the correct solution. And if you only make your decision solely based on a spreadsheet, you probably won't end up with the right answer.

RC: You've been active with community service throughout your career; could you describe some of the challenges that you've had balancing community service with work life?

LK: You know, it's always a struggle - especially the earlier on you are in your career, you will always have challenges in balancing different situations. It's less of an issue with regard to community vs. work because the reality is, when you are young in your career, work can be all encompassing. The amount of time I gave to

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my community earlier on in my career is nowhere near the amount of time I'm giving today. The struggles really become combining family, work and religion. The key thing is knowing your priorities and not deviating from them. People will respect your balance so long as you don't make it an "excuse". If I ever left a team working on Friday, I would always let them know that I will get the job done

by Monday morning. Regardless if it meant coming in on Saturday night or Sunday.

But you need to understand that you can't just take, you need to give - and you should also view giving as receiving, for me, there is tremendous reward to giving. Whether that means giving financially, whether it's giving time, or even sitting down with a student to help them think through their career - that's what gives me pleasure.

RC: *What qualities do you look for in a new hire?*

zLK: Hardworking. Work ethic is paramount. Being smart and summer jobs are just the cost of entry. The person needs to demonstrate that they want the job. Come in having done your research, come prepared and prove to me that you are willing to go the extra mile.

By Eliezer Sundel

In what was the biggest technology deal in history, Dell agreed to purchase EMC Corp. for \$67 billion. While there are only a few companies that are capable of executing a complicated deal like this one, for a much smaller price, anyone can actually purchase their own piece of a company, albeit a smaller share of a company, by investing in a company's stock. Stock investing, whether done on your own or on your behalf, should have a place in everyone's life as a chance to increase one's wealth. However, with anything else in life that is worth your time, research and knowledge are of the utmost importance. This article will give the reader some basic terminology and knowledge of the stock markets, and will provide examples with well-known companies.

What is a stock? Simply put, it represents an ownership or a share in a company; just like a typical ownership position, you are entitled to a company's assets and profits. There are two main types of stock: preferred and common. Although it might seem as though preferred stock is "preferred," that is certainly not always the case. Preferred is only "preferred" for the main reason that in case of a company's bankruptcy its owners have a higher priority to any leftovers over common stockholders, and periodically, almost every company will distribute a stream of fixed payments, called dividends. On the flip side, the relative predictability and safety of preferred stock makes it less prone to the vicissitudes of the market, causing it to often lag behind its counterpart's appreciation. Not all companies have both types of stocks, but almost all with have common.

The more stock that one has, the greater ownership that he/she possesses--owning two slices of a pizza obviously represents a larger share of the overall pie than just one slice. The total number of shares of a company multiplied by its stock price gives you to its market capitalization. This is what the company is worth in the public's eyes, i.e. the whole pizza pie. This, however, is not necessarily its "real" and inherent value, i.e. I can buy a potato chip for \$100, which is clearly overpaying. Apple has a stock price of \$111.79 and 5.7 billion shares outstanding (shares that are owned outside of the company) bringing it to a world-leading market capitalization of \$637.5 billion (as of this writing). As of October 13, 2015, one share of Microsoft was worth \$46.89, which represents a 1/8.03 billionth ownership in the company. However small that may seem, 10 years ago that same share was about \$25 cheaper. You can do the math, but if you would have purchased 100 shares back then, you could buy plenty of Zeide's Nuggets at Golan Heights today.

You may have used a service such as Uber or Instacart recently, had a great experience, and now want to invest in the company. Unfortunately, some companies like Uber and Instacart are private, meaning they're not publicly traded consequently cannot be purchased by everyday investors. Microsoft on the other hand is a public company and its shares can therefore be purchased. In theory, if you buy a share in Microsoft, you now have a claim on Bill Gates' old desk, have a say in who is elected CEO, and all while not incurring the same liabilities as privately-held Uber's executives. Some of the greatest investors think within this framework- because even they can get lost in the trees and not see the forest. They see every dollar as an investment in a company. They picture themselves sitting besides Bill Gates' desk as opposed to a stock-purchase certificate on the computer. In fact, the only risk that you possess is losing any money you invested. This may seem far-fetched, but it has happened on occasion, mostly due

Stock Basics for Dummies

to corporate scandals or exorbitant debt requirements. To illustrate, former investment banking behemoth Lehman Brothers was sitting atop the financial world with a top-five ranking in worldwide investment banks. At one point in 2007 it was trading at \$86.18 per share, giving it a market capitalization close to \$60 billion. Amidst insurmountable financial obligations, its share price plummeted to \$3.65, ultimately causing its sudden purchase by Barclays for a fraction of the price. Someone who was still invested in the company when its price plummeted would have lost a lot of money.

As touched on earlier, some companies are private, like Uber and Dell, and are thus inaccessible to the general public, while others like Microsoft, McDonalds and Nike

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

are, mainly through exchanges. Simply, an exchange is an interface that brings together buyers and sellers within the general stock market. The exchange can either be a physical location, with the most famous being the New York Stock Exchange, otherwise known as NYSE or the "big board", or a virtual one, where trades can be executed electronically, most famously through the NASDAQ. Additionally, an exchange can be anywhere across the world- anywhere from the Chicago, Frankfurt, Sydney, to Tel Aviv. For the most part, trades can only be executed on that respective exchange during set hours. The New York Stock Exchange trades from 9:30am to 4:00pm on a regular day and is closed for Shabbos, Sunday and some holidays.

Now that you know a little about stocks, the obvious question is what causes them to go up sometimes, and unfortunately for investors plummet at other times? At the core, supply and demand is the catalyst--if a company is in higher demand than it is supplied, it will go up, and the reverse applies. It is for that reason that stock prices are constantly changing, as people want things at different times. That part is simple. The harder part is determining the stimuli behind the many decisions of the participants of the market. Until today, no one has mastered this. There are many theories, some of which have even won Nobel Prizes. The consensus is that the amount that the company earns is a major factor, since no investment is worthwhile if it doesn't make money. But, there are also more outlandish theories, such as the "Super Bowl Indicator," where overall prices are determined by the conference of the winning football team. At the end of the day, it is important to remember that investing is an art and not a science, and that no one is yet to master the trade. It is said, that the best stockers correctly pick a stock 51% of the time. Where else do you have an opportunity to be wrong 49% of the time and still succeed?



Key Career Guidance For Aspiring Accountants

By Etan (Alex) Neiman

Large or mid-size firm? Tax or audit? For many accounting students, these career-defining decisions are just around the corner. Other accounting students have more time before these decisions are made but still must start to consider the right career path. The problem is that determining the right position at the right firm can be tougher than finding cold water in The Caf. Luckily for us, others have been where we YU accounting students stand today and have come out on the other side with long, successful accounting careers.

In an attempt to sort through all of the career possibilities, I recently interviewed four YU alumni in the accounting field, three of whom have over fifty years of combined public accounting experience, and one recent graduate who not too long ago was making his own major career decisions. We broke down the key factors YU accounting students must consider before arriving at the right position at the right firm.

The Panelists:

Jonathan Sicklick (JS): Sicklick (YU '98) is a director in audit at Deloitte, concentrating on technology and media companies as well as law firms. He has been at Deloitte his entire career.

Nachshon Block (NB): Block (YU '05) is a senior manager at EY in the Banking and Capital Markets group within the Financial Services office. He has been at EY his entire career.

Jeffrey Resnick (JR): Resnick (Brooklyn College '83) is a partner with a focus in tax at WeiserMazars, a top 25 accounting firm. He started his own practice in 1990 and has subsequently merged three times, most recently with WeiserMazars in 2013.

Benjy Blumenthal (BB): Blumenthal (YU '15) is a first year audit associate at Frost Rittenberg & Rothblatt, a well-respected, mid-size Chicago accounting firm.

What is the path from YU graduate to partner at your firm?

NB: The general career path is staff for two years, three years as a senior, three years as a manager and then senior manager until partner. There are opportunities for early promotion, but I would say the overwhelming majority of EY employees follow that career path.

Author's Note: The large firms generally follow a path to partner along these lines.

JR: Within ten to twelve years, if someone stays on the track, they will be a partner at WeiserMazars (2 years as a staff accountant, 3 years as a senior, 2-3 years as a manager and 3-4 years as a senior manager)

What are some of the advantages of working at a large firm?

JS: At a large firm, there is a much larger client base, so you get varied experiences. I've worked on start-up companies and was exposed to full audits as a young staff member. As a manager, I began working on larger publicly traded media companies and one of the largest privately owned media companies. My experiences as a staff allowed me to adjust and be able to see the big picture on larger audits. An additional advantage of a large firm is that it comes with a lot of (scheduling) flexibility, which is key when you're leaving early every single Friday for the majority of busy season.

Author's Note: Other advantages include, but are not limited to, the tremendous resources, as well as the network of YU alumni and distinguished professionals.

What are some of the advantages of working at a mid-size firm?

JR: If a student coming out of YU goes to a tax or audit department at one of the large firms, the likelihood is that he or she is going to be working (significant) hours. To try to have a life where you also have family time and religious studies is very difficult. WeiserMazars stresses work-life balance. If someone wants to stay in public accounting, a mid-size firm is a great option. You will work with great clients and make a nice income for your family.

BB: The advantage of a mid-size firm is that the firm is like a family. My mentor and I have meetings and lunches to keep track of my progress, and I am comfortable asking questions. The firm is very accommodating to Jews and all religions with flexible holiday scheduling.

Audit or Tax?

JS: In tax, you are working with the company and can bring clear tax savings that translates directly into dollars, while in audit you are working for the shareholders and the public at large, where these third parties and the capital markets as a whole rely on us.

NB: I believe that audit provides one an opportunity to fully understand the inner workings of a company, such as how the company is looking to create efficiencies and how and why they are making their business decisions. I believe that if I would run my own business, my audit experience has provided me with the required foundation needed to be successful. On

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- JONATHAN SICKLICK

the other hand, I believe there is an appeal to the tax practice as well, as one can analogize tax consulting work with learning Gemara. In both cases, a text is analyzed (in tax it would be the tax code) with an attempt to identify a certain phrase or application of a specific phrase that can be applied to benefit your client.

JR: I don't know if there's really a benefit to either one; it's what you like. There are people who are more inclined to choose one over the other. In my opinion, if someone doesn't know where they want to go, it's easier to start in audit and switch to tax. By selecting audit, you will gain an understanding of how the numbers flow and a general understanding of how a business operates.



What are some misconceptions about working at accounting firms?

JS: Your goal should be to make manager in whatever firm you're in and then assess your career and decide what you want to do next. You do not learn enough being in a firm for only two or three years. If you leave before you're a manager, you are making a mistake and not taking advantage of the opportunity that you were provided.

NB: A big misconception is the type of people that work in accounting. The people I work with are fantastic, engaging, entertaining and interesting, as opposed to the general stereotype of accountants (being boring people).

JR: There is a mindset that only if you cannot get into a large firm, then you should go to any of the mid-size firms. I believe that a disservice is being done to YU students; the students should be looking at mid-size firms not as a secondary choice but as a conscious choice. Think it out. Why do you want to be in a large firm? Why do you want to be in a mid-size firm? The top students should be applying to all of them depending on their choices.

BB: In terms of mid-size and small firms, there exists a major misconception about compensation. Salaries at mid-size firms and small firms are competitive with the large firms.

Author's Note: The Robert Half 2015 Accounting Salary Guide supports Blumenthal's findings about public accounting salaries. Though the large firms offer the highest salaries, there is not a steep drop-off in mid-size and small firms.

What are the characteristics you are looking for in an associate at your firm?

JS: For me, success as an associate is a product of three things:

A) Always have the right attitude. Give everything and seek additional work.

B) Know what you don't know. There is nothing wrong with saying "I do not know" to a client. Do the research, and get back to them.

C) Be responsive. My clients all know that I get back to them ASAP. I once got an email from a client and it took me more than a few hours to get back to them. They were (genuinely) concerned something was wrong.

JR: Work effectively, ask questions, and take ownership. I want that next student who comes out of school to be the best and the brightest so that they can eventually be my partner. That would be the best thing in the world for me.

What advice would you give to a YU accounting student?

JS: Try to get the CPA done before you start work. It will make your life so much easier, as you will not have to worry about starting work and studying at the same time.

NB: Being an observant Jew in corporate America is not so easy and requires hard work and dedication to be successful. One must realize that while everyone understands that you are not available on Saturday when the team is working, it might require working on a Sunday when the team is not working. You don't want to be viewed as the type of person that's taking advantage of being a Sabbath observer, one who disappears at 3:00 (on Friday when the team is working Saturday) and comes back Monday morning.

JR: Keep all of your options open. Explore all firms and what the pros and cons are. Where do you think you are going to be down the road and will that firm offer you what you want? It could be that a large firm is better for you; it could be that a mid-size or small firm is better for you.

BB: Form as many good relationships as possible. If you are looking for a job, make sure to use all of your contacts as well as go to every job fair. When you start working, ask as many questions as possible to your mentor or senior. They know it's your first year, and they don't expect you to know everything.

If I Can Have Your Attention For Just A Moment

By Benjamin Zirman

Do you have trouble paying attention, have hyperactivity, or suffer from impulsivity? Well you very well might have ADHD. Not to worry though, more than 11 percent of American children also suffer from ADHD according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. In addition, about 4 percent of American adults deal with ADHD every day. These numbers are on the rise as there have been 42 percent more diagnoses over the past 8 years. An Israeli startup company called Alcobra has an innovative new ADHD drug called Metadoxine Extended Release (MDX) that will take the market by storm when it comes out later this year.

Alcobra is an Israeli startup company started in 2008 and headquartered in Tel Aviv. The CEO and President is Dr. Yaron Daniely. Daniely spent his early years in Tel Aviv before moving to Florida and continuing on to NYU School of Medicine where he received a Ph.D. He also got an MBA from the Technion in Israel. He has been the CEO and President since 2008 and has totally changed the company. Alcobra actually developed the drug for ADHD by accident. The company was founded by Dr. Dalia Megiddo and Udi Gilboa to work on developing metadoxine, in order to create a pill that would prevent alcohol from affecting the brain. It was supposed to quickly reduce blood levels so people could get behind the wheel and drive shortly after drinking. The results showed that the drug had no impact on lowering blood-alcohol levels but it had a surprisingly big impact on cognitive ability. "In driving, memory, and attention tests that were conducted, it was as though those people were not drunk, despite the fact that, in terms of the amount of alcohol in their blood, it was not clear that they would be able to stand on their own two feet. So the idea to treat Attention Deficit Disorder came about" said current CEO and President Yaron Daniely. Alcobra has become one of the hottest companies since then with their new focus and concentration on ADHD.

Almost 5% of adults around the world have ADHD but many more adults remain undiagnosed and untreated. The most common products on the market now can be divided into two categories: stimulants such as Ritalin, Adderall, and Concerta and the non stimulant drugs such as Straterra. There are problems with both types of ADHD medication. Between 30 to 50 percent of those who take stimulants for ADHD either do not respond to or do not tolerate the treatments.

"ALCOBRA IS AN EXCITING COMPANY, BOTH BECAUSE OF WHAT THEY'VE BEEN ABLE TO ACCOMPLISH AND FOR MDX'S POTENTIAL. ALTHOUGH THEY STARTED AS A SMALL ISRAELI STARTUP, THEY HAVE BEEN ABLE TO SCALE TO THE UNITED STATES' MARKET AND COMPETE WITH PRE-EXISTING COMPANIES THERE."

Additionally, stimulants have many negative side effects including uncomfortable mental states, interference with sleep and appetite, development of nervous ticks and increased blood pressure. Even more scary is the high likelihood of abuse as these drugs are controlled substances. Therefore, the drug market has been leaning towards non-stimulants but unfortunately they have been not nearly as effective in dealing with the symptoms. The only FDA approved non-stimulant, Straterra, also brings with it side effects sleepiness, headache, abdominal pain or upset stomach, nausea and vomiting, dizziness, mood swings, and uptakes of suicidal thoughts. The current market options clearly all have their downsides and the platform is set for a game changing drug to be developed.

While Alcobra has developed MDX as a non-stimulant pill, tests results show that it is twice as effective as regular non-stimulant drugs and as effective as stimulant drugs. Even better, no side effects beside slight nausea have been reported by users. MDX has multiple applications to other CNS disorders including the rare Fragile X Syndrome (FXS). Fragile X Syndrome is a genetic condition that causes learning disabilities and cognitive impairment. The FDA has already approved use of the drug to treat Fragile X Syndrome. MDX for ADHD is in its final stages of testing and should be approved by the FDA in the upcoming months.

From this writer's point of view, Alcobra is an exciting company, both because of what they've been able to accomplish and for MDX's potential. Although they started as a small Israeli startup, they have been able to scale to the United States' market and compete with pre-existing companies there. Additionally, they have gathered a board of directors consisting of renowned doctors and scientists that will help the company immensely as they continue to test their product. I expect Alcobra to take up a large share of the current 4 billion dollar market that exists for ADHD medication. The stock currently closed at 6.28 dollars and I expect that number to skyrocket once the company completes testing and receives FDA approval for MDX. Alcobra's revolutionary pill is right around the corner, and with it may come a solution to the growing epidemic of ADHD.



By Dovid Simpser

Imagine having the power to impact thousands of lives with the decisions you make everyday--such is the gravitas of being an executive of a nonprofit organization. Their decisions impact not only their own institution, but also its stakeholders and the broader community that they're part of as well. How did leaders get to their current positions? Were their original professional aspirations always in the nonprofit sector? Through interviewing two non-profit executives, Michael Feinman, Executive Director of the Jewish National Fund-Greater New York Region, and Dr. Alisa Rubin Kurshan, Senior Vice President of the UJA-Federation of New York, I was able to see the unique paths that led them to their respective leadership roles.

Michael Feinman woke up to a career that wasn't what



he had envisioned for himself. After working in sales for ten years, he realized that this was not the life he had wanted. "I was in a field that I wasn't happy or satisfied with," he remarked. Feinman went back to the drawing board, and through discussions with friends and role models, he decided that a Master's degree in social work would be the perfect window into a meaningful career. So that's exactly what he did, receiving his master's degree from Yeshiva University's Wurzweiler School of Social Work.

After completing his master's degree, Feinman started at the very bottom as an intern at the UJA - Federation of New York, but through hard work and high aspirations, he "worked his way up the ladder" until he became the Executive Director of the Jewish National Fund - Greater New York Region (JNF). When asked what advice he would offer to those interested in the nonprofit sector, Feinman emphasized the importance of making your career your own. "What is your 'fill in the

The Nonprofit Life

blank story," Feinman would challenge those interested in the nonprofit sector. "My JNF story is mine - it takes time to develop but I can talk about what JNF means to me and it's real."

Feinman came to the realization that there was something missing in his life, something in his regular job that was lacking. A job simply paying the bills just wasn't enough anymore. That all changed when he started his career working in a nonprofit organization. To Feinman, "Working in the nonprofit sector, especially focusing on Israel, is totally fulfilling for me. I am proud of the work and I am proud of the organization."

Dr. Alisa Rubin Kurshan has her own unique story of how she ended up as the Senior Vice President of Strategic Planning and Organizational Resources at the UJA. Kurshan described how she was a "mathematician who loved to teach math." Motivated to help struggling students, she felt that she could change the way students viewed math, and help them feel confident when faced with difficult equations. She believed that "every high school student needed one great math teacher and then there would be no fear of math anymore." Kurshan wanted to be that teacher.

"WHAT IS YOUR 'FILL IN THE BLANK STORY,' FEINMAN WOULD CHALLENGE THOSE INTERESTED IN THE NONPROFIT SECTOR. 'MY JNF STORY IS MINE - IT TAKES TIME TO DEVELOP BUT I CAN TALK ABOUT WHAT JNF MEANS TO ME AND IT'S REAL.'"

Eventually though, this wasn't enough. The "black and white of mathematics that had once brought [her] so much

satisfaction, no longer did." In pursuit of something more, Kurshan became invested in furthering Jewish education. She felt that it was critically important to address the "nuances, the challenges of the grays of life" to improve Jewish education. Kurshan saw an unaddressed need in the community as a calling for her to make a difference.

With the help of the Wexner Graduate Fellowship, Alisa Rubin Kurshan, was able to return to school at age thirty-five to earn her Ph.D. in Jewish Education. After completing her advanced education and getting a job in the UJA, Kurshan, enthusiastic about improving Jewish education, continued to progress in her professional career. Eventually, she advanced to become the Senior Vice President of Strategic Planning and Organizational Resources, where she "oversees the distribution of hundreds of millions of dollars to nonprofits in New York, Israel, and around the world." She spends a good portion of her time connecting with the community that she serves, "making sure that each program is having the maximum impact and fulfilling priorities." Whether trying to lift Jews out of poverty, improve the quality of Jewish educational experiences, or strengthen the connection of North American Jewry with Israel, she makes sure that every dollar is used to its fullest potential.

Neither Michael Feinman nor Alisa Rubin Kurshan started their careers with a desire to work in the nonprofit sector, and neither of them even had career paths that necessarily would have lead them to executive positions. But what they both had was the desire for something more from their lives; in Kurshan's case, you can practically hear her sense of fulfillment when she describes working for a non-profit: "I love my job. I believe I have the best job in Jewish life."

College gives us the impression that there is one direct path to our ideal career. There is a mindset that if we want to be successful, we need this internship, or that job. But at the end of the day, there are so many unique career paths and options. The truth is that there isn't one route to becoming a leader of a nonprofit, or of any organization for that matter. Far more important than the path you choose is finding a career path that adds meaning to your life.

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