

The COMMENTATOR

The Independent Student Newspaper of Yeshiva College, Sy Syms School of Business, and Yeshiva University



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Yeshiva University Formally Invests Rabbi Dr. Ari Berman as Fifth President

By Nolan Edmonson



To great fanfare, President Berman ushers in new 'World of Tomorrow' for Yeshiva University.

Rabbi Dr. Ari Berman was installed this morning as Yeshiva University's fifth president and with his investiture came much celebration and festivity.

The ceremony took place in the historic Lampport Auditorium, filled with faculty, alumni, trustees and students—a cross-section of the university's past and present. Infused with an atmosphere of new beginnings, the slogan "the world of tomorrow" graced programs and pins for the event.

Throughout the two-hour program speakers touched on a future-focused theme, noting the institution's storied history and significance for the Jewish people, while pointing decidedly towards a pivot where the university adjusts to account for a "contemporary reality" that requires focus on scientific innovation, analytical skills, and global awareness and reach.

The program began rather ceremoniously with members of Yeshiva faculty from each of the graduate schools parading down the aisles of Lampport auditorium dressed in their academic regalia. Students and various alumni and friends of the university preceeding them.

Esteemed guests included former

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YU Grants Tenure to 17 Professors, Appoints Two as Full Professors

By Ilan Hirschfield

Over the summer, the Yeshiva University Board of Trustees awarded tenure to 17 faculty members across the university's undergraduate and graduate programs.

The university announced the decision in a press release made public on July 13, which provided a list of the professors in question and elaborated on some of the professors' research interests in their respective fields.

Dr. Karen Bacon, the Mordecai D. Katz and Dr. Monique C. Katz Dean of Undergraduate Faculty of Arts and Sciences, expressed satisfaction with the decision. "The tenure track faculty at YU are those individuals who wish to make their careers at this University and those to whom we are equally

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No Future Without the Past: An Analysis of President Berman's Invest

By Shoshy Ciment

"It is extremely humbling to stand here today in this hallowed hall," said President Berman at the beginning of his investiture address in the Nathan Lampport Auditorium. "This hall through which the voices of our past continue to echo across the generations."

On Sunday, September 10, Rabbi Ari Berman stood in front of close to 1,000 people and was invested as the fifth President of Yeshiva University. But even as President Berman readily accepted the task of propelling Yeshiva University into new educational and innovative frontiers, the legacy of Presidents and University leaders past clung to Berman's words and vision for the future.

"Whatever success we hope to achieve in shaping our future will be due to the fact that we are standing on the shoulders of giants," stated Berman, requesting of his audience to take a moment to recognize Presidents Emeriti Rabbi Dr. Norman Lamm and Richard Joel, both seated on the stage.

Aside from Berman's allusion to the leaders of Yeshiva University that came before him, history was the underlying theme of Berman's investiture ceremony. Students were encouraged to attend the ceremony

SEE NO FUTURE, CONTINUED ON PAGE 11

The EDITORIAL

The Paper from the Past, The Paper of Tomorrow?

By Avi Strauss

If imitation is the highest form of flattery, then a desire to plagiarize my predecessors' opening editorials on freedom of the press must mean that I'd like to take them out for a three-course dinner. Fully aware of the breadth and clarity with which many editors have articulated visions for this paper, there were times before writing my own editorial where I wished I could lift their words from the archives, or at least paraphrase large chunks and call it a day. The past has certainly produced more original arguments for an independent and free media than I could devise on my own.

Keep with me, recycling and reformulating clichés of editorialists' past is an exercise in which I wish to engage briefly, if only to reaffirm that those words still remain true. The length dedicated to these affirmations carries no correlation with their importance or significance:

Campus journalism is an essential component to a vibrant campus and communal debate.

Shining a light on impropriety and indifference is a core function of this paper.

The Commentator is perhaps the primary historical document of this institution, with its robust and content-driven columns and sections, and will continue to be such.

Responsible reporting is our duty, and this editorial board will strive to fulfill that central charge.

We are very open to serious, constructive feedback.

Openness to a broad spectrum of ideas is vital for a paper to occupy its proper place in the free exchange of opinion and thought. The need for an undergraduate paper to lend a platform to any undergraduates who wish to express themselves only redoubles this point.

The returning editors to this paper's Board demonstrate through their track record that the above are our core ideals. This paper's newer editors, chosen for their hard work and passion for journalistic integrity, are prepared to maintain these principles as well.

Throat clearing aside, thoughtful and frequent readers of these pages know the above to be true. Hopefully our new readers have faith that my curtness conveys my seriousness.

The question remains: Where do we go from here?

According to any objective timeline, YU is at a moment of unique historical significance. New presidents don't come often for our university (there have been just five Yeshiva presidents since Dr. Bernard Revel assumed the formal position in 1915). Based on the slogan of the investiture—"The World of Tomorrow"—it seems President Berman is maneuvering to make this moment about more than just formal proceedings and ceremonial medallions.

The world of tomorrow President Berman described includes many changes that YU needs to function as a university at the cutting edge of several developing fields. Nonetheless, as the president and other featured speakers described, any progress is to be done with a keen awareness of our past, honoring, rather than sacrificing, our history in order to adapt and evolve appropriately.

Based on my own interactions with the president, I trust that he is sincere when he articulates this type of vision. It will be upon him and his administration to move beyond these mere talking points in the years ahead. Because while such platitudes make effective fuel for a merry-go-round of positive outlooks and generic talking points, they don't do much in thumbing the scale of bureaucratic slogging in favor of the student body, nor will they untie the financial corset squeezing YU at the hips.

But presidents don't need editorialists without administrative backgrounds to pretend to lecture on how they can best do their jobs—there are many other ways for me to spill ink. Rather, at this unique juncture, it is incumbent upon this paper to figure out its own role in a changing university, irrespective of what becomes of "Tomorrow's" promised changes.

To figure out that role, some more brief accounting of the past is warranted. For over 81 years, *The Commentator* has served, as I stated earlier, as an historical document for this institution,

recording key events and key narratives that developed over time.

In combing through the archives that tell the tales of Yeshiva's past, nothing more striking occurred to me than the plodding repetition—every few years, the same conflicts arise, and the same articles are printed, just with new names and new dates. Limited by short institutional memory, student bodies come and go, unaware that the problems they bemoan agitated students of the past, and oblivious to the fact that future students will contend with the same issues.

For decades, in these pages, students have detailed rifts between the right- and left-wings of the undergraduate programs. No meal plan price has been raised without discontent (see this issue for the latest in a never-ending saga). The student constitution has been written and rewritten, most recently in 2013, *just* before many students who wished to rewrite it yet again set foot on campus. Student leaders even met with a (different) Dean Bacon to discuss problems with the dual-curriculum in 1966.

It's not for naught that Tocqueville said, "history is a gallery of pictures in which there are few originals and many copies."

No doubt the students leading the charge when any given issue arose were ambitious and passionate, attempting to right wrongs. And often progress was made and issues resolved. But many other times, problems languished. Students became fatigued and disinterested, graduating and bequeathing a mostly good institution with several unresolved problems to its next generation of undergraduates.

While some might use the above information as a reason to despair, I see it as a wondrous opportunity. We are not bound by any religious law or social contract to join in the cycle of disorderly, if at times justified, complaints. Instead, for our collective sanity, we can move to make YU's history linear instead of circular.

And to be sure, I have witnessed several students overcome the hurdles and challenges to change something for the better, and have that change outlast their own campus tenure. Changing the Chanukah concert to ChanukahFest and relentlessly pursuing student involvement in certain academic decisions like changes to Core requirements are just two of many instances where students who wished to do, rather than sit back and complain, effected changes that outlasted their own time here.

But whether it's tension between disparate parts of the undergraduate community, presidents exchanging ceremonial regalia and stating Yeshiva philosophy, or Editors-in-Chief revisiting their predecessors' work, we must move beyond simple copies of the past. We must be at the forefront of generating originals: new solutions, new initiatives, and new content.

Now, more than ever before, this holds true. It is during times of significant change where positive reform can occur, as long as we can balance our passions with level-headedness, and our egos with tempered respect for those who can assist us.

Bearing this in mind, this year *The Commentator* plans to revisit and reprint articles from the past for the issues of the present. Hopefully, this will give greater perspective to old problems that are rearing their heads once again, just with different names. Moreover, so as not to become disheartened, an historical lens will remind us of the times where things actually *did* change and students' petitions *were* heeded.

Secondly, while mirroring some of the amazing journalistic work done in the past to break important stories and diligently cover ongoing issues, it is our hope to investigate in new ways, utilizing data and analysis to yield fruitful, content-driven discussions, rather than lend fodder for emotional rants. By providing previously unknown, complex information in easily readable forms, we hope to continue a transition from a paper with deep roots in the past, to a paper ready to adapt to the future.

In this way, we too can take part in YU's World of Tomorrow.

The COMMENTATOR

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*For 82 years, The Commentator has served
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living the ideals of Torah u-Maddah,
and a commitment to
journalistic excellence.*



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1 "The World of Tomorrow"
YU's new slogan, or a sci-fi film featuring President Berman on a quest to find his giant gold medallion.



2 The Word "Investiture"
The most used word in our vocabulary for the past two weeks that will proceed to be forgotten about forever.

3 The 185th St. Quad
Stop calling it the Plaza—real universities have quads and YU is a real University... I think.

4 Huge Open space on the 5th floor of the library

Perfect for wheely chair races and spreading out as much as possible during the 10 PM Maariv.

5 Investiture Robes
Fashion statement of the century..

6 PRDAB
It's pronounced "perdab," and this is totally a thing now.

7 Maccabeats' Version of Despacito
Way underrated.

7 UP 7 DOWN

1 Despacito
Way overrated.

2 Investiture -> Investfest
Kind of like going straight from Yom Kippur davening to a 3 year old birthday party.

3 Peace before Midterms
Enjoy it while it lasts. Try not to think about those ten weeks of wishing you had missed the flight home from your summer vacation.

4 "Look What You Made Me Do"
Just no.

5 #Investfest
#Bermanblockparty would have been so much better.

6 Hurricane Season
President Trump is still trying to find a way to blame Harvey and Irma on Hillary's emails.

7 Fidget Spinners
Someone please tell that Syms kid in my class that it's just not cool anymore.

Truly "Love At First Bite"

By Ellie Parker

Anyone who has been living in or near Brookdale for the past few weeks has to have heard the buzz surrounding the new restaurant "Paprika," which opened up two doors down.

Though it is only my first year on campus, I consider myself a pretty dedicated "Tiberias" customer. I would be lying if I said I haven't found myself sitting in my favorite seat in the back at 2 AM at least once a week. Not to get too down on "Eden Wok", but I am of the belief that sushi will never quite compare to the Salmon Caesar Salad offered next door. So, when I heard about this new joint across the road, my heart was torn between my two loves: Shakshuka (for which "Paprika" has made quite a name for itself) and my loyalty to "Tiberias". However, being as dedicated to my writing as I am, I swallowed my pride and entered into the world of "Paprika".

I was immediately struck by the vibes and atmosphere of the place. The rustic feel coupled with the bright, glowing signs strung from the walls was highly reminiscent of my recent trip to SOHO. Counters and chairs evocative of a Restoration Hardware floor model and decorative chalk boards dangling above the heads of employees completed the look. The Israeli accents of the workers behind the counter and the Hebrew spoken by the customers jolted me back to my days in Yerushalayim during my year in Israel. A wave of nostalgia washed over me as I uttered words I haven't spoken in months—"can I please order the Shakshuka?" As steaming tomato sauce was poured over slices of pita, I was highly impressed by the speed and service of the restaurant. Their efficiency brought my consciousness back to 34th street as I compared "Paprika's" quickness to the differing line and wait at "Burgers Bar" on Yafo. All at once I felt that "Paprika" had mastered the perfect balance between Israeli culture and American organization. While they have yet to be added to the caf card, the cashier assured me that they were working to get this kink resolved. As the smell of shakshuka wafted in the air, I fought back tears of joy as I brought my tray to the bar stool against the wall.

Passersby are caught almost instantly by the illuminated sign in the front of the shop, reading "Love At First Bite" in large, vibrant letters. I can personally vouch that "Paprika" lives up to the claim. Fast, clean, and delicious, I left understanding the tremendous draw Stern students have to the new restaurant. Not only is the convenience of the location unparalleled and the prices of the dishes dangerously reasonable, "Paprika" does not skimp on service and especially not on taste. Though I would never in good conscience turn a student away from "Tiberias", if you're looking for an appetizing throwback to your seminary or yeshiva days, "Paprika" should be your go to. Who knows, maybe you'll even see me sitting in my new favorite bar stool by the wall.



Renovations to Wilf Library and 185th Street Plaza Nearing Completion After Work Over Summer

By Ben Strachman

Two major renovation projects on the Wilf campus that were planned for years near completion after major work was done over the summer on the 185th Street plaza and the Mendel Gottesman Library.

Neither project was paid for by YU. The \$3.6 million plaza was funded by "Council member [Ydanis] Rodriguez, Comptroller Scott Stringer...and the Department of Transportation," according to Shavonne Williams, Public Information Officer for the NYC Department of Design and Construction. The renovations on the Mendel Gottesman Library for Hebraica-Judaica, which occupies floors 5 and 5A of the library, were funded by a donation from David S. and Ruth Gottesman.

Joseph Cook, Executive Director for University Operations, stated that for roughly twenty years, YU searched for resources and permission to block off and renovate 185th Street. The area eventually became closed off to traffic and a space for both the YU community and the local Washington Heights community to enjoy. When the New York City Department of Transportation began an initiative to create pedestrian plazas around the city, Jeffrey Rosengarten, former Vice President for Support Services, applied in 2008 to have the then-blocked off section of 185th Street made into one of these plazas. After years of efforts, construction on the plaza began in summer 2016.

The plans originally called for the project to be completed by summer of 2017, but delays caused by working around energy company Con Edison's schedule pushed the finish date to the fall. While all major components of the renovation have been completed, the construction delays last winter pushed off the planting of various bushes and plants past the date predicted in the spring by Cook. At the time, he stated, "It'll all be done by summer of 2017, except for the planting. They've gotten so far behind that they're going to miss the spring planting, so the actual planting of all the shrubs, flowers, [and other plants] will be done in summer 2017."

Phil Goldfeder, Assistant VP for Government Affairs, said, "The plaza is expected to be completed by the end of October. Although the physical planters were completed during the summer months, it is customary for the city to wait for cooler weather to plant trees and shrubs."

The lane of Amsterdam Avenue that is blocked off from traffic was also resurfaced as part of the renovations, although according to Matthew Yaniv, YU Director of Marketing and Communications, "The implementation [of the plans for Amsterdam Avenue] is not complete. We

are still awaiting word from our partners at [Department of Transportation and the Department of Design and Construction]."

Goldfeder further stated that "The DOT will oversee maintenance for the first year, after which YU will be responsible for maintaining the plaza, which will include everything from keeping it clean and snow removal to repairing minor damage."

The recently completed renovations on the Wilf library constitute the second phase of renovations going back to 2015. The library building was completed in 1969, and until 2015, there were no major renovations on floors 2 through 6. Phase one, in which floors 2, 2A, 3, 3A, and 4 were renovated, began after the spring semester ended in 2015, and ended in early November, about a month behind schedule.

Phase two of the renovations, which focused on the Mendel Gottesman Library for Hebraica-Judaica on floors 5, 5A, and 6, began after the Spring 2017 semester ended. The renovations have been on schedule thus far, with the majority of the work finishing before the fall semester began, as planned. As Director of University Libraries Paul Glassman wrote in an email in June of 2017, "the punch list (miscellaneous items needing revision) [will] be completed by September 30."

Josh Joseph, Senior Vice President of YU, stated in an email to the YU community that phase two renovations "will, by upgrading and modernizing the facility, provide an optimal environment for students and faculty to conduct research and collaborate. [They] will also allow the university's world class collection of Hebraica-Judaica materials to grow."

"Much of the scholarship and publishing activity in specialized disciplines like these are still in print format, and the plan [included] adding library stacks to level 6," Glassman wrote. "The goal [was] to preserve Mendel Gottesman Library as the Hebraica-Judaica library of record in the New York metropolitan area—one in which the materials remain accessible on site."

The renovations on 5 and 5A included new lighting, electrical outlets, carpeting, chairs, upgraded Wi-Fi, and new tables made from recycled table tops. The 6th floor, which was never made open for public use since the library's construction in 1969, was converted to a storage area for bound print periodicals, providing more area for library materials.

After concerns were raised by faculty members over possible disruptions to their research while the library was being renovated, Glassman sent an email explaining the renovations and assuring those concerned that steps

would be taken to ensure as little disruption to normal library activities as possible.

"We were glad to be able to meet the research needs of everybody who needed to use that library over the summer...and that's the feedback that we got," Glassman said. "We set up a personal librarian program with all of the graduate students, we retrieved items for faculty immediately...[and] we moved heavily used reference items [to an area accessible to library users]."

The renovations included a significant amount of student involvement after Yeshiva College junior David Selis learned of the proposed plans in spring 2017. Concerned with some aspects of the plans, especially the proposed move to replace a popular study area on the east side of the 5th floor with enclosed study rooms and a conference room, Selis shared the plans with Yeshiva College senior Reuven Herzog. After Glassman suggested that he gather data on the student body's opinions on the plans, Herzog sent out a poll to students, to which almost 90 responded. Herzog then showed Glassman the results of the survey and a compromise was reached. Glassman communicated the students' concerns to the project architect, and the plans were then changed so that the study rooms, which Glassman said were necessary during times of heavy library use such as finals and midterms, were eliminated, and a proposed conference room was moved to the other side of the floor, preserving the area frequented by students.

After seeing the completed renovations, Herzog stated, "I am happy that some of the students' requests were listened to: the configuration of the tables was mostly retained, and outlets are now much more accessible...I hope the work is not done – we certainly need more reading chairs up here and I think all the white paint needs more contrast – but on the whole it seems good to me."

"Overall I'm happy with the renovations. The improved lighting, windows and increased number of power outlets make the 5th floor much more conducive to research," said Selis. "That said, I think there is too much empty space and more tables as well as study carrels are highly desirable."

Glassman welcomed further student involvement in library decisions by imitating other university libraries and creating a position for a student representative on the newly created library advisory committee. According to Glassman, the committee, which was called for by the YU strategic plan, will advise him on issues relating to library services and developments, as well as help him receive feedback on library services.



Google Grants Cardozo \$200,000 to Launch Project to Close U.S. 'Patent Gap'

By Eli Weiss

In a press release distributed on August 21, 2017, Cardozo Law School announced that Google had awarded them a \$200,000 grant to launch the Cardozo/Google Project for Diversity, an initiative designed to help close the "patent gap" in the U.S. by "becoming the go-to destination for women and other underrepresented entrepreneurs in need of patent assistance."

Professor Aaron Wright, an Associate Clinical Professor of Law at Cardozo Law School and the person in charge of the initiative, said the Cardozo/Google Project for Diversity is expected to create "a network of representatives" in order to provide legal services on a pro bono basis to underrepresented groups that are seeking to file patents. Wright disclosed that the program will be available to "African Americans, Latino Americans, and female entrepreneurs in need of legal assistance." Cardozo will also provide its own legal counsel to underrepresented groups.

According to the press release, 92% of patents do not have a woman listed as a primary inventor, and 82% do not have a woman inventor at all. The release also mentioned that U.S. born minority groups make up just 8% of U.S. born patent holders.

"Nobody understands why there is a patent gap," said Wright. "We believe that there is a lack of access to the legal system."

According to Wright, the cost of filing a patent is often prohibitive and expensive, usually priced at around ten thousand dollars. The cost is high because the specialized nature of patent lawyers means there are less of them. Such a large cost for patents is often difficult for entrepreneurs to handle in the early stages of forming a business. By providing free legal counsel, Cardozo hopes to remove the financial barrier, allowing for more underrepresented inventors to patent their ideas.

Cardozo alumnus, John Labarre, is senior legal counsel to Google. According to Wright, Labarre asked to meet with Melanie Leslie, the Dean of Cardozo, and Wright in the fall of 2016. It was then that Labarre

expressed his frustration with the patent gap and the group set to work to find a solution.

The group saw an early success this August when they received funding from Google. However, Wright expressed that the project is still in its early stages.

"BY PROVIDING FREE LEGAL COUNSEL, CARDOZO HOPES TO REMOVE THE FINANCIAL BARRIER, ALLOWING FOR MORE UNDERREPRESENTED INVENTORS TO PATENT THEIR IDEAS."

"There is still a lot of work that needs to be done, and a director still needs to be picked," he said.

The grant for the Cardozo/Google Project for Diversity was announced shortly after an incident regarding Google's diversity programs this past summer.

On August 7, 2017 Google engineer James Damore was fired for circulating a memo that suggested that men are better suited for jobs in technology than women.

"I'm simply stating that the distribution of preferences and abilities of men and women differ in part due to biological causes and that these differences may explain why we don't see equal representation of women in tech and leadership," wrote James Damore in his memo.

The Wall Street Journal reported that Damore's memo was intended to "criticize Google's efforts to increase diversity at the company."

Wright affirmed that the memo and Google's decision to award a grant to Cardozo were not connected and that the Cardozo/Google Project for Diversity was in motion long before Damore's memo and firing took place. He also asserted that Google will play no role in the administration of the program and that Cardozo has not been influenced in any way by Google with regard to the Cardozo/Google Project for Diversity.

Cardozo Law School was founded in 1967 by Yeshiva University. It is famous for The Innocence Project, an initiative to vindicate wrongly convicted people by the use of DNA technology that may not have been available at the time of the original trial. Cardozo's website reports that it is ranked number 14 in the nation for practical training and 1st in New York by The National Jurist.



TENURE CONTINUED FROM FRONT PAGE

committed," she wrote in an email. "When the time comes to consider these teacher/scholars for tenure, and the internal and external reviews come out very favorably, we know that both sides have invested well. I am so proud of all these new members of the permanent faculty at YU."

The decision to grant these professors tenure comes several years after the departure of several full-time, tenure-track, or tenured, professors from Yeshiva University. For example, during the 2015-2016 academic year, the Biology department lost three professors: Dr. Yakov Peter (tenure-track) left to teach at Landers College for Men, while Dr.'s Carl Feit and Barry Potvin (both tenured) retired.

Further, Dr. Gabriel Cwilich, professor of physics and former director of the Jay and Jeanie Schottenstein Honors Program in Yeshiva College, expressed concerns about the departure or retirement of several humanities professors in the future and claimed the university had not begun planning in anticipation of those probable changes, according to an article in The Commentator about adjunctification of professors by Tzvi Levitin published in February of 2017.

The following Yeshiva University professors have received tenure: Dr. David Lavinsky, associate professor of English (YC), Dr. Ran Shao, associate professor of

economics (YC), Dr. Josefa Steinhauer, associate professor of biology (YC), Dr. Avraham Leff, professor of computer science (YC). Dr. Catherine Eubanks, associate professor of psychology (Ferkau Graduate School of Psychology), Dr. Shu Han, associate professor of information systems (Sy Syms School of Business), and Dr. Deborah Pearlstein, professor of law (Benjamin N. Cardozo School of Law).

At the YU-affiliated Albert Einstein College of Medicine, the following professors were awarded tenure: Dr. Luciano D'Adamio, professor of microbiology and immunology, Dr. Yousin Suh, professor of genetics, Dr. Bin Zhou, professor of genetics, Dr. Jose Pena, professor of neuroscience, Dr. Ganjam Kalpana, professor of genetics, Dr. Antonio DiCristofano, professor of developmental and molecular biology, Dr. Hannes Buelow, professor of genetics, Dr. Ulrich Steidl, professor of cellular biology, Dr. Kartik Chandran, professor of microbiology and immunology, and Dr. Michael Ross, professor of medicine and chief of the renal division.

Additionally, two professors, Dr. Jeffrey Gonzalez, professor of psychology (Ferkau), and Dr. Daniel Rynhold, professor of Jewish philosophy (Bernard Revel Graduate School of Jewish Studies), received the rank of full professor.

Wilf and Beren Campuses Introduce Shabbat Programming Changes

By Ilan Atri

Both the Wilf and Beren Offices of Student Life have introduced new changes to shabbat programming and pricing that are aimed at improving shabbat life on campus.

Both the Wilf and Beren Campuses have a newly implemented sign up system for shabbat meals. Whereas signing up for both meals originally cost twenty-five dollars before Wednesday and thirty-five dollars after Wednesday, the new system provides a cheaper option for students who sign up even earlier. Rabbi Brander, Vice President for University and Community life, explained in an email that signing up for shabbat meals would work as a “3-tiered system of rates set at \$15/25/35, depending on when the student signs up during the week leading up to shabbat”. He added that the cafeteria staff is also offering students the ability to purchase shabbat meals online and via the YUcard App on their smartphones.

A change in shabbat programming on the Wilf Campus is the introduction of themed shabbatot. While themed shabbatot were previously primarily run on the Beren Campus, the Wilf Campus will now feature shabbatot that incorporate a large number of themes, according to

“CHANGES IN WILF AND BEREN SHABBAT PROGRAMMING HAVE ALREADY MADE AN IMPACT ON CAMPUS.”

Natan Bienstock, Student Life Coordinator on the Wilf Campus. Some of those themes include a 3 on 3 Basketball Tournament Shabbaton, a Politics and Civic Engagement Shabbaton, and a Summer Program Shabbaton. Bienstock mentioned that they are also looking for other clubs interested in partnering with them on shabbatons.

Additionally, the Wilf Campus will now feature floor shabbatons. These shabbatons encourage dorm residents to pray, eat, and hang out with their floor over a shabbat on campus separate from everyone else. Ilan Lavian, a resident advisor in Rubin Hall, expressed his excitement for this initiative.

“Floor shabbatons are really going to bring the dorm floors together,” Lavian said. “Last year I didn’t feel like I made so many friends on my floor, but now I feel like I will get to know everyone pretty well.”

The Wilf Campus has also introduced a shabbat campus couple. Shalom and Rivka Rosenbaum were brought in to help facilitate great shabbatot on campus by being constant presences every weekend and developing relationships with students, according to an email from Rabbi Brander. Rabbi Beny Rofeh and his wife Yoanna also joined the Student Life team as shabbat hosts on the Wilf campus. A shabbat host is different from a campus couple in that they host students at their apartment at times and eat in the cafeteria with everyone at other times. Rabbi Rofeh is currently a faculty member and Mashgiach Ruchani of the IBC program.

“Rabbi Rofeh being an official part of the campus shabbats really attracts me to eating my meals in the cafeteria and just being around campus over shabbat,” expressed Yoni Cagan, an IBC student currently living in an off-campus apartment and a past student of Rabbi Rofeh.

On the Beren Campus, Rabbi Yisroel Meir Rosenzweig and his wife Elisheva have been added as a second campus couple in addition to Rabbi Daniel and Mrs. Lerner.

Changes in Wilf and Beren shabbat programming have already made an impact on campus. The first shabbat of the year was made free for all students, a privilege that was previously available only to those who were on campus for the first time. Roughly 300 students signed up for shabbat on the Wilf Campus, according to Bienstock. According to Talia Molotsky, the Student Life Coordinator on Beren, around 300 students also signed up for the first shabbat on the Beren Campus.

In addition to the changes made to the structure of shabbat on campus, the Wilf Campus now employs a staff member whose job focuses specifically on shabbat improvement. Regarding shabbat in general and the new position, Jonathan Schwab, Associate Director of University Housing and Residence Life on the Wilf Campus commented, “Having been on campus as a student and employee for the past ten years, I am excited that shabbat at Wilf is continuing to improve and that we are providing many programs to satisfy our diverse student population with an enriching, enjoyable, appropriate shabbat atmosphere. I am especially excited that Natan Bienstock, an exceptionally passionate recent graduate and staff member, is in the position of focusing on shabbat full-time.”

Like Schwab, Bienstock is optimistic about the future of shabbat life on the Wilf Campus.

“We hope that more students will feel connected to shabbat on campus and that the new programming will deepen the sense of community and camaraderie amongst the student body,” he said.



Regarding shabbat improvements on the Beren Campus, Molotsky said, “We are placing a heavy focus this year on shabbat enhancement. Our efforts include enhancing the physical atmosphere by buying new vases, flowers, and tablecloths and making a number of positive adjustments to the menu options to work in tandem with our investment in the spiritual shabbat atmosphere. We look forward to a year of dynamic shabbatot.”

In an email about future changes, Rabbi Brander said, “Students have shared with us on both the Beren and the Wilf Campuses that shabbat needs to be a focus. They have shared with us what we are doing well and where we need to improve. Therefore we have made it a priority to improve the shabbat experience with a commitment to send out surveys to see how we are doing as we move forward with these initiatives.”

“I am excited for shabbatot this year,” remarked Michael Kohan, a Resident Advisor on the Wilf Campus. “I really feel like more people are going to stay in and really improve the shabbat experience.”

Hannah Goldring, a Resident Advisor on the Beren Campus, echoed this sentiment. “Shabbatot are an important part of student life at YU. I am excited to see how the new shabbat initiatives will help make shabbat on campus an experience to remember.”

YU Launches Online Nexus Initiative to ‘Help Shape the Future of Moral Discourse’

By Avi Strauss

Hours after the formal investiture of President Ari Berman as Yeshiva University’s fifth president, an initiative was launched on the Yeshiva University website to put YU at the forefront of contemporary discussions and innovative ideas. The new initiative, named Nexus, has the stated goal of “leverag[ing] the Yeshiva University community’s vast interdisciplinary resources to stimulate conversations on some of the most important issues facing the world at large.”

It appears that the creation of Nexus is one of the first steps towards preparing YU for “The World of Tomorrow”, the theme of the investiture ceremony. Several speakers, including President Berman himself, addressed evolving industries and marketplaces with revamped and integrated programming at the investiture.

The plan for the initiative is to address a new topic each month relating directly to one of “four themes of central significance to human society - Education, Marketplace, Leadership, and the Values of tomorrow.”

The first topic on the recently launched page is “The Future of Artificial Intelligence” and was prepared by Andrew Boyarsky, a Clinical Associate Professor and the Academic Director of the Master’s Program in Enterprise Risk Management at the Katz School of Professional Studies.

The topic’s theme page includes an introduction detailing the prevalence and emergence of A.I. in the world today, as well as a series of tiered, curated sources meant to introduce the topic while also providing resources for further exploration. The curated sources come from resources such as newspaper articles, the Talmud, YU Torah, and Ted Talks.

On October 22nd, Nexus is set to host a conference at which the four main perspectives of the initiative—Education, Leadership, the Marketplace, and Values—in the “World of Tomorrow” will be addressed. The program will open with Rabbi Lord Jonathan Sacks in conversation with Rabbi Ari Lamm.



YU Raises Student Activity Fee

By Judah Stiefel

The student activity fee for all undergraduate students has been increased by 67% this year, to \$250, in the first raise in the student activity fee and student activity budget in years. The budget is used by the Beren and Wilf student councils to fund all student run clubs and events on campus.

In a statement to *The Commentator*, Rabbi Kenneth Brander, Vice President for University and Community Life, wrote, "After it was suggested by student leaders last year to increase it, the YU administration decided to increase the student activity fee from \$150 to \$250 annually. It will go to student events and programs. For example, we will be increasing the amount of service learning experiences and the amount of money we will be spending on Shabbat on both campuses."

One of the student leaders referenced above by Rabbi Brander was former YSU VP of Classes Aryeh Minsky, who stated, "We found ourselves increasingly restricted [financially], both in terms of student council events as well as club events. For smaller events, we often had to cut things like food, and for the bigger events, we either had to take things away or charge more money."

As reported in these pages last year, the student activity fee has traditionally been funnelled directly towards student council budgets. However, it remains to be seen if the increase will be allocated according to the old status quo, or if it will be divided amongst offices directly involved with student activities, like the Office of Student Life, and the student councils more generally.

Yeshiva College Sophomore Dov Alberstone said about the increased fee, "If fifty dollars a semester is all it takes to increase the quality of student activities at YU then I'm absolutely for it. But if the funds don't end up going to the students then it sounds like a scam to me."

When asked about the increase, Dean of Students Dr. Chaim Nissel said "The student councils and the Office of Student Life work tirelessly to provide the most enriching student experience we can and I am confident that the increased student activity fees will allow us to provide even more varied socially, educationally and spiritually rewarding student experience."

While an increase in funding isn't necessary for student councils on either campus to continue their key operations, several council presidents welcomed the possibility of additional funds.

SCWSC president Keren Neugroschl explained, "We are planning new events that are both co-ed and campus-specific and organizing initiatives to increase communication between the student body and student council. Extra funding would definitely be useful, but regardless of whether or not we get it we're working to make these projects happen."

Zach Serman, president of YSU, asked Senior Director of the OSL Rabbi Josh Weisberg how the budget increase would affect student government. According to Serman, the increase in the student activities budget may have been suggested by student government to the OSL, but the actual increase was conducted by higher-ups in the administration. It is unclear at this point exactly who executed the increase.

The Commentator published an in depth report last semester detailing how funding for student councils is divided and apportioned.

The funding for each student council is distributed according to the size of the student population of each program. On the Beren campus, funding for the three student councils is divided as follows: SCWSC receives 52%, TAC 38%, and SSSBSC 10%. In the fall of 2015, the most recent year in which student populations are available, this amounted to \$74,412 for SCWSC, \$54,378 for TAC, and \$14,310 for SSSBSC, for a total of \$143,100. According to the Beren Office of Student Life, these percentages are based on an outline in the Beren student constitution, and were determined back in 1995.

These proportions have not changed since then, despite some minor fluctuations



in student enrollment in both undergraduate colleges on the Beren campus. Based on available data, from fall 2012 to fall 2015, Syms-Beren saw an increase from 47 students to 138, an increase of about 50%, while Stern College decreased from 968 students to 816.

The budgeting on Wilf is slightly more complicated, with some allotments changing each semester based on student enrollment in Yeshiva College and Syms-Wilf. There is often a minor shift in funding between the fall and spring semesters and a larger shift over the summer. According to Josh Weisberg and OSL Director of Student Events Linda Stone, this is based on a contract, signed by the Wilf Student Council presidents in the year 2012-2013, whereby the council presidencies were consolidated from seven to four.

Serman outlined the way in which spending is approved by the student activity councils. The student council presidents are given a budget every semester to fund every club and event over the span of the semester. The presidents then receive event request forms from various clubs and student leaders, and it is the presidents' job to decide how much to spend on each event.

Speakers are often the largest expense of the student budgets, and if the student council deems that a certain speaker will be of value or interest to the students, it will often spend between \$100-\$300 to bring in a speaker. The club sponsoring the event must find outside donors if the funds designated by the student council are insufficient. For example, most of the funds needed to bring political pundit Ben Shapiro to campus last year were provided by outside sponsors. Shapiro is a well known personality, and his speaking fee far surpassed what the student council was able to afford. Higher scale events, such as Chanukah Fest, also take up a large portion of the budget.

Last semester the OSL posed the question as to whether or not the previous allotment system had worked effectively. According to a survey conducted last year by the OSL, 70% of student respondents believe the number of events on campus is "just right." Just 17% answered that there were "too many" events, while the remaining 13% responded that there were "too few." *The Commentator* reported in the spring of 2017 that Dean Nissel was more than satisfied by that overwhelming response, although he stressed there is always room for improvement in bringing new and innovative events to an ever-changing student body.

Yeshiva College Introduces New Media Studies Minor

By Esther Stern

A new media studies minor was introduced to Yeshiva College for the fall semester of 2017. Spearheading the new minor were Dr. Lauren Fitzgerald, YC English Department Chair and professor, and Dr. Rachel Mesch, a tenured YC professor who was recently awarded a Public Scholar Grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities. Both Fitzgerald and Mesch were enthused about this recent addition to the list of Yeshiva College minors, which now consists of 21.

The media studies minor, said Fitzgerald, was created to bring "together a range of disciplines that address so much of what it means to communicate in the 21st century as well as to negotiate the information we're all being bombarded with on a daily basis."

As for the demographic of those interested in the media studies minor, Mesch predicts that it will attract a diverse range of students. "It allows them to study traditional subjects from a new vantage point, and to pull together a diverse set of courses around these interconnected themes," said Mesch.

Ari Kaye, a YC student who has already committed to the media studies minor, expressed his enthusiasm

about the minor.

"I'm very excited for it - I decided to take this minor which seemed to be the next best creative minor," said Kaye, who plans to go into creative directing.

Central to the media studies minor will be a new course in journalism offered in spring 2018 taught by a new writer in residence, tells Fitzgerald, who will give an explanation of the course later this semester. In the interim, students interested in the minor should

be taking the courses currently offered that can count toward the minor including ART 2201 Color and Design, COWC 1026: Face to Face: Modern Identities in Film, INTC 1001: Books on Books, Films on Films, INTC 1005: Parisian Views: Spectacle, Reality and the Invention of Mass Culture, ENG 3575: Approaches to Film, MAR 3318: Social Media, MAR 3320: Digital Media, and MAR 3323: Creative Advertising.



YU Drops to 94th Best Among U.S. Colleges in U.S. News Ranking

By Commentator Staff

Yeshiva University tied for 94th place in this year's U.S. News ranking of colleges across the nation, dropping significantly from last year's 66th place. In the Best Value Schools category, YU was ranked 65th, down from last year's 49th place.

2018 will mark the third consecutive downgrade in annual ranking. In 2015 and 2016, YU placed 48th and 52nd, respectively.



YU scored 51 out of a 100 total possible points. Graduation and retention rates, undergraduate academic reputation, and faculty resources constitute the largest factors in a school's rank.

The report highlighted several aspects of Yeshiva University, including the Center for the Jewish Future

"2018 WILL MARK THE THIRD CONSECUTIVE DOWNGRADE IN ANNUAL RANKING."

and its undergraduate newspapers, The Observer and The Commentator. It also mentioned that YU "earns accolades" for its the research opportunities at the Albert Einstein College of Medicine. Yeshiva sold the medical school to Montefiore Medical Center in 2015.

The report included other interesting data. It claimed that many students who apply to YU also apply, among others, to Brooklyn College, ranked 85th, Queens College, ranked 41st, and Touro College, whose

ranking was not published. It also stated that 35% of undergraduates live off campus.

YU issued this statement in response to the ranking: "Yeshiva University is proud of the educational excellence across all of our schools and programs. We are excited about our expanding academic opportunities, particularly in the STEM and health fields, that will only bolster our reputation. While our class sizes remain small, graduate outcomes remain stellar, and the student experience remains unique, our U.S. News & World Report ranking has predictably dropped due to the restructuring of our university. We are analyzing the factors in the algorithm of the rankings within the context of YU's plan for growth and expansion, and are excited about the new world of opportunities open to us in the future."

College rankings are a popular means of helping prospective students decide among undergraduate programs. The U.S. News and World Report is among the most widely consulted ranking service. Kiplinger, another popular ranking report, pegged Yeshiva at 37th in December 2016 for best value in private colleges.

YU Community Reacts to President Berman's Investiture

By Ilana Kisilinsky

On Sunday September 10, 2017, Yeshiva University celebrated the inauguration of Rabbi Ari Berman as the University's fifth president. The "Investiture," the official name of the event, marked an important moment in the history of YU. With hundreds of students, alumni, faculty, friends, and family in attendance, the reactions to the event were incredibly varied and diverse.

The feeling of change and new beginnings was palpable and many students discussed their excitement for the days ahead. "I don't know what he [Rabbi Berman] is going to do but I feel like there is already a sense of change in the air," said Chaviva Freedman, a senior at Stern College. "I think it's a good change, I think we need something different. He's the fifth president and it's shocking that in over 100 years we've only had five presidents. I think it's a good thing that they're making a big statement about it, showing that we're accepting change, we're accepting something new." Chaviva was sitting in the front row with a group of her friends at the Investiture viewing party, which took place in the heights lounge, and was attended by over 100 people.

The viewing party was put together by the Office of Student Life to ensure student involvement at this significant event. They wanted to provide the opportunity for students to either sit in on the ceremony or participate in a more social environment with a viewing party.

"We've been planning it [the viewing party] for a couple of months now. We wanted to give students the opportunity to participate in the event in whatever way that they would get the most out of it," said Tzvi Levitin, a graduate of Yeshiva College and Stanton fellow at the Office of Student Life. "Overall it's worked really well, it seems like students are having a great time." Student Life wanted to create an atmosphere where students could come and go as they please and participate in whatever way they felt most comfortable. "We're giving out free t-shirts and all kinds of free prizes and raffles," said Talia Molotsky, a Stern College graduate and viewing party coordinator. "The idea is to have the women from the women's campus and the men from the men's campus just sitting and chilling, which I think is what we have here today. It's nice - people are clapping, people are really supportive, it's a really nice environment."

Many students expressed excitement and enthusiasm for what President Berman will bring to YU. "This is such a fun event," said Shir Ben-Shoshan, a student at Stern College. "I'm a very new freshman so I don't know much about Rabbi Berman, but change is good and YU has been amazing already, I'm sure he's going to make it so much better."

Rabbi Berman's speech was met with cheering and applause, as everyone made their way to the festival outside. "He was definitely speaking from his heart," said Daniel Nimchinsky a student at Yeshiva College. "I think he really cares for the University - he feels it."

"It was a truly wonderful event," said Harriet Adelson, whose three children attended Yeshiva University and has been coming to YU events with her husband for the last ten years. "We are so impressed with Rabbi Berman and we love coming to everything YU because it feeds our soul."

While many attendants felt this was an occasion to be celebrated, some questioned the tactfulness of such a grandiose event. "It [the Investiture] is a little much in my opinion," said Sarah Poborets, a junior in the Sy Syms School of Business on the Beren campus. "I personally connect with President Joel. He's been here for so many years and dedicated so much of his life to Yeshiva University that I think they probably should have eased in Rabbi Berman a little bit better, rather than making a big thing about it."

Additionally, many participants were more concerned about the fun and games than the ceremony. Students

were overheard asking if they missed the food while some lamented that the event was not as big as they had hoped and wished there would have been rides and more free food.

"For such a momentous event I was expecting a little more than free corn and cookies," said Jason Kohanbash, a student in the new MS in Taxation program. "But I was still honored to be a part of the new era Rabbi Berman is bringing to YU."

Attendees were conscious of the significance and demand of President Berman's new position.

"It's so scary for him," said Shira Feen, a senior at Stern College, as Rabbi Berman took to the podium for his speech. "There's so much pressure."

Despite the large shoes that Rabbi Berman has yet to fill, many are confident in his ability to rise to the challenge.



Group of Students Head to Houston for Hurricane Relief Mission After Over 100 Volunteer

By Shoshy Ciment

In the aftermath of Hurricane Harvey, over 100 Yeshiva University students volunteered to forgo their first day off from school and attend a relief and rescue mission to Houston, Texas. The mission, which had room for 12 volunteers, focused on providing relief to the Jewish Community in Houston after it was devastated by the Category 4 storm.

The mission took place from Sunday, September 3 to Tuesday, September 5. The student volunteers, who were put up at non-flooded homes, helped families salvage their belongings and clear out their houses so repairs could eventually be made. Students packaged meals for families in need, tore down sheetrock, and helped with mold remediation while wearing masks and goggles. Although only twelve spots were available on the trip, over 100 students volunteered to go on the mission within a few hours of the sign-up email going out.

"The greatness of our students is their willingness to get involved and make a difference, be it around the corner or around the world," remarked Rabbi Kenneth Brander, the Vice President for University and Community Life, when asked about the overwhelming response to sign up for the mission.

The mission was funded by the YU Office of Student Life and Neal's Fund, a social entrepreneurial fund that gives students the opportunity to help the Jewish and general community by awarding small grants to student-charity-based startups.

A GoFundMe page was also created by the Yeshiva University student councils to help purchase various materials and supplies for the trip. 35 donors participated, raising \$2,126 of the \$5,000 goal over four days.

According to Rabbi Brander, the relief effort was organized by the Office of University and Community Life, the Office of Student Life, and various student leaders, including the Yeshiva University student councils. Together, each office ensured the trip would be safe for the students and beneficial to the community in Houston.

Hurricane Harvey wreaked significant damage on Houston and the Texas Gulf Coast. In Houston, severe flooding from approximately 50 inches of rainfall left 30,000-40,000 homes destroyed. At least 39 people died as a result of storm.

Rabbi Barry Gelman, the Rabbi of United Orthodox Synagogues of Houston, described some of the struggles he has been facing as a leader in the Houston community.

"The key factor is that people don't give up and succumb to a sense of helplessness," Gelman explained. "It's very important to try and help people understand the strength of our community."

Students on the mission saw the Houston community show resilience in the face of disaster.

"It's amazing how put together these people are," explained Eliana Klein, a junior at Stern College for Women who participated in the relief mission. Klein was shocked at the unexpected optimism she encountered from the hurricane victims, noting that many of them had gone through the trauma of flood damage before.

"I saw people in front of their yards laughing with their families and friends," she observed in admiration. "These people are not negative - not even for a second."

While most of the volunteers were selected through a lottery run by the Office of Student Life, students from Houston were offered priority spots on the mission.

"It means so much to me as someone who grew up in Houston to see YU students giving of themselves to enable Houston to pick itself up," said Amitai Miller, a Houston native and Yeshiva University student who participated in the relief mission. "I am so proud and fortunate to be a part of an institution that looks after its students and that demonstrates its care for individuals well beyond the scope of the university."

Rabbi Gelman, the Houston Federation, and the Orthodox Union helped the YU relief mission coordinators decide which volunteer efforts to participate in.

"The relief missions are important because they help lessen the burden that people have," said Rabbi Gelman. "They give people a sense that other people care about

them."

Linda Stone, the Director of Student Events who attended the mission, described the work of the volunteers as physically and emotionally difficult. She noted, however, that despite all of the work, the student volunteers never backed down from a task.

"The students worked so hard and never complained—they only wanted to do more," said Stone. "I am so proud of our students and what we were able to accomplish."

In addition to the flood relief work, Dr. Chaim Nissel, University Dean of Students and an expert in trauma and mental health issues, ran an in-service training program for the congregants of United Orthodox Synagogues and the teachers of the Robert M. Beren Academy in Houston that focused on working with children and adults who have experienced trauma.

"Children are scared, anxious, and for some, mourning the loss of everything they own," Dr. Nissel pointed out. "Seeing curbside piles of people's furniture, toys, games, book shelves, stuffed animals, etc. is so incredibly difficult to fathom."

Students that did not attend the mission have been involved with other initiatives to provide relief to Houston. Celia Rayek, a Sy Syms School of Business student, announced on Facebook that she would be collecting various supplies such as granola bars, garbage bags, and pens to send to Houston after she contacted the Orthodox Union and expressed a desire to help.

"As Jews, we are all responsible for one another," reflected Rayek, who has already collected two bags of donations and hopes to send out the supplies by Friday.

According to Rabbi Brander, this mission is the first of many programs bringing YU students to Houston for weekends that will combine flood relief work with meaningful shabbat experiences in Houston.

"YU is an extraordinary university experience, one that is grounded in Torah, with challenging academic coursework interwoven with leadership opportunities," said Rabbi Brander. "Sometimes we just need to make a statement that we are here and that [YU helps!]"



New Restaurants on Wilf and Beren Campuses, YU Raises Caf Card Minimum

By Eli Sharvit

This semester, YU has raised the caf card minimum for students living off campus from 250 to 400 dollars a semester, and two new restaurants opened on the Beren and Wilf campuses.

All students are required to have a minimum balance on their caf card, which is officially titled the Dining Club Card, that they can use to purchase food at campus cafeterias or at restaurants that accept the caf card. However, students who live off campus have always had a significantly lower

“WHEN ASKED WHY THE RAISE WAS NOT PUBLICIZED TO STUDENTS, BRANDER RESPONDED, ‘WE SHOULD HAVE DONE A BETTER JOB COMMUNICATING THE INCREASE WITH STUDENTS.’”

minimum required compared to students who live in the dormitories.

Rabbi Kenneth Brander, the Vice President for University and Community Life, stated that the the minimum was raised to benefit students. “The Dining Club Card is designed to offer students a tax free secure, flexible and convenient access to Yeshiva University’s dining halls and participating local restaurants around campus... Unfortunately, we have seen students without sufficient funds forgo eating during high-pressure times over the course of a semester and therefore require a structured meal plan to ensure students, both on and off campus, have the adequate resources.”

Many students were surprised to discover the change in the caf card minimum on their bill, since no formal

address to the students has been made explaining the raise. When asked why the raise was not publicized to students, Brander responded, “We should have done a better job communicating the increase with students.”

Two weeks into the semester, the restaurant Paprika opened on east 34th street, directly adjacent to Brookdale Residence Hall. Paprika offers a range of Mediterranean foods, and according to the owners it is unlike any other kosher restaurant in the area. Owner David Zaken explained that he is very excited to be a part of the Beren campus, and knows that the students will appreciate the homestyle Israeli cooking. He commented, “We aren’t fast food, falafel, or shawarma, we want to bring you the good stuff, the way your grandma would make it.”

Paprika is not yet on the caf card, but Zaken hopes it will be very soon. He has already submitted the required application and demonstrated Paprika’s official kosher certification and health standards evaluations. At time of writing, Zaken was waiting to hear back from YU.

Burgers and Grill, a burger and meat sandwich restaurant, opened up on the Wilf campus about three weeks into the start of the

semester and is now on the caf card. The owner, Doron Levy, expressed his excitement for being part of the YU community. He added that even though his restaurant is new and he doesn’t know if being on the card will increase the volume of his customers, he feels it is necessary in order to compete with the other various restaurants in Washington Heights that do accept the card.



FIFTH PRESIDENT, CONTINUED FROM FRONT PAGE

presidents Rabbi Dr. Norman Lamm and Richard Joel, United States Senate Minority Leader Chuck Schumer, and several New York City councilmen and assemblymen.

Provost and Vice President of Academic Affairs, Selma Botman served as the master of ceremonies in the role of Herald. She acknowledged the historic significance of the day while reiterating how the university under the its new leadership would be lead into the “world of tomorrow.”

After a stirring rendition of the national anthem by the acapella group, the Y-Studs, Chief Rabbi of the United Hebrew Congregations of the Commonwealth, Rabbi Ephraim Mirvis gave the opening benediction. He set the tone for the gravity of the day when he remarked to President Berman that, “great success is within your reach.” Rabbi Mirvis went on to mention how the world was indebted to YU for its pioneering in the philosophy of Torah U’Maada. The acknowledgement of the university’s storied past and the hope for its future was a theme heard throughout many of the speeches of the day.

Vice Dean of the Cardozo School of Law, Myriam Gilles gave well wishes on behalf of the faculty and spoke with great excitement about the future of the school and in particular the strides being made among our faculty in their respective fields of research.

Rabbi Dr. J.J. Schachter introduced President Berman to the stage but before he did, acknowledged that, “there is more ink left to write in the book of the history of Yeshiva University,” and with great excitement for the future of the school, assured those present that he had faith in Ari Berman to continue the story of YU into the future.

President Berman took the opportunity to thank all those in attendance before beginning his 40-minute address to the Yeshiva community. In his speech he expressed great appreciation for his predecessors, including an applause line for his living predecessors

President’s Lamm and Joel. He then proceeded to detail what he believed were the core principles of Yeshiva, which he labelled “Torot.”

Defining Principles: President Berman as well reflected upon the future of the university through the context of its core tenets. The new President outlined five principles through which the future of YU was to be realized. They were Torat Emet (steadfast dedication to truth and its pursuit), Torat Chaim (valuing the importance of the lives of those around us), Torat Adam (realizing the humanity in others and treating them as such), Torat Chesed (a principle that seeks to exercise compassion in our everyday dealings with each other), Torat Tzion (a redemptive spirit that recognizes the value and importance of diaspora Judaism but also looks forward to the future of the Jewish people and the flourishing of the land of Israel). President Berman stated that Yeshiva University is, “located at the nexus of tradition and pioneering” and heralded that “the future of Yeshiva University as an institution is bright.”

Looking to layout a plan for his tenure founded on the above principles, Berman laid out three main areas the university would be looking expand for the future in order to continue in Yeshiva’s core mission.

New Industries: Recognizing rapid advances and development in the world and its changing economy, Rabbi Berman pointed to new areas where Yeshiva could expand and excel. “As the global economy evolves, we will create new opportunities for our students in the area of STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics), as well as in the health fields.” As well, he noted the marketplace of tomorrow will be in high-demand for students capable of coding and data analytics, alongside entrepreneurial experience, and that the university would see to it that students are given the opportunity to study and grow in these areas.

New Marketplaces: Here, Berman announced the university would be redoubling its efforts to bring in new student populations from across the United States and

internationally. He stressed that the university would specifically eye students who would be role models for the “Five Torot” he mentioned earlier. This would include “students who show a propensity and passion for Torah studies, who would display their capabilities in areas that create knowledge like science and technology, for young social entrepreneurs who stand out for their social contributions, or those who have shown the courage of convictions to respond to the historical opportunities of our era” declared Berman. YU would encourage this behavior and work to bring those engaging in these types of activities by establishing scholarships for students demonstrating these traits, like volunteering for Sherut Leumi (national service in Israel) or joining the Israeli Defense Forces or the American Armed Forces.

New Educational Pathways: Berman asserted the university would start to conceptualize itself “as a single, interconnected network, instead of a collection of separate schools.” This would include the creation and expansion of pathways between Yeshiva’s undergraduate and graduate programs, as well as integrating the vast network of alumni who could serve as “connectors” for current students as they move into the workforce. Additionally, Berman stressed YU would be looking to connect with other universities, citing a recent agreement with Bar Ilan and Hebrew Universities in Israel, to create bridge program for Yeshiva undergraduates in computer science to pursue master’s study in the fields of data science, cybersecurity and information technology.

By innovating and improving in these areas, Berman hoped to better prepare students for the “marketplace of tomorrow.” He stressed that all of this would be done with the “overarching grand purpose of moving history forward...all of this in service to God.”

Over the past 98 years, while Yeshiva has invested just five presidents, neighboring Columbia University and NYU have invested nine and twelve presidents, respectively.

The Bold Type: Review Season 1

By Lilly Gelman

Summer may be over and the fall semester underway, but work has yet to pile up, leaving ample time to binge-watch a new show before midterms come around the bend. With Netflix and Hulu spitting out original shows left and right, deciding what to watch could mean sifting through the suggested list for hours. So take my word for it and go straight for *The Bold Type* — a brand new show on Free Form, sparking conversation in the media and giving viewers aspects of a television show they didn't even know they wanted.

The Bold Type first premiered in July of 2017. Based on the life of former Cosmopolitan editor Joanna Coles, *The Bold Type* takes place in modern day New York City, and follows the lives of three young women — Jane, Kat, and Sutton — all of whom work at Scarlet Magazine. Each episode showcases these three best friends as they try to keep their heads above water in the fast paced world of New York City publishing.

What immediately strikes a viewer about the show is the emphasis placed on modern technology and social media. A conversation over text — which the audience sees as pop-ups on the screen as the character types — often moves the plot along, revealing key information about the storyline. Snapchat, Instagram, and Twitter are frequently mentioned and used by the characters—

especially Kat, who works as the Social Media director of Scarlet Magazine. The show not only appears modern, but showcases the usage of modern technology and social media culture in the 21st century.

Aside from being up to date on Social Media, *The*

“THE SHOW LEAVES NOTHING TABOO, TOUCHING ON ASPECTS OF DILEMMAS OFTEN AVOIDED TO PREVENT DISCOMFORT.”

Bold Type deals with incredibly current social issues, those most prevalent in political and societal dialogue. *The Bold Type* handles Islamophobia and immigration issues, sexual exploration, breast cancer awareness, and rape — all hot button topics serving as the subject of much debate in modern society. By fearlessly tackling these subjects with no reservations, the show leaves nothing taboo, touching on aspects of these dilemmas often avoided to prevent discomfort.

Its modern flare and open minded plot lines cannot hide the fact that *The Bold Type* lacks a certain subtlety that could have made it a smashing success. The slight overuse of the social media aspect and the abrupt

introductions to the societal issues leave *The Bold Type* void of nuance and grace in its storylines and characters. This obviousness leaves some viewers frustrated by the shows “unbelievable” quality, describing it as an unrealistic representation of life as a millennial in New York City.

What may seem like a flaw in the eyes of television critics, however, could in fact allow *The Bold Type* to send a message to its viewers. Social media is overused in 2017, taking over our lives and replacing real human connection and communication with texts and emojis. Political and social issues come up fast and impact people from the start. With the increase in media news outlets and their own presence on our social media platforms, we cannot hide from the injustices and dilemmas that face American society on a regular basis.

The first season of *The Bold Type*, available on Free Form and Hulu, has recently come to a close leaving many questions pertaining to the fate of the beloved Kat, Jane, and Sutton. The question of whether or not this should be your next TV obsession has an obvious answer. *The Bold Type* is refreshing, fast paced, modern, and the perfect blend between *Gossip Girl* and *Suits*. So if I were you, I would get watching before midterms creep around the corner.



NO FUTURE, CONTINUED FROM FRONT PAGE

to “witness history” in the making and more than one speaker referred to Lamport auditorium in terms of its historical significance.

To be sure, President Berman did more than just focus on the history of Yeshiva University. He listed his own ideas for its expansion to make it relevant in our rapidly changing world. He proposed initiatives that focused on educational sectors of the future, such as science and technology.

But with all the talk about moving forward, President Berman was sure to remind his audience that sometimes, it is just as important to look back.

Dean Karen Bacon has watched Yeshiva University transition through leadership before. A Stern College alumna herself, Dean Bacon has been the Dean of Stern College for Women since 1977 and The Mordecai D. Katz and Dr. Monique C. Katz Dean of the Undergraduate Faculty of Arts and Sciences since 2015.

“As President Berman charts the future of this University, he has the wisdom of the past to guide the many possibilities of the future,” remarked Bacon. “I believe this is precisely what each of our previous presidents did.”

With just 5 presidents since 1915, Yeshiva stands out from the universities that border it. During that same amount of time, New York University has had 11 presidents and Columbia University has had 9.

What this says about the leadership of Yeshiva University is left up to interpretation. Nonetheless, there are fundamental ideals that have defined the institution, president to president.

“The core foundational principles of Yeshiva University are those that made this university necessary at its founding and relevant ever since,” remarked Dean Karen Bacon. “Allegiance to these principles makes it

possible to encounter the new in meaningful and productive ways.”

Indeed, certain principles of Yeshiva University will always remain timeless. *Torah Umadda*, the intersection of Torah and Secular study, is the bottom line of our identity as a university, the foundation from which we can build towards new heights. As President Berman said, our celebration of the past and commitment to the future truly makes us a university “located at the nexus of heritage and pioneering.”

In his speech, President Berman pointed out that Rabbi Joseph B. Soloveitchik spoke from that very podium in Lamport Auditorium 61 years earlier.

“*Kol dodi dofek* - the voice of God is metaphorically calling to us, knocking at our door,” paraphrased President Berman. “He has placed us in this incredible time, and he beckons us to respond.”



A Coming of Age in Horror's Clothing - A Review of It

By Matthew Silkin

Student councils are responsible for a wide range of Let's get this out of the way first: I don't like horror movies. Never have. I don't like the tension of being scared, I don't like monsters, I especially don't like the discordant violin sound cliché that every horror movie seems to have to try and scare us. So, against my better judgment, I saw *It*.

Luckily for me, it's not a horror movie. Horror elements? Plenty. But *It* is not a horror movie. Let me explain.

It, directed by Andy Muschietti, is based on the first half of the 1986 Stephen King novel of the same name. The story follows a group of plucky teenagers -- known as the Losers' Club due to their common status as outcasts in school -- who discover and battle a demonic entity lurking in the sewer system of their town. This, however, is just the backdrop for what the story is really about: a group of kids conquering their biggest fears and learning to deal with a world that treats people like them with about as much contempt as one would expect would be dealt to someone who joins a Losers' Club.

What *It* does best is create for the audience an almost oppressive tension throughout, even during the calmer moments. Whereas another director might have been conservative with showing violence, especially towards children, Muschietti makes the decision to not shy away from this kind of graphic imagery, but to display it in all its uncomfortable glory. The opening scene ends with a six year old boy crawling away from the sewers with a bloody stump where his arm once was. While I as a human being would not enjoy nor recommend watching videos of children losing limbs, I felt it was necessary in setting the tone of the film, as well as emphasizing that this would not be a sanitized version of the original story. One little touch I noticed is that in all the scenes where the monster is around, Muschietti slightly yet noticeably tilts the camera, making the audience feel as offset as the movie is in that moment.

Since the emotional impact of the movie rides on the performances of the teen actors, it should be noted

that there was not a single weak link in the main cast. The strongest characters were Jaeden Lieberher as club leader Bill Denbrough, a boy with a stutter and a hangup on the loss of his younger brother Georgie to the entity, and Sophia Lillis as Bev Marsh, the only girl in the group, dealing with bullying from the other girls in school and creepy advances from adult males, including her father. Finn Wolfhard - who, curiously enough, also stars in

"IF YOU LIKE HORROR - HECK, EVEN IF YOU DON'T REALLY LIKE HORROR BUT ARE A BIG FAN OF WATCHING YOUNG TEENAGERS GO ON ADVENTURES ... I WOULD IMPLORE YOU TO GO SEE IT!"

the King-esque *Stranger Things*, also about a group of young friends fighting an unexplainable otherworldly horror in a small town in the 1980s - Jack Dylan Grazer, and Jeremy Ray Taylor brought much needed comic relief as fellow Losers' Club members Richie Tozier, Eddie Kaspbrak and Ben Hanscom respectively. Wyatt Olef and Chosen Jacobs held memorable performances as the last two members Stan Uris and Mike Hanlon, although the characters themselves were overshadowed by the rest of the Club.

The main draw of *It*, though, is the titular *It*, which usually takes the form of a clown named Pennywise. Bill Skarsgård absolutely delivers all the creepiness that a sewer-dwelling clown would possess. It should be noted, however, that while Pennywise remains the true villain of the film, there exists a surprising but necessary human element to the opposition as well, specifically in the form of Henry Bowers, portrayed by Nicholas Hamilton. Bowers, as the school bully, is to Pennywise what Dolores Umbridge is to Voldemort in the *Harry Potter* franchise -- a much more tangible evil for the

children of the film to overcome and for the audience to direct their hate towards, while all the creepy demonic clown action is pushed to the back burner. And it's pushed there pretty often - I would say this movie is about 65% *Stand By Me*, 35% Pennywise terrorizing the Losers. While some people who were drawn into the movie by the horror aspect might be disappointed by that ratio, I personally was very relieved. The human drama of the Losers dealing with bullies and their own group dynamic gave *It* a realism that is missing from most horror movies nowadays, which focus on making the audience soil themselves before making a coherent screenplay.

Is *It* a perfect adaptation of the novel though? No. Muschietti does make a lot of noticeable departures from the original, mainly by changing the year in which the story takes place from 1958 in the book to 1989 in the film and updating several of Pennywise's monstrous forms to match the new time. The film also wisely cuts out several scenes from the book that were questionable at best originally - people who have read the book will know what scenes I'm referring to, but suffice it to say that they would not have been suitable to show on screen for various reasons. One more aspect of the book, which goes into the details of the origins and motivations of Pennywise, did not make it into the movie. While I am disappointed that it was removed, Muschietti has expressed that he does want to visit this in a potential sequel, so it may happen yet. Overall though, the changes that he made from the original work do not detract from the story in any meaningful way.

If you like horror - heck, even if you don't really like horror but are a big fan of watching young teenagers go on adventures, à la *The Goonies* or *Stranger Things* - I would implore you to go see *It*. Horror fans will get the frightening performance they crave from Pennywise, while those like me who just want a good story can follow the Losers' Club as they grow from scared kids to confident teenagers, albeit with some frights along the way. There's something in *It* for everyone, which may be the best thing about it.



PRESIDENT'S DESK,
CONTINUED FROM PAGE 12

taking in something new and different, and growing from it.

The breadth of opportunity on campus is immense. These short years are the time to grow your identity and build yourself as a person. They are a chance to delve into self-exploration and interests that will be scarcely available outside the freethinking, intellectual incubator that is college. However you choose to explore -- be it a Thursday night party or a Thursday night kumzits; political activism through College Republicans or Democrats; a foray into campus journalism; reading the newspaper every day, or once a week; picking up a podcast; traveling the country, or the world; visiting a museum; going skydiving -- push yourself to experience something new. Something different. Challenge your comfort zone.

The result of these experiences is more profound than a mere list of YOLO-inspired activities. Rather, they open your mind to new ideas and different ways of thinking. Adopting this philosophy of exploration enables us to discover new passions; to study our religious and spiritual

identities; to hone our understanding of ourselves and of people who see the world differently; to feel independent and remove one's self from the constraints and molds of expectations and pressures; to experience the moment. There will always be a next step that needs planning. Here you have a unique opportunity to stop and look around -- to grow into someone more dynamic, more confident, and more interesting. And who knows -- ironically, that might just up your professional capital as well. Steve Jobs once said of people who haven't had diverse experiences, "... they don't have enough dots to connect, and they up with very linear solutions without a broad perspective on the problem. The broader one's understanding of the human experience, the better design we will have."

Set out from college and into life's next steps not only with a degree and job credentials, but with an identity constructed upon a foundation of diverse experience. Leave with an identity bolstered by self-exploration and a drive to continue growing as a person. From what I've seen, not only does that turn apathetic college experiences rich, but also makes for a richer existence for life.

After that conversation, I started thinking about what truly made me happy. As I turned on an episode of *The*

Newsroom once again, it hit me that being a Management major would never make me happy. I loved writing articles. I loved talking to people. I loved finding the heart in each person and relaying it in my pieces. I loved finding the story. And the only way to do that was to become a Journalism major. The next day, I marched into the Registrar's office, filled out a Major Declaration form, and walked out as a Journalism major, one step closer to living out my dreams.

As I'm writing this article for *The Commentator* in my senior year of college, I contemplate how moments from childhood really do affect your life choices. If I hadn't sat down in my grandfather's recliner all those years ago, I never would've found the television show that gave me the initial idea of becoming a journalist. If I hadn't sat down across from a stranger on the train at the beginning of my adult years, I never would've found the show that gave me the confidence to switch my major and pursue a career I'd only dreamed about. This goes to show that sometimes you should listen to your gut. You never know where that feeling will take you in life.

A Discourse on Warfare: Why We Still Haven't Defeated Cancer

By Jonah Stavsky

Cancer -- the familiar phonetics of the word sends shivers down our spine and vandalizes our core. The disease ignites sensations of somber, leaving friends and family of the affected in disarray -- despondent, anguished, and heartbroken. In angst and in desperation for comfort, we euphemize the term: she *fought* cancer. Maybe she was victorious, we would hope; or perhaps she lost, we mourn. Because in the end, this most enigmatic aspect of the human condition is viewed as a war to be fought, a battle to be won.

As a species, we have landed man on the moon, learned to communicate across continents at the touch of a button, and, not too long ago, sequenced our own genome in its entirety. Similarly, we have discovered the simple, yet astonishing drug penicillin -- a life-saving antibiotic. And, in an incredibly unlikely turn of events, we have uncovered the notion that small doses of a virus, such as chicken pox, for example, can protect against the full fledged disease itself. Technology, science, and medicine have come a long way. Cancer, however, despite its seemingly simple pathology, continues its campaign, striking deep into our creative arsenal. In a brief moment of digression, unencumbered by the ethotic nature of the disease, the question is undoubtedly asked: why have we not yet cured cancer?

In a few words, it is because we are asking the wrong question. Cancer does not have a single cure because it is not a single disease. Rather, the group of conditions we call cancer only displays a common base pathological mechanism.

Normally, our 30 trillion body tissue cells are constantly dividing and replacing those which have already expired. This division is tightly regulated by specific "checkpoints" along the cycle, which signal the cell to replicate, divide, and stop at specific times. However, the cellular division stop sign, if you will, may become faulty, leading to the uncontrollable formation of clumped cells in a specific body tissue. We call this colony of cells a tumor. The name of a specific cancer is dictated by the location of the tumor: if it's in the breast, breast cancer; the prostate, prostate cancer. The rarity of heart cancer as emphasized by Lewis Cantley, a biophysical chemist, helps illustrate this point: cardiac cells, which develop primarily in utero, offer little chance to become cancerous into adulthood "because they have reduced abilities to divide". In other tissues, however, these rapidly dividing cells can cause tumors which interfere with body functions, and, if spread to

other areas of the body, are said to have metastasized.

Surprisingly, this process of tumor formation happens quite often. Our immensely clever immune systems, however, typically recognize the problem before it becomes pathologic, targeting the rogue cells with an elegantly planned search and destroy mission. But what happens to those mischievous cells that slip through the defenses? More specifically, how is cancer currently treated and what does the future of this interesting field hold?

To begin speaking of potential treatments, we must focus on an unfortunate reality: large variation exists in how tumors develop, and, along with a multitude of other factors, this is why we have not yet "cured" cancer.

By extension, the disease comes in five main varieties according to the Cancer Treatment Centers of America: carcinomas, sarcomas, leukemias, lymphomas, and central nervous system cancers. These diseases differ in their primary developmental mechanism -- namely, those beginning in the skin, connective tissues, blood, immune system, and brain and spinal cord, respectively. What's more, the pathology of tumor development often diverges in different body tissues: colorectal cancer formation demonstrates a distinct mechanism from that of skin cancer. A large body of research, including a study on breast cancer performed in conjunction with the University of Cambridge, showed that even the same cancer within different individuals must be treated distinctly.

Currently, according to the National Cancer Institute, we have three main options for cancer treatment depending on its type, stage, and the general health of the individual. In no particular order, we have surgery, radiation, and chemotherapy. The surgical option, or resection, is fairly straightforward (but not always feasible) and mandates the manual removal of the tumor -- the "go in and take it out" approach. Radiation therapy involves aiming specific energy filled photons at the tumor in an attempt to kill or even shrink it -- the "laser it away" approach. Lastly, the group of drugs we categorize as chemotherapy agents can be utilized to kill not only cancer cells, but, unfortunately, many of their healthy counterparts as well -- the true "carpet bomb" approach. However, as many may be aware, these treatment options are far from perfect and often carry unduly adverse effects.

In an attempt to extinguish such tumors while minimizing potential side effects, researchers continue to develop targeted treatments to individualized cancers, which have, in recent years, become a reality. One such targeted therapy, according to the National Cancer Institute, is a type of immunotherapy which involves the

use of monoclonal antibodies, which essentially assist the immune system in its search and destroy mission by "tagging" cancer cells for destruction. Another such targeted technique, hormone therapy (which works particularly well on breast and prostate cancers), takes advantage of one of the cells' primary growth factors, hormones, and regulates them in order to starve these rogue biologicals of their food. Just as well, some therapies can cut off cancer cell nutrient supply by harming their blood vessels. Such an approach is similar to shutting the oxygen vents in a sealed room, thereby suffocating its contents -- in the case of uncontrollable cells, a sensible biological weapon.

These are just a few of the many potential cancer treatments. Thus, left with a myriad of complex, interplaying options, how are we to choose? While oncologists may be experts in their field, treatment plans are becoming increasingly reinforced with a robotic mind. The International Business Machine Corporation (IBM), in 2011, released *Watson*, a computer program that can help synthesize a patient's medical records in order to grant an evidence based treatment plan grounded in thousands of research studies. Various studies, such as a 2017 study from the Manipal Comprehensive Cancer Centre in India, have cited *Watson's* accuracy as defined by its congruent opinions with doctors, specifically when it comes to lung, rectal, and colon cancers. The researchers concluded *Watson's* treatment plan to be "highly concordant in the cancers examined". Of course, while *Watson* has, in many instances, sufficiently demonstrated its capabilities, the program does contain limitations. Moreover, many experts -- including one of the physicians heading the project -- are in agreement that *Watson* will require improvements before claiming itself as a breakthrough device in cancer treatment. The physician commented: "It's still in testing and not quite ready for the mainstream yet, but it has the infrastructure to potentially revolutionize oncology research".

In consideration of our predicament, what are we left with? As a society, we are in an ongoing war with an enemy that is constantly adapting. As a countermeasure, we search in the test tubes and computer databases for our weapon. Yet, as we have seen, a single weapon does not likely exist. Rather, multiple weapons are required for multiple enemies. The various cancers, therefore, will need to be treated one at a time. However, to those who have become despondent, anguished, and heartbroken, know that progress is being made everyday and that staunch optimism should remain in your blood.



FROM THE COMMIE ARCHIVES

Editor's Note: In honor of the recent Investiture of Yeshiva University's fifth president, Rabbi Dr. Ari Berman, the Commentator has chosen to reprint several articles from its archives relating to the inauguration of the university's second president, Rabbi Dr. Samuel Belkin, in 1943.

From the Archives (September 23, 1943; Volume 8 Issue 1) — Dr. Samuel Belkin Assumes Office As New President of Institution

An Editorial: A Wise Choice

By Paul Orentlicher (Editor-in-Chief 1943-1944)

It is with happy and joyous hearts that the student body of Yeshiva and Yeshiva College greets the news of Dr. Samuel Belkin's appointment to the presidency of the institution. The appointment is all the more appreciated when it is realized that it fills a long-felt, if mute, need.

Since the death of our saintly leader, Dr. Bernard Revel, the institution has been like the proverbial body without a head. This is not to deny that progress has been made during the last three years. But that progress has been of a desultory nature, each department pursuing an independent course towards what it considered its goal.

We need one goal, and collective effort, if Yeshiva is to assume its rightful position in American Jewish life. And this collective effort must receive its direction from and be lodged in the person of one individual.

The appointment of a president is therefore happy news to all those interested in the welfare of the institution.

But that the choice should be a man of the qualities and capabilities of Dr. Belkin makes this occasion doubly auspicious.

Since he stepped into Yeshiva life in 1936, Dr. Belkin

has endeared himself to students and instructors alike. As a teacher, he was one of the most beloved and respected on the faculty. As Dean, he impressed all with his conscientious work and sincere efforts in behalf of the Yeshiva. It is only necessary to point to the remarkable strides Yeshiva has taken during the last few years to prove, if proof need be given, the inspiring leadership virtues of Dr. Belkin.

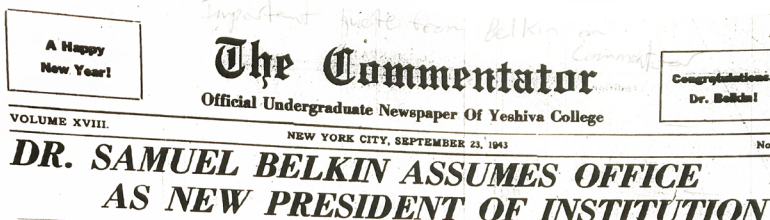
But it is as President of Yeshiva and Yeshiva College that we think Dr. Belkin will write his most glorious page in Yeshiva history. His splendid Talmudic and secular scholarship will underscore every line; his rich sagacity and vision every verse.

So today we comment the Board of Directors on its wise

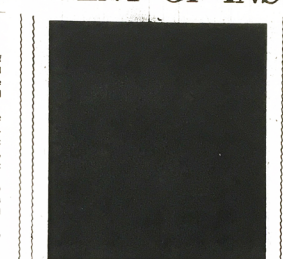
choice and say to Dr. Belkin:

Congratulations! The student body of Yeshiva College pledges its whole-hearted support to you and your administration. We know that under your guidance Yeshiva will reach year greater heights. We know that under your leadership there will be no room for political bickerings and behind-the-scenes manipulations. You are our leader; you have but to lead and we will follow.

We pray that the Almighty grant you strength and courage, physical and spiritual fortitude. They will be needed in the critical days ahead.



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Former Dean Named In June
Beginning with the school year, Rabbi Dr. Samuel Belkin assumed duties as President of the Yeshiva and Yeshiva College. His election to the post was announced last June 20, 1943, by the Hon. Samuel Levy, former Borough President of Manhattan and Chairman of the institution's Board of Directors.



Rabbi Dr. Samuel Belkin, pictured here in 1968 with Yithak Rabin at the YU graduation ceremony

Prospectus for New Year Outlined by Dr. Belkin

A slightly perplexed student body greets the inauguration of the new year at Yeshiva. Old students are wondering about the administrative changes which have taken place. They are curious about the essence of the new policies which have been formulated. New students are in doubt as to the aim of Yeshiva and the position it occupies on the American-Jewish scene.

Council Speeds Plans for Student Court, Club Advisors

A number of important issues were discussed at the first official meeting of the Yeshiva College Student Council which was held last week in the Council office. The most noteworthy development was the formation of a student court which will consist of five members appointed by the president and approved by the Council and will consider all charges brought against members of the school privileges to being the offender from holding school office.

War Problems

Turning to pertinent war problems, Dr. Belkin reported that the greatest number of Orthodox chaplains in the armed forces are Yeshiva-ordained. He added, "We encourage our young graduates to enlist as chaplains."

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In a recent interview, Dr. Samuel Belkin, newly elected president of Yeshiva and Yeshiva College, discussed the Yeshiva of '43-'44 with a view toward clearing up some of the uncertainties.

No changes have been made as far as the various departments and deans are concerned. Three new Roshei Hayeshivos have assumed posts in the Yeshiva department and Rabbi Marcus has been appointed chairman of the permanent, already functioning, Placement Committee.

Grad School Enlarged

Courses in the Bernard Revel Graduate School have been increased and intensified. Dr. Joshua Finkel is now a permanent lecturer on Semitics. A course dealing with the traditional evaluation of the Torah with commentaries is being offered for the first time. Dr. Zeitin, eminent historian, has given up his college position in order to devote his time to the Graduate School.

In reference to the renewal of seminars which aroused to much favorable comment last year, Dr. Belkin state, "As the occasion warrants seminars will be arranged for graduate students."

The smicha requirements are identical with those of last year. The knowledge amassed during years of study in the lower and upper divisions and an intensive Talmudic background will count toward smicha aspirations. No student may begin the study of Chulin before having been

graduated from college.

Yeshiva Policy

Dr. Belkin then proceeded to discuss several general matters pertaining to Yeshiva policy.

The purpose of The Commentator, as Dr. Belkin expressed it, is "to serve not merely as secular paper for college activities but as the representative of the Yeshiva man in his entirety. It is my conviction that the college should in no way be separated and treated as a distinct unit. One cannot divorce himself from the essence of his being in the afternoon after having devoted the morning to Torah.

"The college as founded by our late Rosh Hayeshiva, Dr. Revel, of blessed memory, serves a double purpose. It gives the Yeshiva man a secular education in a Jewish environment; and, by being a Yeshiva college emphasizes the greater ends and purposes of learning which above all mean the moral and religious form of life. We hope that Torah knowledge will influence the character of the

student body and that our students will realize that the purpose of their secular studies is to supplement and complement the essence of religious life."

War Problems

Turning to the pertinent war problems, Dr. Belkin reported that the greatest number of Orthodox chaplains in the armed forces are Yeshiva-ordained. He added, "We encourage our young graduates to enlist as chaplains."

As President of Yeshiva, Dr. Belkin is concerned with the improvement of the institution as a whole. The complete harmony existing between the president and various deans and faculties of the departments will facilitate the continued progress of Yeshiva.

Studying Abroad From YU

By James Cappell

Don't think it's possible at YU? Don't think you can get credit? Think it might not be worth it? Think again my friend. Studying abroad at YU is unfortunately so uncommon that perhaps the thought hasn't even entered your mind. Well now it might.

I recently returned from a semester abroad in London, where I grew academically, socially, and religiously; and in doing so, had the best time of my life. In those five months, I studied theater and economics at the University of Westminster in Central London. I made friends with whom I shared experiences of a lifetime. I traveled across Europe, seeing the greatest sights and places I could imagine. And of course, I had my fair share of pints at the pubs along the way. I captured amazing, once in a lifetime moments and experiences.

However, as positively life changing as it may have been, at times being abroad certainly had its challenges. In my first three days, I lost six pounds, slept four hours a night, couldn't find my classes, and overall didn't know what the hell I was doing in the country. Refusing to compromise Jewish values and arriving there with minimal friends or acquaintances, I was utterly lost upon touch down in London-town. Once I was finally acclimated to my surroundings, I realized that it would take two 40 minute trips a month with my empty suitcase to the Jewish neighborhood in order to stay satiated. I understood that I'd be cooking and eating alone most meals and that on Friday nights and Saturday (trip day) I would have absolutely nothing to do with my abroad program.

Although many study abroad locations will be able to satisfy most of your religious needs, they often will put you into difficult, religiously-conflicted situations such as requiring you to carry your keys on Sabbath when there is no eruv, or causing you to desire that piece of uncertified bread in southern Italy when your

stomach is rumbling. Males might have to explain to their roommates what those black leather straps they are wearing every morning are. This feeling of religious displacement might begin to settle in when everything that is convenient about religion goes out the window.

“STUDYING ABROAD IS ABOUT MAKING THE MOST OF EVERY SINGLE OPPORTUNITY, RELIGIOUS, ACADEMIC AND SOCIAL”

However, this is also an opportunity to show yourself where your beliefs and commitments truly lie. Jewish religion and tradition is part of the reason we have all chosen to be here at YU, a place with an unparalleled atmosphere when it comes to religious growth and spiritual connection. Nevertheless, there is a sense of being too comfortable here, and therefore this religious discomfort, an important factor of growth, can only really be achieved elsewhere.

Academically, studying abroad gives you a chance to step into the culture of other people. In London, I first walked into a classroom full of Muslims, Bulgarians, Germans, and English. The teacher had a thick accent and the subject was playwriting, a subject I knew absolutely nothing about. My adventures started with Playwriting 101 and extended to seeing shows on London's West End about the city's Great Fire of 1666 or architectural evolution. They continued into the museums of London, Paris, and Amsterdam, complete with rich history, art, and culture. If you do study abroad, be sure to immerse yourself in the ideas and cultures of others in their own hometowns and watch as you emerge with extensive knowledge and a thirst for

learning. If you're lucky, you'll try Hungarian goulash, Italian pizza, Irish whiskey, and maybe even sit down to a Friday night meal discussing Judaism with a young German whose grandfather happened to be a Nazi.

Studying abroad is about making the most of every single opportunity, religious, academic and social. Imagine showing up to a school alone, surrounded by thousands of other students from all over the world. Would you introduce yourself? Ask one of them to grab coffee? Or would you go to your room and watch Netflix? It took me a while to realize that, in truth, everyone was as lost as I was, wanted to learn as much as I did, party as much as me, travel and tour just like me, and most of all to be friends with me.

This is the life of studying as an abroad student with an unmatched desire and freedom for social encounters, connections and friendships. The atmosphere is one of warmth, exploration, and pure adventure. While your life at home is put on pause, your life abroad, in which you are spontaneously discovering more about others and yourself socially, academically, and religiously begins. Embrace the uncomfortable situations that you will surely have, and use the opportunity to learn about other people and even more about yourself. Visit Dublin with your new friends to learn about the Vikings. Meet your old ones in Budapest to enjoy an Austrian bathhouse. Have a drink in the Lochs of Scotland, or take a day trip to Windsor, London. The possibilities of discovery, adventure, and fun are endless while studying abroad.

Go see something new, meet someone new, and discover something new. Go study abroad.

Editor's note: For questions about studying abroad as a YU student, please contact the author at jcappell@mail.yu.edu

Out of the Depths: a Visit to the 9/11 Memorial, Sixteen Years Later

By Ben Atwood

A buzz overtakes my eardrums: not the hurried drone of an uncomfortably close hornet's nest but the soothing hum of a nearby waterfall. The sound of rushing water and the slimy humidity glued to my skin for a moment deludes me into thinking I sit in the midst of an exotic rainforest. But I quickly end my daydream and find myself in the vastly dissimilar financial center of New York City. I lift my eyes upward and shift my pupils left, and then right, surveying the towering banks and office buildings lined up as dominoes around the perimeter of where I sit typing at my silver Dell laptop. The noon sun hangs directly over my head; the lack of shade producing a couple droplets of sweat that fall from my forehead to be caught in the thicket of my eyebrows. My eyes squint as I peer down towards the source of the only noise I can hear, the waterfall that fills the site of what seventeen years ago housed the South Tower of the centerpiece of Manhattan, the grand prix of financial hubs: the World Trade Center.

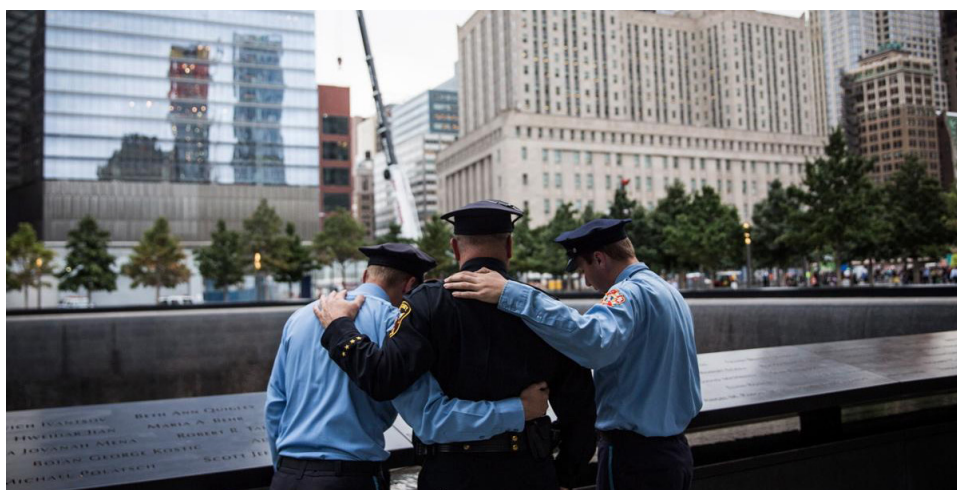
The brutal terror attacks of September 11, 2001 that reduced the two largest towers of the World Trade Center to mere piles of ash and rubble strove to damage the Western world's confidence in their value of liberty by assaulting a symbol of their free markets. As a result, the 9/11 Memorial was constructed not only as a tribute to the lives lost but a reminder of the Western appreciation for life and freedom (Based on the 9/11 Memorial Mission Statements). The plaza grounds consist mostly of white and black concrete with scattered concrete blocks for sitting, used when visitors need to rest their legs or simply dwell in contemplation over the tragic events of that fateful September morning. While the park serves as a serene respite among some of the tallest structures in the city, the area's own highest points, save for the

Memorial Museum, are youthful swamp white oak trees that lie scattered on unevenly distributed rectangles of grass and soil. The glistening, tough concrete reminds the visitor of the West's industrial prowess, while the plush greens and sprouting oaks reflect the flourishing, peaceful pleasure of freedom, the targets of 9/11.

Within the grounds of the memorial are two large pools that represent the two main towers obliterated sixteen years ago. Gallons of water flow down the inner walls of each square, landing in another pool that itself leads to a black square-shaped void in the structure's center, providing the illusion that the water falls forever into nothingness. The pools and the plaza please the aesthete's eye, yet appear as mere scabs over the wounds that remain fresh to many who remember 9/11.

The Manhattan financial center houses a bustling world of capitalism, where employees and CEO's work incessantly for profit. In such an atmosphere, little time exists to ruminate over larger aspects of life and existence. Thus, the serenity of the 9/11 memorial acts as a spiritual foil to and perhaps remedy for one of the centers of utilitarian capitalist America. Sitting on one of the concrete blocks in the memorial's plaza, I spend much time watching the various visitors use the memorial as an area in which to express their freedom in diverse ways.

I see an American couple probably in their seventies or eighties, the man plump with a bald head and graying beard alongside his skinny wife with frizzy, long gray hair, staring silently into the openness of the South Tower pool. Neither speaks. The man's liver-spotted hand, shaking, rises slowly from his side to his partner's opposite shoulder. Around the corner of the same pool, two Asian girls with long, straight black hair smile as one of them raises her selfie-stick in front of them to snap a picture. Nearby, a French mother profusely apologizes in thick accent-tainted English to a patrolling security guard after he reprimands her teenage son for lying down on one of the sitting blocks. All of these visitors come to commemorate the same event. Irrespective of race or nationality, they wave their hands, mimicking



SEE, 9/11 CONTINUED ON PAGE 17

ORA: A Light at the end of the tunnel

By Nechama Lowy

For most people, summer is a time to relax, maybe take on that hobby they have been meaning to perfect, or work on a project that they have not had time to focus on. I've worked both months in the summer for the past five years, so while there was not much relaxing time, I have always gained important skills and earned substantial money.

This year was different. I had the amazing opportunity this past summer to intern for an incredible organization, one that I can truly say taught me an immense amount -- ORA; the Organization for the Resolution of *Agunot*.

For those who are unfamiliar with it, ORA deals with issues of Jewish divorce. In a traditional Jewish marriage, in order to legally separate and be able to remarry, the man must present the woman with a *get* (legal divorce document) and the woman must accept it. This gets tricky in messy divorce cases, and often times one party will withhold delivering the document or accepting it, thus binding the opposite party to the marriage and earning them the name *agun* or *agunah* (chained person). ORA works with both sides of the relationship to ensure the *get* is given and received. By speaking to both parties, providing assistance and resources to lawyers or rabbis, and using any halachic means possible to make the process happen smoothly, ORA does not rest until both parties are free to remarry. When I left my job at the end of the summer, they had just solved their 290th case.

The ORA staff is dedicated, hard-working, and extremely knowledgeable in Torah and worldly topics. Being that I had recently come back from seminary, I was worried about going from constant Torah learning in Israel to mundane studies back in America, but working at ORA and participating in their weekly *chaburot* (group lessons) and lunch-and-learns assisted my transition greatly.

The specific aspect of ORA I would like to focus on is their ability to face that which is negative and taboo with a rare kind of courage. Instead of turning a blind eye to real issues, the staff chooses to engage and fight, never giving up until their goal is met. While ORA sounds noteworthy, some might write it off as an important advocacy group but not one that will ever breach the boundaries of their respective communities. It is important to recognize that this is not the case, and more people that one might think actually utilize their resources.

Coming from a home with divorced parents, I entered the office with an awareness that the cases they deal with are not entirely foreign to someone with a similar background to me. I spoke many times with the director about my sensitivities to the topic, and while he did reassure me I would never have to be put in a position that made me uncomfortable, inherently facing and dealing with the issue of divorce everyday was inevitably going to affect me. While everything has been settled in my family for many years, it is not an experience I would ever wish to recount. Yet I found myself discussing it in great detail and coming to terms with the past in ways I never did before. The one silver lining being that it was not without hope that I faced my problems.

While ORA deals with frightening pasts, they are also committed to creating a brighter future through utilizing

a legal document -- the Halachic Prenup. The prenup was composed by the Beit Din of America and endorsed by many Jewish leaders of our generation. By issuing a support obligation for every day a couple is separated and the *get* is not settled, the document ensures that the *get* will not be used as a form of extortion by either party in the marriage. The mandatory support falls on the party who is refusing to cooperate. The idea behind the Halachic Prenup is based on the lawful obligation of the man to provide sustenance to his wife while they remain married. In all

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AS IMPORTANT AS YOUR SAFETY
AND HAPPINESS."**

cases where the prenup was properly signed and a copy was maintained, it has worked in preventing *get* refusal. In fact, the importance of this prenup is so renowned and recognized that the Rabbinical Council of America will not officiate a marriage if there is no prenup signed.

Being an intern at ORA gave me the rare opportunity to witness a prenup being signed, and I remember the moment vividly. The prenup is considered a legal

document so it is permissible for a woman to act as a witness, allowing us an opportunity to be on the forefront of this important movement, and I was naturally very excited. I had spent a lot of time learning about the prenup and discussing its importance, so to finally be able to participate in a signing was a truly memorable moment for me. The couple sat down and my co-worker proceeded to explain the document, answer questions, and get the couple to open up and trust us enough to put an aspect of their marriage in our hands. As I sat watching them, I was struck by a certain sense of calmness and serenity. Watching the way they interacted, how they teased each other, and laughed together gave me unexplainable joy. I could tell there was real love and care between them; a love that went so far, they were willing to be bound by a legal document that states even in the worst case scenario, if all fails and our marriage does not work out, the money, house, and physical property will never come close to being as important as your safety and happiness. In essence, that is what signing the prenup says in words that do not have to be spoken -- for it is an act so great, words cannot express it. In an act of pure selflessness, of genuine self-sacrifice, the couple signed the prenup, said their goodbyes and left. Just like that, I had witnessed so much more than a few words being written on paper. I witnessed hope.

Resolving *agun* and *agunah* cases has been a challenge for the past generations, and it still continues to plague our communities. But to know there is a remedy, the prenup, and that people are utilizing it has made every negative moment I endured, every painful experience I relived of what messy divorces can result in, worth it. Facing problems becomes more bearable knowing that there are solutions, and that's exactly what ORA works towards. They don't shy away from the flaws of humanity, hiding behind tradition and letting it dictate our lives. Instead, they persevere and find creative, revolutionary paths to ensure we do not remain bound to the mistakes of our past.



9/11, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 16

a plane to explain to their children what happened on 9/11.

Along the outer edge of the pools are plaques with the names of the almost three-thousand victims of 2001 and the six of a first attack in 1993, hollowed out in bronze. Relatives, friends, those with zero connection to anyone murdered during those events place their fingers on the names, feeling the emptiness within each letter. Each carving represents a life, a legacy, and an unfulfilled destiny. Humans may differ in terms of background, profession, and future, but all who value liberty and free life come to the memorial to remember in unison. The different cohorts of visitors rarely speak to each other or recognize each other's presence yet are unafraid to pipe in softly to correct a father to their left explaining to his adolescent twin sons what he remembers of the details of 9/11 morning. A mere hour later, visitors express empathetic looks towards

a young widow who breaks down in tears upon seeing her husband's name on the plates for the first time. The interactions I witness from my seat stem from a shared appreciation of what the World Trade Center symbolizes and prove that the September 11 terrorists not only failed to quash Western spirits but indirectly created a space that fosters our unity.

As noon begins to pass, I steal a final panorama of my surroundings. In his poem "Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening," Robert Frost describes a short visit to a snowy forest on his trek back from a long day of doing business. He absorbs and meditates over the nature around him, but soon declares "the woods are lovely dark and deep, / but I have promises to keep, / and miles to go before I sleep, / and miles to go before I sleep" (Frost). Frost's minute of asylum in the woods does not hijack his entire evening nor is it dismantled by business he must soon rush take care of, but rather complements his hectic day and aids in moving him

forward. The 9/11 Memorial in Manhattan acts similarly for the frenzied culture of not only New York's financial center but the Western world at large by providing refuge for those who need a moment to meditate over larger values in life and inspiration for persevering further.

As my eyes reach directly in front of me, I cannot help but smile. From where I am sitting, the One World Trade Center, formerly known as the Freedom Tower, constructed next to the memorial site as the new tallest building in New York, appears behind the South Tower pool as if rising from the pool's opening. From the empty depths of the pool ascends a new life more vibrant than ever. The 9/11 Memorial as a tribute to Western freedom cultivates unity among all peoples by granting sanctuary to the otherwise chaotic routine of daily life and, as a result, could no better display what it means to rise from the ruins of catastrophe and march onwards.

Expectations and Eclipses

By Benjamin Koslowe

Orderly systems are nice. Our daily schedules, our cyclical lifetime events, our consistently behaved peers – they offer us safety in their predictableness. With fundamentalist faith do we utilize the orderly; to offer two examples, setting up structured education systems and making probabilistically wise career choices. Even in ordinary routine, we value those people and institutions that are conducive to minimizing that which is unpleasant, unpredictable, and even unsafe. In short, we shun surprise.

But if order is the skeleton that gives our lives safety and structure, then surprise is the blood pumping throughout, the passion swelling within, which enriches and animates them with special experiences. There is something exciting about not knowing what comes next. Whether the literal roller coaster or just a healthy dose of normal surprises, the unexpected keeps things interesting, worthwhile to anticipate.

This past summer I found myself in a strange position of desiring surprise, but finding that there was part of my psyche that involuntarily wrecked any hope of such. I was set to witness the Great American Eclipse in only a few weeks and, as much as I tried to keep the experience something impossible to spoil in advance, something fresh and mysterious, I found myself looking up any and all articles on the subject, essentially forming in my mind a complete anticipatory picture of what was to come. As I embarked on the road trip to Tennessee to catch the moment, I already had a strong sense of what exactly would happen in the sky, how I would feel excited and nervous, what inspiration would run through my mind. These thoughts essentially ruled out making the moment something special.

Which was déjà vu, since I had experienced similarly two years prior in anticipation of a trip to the Swiss Alps. Despite desiring a pure, original reaction to my first glance at the mountains, I found myself already weeks in advance outlining in my mind exactly how I would feel and react. I concluded even before arriving in Switzerland that a sense of awe would overflow me, that I would be humbled at the sight of something so much

grandier and everlasting than I.

But I was wrong. Though I had stubbornly outlined what impression the Alps would induce, the actual moment felt quite different from what I had expected. Whereas I had predicted an inspired reflective moment,

**“THERE IS SOMETHING
EXCITING ABOUT NOT KNOWING
WHAT COMES NEXT.”**

I found myself on that rainy day, as we broke through the dense clouds above Zermatt into the clear blue sky with snowcapped mountains all around, jumping in the cable car with excitement. I didn't feel small compared to the mountains. Instead, I felt proud as part of an amazing species that successfully conquered nature and rose above it.

This was a doubled-edged success. True, I managed to have a fresh experience despite my overthinking. But this posed an updated problem that was manifest before my Tennessee road trip. I was now aware that my gut predictions were likely to miss the mark, and this knowledge made me overthink the future tenfold. Not only did I form an early picture of the future excitement that the disappearing sun would inspire, but I also acknowledged for myself that other reactions were likely. I even instinctively attempted to gauge what those other possible reactions might look like.

Once again I turned out to have imperfect predictive powers. When the temperature dropped 15 degrees on that humid Tennessee summer afternoon, I felt an unexpected sense of spookiness in the air and in my bones. Despite the many eclipse photos that I had researched online, the sun's corona around the moon and the darkened daytime sky actually looked quite different from even my most creative mental drawings. Even in my many-layered, meta, involuntary sabotage of all mystique, the Great American Eclipse truly caught me off guard.

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Astronomy is wonderful in the immensity that it represents. Equally amazing is the high order of the cosmos and mankind's corresponding high accuracy and precision of predicting their movements. Science can describe a solar eclipse down to the millisecond, longitude, and latitude. We know that Halley's Comet is currently speeding away from the sun in the extremities of our solar system, and that it will soon turn back once again on its elliptical path to eventually greet our planet once more in July, 2061.

This knowledge is awesome. But, if I have learned anything from the recent solar eclipse, it is that even within the most structured systems we encounter in life, the future always remains somewhat of a surprise, somehow unexpected.

I believe that accepting this quality of life is a good thing. It's this quality that turns standstill post-eclipse traffic in the Virginia Mountains, something predictably quite annoying, from an immense frustration into a surprisingly incredible sensation of belonging to something larger than yourself. It's this quality that makes something as chaotic as a plot twist a very memorable feature of many modern great films. It's this quality that explains how Beethoven's Fifth Symphony and Stravinsky's "Rite of Spring," both shocking and revolutionary upon their debuts, have become dominant pieces in the classical music repertoire. And this applies to life more broadly. While instinct suggests, for good reason, that a perfect mapping of the future is desirable, in reality it is more exciting when the future is largely unknown.

I know that I will be 66 years old during Halley's Comet's next appearance. I have known as much since my great-grandfather told this to me as a child. It is by a long shot the latest event which I have marked on my calendar. But will I witness the event alone? Will my future family join me? Where on this planet will we find ourselves on that day? What emotions will we feel inside? How will the 2061 sky look at that moment?

I am glad to say that I have no idea.



Raised Eyebrows over Raised Fees

By Eitan Lipsky

Procuring an apartment located on one of the local streets of Washington Heights to live in is somewhat of a rite of passage for students on YU's Wilf campus. While first year on campus students, affectionately known as "FTOC's" (emphasis on the 'on campus'), are required to live in the dormitories on campus, everyone else is free to find his own housing. A high percentage of second year students and a significantly larger number of third years (at least based off of some non-scientific random polling) move from the dorms into off campus housing. In fact, this is so prevalent that, according to Rabbi Kenneth Brander, Vice President for University and Community Life, nearly 50% of YU's men (539 out of 1130) live in off campus housing. In my second year, I too moved from the dorms to a slightly grimy, yet very cozy apartment just a few groggy early morning minutes away from the main campus.

This culture of moving into off campus housing is clearly quite strong, but how did it get this way? I believe that it is a product of three factors. Firstly and most obviously is the price. Paying for YU dorms runs up the already-pricey tuition fee to something even more daunting. This is both due to having to pay for the dorms themselves and the required subscription to the university's dining club that comes along with living in the dorms. The cost of rent in many local apartments comes out to thousands of dollars less than the dorm prices and, for those who have the head to plan it out, the cost of food is also much lower. The second thing that students gain from living outside of the dorms is a sense of independence and freedom; a sense that had been stifled by the many rules and regulations of the dormitory, including the no alcohol policy and the need to sign in guests in order to allow them to stay the night. Finally, what follows directly from this newfound sense of independence is an increase in responsibility coming from the need to pay rent on time, make sure that the apartment is clean (or at least livable), and arrange all meals. Inculcating into oneself this ability to be self-sufficient is an invaluable lesson to learn as college students transition into work and family life.

Late this past summer, as I was peering over my bill from YU for tuition and other various fees, something caught my eye. Under the heading of "Off Campus Dining Plan" was a \$400 fee for the fall semester. While this

was not a new fee altogether, it was a \$150 per semester increase from the previous year's mandatory dining card fund. I was initially suspicious that this was an error, as neither I nor my parents had received any notification from the university that the price was going up, but after consulting with my many other off campus friends, it was confirmed that the university had raised the fee. Aside from my initial frustration with the university's lack of transparency in raising a fee without mentioning it or explaining their reasoning to the students, there was something else bothering me. For some reason, I had a feeling that this was another example of the university attempting to help its student population without knowing what their real needs are.

Once I returned to campus, I made sure to contact the administration to find out what happened and why this change was made. I was told that the basis for raising the mandatory fee was because students in the past have not been able to manage their funds correctly, and thus in stressful times of the semester such as midterms and finals, they will not have any remaining funds and will be forced to skip meals. I was assured that these dining funds were tax free, would go towards "maintaining and enhancing the dining options" on campus, and that the funds could be used in most of the restaurants on the Wilf and Beren campuses. In the remainder of this essay, I would like to explain why I think that these funds are misguided, and suggest what similar minded students like me can do about it.

As mentioned above, having an apartment comes with major responsibility. One is subject to eviction if they do not pay their rent on time. Living out of the dorms also increases the potential security risk, and therefore requires one to have an extra caution about leaving valuables lying around or walking home alone at night. Additionally, living out of campus housing requires one to make real calculated decisions about food purchasing, preparation, and consumption. Those students who decide to live out of the convenience of the Morg, Rubin, or Muss dorms are essentially saying that they are accepting these and other responsibilities upon themselves. And just as it is not the responsibility of a university to make sure that its students pay their landlords before the first of the month, it also should not be its responsibility to take care of their grocery shopping needs.

Additionally, the very notion that it was necessary to raise the fee for all off campus students overlooks the system within which it exists. Dining cards can be very easily refilled on the OneCard website. Students are very familiar with this system, especially as this year for the first time they are able to sign up for Shabbat meals in the cafeteria from that very same site. If students really are running out of money around stressful times of the semester, they should be able to independently add to their own funds using that website. The notion that students would rather starve than spend 5 minutes pursuing this is a very difficult one for me to accept.

With such a large percentage of students living off campus, it only makes sense that more focus should be placed on how to best service that part of the YU population. In this sense, the administration was in the right for thinking about them. However, these decisions must be made after conversations between the administration and the off campus population to find out what their main needs are. Imposing random fees for reasons that don't apply to everyone that were decided by the administration without consulting the affected group seems more like a punishment for living off campus than anything else. It might be a relatively small \$300 per year difference, but I think that the larger issue makes this sufficient grounds for letting our voices be heard and trying to work together with the administration to make useful and effective change going forward.



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On the Limitations of Torah Ideology: The Weaknesses of Torah in Galut and What to Do About It

By Aryeh Schonbrun

As a proud alumnus of the Modern Orthodox educational system, I do not wish to offend the sensibilities of my pious teachers and friends who adhere to the tenets of the Torah. I also do not want you to think that I have, *chas veshalom*, strayed from the ways of the Law of God and rebelled against the truths that have defined the Jew since his inception. I am grateful for my upbringing as a proud Jew and I appreciate all the mentors, friends, and figures who have allowed me to take part in the millennia-old story of the eternal people. Throughout the ages, many have fought and died in order to preserve our hallowed tradition, and to object to even the most basic teachings of our sacred inheritance would amount to personal hubris on an unimaginable level and an absurd denial of the authenticity of our most cherished possession and the closest element to God in existence.

However, I cannot but bemoan the damage that a two-thousand year exile has inflicted upon our holy covenant. The Torah we have today has for the most part survived the impact of the destruction of both temples, multiple exiles, pogroms, holocausts, and destruction. Even through the most harrowing periods of our tortured exiled existence, our collective will has preserved our precious cargo and has transmitted it onwards for future generations. But, in general, the effects of this never-ending *galus* have weakened the spiritual connection we retain with the original, natural *torah shebe'al peh*, the unwritten commandments as part of our life as a nation. In a well known passage from the Talmud (Shabbat 112 b), the Rabbis (Amorites) consider their relative stature as compared to their fathers and ancient predecessors. They conclude that they are as asses to men in comparison to their forefathers.

This concept of *yeridat hadorot*, or the “diminishing of the generations,” reverberates strongly in the fabric of our nation’s history. Throughout the millennia, great scholars of Torah graced the landscape of Torah Judaism. These figures served not only as spiritual and halakhic leaders, but also as political personalities that served the pressing needs of Jews in exile. They, as documented by our ever-present reverence for their talmudic prowess and human insight, inspired generations upon generations of Jews to uphold their traditions and preserve the authenticity of the Torah. Even so, any *talmid* of basic Talmudic law knows

that we do not approach every Rabbi with equal reverence. The temporal hierarchy as described by the Rabbis in the Talmud continues to this day and plays a major part in Jewish literature. A prominent Acharon may argue with his peers and possibly with a Rishon, but no one would tolerate a modern Rabbi to personally contradict the teaching of a Tana(!). Similarly, the dictates of previous Rabbis remain in place today not only as a result of a consensus of Rabbis who continue to deem them appropriate, but rather, in recognition of the greatness of past generations and our relative insignificance due to our time-diluted relationship to the source of Torah, and due to our personal, communal, and national shortcomings, we dare not dissent.

Hence, we find ourselves in an awkward situation. We maintain the integrity of what remains from the revelation at Sinai, strive to protect and study the works of our great religious leaders, and attempt to lead lives of *bnei torah* as

“WITH THE ESTABLISHMENT OF AN INDEPENDENT JEWISH STATE CAME THE RESPONSIBILITIES THAT HAD SO LONG BEEN RELEGATED TO OUR NUMEROUS GENTILE HOSTS. WHO WILL RUN THE COUNTRY, HOW WILL THEY BE CHOSEN, WHAT WILL THE ECONOMY LOOK LIKE, AND HOW DO WE EMBRACE OUR BRETHERN IN THIS BIRTH OF AN IDEAL SOCIETY?”

we find them guided by our ancient tradition. However, as many of us feel, and as demonstrated by our continuous decline from the heights of Babel to the present, the conduit of divine revelation, of ancient commandments and decrees, runs drier and drier as time goes on, and can no longer satisfy the political and spiritual needs of most of us. To experience the revelation at Sinai through the study

of Torah offers the most direct connection to God almighty, but, to our dismay, the act of study does not always answer life’s most pressing questions. I do not mean to question the importance of knowing the laws of Sabbath, of Nidah, or of Neziqin. All observant Jews need the expertise of Rabbinic guidance when approaching the specific halakhic issues that affect everyone, everyday. Instead, I question the prospect of expecting Torah to provide the answers to some of the major questions that now occupy world Jewry and the world in general.

Of course, Jewry today is not the Jewry of a century ago. We have suffered much in the past century, have survived against all the odds, and have risen from the ashes of Auschwitz to settle and secure the ancient Land of Israel, initiating the process of the redemption (speedily in our days. Amen). Nevertheless, the process of transformation from a “nation spread out amongst others,” to a nation sovereign in her homeland has brought forth much confusion and has disturbed the status quo of Jewish life as defined by its never-ending experience as a diaspora Jew. Along with the new Jewish State of Israel, and the ingathering of the exiled masses of Jews from the world over, the Jewish people have begun the process of fulfilling their destiny. Instead of just rolling with the punches, accepting the yoke of gentile rule with both equanimity and despondent helplessness, the modern Israeli Jew lives proudly in his homeland, fashioning for himself a culture, society, and life unique to the Jew and to Israel. But, owing the lack of proper guidance, and to the influences of the ever-present exile, Israeli Jews, and even Religious-Zionist Israelis, find it difficult to envision a redemptive society, one which would fully unlock the potential of our peoplehood. Such a society, as proposed by religious Hareidim and Zionists, must ultimately conform to the dictates of the Torah, but as to the critical elements of culture, economy, and society, there does not exist any agreement between parties, nor, indeed, much interest in analyzing the possibilities in light of Torah principles.

This apparent oversight, the inability of Torah to adapt to a practical, realistic *geula* has dogged Jews for centuries, if not millennia, though rises to prominence only now in regards to the contemporary Jewish state. Up until recent history, Jews have made do with adapting themselves to whatever environment the exile has presented them. They usually could not realistically impact the politics of their host countries, and, when they tried to do so, risked facing anti-Semitic backlash accusing them of meddling. Additionally, those who injected themselves into the secular discourse of gentile politics usually found themselves severed from the existing world of Torah and Jewish tradition. Most visionaries, as we discovered, quickly threw off the yoke of Torah and assimilated into the surrounding culture. With the establishment of an independent Jewish state came the responsibilities that had so long been relegated to our numerous gentile hosts. Who will run the country, how will they be chosen, what will the economy look like, and how do we embrace our brethren in this birth of an ideal society? Surely, the ingathering of exiles and the establishment of the State of Israel contribute to our sense of an impending *geula*, but if we do not, or cannot, actively engage in the dialogue surrounding the practical aspects of an ideal society, if out of fear or lack of insight we refrain from contributing to the construction of a just, divinely inspired community, how will we continue to see Israel as an expression of divine will? In order to achieve a deeper level of understanding, we must first attempt to acknowledge and examine our weaknesses and begin to compensate for the damage that such an exile has wrought.

Rabbi Avraham Yitzhaq Hakohen Kook, a man we may consider the demi-prophet of religious Zionism, writes in his work “Orot” of the many spiritual, sociological, psychological, and political forces that affect the Jewish people. In a passage he calls the “Course of the Ideas of Israel,” he describes the interaction that takes place between the Ideas of Nationalism, Religion, and Divinity. He writes that in order to maintain stability and succeed, the people of Israel need to incorporate the characteristics

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Are Jewish Leaders Afraid of Their Constituents? Analyzing Rabbinic Self-Censorship

By Moshe Kurtz

Many of us have been raised to view rabbis and Jewish leaders as strong and resolute figures, individuals charged with the sacred cause of conveying the message of God to his people without compromise, even in the face of adversity. But what if rabbis don't always convey the message of the Torah, and at times experience a type of fear that exceeds even their fear of God...a fear of their constituents? In the following article I seek to address the issue of Rabbinic self-censorship and its implications for the Jewish community.

As an Orthodox reader, you have likely encountered rabbis and teachers who have taught you about the greatness and almost immaculate personages of both Biblical figures and *gedolim* of recent history. There is a tendency to present past leaders as faultless and of absolute perfection, even though our tradition teaches that "...there is not a righteous man upon earth, that does only good, and does not sin" (Ecclesiastes 7:20).

Allow me to shift my focus to the other side of the Jewish spectrum: A few months ago, I participated in a Jewish interdenominational program, in which a Reform rabbi presented on the topic of Judaism and homosexuality. On her PowerPoint slides she proudly displayed the verses "And you shall love your fellow as you love yourself" and "You shall love the stranger..." However, I couldn't help but think that she was missing a very critical verse: "A man shall not lie with a man as he lies with a woman..." Regardless of one's conclusions on how Judaism should address homosexuality, or any modern circumstance for that matter, to have an honest Torah discussion it seems non-productive to omit explicit verses in the Bible.

Why would an Orthodox rabbi omit opinions that critique Biblical heroes, and why would a Reform rabbi omit an explicit verse that is directly relevant to her topic? One possibility is that the rabbi is unaware of the existence of the "omitted" opinion/source. Alternatively, the rabbi is deliberately excluding it from his/her teachings.

I would like to assume that in both cases, each rabbi had the basic Jewish education to know about the dissenting viewpoints. That being the case, the only explanation is that for some reason they both chose to not present a particular idea. This is curious – why would a rabbi or teacher deliberately censor ideas that are found within the traditional Biblical

and Rabbinic Jewish canon?

In most synagogues across the denominations, rabbis present a weekly sermon to their audience. Many rabbis whom I have spoken with claim that they already know the idea that they intend to convey, and they simply use the Bible and its commentaries as a means for substantiating their message to their audience. Essentially, they read the Bible with a confirmation bias to find their preconceived views within the Bible, as opposed to initially forming their viewpoints based on God's word.

Often times sermons are about unambiguous virtues such as charity or prayer, and to simply find one of many Jewish sources that supports it for the purpose of a sermon can very well be acceptable. However, when it comes to discussing complicated topics, such as rabbinic authority or Judaism and homosexuality, it seems clear to me that one should not leave out material. For to censor material that challenges one's viewpoint is not only lacking in honesty, but indicates weakness in the speaker's very own convictions.

Sermons often serve as a means of conveying a previously decided policy as opposed to educating the congregants on a particular topic. However, the examples that I gave above were from **classes**, put together for **educating** the audience on a Jewish topic. It is in these contexts that I am disturbed to find a blatant omission and censorship of sources.

This leads us to a fundamental question – if a rabbi or religious figure's goal is to teach the word of God to his constituents, then why would he ever censor a legitimate source? If the rabbi has an agenda, then it makes sense as to why he might choose to cherry-pick the sources that agree with his point of view. If he wants to idolize a biblical character or Jewish leader, he will omit sources that don't support his depiction – and if he chooses to substantiate social practices that are questionably at odds with the Torah, he may be selective in the sources he chooses to provide.

To answer this question, it is imperative to introduce a second category of rabbis and Jewish leaders who omit and censor Torah knowledge, not because they have an agenda, but because their constituents have already made up their minds about it. I have seen in the Modern Orthodox community, rabbis and teachers of Judaism who will refrain from teaching or writing articles on certain topics because their audience has already decided that it does not approve of the content.

All the mundane specificity of Torah practice, Mitzvot and their individual minutiae...that earlier manifest itself and was performed through the revelation of the divinity in the soul of the collective nation...began to, in the absence of the collective spirit...found itself and stand out in the private sphere: the morality of the individual, the concern for immortality (including the afterlife), and the meticulous detail of every act...adapted nicely to the limited divine revelation in the private sphere--the religious idea."

But after years of exile and suffering, after the millennia of submission and humiliation, Rav Kook argues that the sin of our forefathers has been washed away and this has allowed us to begin to reinvigorate our national spirit and reestablish a national identity. He claims that "our long absence from deliberating political issues silenced the collective spirit of Israel," but also gave us the time to regroup and get ready for redemption.

In order to regain the stature lost in the destruction of Israel, modern Jews must, as Rav Kook desires, understand the nature of each piece of our collective identity that was lost or transformed throughout history. The religious identity, purified through the efforts of all the generations of *galus*, in addition to the rediscovered national identity and purpose held in limbo for so long, must come together and combine to form one coherent national, religious, and divine identity, informed by the dictates of religious laws, practical national policies, and divine authority.

Upon further thought, it may occur to you that such a

I once spoke at a synagogue on the Shabbos of *Parshas Vayikra*, and was instructed by a staff member not to speak about the Temple sacrifices, as the congregants did not approve of the Biblical practice. I was astounded. If our philosophy as Orthodox Jews is to submit our will to God, how can we possibly be told to refrain from teaching His laws?

Assuming at least in Orthodoxy we can all agree that we are meant to submit our will to God's will – why would rabbis not present material, even if it is not to the liking of their audience?

Religious leaders play a dual role in which on the one hand they represent God to their flock, and at the same time they need to invigorate their people's interest and commitment in serving God. If they intend to maintain their congregants, students, and adherents, they face excruciating pressure to earn social approval. Unfortunately, I think in the necessity, and even lust, for social approval, a leader can compromise his principles. Bribery, which can corrupt even the righteous, is not only in the form of money – it comes as compliments and accolades as well. In the quest for Jewish leaders to maintain their leadership approval, as well as to make sure their constituents are happy, they fall prey to the great risk of distorting and compromising the message of the Torah for the sake of placating their audience. Many rabbis outside of the *charedi* community are afraid to give *mussar* from their pulpit as it is a message that many congregants do not wish to hear. This is because the congregation decides both the financial and social outcomes of the rabbi, and to risk saying an idea that would invoke their ire is something that many will stay far away from provoking.

A rabbi has the sacred charge of bringing the word of God closer to his constituents, and his constituents closer to God. If he omits ideas from God's Torah, he not only misrepresents the faith, but he does a major disservice to his constituents as well. From the rabbi's end, if he censors an authentic topic/source because he is afraid of how his audience will react to it, he is in essence saying that he thinks that his constituents cannot handle the truth of God's Torah. Likewise, it is incumbent upon the congregants and students to listen to the Torah's teachings – and if that is not one's goal, why choose to attend a Torah class to begin with? In a world where both teachers and students genuinely seek the teachings of God, there will be a perfected service of God.

TORAH, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 20

of all three. Wayward nationalism, or weak religious conviction, works against the collective strength of the Jewish people and brings about suffering. In the society preceding the destruction of Israel and the Temples, the powerful monarchs maintained Jewish independence to varying degrees, but due to the weakness of the religious aspect of life, as influenced by the surrounding cultures' paganism, Israel became weak and eventually succumbed to the larger forces of a larger world. Rav Kook, when describing the transition between sovereignty to exile, explains that "When the spirit of God was swept from upon the nation, when her *national* character separated from her spiritual wellspring, the exile became obligatory. The public sphere, impure in its essence, needed to suffer. The exile struck and destroyed to the core the wanton national spirit that betrayed her God. This, by her severing herself from the source of life and engaging in pagan cultures.

"Instead of a strong national identity, the divine spirit found its place in the religious character of the diaspora Jew.

"Unable to influence the national character of the nation...the divinity withdrew herself and subsisted in a small and meager nest: the lesser temples of the synagogues and study halls, in the holy quotidian lives of man and family, in the codes of Torah and religion...remnants of what had been lively and complete and which will return to glory when God redeems his people.

prescription for national rejuvenation too generally states its purposes and lacks much in details. How shall the spirit of national identity reawaken in our weary psyches? How may we navigate this torment of newfound ideas and old-new identities? I believe that the answer lies in the way we approach the problem. We must first understand that the Torah as we have it today serves a purpose in maintaining for us the necessary principles and laws that allow us to think in a structured, holy manner. Without the strict regulations of a Torah mentality, we would never succeed in determining the proper manner of building a national society. However, you would be amiss if you only focused on the specifics of the Idea of Religion. Religion, as defined by a mentality borne in *galus*, cannot offer the broader vision of full national recovery, as it knows not how to function in a real, practical manner. All of Torah is true, but not all of truth can be found accessibly within the tomes of the Talmud or in the teachings of the Rabbis. Economy, politics, culture, and security all present themselves with

their own peculiar challenges, and require us to think in broader terms, outside the world of the diaspora Jew. Nevertheless, such discoveries, novelties in their own right, cannot contradict our authentic teachings of Torah. We must view them through the lens of religion. They must find themselves in union with Torah, a national symbiosis allowing for the continued progress of our nation and humanity.

A Conservative Response to the Alt-Right

By Sarah Casteel and the Board of the College Republicans

Since last year's election, I have found myself, as a conservative, feeling constantly pressured to defend my humanity. This was certainly no different after the recent violence in Charlottesville. The media sprang to action, often clumping the alt-right with the conservative movement and Republican party. The alt-right movement, which stands for alternative-right, was established by white supremacist Richard Spencer in 2010. The group believes that western civilization was created from white identity, and that this white identity and therefore western civilization itself is threatened by the presence and acceptance of other races and ethnic groups. While it's clear to me and other run-of-the-mill conservatives that we don't sympathize with the alt-right, I have no doubt in my mind that there are reasons why people would assume we do. I feel it is my responsibility to dispel that notion.

Trump's failure and refusal to condemn the alt-right in his speech on the Saturday following the attack is both disturbing and disheartening. Since Trump hired Steve Bannon, a self-proclaimed alt-right supporter, I feared that the image of the conservative movement would be tainted by the image of the alt-right. It seems that Trump, with all of his provocative and inciting rhetoric, feels the need to appease the alt-right as if they are a significant part of his base of support. While it may be true that the alt-right voted for Trump, he doesn't need to support them just because they support him. Whether or not he fears he will lose power and popularity by publicly distancing himself from the alt-right, the moral and necessary thing for Trump to do is to forcefully condemn them. When he did not do that in his speech following the Charlottesville violence, and furthermore said there were some "decent people" at the rally, Trump failed to represent the values of the conservative movement.

Another issue is that there is a miscommunication about the definition of the alt-right. This leads many people to believe that the alt-right is a big group, holding power in both the conservative movement and in society in general. In reality, the total number of people who are *legitimately* part of the alt-right is so miniscule that it is not worth worrying about in terms of their power to take over the government in any way. However, of course, it is important to talk about it and to condemn them strongly and publicly. This is why I was so disappointed and disturbed when Trump

did not do so in his response speech. Luckily, many other prominent conservative politicians have called Trump out for this failure, and subsequently stood out strongly against the alt-right. At the end of the day, though, conservatives still are not doing enough to distance themselves from the alt-right. This is particularly true when it seems that many other groups have a motive to clump the alt-right together with all conservatives.

There are a few reasons why people believe the conservative movement and the alt-right are synonymous, or sympathetic to one another. Of course, most conservatives see the alt-right as a group that is evil, disgusting, and unquestionably vile. Unfortunately, often the media proliferates the baseless theory that all conservatives are really "alt-right," and it seems that conservatives are not doing enough to combat it. For example, while the liberal media has rarely given much coverage of attacks by the violent leftist group Antifa, conservative media outlets often get stuck between a rock and a hard place when they feel the need to defend the alt-right victims of Antifa attacks. While conservatives do not actually agree in the slightest with the alt-right, they believe that this country's guaranteed freedom of speech allows them to hold rallies and publicly proclaim their beliefs. So, when the violent Antifa members attack peacefully protesting alt-right individuals, conservatives defend their freedom, while paying the cost of appearing to side with them on an ideological basis. It is clear to conservatives that the alt-right is an abominable philosophy, and instances that make this unapparent to the media prove why we need to step up our game in terms of condemning their beliefs while defending their rights.

Another issue is that a decent amount of ignorant and foolish people are perceived as members of the alt-right without really believing in the alt-right philosophy. Internet trolls often post memes and other junk which appear to be sympathetic to the alt-right movement, but such instances of seeming alt-right proclamations are really indicative of nothing more than people's boredom and insensitivity. They are not real members of the alt-right movement, and the alt-right is nowhere as big of a movement as it can seem with the consideration of all of these internet trolls. It is frustrating for conservatives to see the impact of these people on the perceived strength and growth of the alt-right -- a philosophy that has existed for centuries and has not legitimately gained much traction, even now.

To be a political conservative, a person has to believe

in the Constitution, which subsequently implies the values of individual liberty, and equality under the law. Members of the alt-right are fundamentally opposed to all of those traditional American values. White supremacists in the alt-right are by no means conservatives, or even part of the political "right," and therefore it is exceptionally aggravating that people would even consider the alt-right a group promoting right-wing violence. They are not considered part of the conservative movement both morally and fundamentally, and, therefore, it shouldn't matter if they try to latch on to our movement to give themselves legitimacy. They are not part of the conservative movement in any way.

Whether or not the alt-right is successful in appearing more mainstreamed right now, the definition of their philosophy has not changed. The alt-right consists of white supremacists, anti-semites, Neo-Nazis, and barbarians. They are not all of a sudden part of the conservative

**ALT-RIGHT
AKA A HATE MOVEMENT**

movement simply because the media claims they are, or because Trump has refused to condemn them, or even if they claim to be themselves. By allowing the media to broaden their definition of the alt-right to seem as if regular conservatives are somehow sympathetic to alt-right philosophy, we are failing the conservative movement's responsibility to stand up for the Constitution, and all of the liberties it guarantees us. Being a conservative doesn't mean agreeing with everything Trump says, and it certainly does not mean that we are sympathetic to the alt-right simply because we do not agree with their enemies on the left. In fact, the alt-right considers many conservatives to be enemies as well. We need to remember that the alt-right is nothing more than a small group of repugnant extremists, and that whether we are conservative (or even liberal for that matter), our job is to condemn evil no matter the cost.

Save The Dates

By Samuel Gelman (Houston, Texas)

Many of us are familiar with Yeshiva University's most famous slogans. These days YU is synonymous with lines such as 'nowhere but here,' "I am YU," and "sacrifice nothing, achieve anything." And while all of Yeshiva University's slogans place emphasis on different aspects related to the university, they all tend to have one main focus: the uniqueness of Yeshiva University.

Of course, every university is unique in its own way. Columbia University has its famous Core Curriculum, Yale has its distinctive residential college dormitory system, and The University of Chicago uses a quarter system for its academic calendar. When it comes to Yeshiva University, the obvious and most notable difference between it and other universities is the fact that it is an Orthodox Jewish university. There are Torah studies classes scattered throughout the day for both men and women, all the food on campus is Kosher, and no classes take place on Jewish holidays.

The fact that there are no classes on holidays like Sukkot and Rosh Hashanah is a major plus for many students and can, in many cases, end up making YU more appealing than schools like Maryland and Brandeis, universities with vibrant Jewish communities. The Yeshiva University admissions team is fully aware of this and makes sure to emphasize it in its presentations. I sat through various admissions presentations before I arrived here and -- whether it was my high school, Model United Nations, or my Yeshiva in Israel -- YU made sure

that this fact was drilled into my head.

I arrived at YU last year and, as expected, the university was closed from Rosh Hashanah until after Sukkot. This was amazing for an out-of-towner like me. I was able to fly home for Rosh Hashanah and spend time with my family and friends without having to worry about class. However, when I looked at the schedule for the current academic year I noticed something worrisome. Unlike the 2016-2017 academic year, the schedule for the 2017-2018 academic year did not give off on the days in between Rosh Hashanah (RH) and Yom Kippur (YK). Instead we have three full days of class.

I was puzzled by the school's decision. Didn't they usually give off those days? Why would they change it now? To my surprise, I discovered that last year's schedule was the exception to the rule. It turns out that, according to the Office of the Registrar, YU usually does not give off the days in between RH and YK. Looking at the last 10 years or so, YU only gave off those days in the years of 2012, 2015, and 2016, and that was only because RH fell out on a Monday, making it impractical for YU to have class only on the following Thursday and Monday (that following Tuesday would already be erev YK).

Despite the fact that this is how the calendar is usually set up I can't help but feel as if YU is cheating me, the out-of-town community, and the system. While yes, giving class in between RH and YK is not a technical violation of YU values, it is a violation of the spirit of those values. It forces out-of-towner, students living outside the NY/NJ area who comprise over 40% of the undergraduate

population according to the Office of Institutional Research & Assessment and the Office of Admissions, to choose from a variety of bad options, none of which is appealing.

The first option is to stay in the New York area which, while it won't entail missing any class, forces us to abdicate spending those special days with our family. An alternative is to go home for RH, come back for class, and then fly home again for the rest of the holidays. However, not everyone can afford to pay for four flights (two home, two back to NYC) as prices can vary anywhere between \$100-\$350 per flight (these are the average Southwest Airline prices for flights from New York to Houston, Cleveland, and Los Angeles), sometimes more. This could force families to pay over \$1000 for four flights over the course of three weeks. Another option is to fly home for RH and suffer the consequences of missing multiple days of class. As I said before, no good options.

I am not blaming anyone in particular for this issue. The creation of the academic calendar does not fall under the office of one YU institution. Furthermore, I understand the difficulty of creating a calendar that satisfies the academic, Jewish, and student needs of YU. Each class must meet for a certain amount of time to be considered valid by the government, the other Jewish holidays must be taken into account, and the winter and

SEE DATES,

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A Moderate Look at DACA Repeal

By Nolan Edmonson

The immigration policy introduced by the Obama administration, known as Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA), allowed for some 800,000 individuals brought to this country illegally as children to receive renewable two-year periods of deferred action from deportation, while also making them eligible to receive work permits to remain in the US. From a legal perspective, President Obama's use of "prosecutorial discretion" was absolutely legitimate and has been used by many presidents--Republican and Democratic alike--prior to him. However, from an ethical perspective, the Executive's use of personal discretion to ram through policy is cause for some concern.

Policy--especially that of an issue as complex as immigration--should not be left solely to the Executive. Doing so creates a trend towards executive overreach which has the potential to be abused. Whenever possible, legislative measures must be exhausted before resorting to the use of executive powers. That being said, I am fully aware that a Republican controlled House and Senate failed to bring forward a sound bill to the president in 2012--largely because the issue of granting citizenship to illegal aliens is such a complex one and coming to consensus is not simple. Even so, such complexities should not have prevented the GOP from bringing forth a sound--if only temporary--solution to the problem.

Immigration is a multi-faceted issue, and it is my opinion that due to the initial shock of last Tuesday's decision many of the complex layers in the immigration debate were overlooked. I would like to explore those issues in some depth in order to rise above the TV talking points and examine immigration in a level headed way

Financial Ramifications. According to an NPR article published on September 6th, immediately after announcing the president's action to end the DACA program, Attorney General Jeff Sessions mentioned that the implementation of DACA took away the jobs of "hundreds of thousands of Americans by allowing those same illegal aliens to take those jobs."

While it makes sense to assume that more immigrant workers would mean fewer employment opportunities for Americans, the job statistics observed after the enactment of DACA would seem to prove otherwise. Ray Perryman, president and CEO of the Perryman Group, a financial research firm, said in a September 2017 NPR interview that "the primary thing that would argue against [Session's claim] at this point is, we are at full employment with more job openings than at any point in history...we desperately need workers in this country."

Additionally, DACA recipients tend to be well educated which means that they fit into the bracket of educated individuals able to make the economy more productive through their skill sets. The CATO institute similarly reported that somewhere around 17 percent of DACA recipients are pursuing an advanced degree. This number is only expected to rise which leads one to believe that there will be an increase in the DACA recipients being employed in higher skilled jobs (DACA recipients likewise tend to pursue higher paying jobs more than that of their illegal/non-recognized counterparts). These statistics certainly lend themselves to a thinking that not only would increased immigration, but also the sustainment of programs like DACA would lead to more job creation and higher wages. However there is another side to this debate which merits mention and consideration.

The idea that an increase in legally recognized non-citizen workers would naturally lead to fewer employment opportunities for Americans is not necessarily a flawed one, as the above statistics might suggest.

A 2013 study from the University of Chicago surveyed economics professors from Harvard, University of Chicago, Yale, Stanford, Princeton, Berkeley, and MIT. The study found that when posed the statement: "The average US citizen would be better off if a larger number of low-skilled foreign workers were legally allowed to enter the US each year", 63 percent of the economists agreed. Likewise when presented with the statement: "Unless they were compensated by others, many low-skilled American workers would be substantially worse off if a larger number of low-skilled foreign

workers were legally allowed to enter the US each year", 60 percent of the economists agreed. In other words, it would be disadvantageous for low-skilled American workers if low-skilled foreign workers were allowed to join the workforce. In short, increased immigration might spell benefit for average Americans, but it equally might spell disaster for lower skilled Americans--who are disproportionately Black and Hispanic youth between the ages of 17-34. Another 29 percent of the economists surveyed admitted they were unsure of the impact that foreign workers had on native workers. This only affirms what has been previously mentioned: that this issue is not as cut and dry as some would like to believe.

Harvard economist George Borjas concludes that the influx of immigrants (legal non-citizens eligible for work) can potentially be a net good for the nation as far as the increase of national wealth is concerned. However, he also points out that many lower-skilled American workers are negatively impacted by the influx of low-skilled immigrants. [So as not to belabour a point which I feel is self evident, I will not delve deeper into Borjas, but I suggest taking a look at his article in *Politico*]. Borjas's points speak directly to the heart of the matter. While 17% of DACA recipients tend to pursue jobs that require higher skill (thus not making them a threat to low-skilled workers), there are enough DACA recipients that pursue lower skilled labor which presents a threat to low skilled native workers. This issue, no doubt, presents us with more complexity the deeper into the matter we go. But I posit that we might find solutions (or steps towards a solution) from the wise leadership of past conservative presidents.

The Conservative Record. President Ronald Reagan used the power of executive order in 1987 when faced with the Immigration Reform Control Act of 1986 (IRCA). This act granted legal status for many illegal immigrants but failed to address the status of spouses or children of these newly, legally recognized immigrants. Reagan's executive order legalized the status of minor children of parents granted amnesty which affected an estimated 100,000 families. I must stress, however, that the use of executive orders--no matter how expedient and efficient they are over the arduous and slow process that is the legislative process--should be few and far between in a democracy. But occasionally executive orders are appropriate inasmuch as they address pressing issues not easily resolved through legislation. The difference between DACA and Reagan's actions is significant because they arrive at different ends. Where DACA failed, Reagan's executive action prevailed. Where DACA gave a temporary renewable safeguard against deportation, Reagan's order gave undocumented children full legal status with the possibility of permanent residency and, eventually, a clearer pathway to citizenship. Similar to Obama's executive action, President George H.W. Bush created an executive measure that forestalled deportation of spouses and children of legal immigrants who were brought here illegally.

In their own sincere way, all three executive orders tried to address an issue in an efficient and sound way; an issue which affected the lives of hundreds of thousands of immigrants and even more Americans. Gorjas's observation regarding immigration and its impact on native workers and the economy is as true today as it was in 1987, 1990, and 2012. But these leaders saw that our nation would benefit more from making pathways to citizenship possible for as many eligible and upstanding people as possible.

"THE SUSTAINMENT OF PROGRAMS LIKE DACA WOULD LEAD TO MORE JOB CREATION AND HIGHER WAGES."

Present Day Problems, Challenging Solutions.

Bearing all of the aforementioned in mind, we can perhaps conclude what we've always known--or at least those of us who are thoughtful on the issue--and that is that immigration reform is no easy issue to tackle. That being said, President Trump's move to repeal DACA is met with weary and reluctant applause by this writer. A policy that moves to keep children of illegal immigrants here is a noble one. After all, they have only known life in America and they feel in their hearts that they are Americans. However, one cannot overlook the economic effect that policies like DACA have on native American workers. I cautiously applauded the measure for its willingness to address a pressing issue, but am deeply critical of its execution. President Trump could have eased concerns of many of the 800,000 DACA recipients by proposing legislation to congress that would work towards the realization of citizenship (while keeping DACA in place until a sound replacement was sent to his desk) instead of pulling the rug out from under them, and leaving much speculation and even greater worry in the minds of thousands. If congressional legislation proved too difficult to pass, he could have followed the example of Reagan, whose executive order made a path to citizenship more of a reality for thousands. This is the type of executive order that deserves praise--one that does more than just apply a band-aid to a much larger wound (so to speak).

The President could have taken a page from the book of Reagan in trying to implement a more wide ranging solution. Instead, he opted not to and, in doing so, only added to his already worrisome anti-immigration rhetoric he so unabashedly displayed during the campaign. I should hope that a Republican controlled House and Senate could address this issue in a smart and forthright manner like their Republican predecessors of 1986 did. But given the 115th's track record, I am less than optimistic.



There is Only One Side

By Matthew Haller and the Board of the College Democrats

If the first few months of President Trump's term have revealed anything, it is that the human capacity for normalization is seemingly unlimited. The body politic, it seems, is so eager to rationalize this administration's near-constant violations of ethics, decency, and political norms that it has lost the ability to properly respond to looming threats. Take the rising tide of racism and anti-Semitism, undoubtedly sourced in a sweeping populist movement rooted in appeals to fragile, white identity. Trump's personal views on race are, at their most generous, "archaic." This is, after all, a man who established his political identity by undermining the nation's first black president on baseless claims of illegitimate heritage and continued to do so despite ample evidence to the contrary. He remains the man that captivated white America with the demonization of immigrants, particularly Latinos ("rapists and murderers," the attacks on a Judge Curiel's impartiality) and Muslims (calls for a complete ban on Muslim immigration, attacks on the Gold Star Khan family).

The semantic question of whether Trump is an outright "racist" is of less concern than the practical reality: that white supremacists believe that they currently have an ally in the Oval Office. For the sake of this piece, let's give President Trump the benefit of the doubt and assume that this belief is wholly unfounded and that our Commander-in-Chief is as egalitarian as you and me. By examining Trump's recent actions through this assumptive prism, we can best evaluate the status of our President as he relates to his most vile supporters.

Though impossible to recount the full breadth of national shame that delivered us to this point, a handful of critical events deserve mention. Just weeks ago, a vile coalition of the alt-right demonstrators, Ku Klux Klan members, white supremacists, and Nazis descended on Charlottesville, Virginia for the aptly named "Unite the Right" rally. There they hoped to exercise their constitutional right to speak freely about ridding the nation of pernicious globalist (read: Jewish) influences. Most attendees, it seemed, were less well-versed in the art of the dog-whistle, opting instead to chant "Jews will not replace us!" and reintroducing the world to the Nazi slogan "blood and soil!" After a night of wholesome torch-bearing, the vermin readied themselves as any peaceful protesters might be expected to – by arming themselves to the teeth. These rabid fans of our President, as private conversations leaked later revealed, fully intended to respond violently to the faintest hint of resistance. Unsurprisingly, these fantasies were brought to fruition when an incensed white supremacist plowed his car into a crowd of counter-protesters, injuring 14 and killing 32-year-old paralegal Heather Heyer.

What is the appropriate response to Nazi sympathizers



(the murderer was an avowed fan of Adolf Hitler) carrying out acts of terrorism on American soil? The mere fact that such a question must be posed is an inherently disturbing development. Yet, Americans could rest assured that a man with such pointed criticisms of The Pope ("disgraceful"), Meryl Streep ("overrated", "flunky"), London Mayor Sadiq Khan ("pathetic"), John McCain ("I like people who weren't captured"), the news media ("enemy of the people"), a gold star family, a disabled reporter, and near-countless others would certainly have forceful words for legitimately murderous Nazis.

Unfortunately, albeit hardly surprisingly, our Commander-in-Chief simply was not up to the task of resoundingly denouncing hate. Instead, Trump chose to harp about "blame on both sides," attacking counter-protesters for gathering "without a permit" and "charging" at the alt-right demonstrators. Where the universal response from pols in both parties was straightforward and appropriate – that is, the unequivocal denouncing of these abject national embarrassments – the President insisted upon praising the "good people" that elected to march with fanatical racists. As is Trump's modus operandi, this revealing statement is wholly self-absolving. It indicates his belief in the fundamental goodness of those who welcome the support of white supremacists in achieving their political goals.

Following two full days of entirely warranted outrage from all sides of the political spectrum, Trump delivered strained remarks wherein he denounced "racist violence." Even if he hadn't walked back these clearly insincere statements just a day later (the video evidence betrays a speaker who so clearly does not want anyone to hear him), the damage had long been done. Every second during which that first statement hung without being rescinded legitimized the nation's worst fringes. Readers of the *Daily Stormer*, the most prominent white supremacist website, wrote that "Trump comments were good... nothing specific against us... he said he loves us all... when asked to condemn he just walked out of the room." No amount of feigned discomfort with hate groups could disabuse these Nazis of the notion that our President is their ally.

In the following weeks, the Trump camp skillfully managed to turn the debate from the president's overtures to white supremacists into a culture-war-laden clash over the removal of Confederate statues. Pundits proceeded to draw moral equivalencies between violent Nazis and those that sought to counter them. And in that tumult, the nation has lost sight of the most critical issue: namely, what to do about a President who, at the very least, believes he cannot survive without the support of those that yearn for an American ethnic cleansing.

Picture, for a moment, yourself in our President's ignoble shoes. Let's suppose that a significant portion of the nation believed you to be sympathetic to groups like the Klan. Would you not take ample care to avoid any further actions that might be interpreted as fodder for racists?

Apparently, Trump lacks even that modicum of basic rationality. As a part of his years-long development into a racial firebrand, Trump has continually indicated his support for notorious Arizona sheriff Joe Arpaio. To name just a handful of Arpaio's egregious violations of human decency: he positively described his makeshift prison as a "concentration camp;" bragged

about how inmates were subjected to the Arizona heat (one prisoner died when temperatures reached 109°F); forced Latino prisoners into a segregated area with electric fencing; forced a woman to give birth in shackles; arrested *Phoenix New Times* reporters for unfavorable coverage (and was forced to pay millions in settlements); faked an assassination attempt as a re-election ploy and detained an innocent man for four years for committing the "crime." A simple Google search reveals more abuses of power than there is space here to relate. Critically, Arpaio was the second-most prominent "birther," waging a baseless war of legitimacy with President Obama.

Following a rambling campaign rally, the President announced that he would in fact be pardoning the now-retired Arpaio, a man who was convicted of federal contempt of court in July. Despite having signed an agreement to stop arresting Latinos on the baseless suspicion that they might be undocumented, Arpaio maintained this horrid practice for well over a year. Yet President Trump hastily legitimized this corruption of the very institution of policing without a second's hesitation.

"EVEN IF TRUMP IS NOT A WHITE SUPREMACIST, IT SEEMS INARGUABLE THAT HE REMAINS COMFORTABLE MAKING SUCH OVERTURES TO THIS OUTSPOKEN COMPONENT OF HIS BASE."

What kind of statement does such misuse of the pardon power make to millions of patriotic Latino Americans? With the stroke of a pen, President Trump gave explicit notice to the entirety of a significant minority group that its formerly God-given rights are now negotiable. What's more, white supremacists like Arpaio can now rest assured that the full force of the Executive branch will be employed to protect them from any lawful consequences. Even if Trump is not a white supremacist, it seems inarguable that he remains comfortable making such overtures to this outspoken component of his base.

The question of whether President Trump is sympathetic to those with racist and anti-Semitic viewpoints or simply a deluded pragmatist taking support from whichever corners he receives it is far from cut and dry. But the fact of the matter remains that white supremacists, once pushed to the fringes of polite society, feel emboldened by the dog-whistles that Trump's more egalitarian supporters simply write off as missteps. "We are determined to take our country back," former KKK Grand Wizard David Duke put it. "We are going to fulfill the promises of Donald Trump." The line drawn from birtherism, comments like "rapists and murderers," the wall, the Muslim ban, and every questionable decision since, to now-empowered Nazi Trumpists committing vehicular murder is a clear and straight one. White supremacists not only recognize this connection, but publicly celebrate it. It remains difficult to see a path through which Trump can reclaim the reigns on his rapidly spiraling presidency, especially after two years of making such poorly coded appeals to the dregs of society. Excising the impulse toward bolstering white supremacy, no matter how it may reshape his policy agenda, might resemble something like a workable starting point.

DATES, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 22

spring breaks must be long enough to allow students to recover from the semester.

With all of this considered, however, I still believe that something must be done to help the out-of-town students. Forcing us to choose between missing RH with our families, spending extra money, or missing class is not an issue that the university should simply ignore. Therefore, I propose two possible solutions. The first is to work with the calendar and find those three extra days. Perhaps start the year a day or two earlier and cut a day out of reading week. This is obviously the most ideal for out-of-towners as it would enable us to spend RH with our families, pay for only two flights, and not miss classes. However, this may prove to be too controversial or difficult as students may become upset that the year is starting earlier or that they are losing some reading week time.

This leads me to my second solution which keeps the calendar exactly as it is with class in between RH and YK. The only difference would be that YU would instruct all professors to give automatic excused absences for anyone who misses class in between RH and YK, while also recording the classes for the absent students and giving no tests or quizzes during this time. This would enable YU to keep its calendar intact while also allowing students who live out of state to fly home for RH with a greater peace of mind.

This past week was all about new beginnings for YU. Out-of-town students can sometimes get lost in the shuffle of a generally NY/NJ-centric YU. A new and updated calendar that takes the concerns of the out-of-town community into consideration would be great first step for this new era and make us feel like we are part of the community. Yeshiva University tells me that "I am YU." Prove it.

YU's Home Makeover

By Avigayil Adouth

It All Began With a Doormat is the title of my favorite children's book. It tells the story of a woman who noticed that her doormat was tattered and worn. The woman, as most would do, chose to replace it. Her new doormat framed her home differently, and as she laid it in its place, the doorknob suddenly began to appear rusty by comparison, so the woman replaced her doorknob. The pattern continued as such, and soon enough the woman had overhauled her entire home. Proud of her completely renovated home she decided to host a Friday night meal in honor of her son's bar mitzvah. As she returned inside from walking out her guests, she noticed that, once again, the doormat was tattered and worn.

As a kid, the book was just something funny I could read with my mom on rainy Saturday afternoons when playing in the park was out of the question. However, as I have matured and progressed through different stages of life, I find myself revisiting the story and drawing on it for wisdom and guidance.

Since my arrival at Yeshiva University last fall, I have been reminded of this story's messages more frequently, and its lessons seem more poignant and applicable than ever before. At times it feels as if life and, more specifically, life at YU is a game of whack-a-mole where endurance is the most important skill. Once one issue is solved and we begin to feel confident in our ability to affect change, another issue pops out at us out of nowhere.

I remember what it felt like when I arrived at YU. I was quick to begin reading student publications and engaging with clubs and committees on campus. I recall feeling as if the student body was eager to air YU's dirty laundry and to make public that which YU lacked without showing gratitude for the things which it provided us. However, I



slowly realized that the students who were complaining were, very often, the same students who wanted YU to be better for themselves, their peers, and YU students who would come after them. These were student leaders who were not afraid to express discontent; they "leaned in" to the discomfort instead of running away from it. Elie Wiesel once said, "the opposite of love is not hate, it's indifference." The students who were lamenting YU were, for the most part, not doing it because they hated YU or because they wanted it to fail. They were doing it because they had a

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thorough understanding of the idea that when someone loves something they want it to live up to its potential, and sometimes the best route to achieve that is tough love.

There is so much to be done here; there are so many different clubs and committees through which one can leave an indelible mark on the university - whose outcomes will reverberate down these halls (or city blocks) for years to come. Yeshiva University is not just a few buildings in New York where we earn our degrees. It is, by nature of its small size, a place where students can transform not only themselves but their environment. Each one of us, if brave enough to face the fear that we are powerful beyond measure, can leave our marks on this campus.

Let us not come to resent the presence of the dirty doormat. Instead, let us heed the call of duty. There is a Mishna in Masechet Avot which states, "Lo Alecha HaMelachah Ligmor VeLo Atah Ben Chorin Levatel Mimenah" - the work is not yours to complete, nor are you free to absolve yourself of

responsibility to it. We will all inevitably come across our dirty doormats here at YU; we are tasked with acquiring new ones and changing the status quo. Do not be discouraged. The doormat will get dirty again, but isn't a soiled doormat the mark of success? Wear and tear are an indication of exhaustive use. We may leave this place feeling like the bathroom and kitchen are still in shambles. At the same time, though, we should remember that the foyer and the dining room are more beautiful because we were here. The needs of our community are always evolving, and we will all need to leave work for those who come after us.

So here we are either returning to or arriving at YU for the first time. As much we poke fun at YU's slogan, there truly is "Nowhere But Here." YU affords us opportunities, both academic and extracurricular, that we could not get elsewhere. Yeshiva University, like any institution, is not perfect, and it is our responsibility to make it a better place, both for the remainder of our time here and for those students who will come after us.

I challenge us all to continue to criticize YU with good intentions. I'm am not demanding that we go through our careers here seeking out the flaws of this institution to make them more well known. What am I asking of all of us, however, is to be honest with ourselves. To try and discover our strengths, to identify those areas in which we feel we can affect change here at YU, and to use that knowledge as a springboard to spur productive, meaningful conversations. I ask us not to ignore the tattered carpet but to repair it even at the risk of it getting soiled once again. To keep calm when the administration, like contractors or interior designers, prove difficult to work with. This place will never be perfect, but it can achieve great things with our support.

We find ourselves in a particularly special time here at YU. While none of us knows what the future will hold under the leadership of Rabbi Dr. Ari Berman we are hopeful that it will be great. We have arrived at Rabbi Berman's first "90 days in office" which are known to be the most productive. So, when we engage on campus we must not get bogged down by the criticism we will inevitably hear. While some might actively seek things to be upset about (yes, we all know those people) many of us voice the flaws of the university because we care. We are home, and when our home is not meeting our expectations, we have a right to ask it to change. That power, however, comes with responsibility. We are blessed to be students at a university where we are invited to play the game of whack-a-mole and to be the architects in the continued renovation of our home. So grab your gavels or head to Home Depot and get to work.

President Berman, Remember the Humanities

By Akiva Schick

"Who are our graduates? Rabbis, Jewish Educators, Lawyers, Doctors, Accountants, and Financial Analysts. Social Workers, and Psychologists, Mothers and Fathers, Community Leaders, and Leaders of Industries..."

In his investiture speech, President Berman laid out his vision for the future of Yeshiva University. He told us our future is bright, and I am excited to see what he will bring to the institution. His love and care and energy for the school was evident in his words, and in the emotion behind them. I believe he is a man who will always remember the weight of his responsibility, and do his best to perform the job with excellence and dignity.

And because I believe this, I would like to offer a respectful reminder to President Berman: Remember the English majors. Remember the Philosophy Majors. Remember the Art and Music and History and Political Science students.

President Berman's vision for the future is one of job creation. His three steps - New Industries, New Markets, and New Educational Pathways - focus on manufacturing the "market-ready" student.

I do not know if I am a "market-ready" student. I believe I have learned skills in college that make me employable in my field of choice, but that is not the point. More than

any specific job skill, majoring in English has given me the tools of motivation, and dedication necessary for the fight President Berman spoke of. He called on us to "Fight against indifference." There are many ways to do so, and we risk a great loss when we forget that words have a unique power in this battle. Scientists and engineers and

"WE LOSE A CRITICAL RESPECT FOR THE VALUE OF EDUCATION WHEN THE MARKET'S EVER CHANGING STANDARDS BECOME OUR BAROMETER FOR SUCCESS."

computer scientists have the power to fight, but so do writers and artists and poets and musicians.

Majoring in English and minoring in Writing has given me the tools necessary to understand the world as it is, and as it will be when "culture shifts, and moral intuition adjusts." It will help me reconcile these differences with Judaism when possible, and take a stand for my beliefs when the gap grows too wide.

But more broadly, if our future is to be bright, then we must believe in education for education's sake. We must believe that knowledge cannot be measured by a mercurial stock, that our value is not tied to the number in our bank account. We lose a critical respect for the value of education when the market's ever changing standards become our barometer for success.

Furthermore, Yeshiva University must remain a Liberal Arts college if we are to go out into the world with "tools of critical critique, and self-reflection" - tools which happen to be particularly attainable in the humanities departments. We must, with the help of our leadership, resist fear of the economic future, a fear that has the power to turn us into nothing more than a vocational school.

None of this is to say that Yeshiva University should not expand and enrich its educational capacity. President Berman's plan seems logical, and of course the University must provide skills for employment. But President Berman omitted the humanities from his outline of the future, and that concerns me. When we define who we are, we also define who we are not.

In the future, I hope President Berman remembers that the English majors are here too. I hope he will not be indifferent to our presence.

Equity Research Meets New Regulations

By Adam Kramer

When the Markets in Financial Instruments (MiFID) II legislation takes effect in January 2018, the field of equity research will undergo a dramatic shift. MiFID, which was initially rolled out in 2007, provides uniform regulation for investment services across the 28 member states of the European Union (EU), plus Iceland, Norway, and Liechtenstein. The updated legislation, MiFID II, mandates that EU investment management firms—such as hedge funds, asset managers, and others on “the buy-side”—dramatically change how they receive/pay for research. Though MiFID II only applies to buy-side investment firms and sell-side research providers in the EU, it'll likely



affect their counterparts in the U.S. as well. As currently constituted, these buy-side firms can receive research from sell-side equity research firms and banks as a free add-on to other services that the investment firm receives from the sell-side bank, or in a bundle with these other services. However, the new MiFID II legislation will require these firms to pay for sell-side firms' research directly.

This research includes written reports sent to all of a firm's clients, reports requested by specific clients, as well as provides access to members of the management team of the companies that are being researched. These resources can be of great value to buy-side firms which might not have the bandwidth to conduct research on all the companies that the sell-side firms cover, or might not have the same level of research abilities or expertise as the sell-side firms, even regarding companies that they both cover.

In the months leading up to the MiFID II implementation, both buy-side and sell-side firms are dealing with a number of new issues. One such issue, for both the buy-side and the sell-side, is determining proper purchase prices and payment mechanisms for the research. More specifically, buy-side firms will now have to either pay for research out of their own pockets or reach an agreement with the specific sell-side firm to have the firm pay for the research. The latter option can only proceed as long as the research element is given separately from other services that the sell-side firm provides—i.e. is unbundled. An issue that will be faced solely by the buy-side is determining how much research they'll need to buy, given that it'll now be priced

independently, and may ultimately be more expensive. As a result, if many buy-side firms decide that paying for equity research is now too expensive, they'll pay less for research, which will have a detrimental effect on the sell-side research firms and independent research providers in the EU, plus those in the U.S. with European clients.

Since MiFID II only applies to firms domiciled in the EU, one could surmise that the result would be that both buy-side and sell-side firms in the EU will adapt to the new changes. However, things aren't so simple. EU buy-side firms don't receive their research from sell-side firms strictly in the EU—they also receive research from sell-side firms in the U.S. As a result, sell-side research firms in the U.S. are faced with the decision to either charge their EU clients in a method that is approved by MiFID II but continue to charge their U.S. clients as they traditionally have or unite around the MiFID II standards for all of their clients, both EU and U.S. based. The latter decision would have significant ramifications on the regulatory status of their research, as well as possibly cause them to lose clients. These firms may also decide to simply drop their EU clients which would significantly hurt their business. As these regulations develop and possibly spread from the EU to other regions of the world, investment banks and independent research firms will have to rethink how the business of sell-side equity research can remain profitable while maintaining the quality expected from professional security analysts.

Making Global Connections in the Tiny Startup Nation

By Dan Bloom

Sweating profusely, mumbling like an idiot, and completely “choking,” I fumbled my way through a clumsy pitch about my new company at last week's DLD Tel Aviv tech conference. The blazing Mediterranean sun and sticky south Tel Aviv air were simply oppressive at the crowded outdoor event, and I was literally melting down. But, it was totally worth it. I was able to make it through my pitch about www.StartupStars.io and succeeded in forming yet another connection with a fellow startup entrepreneur. It wasn't pretty, but this is the way things are done in the “Startup Nation.”

Here, in Israel's high-tech ecosystem known affectionately by some as “The Silicon Wadi,” it's all about making connections. One of the companies here in Israel that's helping to make connections is www.prooV.io. The team at prooV helps tech startups connect with large established enterprises, like AIG, GE, and Amazon Web Services. By using prooV, startups can acquire big customers more easily, while enterprises are able to simultaneously gain secure access to innovative technology.

Unfortunately, it wasn't always so easy. In the past, software companies and enterprises relied on one-off pilots, or proofs-of-concept (PoCs), to evaluate the potential value of working together. For software companies, pilots are an opportunity to demonstrate the effectiveness of their solutions, an important prerequisite for acquiring customers. This is even

more important for software startups; they need to quickly prove themselves in a real-world application to gain initial traction with enterprise customers and convince investors of their value proposition.

For large corporate enterprises, pilots are an important tool for accessing new technology to gain innovation-based competitive advantages without the overhead or risk of a full-scale deployment. ProoV helps enterprises to more easily initiate, manage, and evaluate pilots, allowing them to connect with an unlimited number of startups, anywhere in the world.

**"THANKS TO COMPANIES
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Through an online “marketplace” that provides secure, automated integration with enterprises, prooV empowers startups with the ability to discover and connect with their most relevant enterprise pilot partners. Once the PoC pilot succeeds, startups can then shift their focus to investor and customer acquisition.

Currently, prooV is “scaling up” after receiving \$14M in VC funding last month from Helios Capital,

Mangrove Capital Partners, Cerca Partners, and OurCrowd in Jerusalem. “We're working towards building more features and enhancing the product,” said Toby Olshanetsky, CEO & Co-Founder of prooV. From their new offices located right on the beach in the tech hub of Herzlia, just a 15 minute drive north from Tel Aviv, the team at prooV has established the company's platform as a global destination, serving startups and large corporations from all over the world. As they continue to expand operations internationally, prooV is working with some very innovative companies as they change the way startups and established corporations interact within the business-to-business ecosystem. “The feedback we're getting is incredible, but even more so, invaluable, as we use this insight as the basis and inspiration for next developments,” said Olshanetsky. “We have a lot of new features coming out soon and I can promise that we're working hard to provide a truly all-encompassing PoC solution.”

Thanks to companies like prooV, we may be witnessing the beginning of Israel's transition from the “Startup Nation” into the “Scale-up Nation” as it aids startups from all over the world of achieving their goals of becoming profitable through the monetization of big ideas.

Dan Bloom is the founder of www.StartupStars.io, an Israel-based “meta startup” that helps investors, prospective employees, and tech enthusiasts to discover early-stage startup companies.

Kevin Durant: The 2018 NBA Executive of the Year

By Aaron Karesh

As the reigning NBA Champions and LeBron-defeaters, the Golden State Warriors should have entered this past offseason free of concern, but due to the fact that seven of their nine key players, ranging from star Stephen Curry to role player Javale McGee, were free agents, this was not the case. With the salary cap — the amount a team is permitted to spend in a given year on the entire 12-man roster — for the upcoming 2017-2018 NBA season set at \$99.093 million, the Warriors' prospects for keeping all of their key players were grim at best. It was obvious they weren't going to let Stephen Curry go, but other

than him, it seemed that everyone else could have left and pursued larger contracts from other teams. How did the Warriors prevent this from happening? The answer lays not in the Warriors front office's brilliance, but in the generosity and sacrifice made by NBA Finals MVP, Kevin Durant.

Kevin Durant, arguably the best player in the NBA, and undoubtedly the best pure scorer in the league, became a free agent this past summer after opting out of his player-option in his contract, immediately causing analysts to worry about the future of the Warriors. Stephen Curry and Kevin Durant are clear-cut max-contract players, and Klay Thompson and Draymond Green aren't too far behind. However,

instead of testing the waters of free agency, Durant renegotiated a contract that would allow other key members of the team to stay in the Bay Area, taking about \$14 million less than the maximum amount he could have received. This allowed the Warriors to give Stephen Curry the richest contract in NBA history, \$201 million (he deserves every penny of it); stop Andre Iguodala, one of the Warriors most crucial role players, from signing with the San Antonio Spurs; keep four other role players; and sign two additional veterans to help bolster their already-strong bench.

Nevertheless, despite Durant's \$14 million *SEE DURANT,*
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Millennials: Chronicles of Today's Go-Getters

By Sarah Torgueman

Millennials are coming of age and will soon be leading today's world into a future of innovation and collaboration. According to the U.S. Census Bureau and Goldman Sachs, the millennial generation is notably the largest living generation in the United States today with a striking population of 92 million people. Surpassing the baby boomers in quantity, the millennial generation has become one of the most impactful generations and continues to disrupt the status quo of our economy and culture right before our eyes. Before exploring the current changes, it is necessary to point out that there is no clear consensus on the proper age bracket of a millennial. However, millennials are commonly considered to be those born between January 1, 1980 and December 31, 2000.

In recent years, millennials have begun entering the workforce. In fact, they make up about half of the current working population in America. By 2025, Millennials are expected to dominate approximately 75% of the global workforce, according to a global study about generations in the workforce done by Ernst and Young. A millennial's way of thinking, a.k.a. the "Millennial Mentality," as award-winning author of *Investing with Impact* and *Millennialization of Everything* Jeremy K. Balkin puts it, is characterized by a do-it-yourself, can-do attitude. This "mentality" is widespread among millennials, and even among those outside the millennial generation who possess qualities such as resourcefulness.

Studies show that a factor contributing to the "Millennial Mentality" may be the generation's general lack of trust. The millennial generation has been affected by two major historical events growing up. The terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001 and the 2008 financial crisis occurred at different stages of each millennial's life, ultimately impacting their mentality and behavior.

Their threatened personal safety and intimidated financial security due to these events have influenced this generation's skepticism and distrust of well-established institutions such as the government, banks, and even Wall-Street. According to a study conducted by the Harvard Institute of Politics, 82% of millennials showed distrust in congress, 86% expressed distrust and skepticism of Wall Street, and three out of four rarely trust the federal government to make the right decisions. Millennials have built upon their skepticism and distrust and have developed into an entrepreneurial and innovative generation of people who are notably self-reliant and productive.

The "Millennial Mentality" has disrupted and transformed long-standing platforms in today's culture and economy. Information technology has been revolutionized by millennials, specifically in the

way media, journalism, and advertising are presented and processed. Social media platforms like Facebook, Instagram, and Snapchat were each created by millennials. These platforms, among others, allow for participants to publish their feelings and thoughts freely and share uncontrolled or unfiltered news of eyewitness accounts. The Pew Research Center reported that 62% of all U.S. adults used social media to receive their news in 2016. To build on the claim of millennial skepticism, 84% of Millennials do not trust traditional advertising, while 96% consider their friends to be their most credible source with regard to trends and information about products. Further, 80% of Millennials say that reaching for their smartphones is the first thing they do every morning, according to Zogby Analytics, and 91% turn to their smartphones for ideas in the middle of a task. The seemingly unlimited access to information through technology and mobile devices has influenced millennials to expect and even rely on that constant information availability. Mobile access to technology has allowed approximately 85% of millennials to constantly check their work-related emails well beyond traditional work hours, fashioning the implication that millennials may value efficiency in work beyond traditional work spaces and times.

In addition, those of the millennial generation tend to strive to accomplish more than just their day jobs. They prefer flexible work hours so that they can utilize their time by taking on a side hustle such as learning something new, building an app, or writing a book on top of their full-time jobs. The "Yesh Me-ein" concept of creating something from nothing is a common characteristic that sprouts from the "Millennial Mentality." The can-do attitude and resourcefulness are part of the entrepreneurial spirit and collaborative nature that are common amongst millennials. They have built thousands of startups and small businesses. Uber, AirBnb, and Dropbox, to name a few, have emerged from the "Millennial Mentality" and have disrupted as well as revolutionized entire industries. With a valuation of about \$70 billion, Uber has disrupted the taxi industry and dramatically transformed transportation, as the startup expanded to 450 cities, directly employing 9,000 people and indirectly employing 1.5 million drivers worldwide. AirBnb, the online peer-to-peer platform connecting room venders to travelers around the world, has created economic value for the real estate industry in idle spaces and temporarily empty apartments. This virtual real estate platform stimulated profitability from otherwise empty spaces, disrupting the hotel and hospitality industry. Morgan Stanley and the Boston Consulting Group predict that by 2020, more than approximately 60% of small businesses in the U.S. will be owned by millennials.

Millennials have been moving away from reliance

on government and banking institutions and have been more inclined to use crowdfunding platforms that pool small sums of money from large groups of people via technology or peer-to-peer lending sites as sources of financial assistance. Millennials have also been choosing to invest their savings in banks with digital mobile services and mobile payment options, suggesting their preference for technologically

"THE CAN-DO ATTITUDE AND RESOURCEFULNESS ARE PART OF THE ENTREPRENEURIAL SPIRIT AND COLLABORATIVE NATURE THAT ARE COMMON AMONGST MILLENNIALS."

advanced ways to satisfy their financial needs.

Purchasing power is transitioning from the hands of the baby boomers to those of the millennials. According to Goldman Sachs, the millennial generation is moving into its prime spending years, yet still retains a major influence on the spending habits of their baby boomer parents, who currently have greater spending power than their children. Millennials are growing into adults that have influence on spending and will soon have the ability to spend more as they develop professionally and financially. In 2015, J.P. Morgan's average millennial-aged customer spent approximately 35% of their expenditures on experiences, as opposed to things, such as travel and entertainment. Millennials have been setting the trend for more experiential spending. With the effects of the 2008 financial crisis instilled in their mindsets, millennials also tend to invest savings in retirement funds to ensure future financial security for themselves. A 2016 study done by Charles Schwab indicated that millennials are committed to saving enough money for a comfortable retirement, which has been prioritized over fulfilling more immediate financial obligations like student loans and investing in job security.

Worldly individuals who possess incredible influence today have emerged from the millennial generation including entrepreneurs such as CEO of Facebook Mark Zuckerberg and CEO of Snapchat Evan Spiegel as well as celebrity influencers such as Justin Bieber and Kendall Jenner. The millennial generation has inspired the spirit of entrepreneurship and innovative technology worldwide and is expected to lead tomorrow's world into continuous advancement of change and productivity.

DURANT, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 26

haircut, the Warriors are still going to be exceeding the \$99.093 million salary cap, which comes at a large expense. According to sports analytics website spotrac.com, in addition to the \$139.6 million the



Warriors are going to be paying their players this upcoming year, they will have to pay the NBA \$46.3 million in luxury taxes. The NBA luxury tax is a fine levied on teams who have a total team payroll which exceeds a separate threshold that is higher than the salary cap; for the 2017-2018 season, that threshold is approximately \$119 million. For every dollar a team spends over this threshold, they are fined anywhere between \$1.50 and \$3.75. If a team is a repeat offender — a team that exceeds the luxury tax threshold at least two years in a row — that range increases to between \$2.50 and \$4.75 for every dollar spent. By taking \$14 million less than his market value, Kevin Durant saved the Warriors tens of millions of dollars in luxury tax fee.

However, not all sports analysts were so pleased with the "sacrifice" that Durant made for the Warriors. One such sports personality is Fox Sports 1 analyst and former NFL tight end Shannon Sharpe. On his sports

debate show Undisputed, Sharpe emphasized that while it was extremely selfless and "nice" of Kevin Durant to take a \$14 million pay cut — something most people can only dream of being able to do — it should not have been his responsibility to do so. Instead, he argued that the Warriors ownership, multi-billionaires who could certainly spare the cash, should have ponied up and paid both Durant and the luxury tax bill that would have come with the increased payroll. Sharpe explained that as wealthy as Durant is, the owners are significantly wealthier, and they should not have penalized him — even if taking less money was out of his own volition — to take less than his market value in order for them to save some money. He went on to argue that Durant was setting a bad precedent in which NBA owners would start pressuring their star players to take less money by convincing them that this would aid in their desire to win an NBA Championship, when in reality the owners would be simply saving themselves a lot of money.

Whether Durant should have taken the pay cut is a matter for debate; however, it is an undisputed fact that due to his sacrifice, the Warriors are now in a prime position to repeat as NBA Champions in 2018.



Thank you!

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

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

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



Rav Elchanan Adler



Rav Baruch Simon



Rav Mordechai Willig



Rav Menachem Penner



Rav Moshe Weinberger



Rav Yehuda Willig
Camp Rabbi



Rav Moshe Zvi Weinberg



Rav Yaakov Glasser



Rav Shimon Schenker



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Rav Azriel Kuschnir



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Wishing you all a K'siva V'chasima Tova!

Rav Judah Mischel Executive Director & **Shmiel Kahn** Camp Director

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