

THE COMMENTATOR

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Undergraduate Students Return to Campus After Eight-Month Hiatus, Over 550 Expected to Live On Campus

By ELISHEVA KOHN

This article was originally published online on Oct. 22.

Yeshiva University campuses reopened for undergraduate students on Wednesday, Oct. 21, after an eight-month hiatus prompted by the COVID-19 pandemic.

The move-in process for on-campus housing will run through Nov. 1. 550 students are expected to return to university residence halls with “many more” commuting or living near campus, Vice Provost for Student Affairs Chaim Nissel told The Commentator. University facilities and services such as libraries, athletic centers, *minyanim* and campus dining are operating in a limited capacity and with strict adherence to health policies. According to Nissel, the university still has availability for more students to dorm on campus.

YU outlined all health-related policies in a “COVID-19 Code of Behavior” guide; students, faculty members and staff who violate the code will be required to leave campus and subject to disciplinary actions under YU’s policies, including expulsion or

termination of employment.

On a twice-weekly basis, all students on campus — whether they live in university housing or off-campus — will “participate in a saliva COVID-19 testing program,” which is being administered in partnership with Cayuga Health Systems. “We also expect to have once-a-week testing of a statistical sample of faculty and staff who are on campus regularly,” Nissel wrote in an email to the undergraduate student body on Oct. 16. These tests, which are non-invasive and self-obtained, will serve as additional precautions to the mandatory PCR swab test results that students must submit prior to arriving on campus.

Students are not allowed on campus “without proof of a negative result from that [PCR] test,” wrote President Ari Berman in an email to the undergraduate student body on Oct. 1. Students who test positive must obtain a negative test and a letter of clearance from their physician before returning to campus. According to Nissel, campus test monitoring will begin Oct. 26, and results will be released on the [New York School Report COVID-19 Tracker](#).

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Marked spots indicate where students should stand in order to adhere to social distancing rules.

YESHIVA UNIVERSITY

YU Student Body Overwhelmingly Picks Trump Over Biden, Survey Finds: An Analysis

By YOSEF LEMEL

Editor’s Note: For the questions dealing with approval ratings and other similar questions, a five-point scale was used, allowing the inclusion of a neutral option and options such as “very likely” or “strongly approve” when applicable. The findings of this survey may radically vary from the results of The Commentator’s [2016 election poll](#) due to significant changes in our survey methodology since then. A more accurate point of comparison, when relevant, would be our [2018 midterm election poll](#).

The Commentator conducted a survey from Oct. 20 to 26 on the political leanings of the Yeshiva University undergraduate student body. The following article details the results and trends found in the survey.

Introduction

The survey polled 279 students, representing 14% of the undergraduate student body.

110 of the respondents (39%) are Yeshiva College (YC) students, 108 (39%) are Stern College for Women (SCW) students, 50 (18%) are male Sy Syms School of Business (Syms-Men) students, 10 (4%) are female Sy Syms School of Business (Syms-Women) students and 1 (.4%) is a Katz School

student. Overall, 160 (57%) respondents are men while 119 (43%) are women.

Of the respondents, 72 (26%), are first-year students, 104 (37%) are second-year students, 83 (30%) are third-year students and 20 (7%) are in their fourth year or more.

93% of respondents indicated that they are registered to vote and 90% say they are likely to vote in the coming election.

Due to their low sample sizes, specific

conclusions and extrapolations will not be derived from the results of groups such as Syms-Women, Katz School, and fourth-year students.

Political Affiliations

47% of respondents consider themselves Republicans, 15% as Democrats and 26% as Independents. When asked to describe their

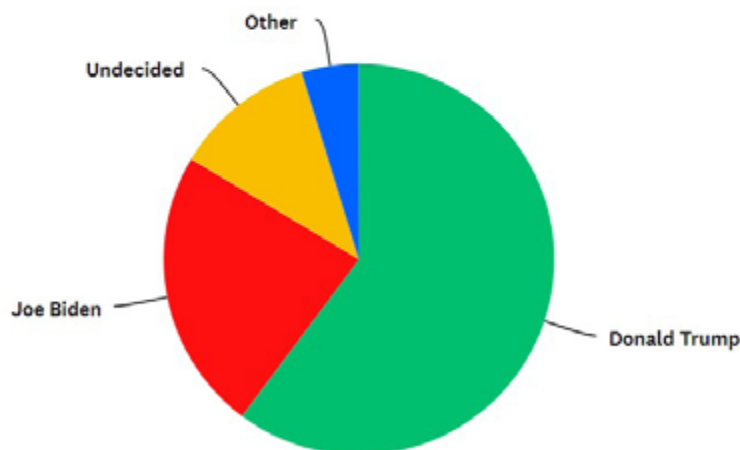
political ideologies, 60% identified with the conservative movement, 18% considered themselves to be liberal and 17% identified as centrists.

Continuing a [trend](#) observed during the midterm election season, Syms-Men is the most Republican-leaning undergraduate

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If you could vote in the presidential election today, which of the following candidates would you vote for?

Answered: 274 Skipped: 5



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We Asked, Y(O)U Answered

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Intro to 5G

FROM THE EDITOR'S DESK

COVID-19: A Personal Experience

By YOSEF LEMEL

"Vaya'avor Adonai al Panav Vayikra!" the maskless indoor crowd screams in unison, over 100 Jews worshipping their Creator on Yom Kippur, the holiest day of the year. It's impossible for me to know when I got the virus, but I suspect it was around that moment. Sensing the unsafe nature of the location I left *shul* early, feeling a small tinge of guilt as I walked out of those doors, feeling like I left my absolution from sin behind.

logic, would I have gotten sick had I stayed home on Yom Kippur? An interesting idea, I must say! The PA tried to dissuade me from taking the test, arguing that if I tested positive "the numbers in Monsey will go up and then the government will shut the yeshivas down"; it was only after I adamantly and repeatedly requested the test that the PA relented. This PA was just one individual, though I genuinely wonder if there is a trend in the *frum* community of deflating the numbers.

The two week-and-a-half following the positive test result was mostly a

their experiences in these pages. The Commentator is open for well-thought-out praises and critiques of the return to campus. Is the library really a "ghost town?" How does the caf food compare to last year in terms of price and quality? Is there any pre-election fervor (hopefully, this time, with a [modicum of civility](#) and no [Confederate flag controversies](#))? I'll hopefully be back on campus on Monday — I recently tested negative, thank God — but, at this point, I've been wondering for weeks what the scene in the Heights is like.

What's most important now is fol-

The PA repeatedly tried to dissuade me from taking the test, arguing that if I tested positive "the numbers in Monsey will go up and then the government will shut the yeshivas down."

From the outset, I will mention as a disclaimer that this editorial is not meant to evoke any feelings of sympathy for my case; far from it. There are many other cases that deserve "feel better" wishes and *kapitloch* of Tehillim — besides, as a relatively healthy 21-year old, I never felt any real personal danger from the virus. Rather, I wish to emphasize the practical effects of the virus from various anecdotal points; the virus is not something that we, as a society, should take lightly.

For most of the pandemic period, I largely stayed isolated from general society, other than the occasional outdoor *minyan* and walk. As the summer went on, and the pandemic seemed less threatening to me, I started to attend indoor *minyanim*. By the *Yomim Noraim* (High Holy Days), it seemed that the threat was non-existent; there were barely any COVID-19 regulations in *shul*, and I felt comfortable joining an indoor *minyan* with a mask on that fateful Yom Kippur.

Just a few days later, on the second day of Sukkos, I started to feel a minor headache, starting a trajectory that defined my life for a month.

By the time *Yom Tov* was out, I was out. I traversed from bed, to couch, back to the bed, and to the couch again and finally to the thermometer — 103-degree fever! By then, I, shivering, sweating buckets and beet-red-faced, didn't have the strength to drive to an urgent care to receive a rapid test; well, that's apparently what parents are for — gotta love 'em.

The visit to the urgent care was quite an eye-opening experience. The attending physician assistant (PA) emphasized that whether I got COVID-19 or not is "all *b'dei shamayim*" (in the hands of heaven), and it "doesn't matter what we do." By that

blur. My daily schedule: homework and "Commie" work when I had the strength, and sleeping — or, more accurately, trying to sleep — for the remainder of the day. There weren't any major headaches or spikes in temperature; the lethargy, however, was draining. The worst part was the isolation. The knowledge that for 10 days, I would have to isolate from society, a society that — as it is — isn't fully functioning, was a harrowing experience, to put it mildly. During that time period, I heard uncomfortable reports of other individuals in my *shul* who tested positive soon after Yom Kippur, at least one of whom is currently in critical condition. Since Sukkos, my *shul* thankfully instituted a mask-mandatory policy; however, there is no doubt in my mind that the *minyanim* on the *Yomim Noraim* were "super-spreader" events.

I expected, after a two-week period, to receive a negative test result, especially since, at that time, I was asymptomatic. Since March, I've been looking forward to returning to Yeshiva University and having a real senior-year experience. I booked the first day available, Oct. 21, to come back, with nostalgic dreams of the Shabbosim on campus, the *beis medrash*, the library, the ping pong tables, the restaurants and the general social scene. Back then, I hoped to dedicate this issue's editorial as a praise and/or critique of various aspects of the [university's return plan](#). Alas, that was not to be the case. Once again, I tested positive and my move-in date was delayed to Nov. 2, and yet another 10 days of isolation ensued.

Though I can't evaluate the university's plan because I haven't been personally affected by it yet, I welcome any student, faculty member or administrator to describe

lowing the rules, as The Commentator focused on in its last [editorial](#). Truth be told, as someone who views himself as a relative outsider to the general Modern Orthodox community, I've been very impressed with the response from communities such as Teaneck, a locale where many YU students come from. At the very beginning of the pandemic in March, I heard a prominent rabbi in Monsey say that "The thing we need most right now, to combat the *magefah* (pandemic), is *t'filla b'tzibur*" (public prayer), a seemingly paradoxical approach, though in line with standard *yeshivish* dogma; to contrast, during the same time period in Teaneck, the *shuls* [shut down](#), perhaps stopping a disaster from developing into a catastrophe, or perhaps not. Who knows? But why take the chance? Regulations may reasonably morph as the situation develops, in line with the advice of medical, economic and societal experts, and students should, at the very least, abide by the university's minimum regulations while, at the same time, enjoying campus life as much as possible.

There is currently a major crack-down on the Orthodox community from the New York State government, due to a [rise](#) in COVID-19 cases. However, we must not, under any circumstance, commit a *chillul Hashem* (desecration of God's name) by violating reasonably-set regulations. As [Rav Mayer Twersky](#), a RIETS *rosh yeshiva*, put it, "Provocation does not mitigate or excuse a *chilul Hashem*." Well, to my fellow students, here's your chance; don't mess it up.

THE COMMENTATOR

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The Commentator is the student newspaper of Yeshiva University.

For 86 years, The Commentator has served students and administrators as a communicative conduit; a kinetic vehicle disseminating undergraduate social, religious and academic beliefs across the student bodies; and a reliable reflection of Yeshiva student life to the broader Jewish and American communities.

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

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1 Welcome back to Wilf/Beren Campus!!!
Unless you're one of the 1,500 students who will *not* be dorming.



2 Printing Money is BACK!!!
You get \$60! And you get \$60! Everyone gets \$60!!! Now you can print this Commie PDF, those 50-page readings you weren't going to read anyway, pictures of the bagpipe guy, Mesora notes and a life-sized colored photo of PRDAB to hang up in your dorm room.



3 Shkoy
To you it might be a peculiar word, but to us at the Commie, it means the world. #KGBlives



4 Minyan Signup
Taking the time to check where everyone else will be davening before committing to your minyan. #MinyanHock



5 Presidential Elections
Once every four years, PoliSci majors finally get a little bit more attention than PreMed..



6 You had legs this whole time?!
You know exactly what I am referring to, right? #ZoomUniversity



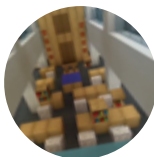
7 Your RA
Thank you to all the RAs and GAs who will most likely not be sleeping well until May 2021.

7UP
by Zahava Fertig
NMODZ



1 Saliva Tests

I'm sorry but ... THERE IS NO MORE SPIT LEFT INSIDE ME!



2 Zoom Lyfe vs. Real Lyfe
For many students and alumni, Facebook and the YU memes page are the only "touch" of YU they're gonna get. Let's not disappoint them.
#BringBackTheMinecraft



3 Do I Know You?
... or do I just think I do because you're wearing a kippah/skirt?



4 FTOC Students
A message to all you "First Years": A long time ago in a galaxy far, far away ... people on campus used to smile.



5 Gottesman Library or Ghost Town Library
The second floor is the new fourth floor.

6 Morning Routines
Glasses? — check. Mask? — check. Airpods? — check. Earrings? — check. Makeup on the top half of my face? — check.
#HoneyWhere'sMyFace?



7 Midterms and Move-in in the Same Week
Why do you hate us??????? (And why can't we just have *Shiriyah* like Frisch?!)



YU Launches Redesigned Lamm Heritage Archives

By YONATAN KURZ

This article was originally published online on Oct. 28.

With the new cycle of Torah Reading following Simchat Torah, Yeshiva University launched a [redesigned platform](#) on its website for an archive of over 800 speeches given by President Emeritus and former *Rosh HaYeshiva* Rabbi Dr. Norman Lamm, who [passed away](#) this past May at the age of 92.

While there already had been a previously [archived set](#) of sermons and speeches given by Rabbi Lamm titled “Derashot SheDarashti,” digitally published several years ago by Pearl Berger, a former dean of YU Libraries, the redesigned website “now features all the sermons in the collection neatly organized by subject matter and date,” according to Rabbi Tzvi Sinensky, director of the Lamm Heritage Archives.

Additionally, Rabbi Dr. Stu Halpern, senior advisor to the provost at YU and editor of many of Rabbi Lamm’s books, including the *Derashot Ledorot* series, was instrumental in helping to launch and shepherd the project. Both Rabbis Sinensky and Halpern are married to granddaughters of Rabbi Lamm.

To promote the new website, YU sent out multiple emails to students and alumni, and has also added [several](#) of Rabbi Lamm’s *derashot* to the weekly “YUTorah in Print” newsletter on YUTorah.org.

According to Rabbi Sinensky, the site saw 1,300 subscribers in the first 48 hours, and over 10,000 views on social media, exhibiting the “clear impact” of Rabbi Lamm. Additionally, he remarked, “many educators and rabbis are sharing this resource with their communities, revitalizing Rabbi Lamm’s works and creating a new generation of readers.”

“It was in the back of people’s minds for a

while that putting it up on that website was overwhelming and over 10 years ago with OCR [optical character recognition], and at the time there were no aesthetics to match the effort made by the library,” explained Rabbi Sinensky. “After Rabbi Lamm’s passing, both the library and the family had in the back of their minds to give this project new life.”

The sermons are categorized on the homepage by “Parsha,” “Holidays” and “Eulogies, Tributes and Special Addresses,”

“The resonance of the sermons to this day is uncanny, and this enables people to experience or relive the eternal relevance of Rabbi Lamm’s words ...”

Rabbi Tzvi Sinensky, director of the Lamm Heritage Archives.

which contain a list of speeches categorized by each occasion in chronological order. Each homily is a PDF of either a typed-up or handwritten speech of Rabbi Lamm, and ranges from 1951 to 2004, between his time as rabbi at Congregation Kadima in Springfield, Mass. to his tenure as chancellor at YU, and including his time as rabbi of the Jewish Center on the Upper West Side of Manhattan as well as his presidency at YU.

The first two categories are mainly from Rabbi Lamm’s time in the pulpit, and the third category is from his tenure at YU, encapsulating the roles he played in each position.

In the old archives, some of the sermons were untitled, so to provide greater ease for the reader and give a sense of the topic of the speech, any *derasha* lacking a title was given a title with Rabbi Lamm’s own language from the talk so it could be historically accurate, and it says “Editor’s Title,” giving

people context of what the title is.

Additionally, each week, an email is sent out featuring several of Rabbi Lamm’s homilies on the weekly *parsha* and holidays, as well as addresses that “speak across the decades to the challenges confronting us today.” The weekly email series is called “Timeless Torah,” according to Rabbi Sinensky, because “not only is the content of extraordinary value, but it remains timeless

despite the change of era. The resonance of the sermons to this day is uncanny, and this enables people to experience or relive the eternal relevance of Rabbi Lamm’s words.”

Rabbi Sinensky noted “three categories of additional materials that may be added to the archives in the future,” namely, “audio files, both newly uncovered ones as well as formerly private library archives,” videos that have been digitized and are waiting to be publicized and unpublished manuscripts. “To see the exact words being said has no comparison,” said Rabbi Sinensky, referring to the digitized videos, “like Rav Soloveitchik, seeing Rabbi Lamm’s speaking the words off the paper is a completely different experience.”

The manuscripts include unpublished correspondences involving Rabbi Lamm that may ultimately be made available to the public. “Rabbi Lamm was not a person who needed much sleep, and in the time in the pulpit and presidency, he was able to maintain correspondences, many of which are in the YU library and are very important material,” Rabbi Sinensky told The Commentator. “It is a treasure trove of material, not only for the YU community, but for someone who wants to learn more about Rabbi Lamm, YU, the Upper West Side, or even Modern Orthodoxy in America.”

“This entire project is a tremendous tribute to Rabbi Lamm, who not only delivered outstanding and pristine *derashot*,” Rabbi Sinensky added. “When Rabbi Lamm was in the pulpit, he would type up his *derashot* every *Motzaei Shabbos*, and he would say that a rabbi gives three *derashot* every week: the *derasha* they plan to give, the one they gave, and the one they should have given. Rabbi Lamm was assiduous in creating an extensive filing system, making sure these materials were available for future generations.”



YU has launched a redesigned website for over 800 speeches given by former President Rabbi Dr. Norman Lamm.

YU

CAMPUS REOPENING Continued from Front Page

As of time of publication, the tracker indicates that one person has tested positive for coronavirus, though the test was administered off-campus. According to a YU spokesperson, the person who tested positive is a YU employee. “We conducted contact tracing and informed those who were in direct contact with the employee about next steps re quarantine and testing,” the spokesperson told The Commentator. “Per applicable laws, we cannot disclose any more information about this case.”

According to the tracker, YU has 129 quarantine rooms available; currently, 48 students from out-of-state or abroad — who plan on residing in university housing this semester — are quarantining in a hotel near the Beren Campus.

“Although being stuck in a room alone for two weeks is far from fun YU has really tried to make the experience as pleasant as possible,” remarked Miriam Fried (SCW ’22), a student currently quarantining in the hotel. “From the awesome welcome packet and Shabbat bags to the meals and reading materials, everything shows that YU really cares and wants to make sure we’re doing well.”

On Oct. 16, just days before move-in day, Beren Housing announced that Schottenstein Residence Hall would not reopen for the fall semester, citing a “number of cancellations for housing for the fall semester,” which resulted in a “significant drop in number of

residents” who wished to reside there this semester. Beren students who were [planning on moving](#) into Schottenstein this week were offered to reside in Brookdale Residence Hall or 36th Street. Beren Housing told The Commentator that the university hopes “to reopen the Schottenstein Residence Hall for the spring semester.”

Both Beren and Wilf *batei midrash* are open for *chavruta* learning, and various spaces on the Wilf Campus, such as the [Heights Lounge](#), were converted into *batei midrash* to follow social-distancing guidelines.

Some classes and *shiurim* are conducting in-person sessions. As previously reported by The Commentator, the [vast majority of classes](#) will continue online. Some in-person classes are live-streamed over Zoom, in classrooms equipped with [video cameras](#), to students who are not able to personally attend. Zoom rooms are [projected](#) onto a screen in the classroom to allow the instructor and students who are attending class in-person and virtually to see each other.

“While it’s jarring to be in a classroom transformed by masks and social distancing, it’s great to return to the familiarity of in-person learning after such an extended hiatus,” said Naftali Shavelson (YC ’22), who is attending his Architectural Design Process class on campus.

Numerous [minyanim](#) are organized on the Wilf Campus, and students are required to sign up in advance. The regular Shabbat minyan on the Beren Campus — which

brought 10 male students from the uptown campus — will not continue this semester, but women’s *tefilah* (prayer) will be held in the Koch auditorium. Director of Office of Student Life Rabbi Josh Weisberg expressed in a recent email to Beren students that YU plans to “resume the [Shabbat] minyan as soon as possible.”

Dining services will be available every day of the week, and only students purchasing meals through one of YU’s meal plans or a credit card may sit in the cafeterias. [Pizza](#) is back on the menu, despite [initial reports](#) that that dining services would only offer takeout meals on weekdays and that pizza would not be served to maximize safety. Food items in the cafeteria are [pre-packaged](#), and [tables](#) have been spread out to seat a maximum of two students at a time.

In his email to the undergraduate student body, Nissel announced that all cafeteria payments would be “cashless” and requested students to bring their credit card or YU ID card — which allows students registered for the meal plan to pay for meals — to the cafeteria; however, students have reported to The Commentator that their credit card was not accepted in the cafeteria on the Wilf Campus.

Libraries on Wilf and Beren Campuses — The Mendel Gottesman Library and the Hedi Steinberg Library, respectively — are limited to current YU students, faculty and staff. Compared to last year, when the library opened at 9 a.m. and closed at 1 a.m. on weekdays, opening hours have shifted

significantly; libraries now close at 10 p.m. on weekdays and 12:30 p.m. on Fridays.

Students may frequent the athletic centers during limited opening hours, provided they sign up for a slot in advance. The Brookdale and Wilf Campus fitness center, as well as the Max Stern Athletic Center Basketball Court, are available for student use at 33% capacity, as per New York State regulations. The reopening of the 35th Street fitness center has been delayed until Oct. 27.

Yeshiva University High School for Boys (MTA), located on the Wilf Campus, also returned to in-person instruction on Oct. 21, after temporarily [shifting](#) to remote learning on Sept. 24.

Prior to students’ arrival on campus, YU released numerous promotional videos, outlining YU’s “[COVID Code of Conduct](#),” [welcoming first-year](#) students and broadcasting a [welcome message](#) from President Berman.

“Yeshiva University remains always in session,” President Berman said in the video, “even if we do not return to campus in the conventional sense.”

Editor’s note: This article has been updated to clarify the status of the person who tested positive, as well as which students will be participating in the self-obtained saliva COVID-19 testing program.

IBC Rep. Wins Redo Election for Sophomore Rep., Sued in Student Court

By **RAPHI SINGER**

This article was originally published online on Oct. 25.

Isaac Breuer College (IBC) Rep. Baruch Lerman (YC '23) won the do-over election for Yeshiva Student Union (YSU) sophomore representative on Thursday, Oct. 22. YSU President Zachary Greenberg (SSSB '21), Sy Syms School of Business President



Baruch Lerman

EZRA TROY PHOTOGRAPHY

Adam Baron (SSSB '21) and Yeshiva College Student Association President Ari Lowy (YC '21) petitioned the court that night to contest Lerman holding both positions simultaneously.

In the **initial elections** for sophomore representative on Sept. 15, Jacob Goldsmith (YC '23) was declared the winner, but he was **disqualified** due to a lack of up-to-date credits to be considered a sophomore. The runner up, Shay Fishman (YC '23), was subsequently declared the winner but was deemed ineligible because he was only a sophomore for Fall 2020, becoming a junior in the spring.

106 Wilf Campus sophomores voted in the redo election, and Lerman garnered 35.85% of the total with 38 votes. Goldsmith was the runner-up and received 33.96% of the votes, just two short of Lerman. Shai Rosalimsky (SSSB '23) obtained 22.64% of the votes, and write-ins constituted 7.55% of the votes.

"I put a lot of work into this campaign, along with several other people who have really helped me out a ton and supported me along the way," Lerman told The Commentator. "I would like to express my gratitude to the sophomores for choosing me to represent them, and to let them know that I am looking forward to giving them the best year ever!"

In addition to his recent win as sophomore representative, Lerman is also the Student Organization of Yeshiva (SOY) IBC representative and was previously a member of the Wilf Canvassing Committee, which oversees Wilf Campus elections. On Sept. 27, Lerman recused himself from the

Canvassing Committee in preparation of him announcing his bid to run.

In their petition to the court, Greenberg, Baron and Lowy argued that although the constitution does not explicitly state that a student cannot hold two positions simultaneously and only forbids running for them

in no way compare to the amount of work or authority a president has."

Greenberg, Baron and Lowy are three of the five Wilf General Assembly members — the other two being SOY President Akiva Poppers (SSSB '22) and Student Life Committee Chair Scott Stimler (YC '21).

"I would like to express my gratitude to the sophomores for choosing me to represent them, and to let them know that I am looking forward to giving them the best year ever!"

Baruch Lerman (YC '23)

at the same time, a student holding two elected positions would inevitably lead to a misuse of power. The three presidents are suing Lerman in Wilf Student Court and are requesting an open trial. Greenberg said that they want Lerman to explain how he can handle his course load and hold two different elected positions simultaneously.

According to Lerman, holding both IBC and sophomore representative positions is not at odds with the Wilf Constitution. He told The Commentator that while he cannot run for two positions at the same time, he could constitutionally hold them both.

"I am sure that I have in no way violated the constitution and look forward to having that affirmed by the court in the event the case is heard," Lerman said. "Firstly, before I ran for the position of sophomore representative I made sure I had the approval of the Mashgiach of IBC Rabbi Beny Rofeh to do so. Secondly, the responsibilities I have as representatives have a lot of overlap, and

In a statement sent to The Commentator, Poppers said that he is not part of the lawsuit against Lerman and supports him as the newly-elected sophomore representative.

"If the three members of the General Assembly who signed this lawsuit dislike the clear wording — and/or lack thereof — regarding this matter in the Wilf Constitution," Poppers said, "I implore all of them to go the proper route and consider proposing an amendment to the Constitution next semester, as doing so this semester would demonstrate a confounding disregard for the wishes of the relevant members of the Student Body — the Sophomores, who elected Baruch."

Greenberg told The Commentator that while he doesn't think Lerman should hold both positions, he is excited to welcome him into YSU. "Baruch is the hardest working guy on student council and I am so excited to be working with him again in YSU," Greenberg said.

Beren and Wilf Batei Midrash Re-Open for Undergraduate Students

By **DAVID SCHMIDT**

Yeshiva University's *batei midrash* on the Wilf and Beren Campuses reopened for undergraduate students on Wednesday, Oct. 21, after a nearly eight-month closure due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Several new regulations have been implemented to ensure a safe return for many students.

While the *beit midrash* in the Glueck Center on Wilf Campus was open to Rabbi Isaac Elchanan Theological Seminary *semikha* students before the holiday break, starting Oct. 21, YU opened it to undergraduate students, as well as opening up several expanded locations. Additionally, the Klein Beit Midrash opened for Wilf students and the Beren Beit Midrash for Beren students. Undergraduate students also **moved** into residence halls on campus on Oct. 21.

Out of the 39 *shiurim* between Stone Beit Midrash Program (BMP) and Mazer Yeshiva Program (YP) for Wilf students, 26 of them are in person for at least part of the week. Due to social-distancing measures, many temporary *batei midrash* have also been set up across Wilf Campus to accommodate *chavrusa* learning for all YP and BMP *shiurim*. Makeshift locations include the Shenk Shul and the Heights Lounge, among others. Some of these additional locations also act as lecture halls for in-person *shiurim*.

Along with the mandatory wearing of masks, other unique restrictions have been put into effect, such as plexiglass between *chavrutot* and not returning books to their location immediately but instead placing them on a cart for two days. These measures



Several new regulations have been implemented to ensure a safe return for many students.

YESHIVA UNIVERSITY

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YU Stands with Uighurs Holds First Event

By JARED SCHARF

Editor's Note: Sruli Fruchter and Elisheva Kohn, the main organizers of the event, are editors for The Commentator. They were not involved in the editing process of this article.

The newly-formed “YU Stands with Uighurs” committee hosted its first event, Uighur and Jewish Action Against Uighur Genocide, via Zoom on Sunday, Oct. 25. RIETS's Senior Mashgiach Ruchani Rabbi Yosef Blau and Uighur refugee and activist Tahir Imin spoke during the one hour program which drew 88 attendees.

The event was organized by Sruli Fruchter (YC '22) and Elisheva Kohn (SCW '21). Fruchter and Kohn founded “YU Stands with Uighurs” in Sept. 2020, after Fruchter wrote an [article](#) in The Commentator discussing how the “Chinese Communist Party has forcibly detained over one million Uighur Muslims in internment camps,” and the responsibility that Jews have to speak up. The two subsequently created a WhatsApp group which has reached almost 190 members with the goal of “[sending] details and relevant articles to educate [on] this genocide in the making,” according to the chat description.

With the help of Yeshiva Student Union President Zachary Greenberg (SSSB '21), as well as a handful of student activists, an official student government committee was formed. The other committee board members included Deborah Coopersmith (SCW '21), Josh Leichter (YC '21), Avigail Winokur (SCW '22) and Sara Schatz (SCW '20).

The event began with Rabbi Blau discussing the Biblical and traditional imperatives for Jews to help others. “It is built into our DNA, or should be built into our DNA to be concerned with the welfare of everyone in the world and not to tolerate injustice,” remarked Rabbi Blau. Adding, “In the particular case of the Uighurs, there is a correlation to our experiences that should alert us to how critical it is that we respond fully. We have a special responsibility because it's part of our identity and we must take this role as seriously as we can.”

Imin spoke next, sharing his life story. Imin was born in Kashgar, the hub of Uighur culture. Imin attended an underground religious school, where he learned and later taught Uighur history and national ideology, until being discovered by the government. Imin was arrested twice and sent to a labor camp for 14 months. There, Imin was fed one bun a day, forced to study Chinese politics



The poster for the first “YU Stands with Uighurs” event.

YESHIVA UNIVERSITY

and traditions, subject to weekly tortures and forced to publicly denounce himself for betraying the Chinese nation.

After his release, Imin founded a fashion company and a consulting group, which he ran from 2007- 2017. During that time, he also founded the Help Uighur Children organization, The Uighur Knowledge Forum and Uighur Doppa Cultural Festival, a festival celebrating and publicizing Uighur culture.

In 2017, Imin was advised by friends and advisors to leave China due to recent crackdowns by Chinese government officials, and he immediately fled to Israel. Eventually, the Chinese government discovered his location and Imin fled to the United States to seek political asylum.

In the United States, noticing the lack of Uighur awareness or advocacy, Imin began writing about the plight of the Uighurs.

Consequently, the Chinese government forced his wife to divorce him and speak out against him for betraying China and his entire family was arrested, and presumably sent to either jails or labor camps. Imin has lost contact with all of his family, including his nine-year old daughter.

Imin continues to write, lecture, and organize protests in front of the UN embassy and the White House advocating for the Uighurs. Imin said ways in which the YU community can help is by boycotting the 2022 Beijing-held Olympics, joining protests and by simply spreading the word. Imin also took time to answer questions from the audience.

“I was shocked how little the rest of the world is doing to help the Uighur people. Tahir shared with us horrific details which are going on today. I left the event disturbed,

but more enlightened to share with other people about this terrible circumstance and wanting to do more to help the Uighur people. Never again,” reflected Greenberg.

“There was a great necessity for the event,” said Akiva Levy (YC '23). “Not only can we just sit by and passively disagree with what's going on in China, but we need to take an active role. I admire Sruli and Elisheva for starting the groupchat and the movement.”

Kohn was pleased with the event. “We did have more than 80 participants which was quite a success,” shared Kohn. Adding, “We are also very open to hearing from students, faculty members and administrators if they would like to collaborate, if there is anything we can do together, because this is just the start of the conversation.”

BATEI MIDRASH REOPEN

Continued from Page 5

come as part of YU's comprehensive [re-opening plan](#) that began as undergraduates moved on to campus.

Rabbi Dr. Yosef Kalinsky, dean for men's Undergraduate Torah Studies, shared the process of preparing for this reopening and the challenges that were associated with the planning. “We have been planning for the reopening since June in conjunction with the efforts of the ‘reopening task force committee’ and a number of offices including facilities, events, registrar, housekeeping, IT and others,” Rabbi Kalinsky told The Commentator. “The main objective was to encourage as many *talmidim* as possible to return safely to campus by providing socially distanced learning in [the] *Batei Midrash* and classrooms.”

When presented with Rabbi Kalinsky's appreciation, some *roshei yeshiva* in turn praised the students. “The *rebbeim* were

inspired by the students themselves who refused to stagnate but grew in their learning despite the challenge and, indeed, by very dint of rising to the challenge,” shared Rabbi Eli Baruch Shulman, a YP *rosh yeshiva* and the Rabbi Henry H. Guterman chair in Talmud.

the *Beis Medrash* and growing in *Avodas Hashem* and learning together with *Rebbeim* and friends,” shared Yoni Laub (YC '22), a student in YP.

Similar protocols have also been put in place for undergraduates on the Beren campus, where the Graduate Program In

“Being back on campus and having the ability to learn both in person and on Zoom has been an exciting experience for all of us.”

Rabbi Jacob Bernstein

Many students returning for in-person *shiur* were excited that YU put this amount of effort into reopening the *beit midrash*. “While the yeshiva did a great job staying connected to the *talmidim* over the last seven months through *bima klap* and many other programs and *shiurim*, nothing compares to being back in the *kol Torah* environment of

Advanced Talmudic Studies For Women (GPATS) had already been making use of the space since Labor Day.

“It has been very exciting to be back on campus, learning together with students while others watch through Zoom,” said Rabbi Jacob Bernstein, who is the Campus Rabbi at the Beren Campus. “Being back on

campus and having the ability to learn both in person and on Zoom has been an exciting experience for all of us. We look forward to continuing to learn together and spend Shabbos together to use the campus for all that it offers.”

Many students have recognized the bittersweet nature of returning to such a regimented campus. “I don't think [the safety measures] are great, but I think they are trying to be as safe as they can in a *chavrusa* learning environment,” said Chemda Weiner (SCW '21), a student who is learning in person in Beren's *beit midrash*. “It has been really nice to see each other's faces and be able to learn together.”

“Hundreds of hours went into planning and implementing our reopening,” Rabbi Kalinsky shared, “and we hope that the *talmidim* who return will find the experience gratifying and that it enhances their learning — being able to learn in-person again with *chavrusas*, with their *Rebbeim*, and with the *chevre*.”



**NEVER. STOP.
COMMENTATING.**

Got something to share?
Email lemel@mail.yu.edu

We Asked, Y(O)U Answered

Your Vote, Your Voice

By DEBORAH COOPERSMITH

Editor's Note: Due to the divisive nature of this election, and with the goal of obtaining an substantive sentiment of the current student body's opinions on the presidential election, The Commentator granted respondents the ability to submit reasonable responses, under anonymity, provided they privately submit their names and contact info to the author. All respondents, aside from one, chose to submit their responses anonymously.

The upcoming presidential election has sparked countless reactions, thoughts and feelings in the minds of every American. For this article, The Commentator reached out to the student body to see what they felt about the choices in the presidential campaign, who they are voting for, how they feel about the other candidate, and the key issues they care about when voting. The responses of six students are provided below. For a more comprehensive analysis on YU sentiment on political issues, read our latest [survey results](#).

Anonymous (SCW '23)
Party Affiliation: Independent
Method of Voting: Mail in/Absentee Ballot

"Neither candidate is ideal. However, I will be voting for President Trump. Despite his inflammatory personality, I agree with most of his policies and believe he accomplished a lot over the past four years. I also feel very safe with him as president in regards to Israel. Most of the negative consequences of him being president have already happened and can't be taken back, so keeping him for another term for the positive opportunities makes sense.

"I don't trust the Democratic Party, since they don't seem to know what they are standing for (how far to the left they want to go). I think it comes from trying to appeal to many different groups. I don't feel comfortable with the party, and Biden in particular (Iran Deal), in regards to Israel's security and its relationship with the U.S. relationship. I also don't agree with many other key policies such as raising certain taxes, moving towards more socialized medicine, etc. And in terms of ideology, I would be worried that things might progress from anti-Zionism to anti-Semitism, and from the PC [politically correct] culture to suppression of free speech.

"Israel is the key issue I care about because it's our safety zone as the Jewish people and if it isn't secure we aren't safe. Health care and taxes are important because it affects me and my family personally (paying for yeshiva day school education, having the ability to have private healthcare and my parents being small business owners). I am also invested in the general safety and well being of America — I am thankful to live in the U.S.A. and want the best for its citizens. The atmosphere is now descending perilously close to anarchy, and the general unrest we have now needs to be dealt with for us to function safely and properly as a country."

Anonymous (SCW '23)
Party Affiliation: Republican
Method of Voting: Mail in/Absentee Ballot



WIKIMEDIA COMMONS

Donald Trump and Joe Biden will face off in the 2020 presidential election.

"Both presidential candidates are really not that good. Biden has more class and is more unifying than Trump, but Trump has a better record of accomplishments and better policies. We need a president with both.

"I am voting for Donald Trump because he has delivered on the promises that he made four years ago, instead of being like other politicians who lie. Although he really doesn't have class and is not very unifying, his policies are good for America. Also, he is a strong leader and other countries are scared of him. We need a president who is able to stand up to China and Iran; Donald Trump definitely scares them. He puts America first and doesn't let our country get played around with. As Jews, it is also important to vote for Trump since he is SUPER pro-Israel, and has done so many things for Israel that no other president has been able to do.

"Joe Biden stumbles over his words and is too weak to be president. He'll allow the other countries to push America around, and he clearly has some sort of pre-dementia. In numerous interviews he mixes up so many terms! In terms of accountability, Donald Trump has done more in four years than Joe has done in 47. Biden is so old, and if elected, it is very likely that Kamala Harris will be president. She is a radical socialist and that is very scary for America.

"I care most about Israel, and law and order. Donald Trump is clearly a better candidate for these things."

Anonymous (YC '24)
Party Affiliation: Democrat
Method of Voting: Early Voting

"The election should be clear cut, but at this point, it's anyone's game.

"Donald Trump's economic, foreign, and defense policies have been great. He has made this country energy independent, and a larger oil exporter than Russia and Saudi Arabia. He has pulled our troops out of needless wars, and given the military the budget it needs. He has brought peace between Israel and its neighbors, doing the

opposite of what foreign policy 'experts' have said for years.

"Joe Biden is forgetful (or a liar), a waffler, a career politician, (40+ years in the Senate and eight years in the White House), and he did not accomplish anything of what he proposed to do (just ask Bernie Sanders). He is a puppet for his party, unconcerned for the good of the country and the American People.

"I care about policies more than character. We barely know Biden's policies, and what we do know is he is bad for our industry. (He is on record saying he will ban fracking.) Trump has four years of great economic growth behind him"

Anonymous (YC '22)
Party Affiliation: Independent
Method of Voting: Mail in/Absentee Ballot

"The presidential candidates are obviously a disappointing result of extreme party polarization, but more than that it reflects Chazal's statement that a generation only gets the leader it deserves. It's up to us to support moderate, smart, problem-solving voices.

"I voted for Trump. While we can widely agree that we don't like his personality, and I strongly disagree with certain policy decisions, particularly immigration, I think that Trump is villainized far more than he deserves. The vast majority of his policies, if seen from an objective standpoint, are hard to feel strongly against and often are very good. Partisan politics have made people much more passionate about the president than they should be; to love him and defend every one of his policies is just as foolish and close-minded as hating him and putting down every one of his policies. Overall, I think he's the better candidate, and his track record of pro-Jewish and pro-Israel policy deserves bipartisan recognition.

"Biden is overall a decent person and is less polarizing than Trump. However, it is clearly evident that he is not as sharp as he once was and is being controlled by the

Democratic party. I am not convinced they will not push through more radical policies under him that could be bad for America, and Jews in particular. While Biden may have a nicer personality, the important thing is policy, and his record does not inspire the same confidence Trump has.

"I care about all issues, but obviously issues that hit closer to home are a higher priority, as I believe they should be. In practice, this means I primarily care about Israel and the protection of religious freedoms. I fear that at this time, the Democratic party, which controls Biden, will not pursue policies that favor Israel and the Jews nearly to the extent that Trump has. However, my vote for Trump is not simply for what he will do in the future; it is a basic expression of *hakarot hatov* for what he has done in the past. Some may question whether *hakarot hatov* is an appropriate factor in choosing who to vote for, but considering that I don't live in a swing state and my vote doesn't matter anyway, I think it is a nice token gesture and, in any case, I don't feel Biden is a stronger candidate."

Elazar Abrahams (YC '22)
Party Affiliation: Democrat
Method of Voting: In person

"Trump was never a consideration for me. Joe Biden was not my first choice — far from it. But the more I see of the man, the more I actually hear him speak in full, the more I like him. He's a truly kind person, and represents the kind of leadership we so desperately need. I wish we had someone a lot younger though.

"I'm voting for Biden. As Vice President, he resurrected our economy after the 2008 crash and can do it again. Common sense gun control, addressing climate change, a federal response to COVID-19, protecting a woman's right to choose, and attempting to repair America's partisan divide are some of the reasons I'm voting for the Democratic ticket this year. Not being human garbage like our current president is

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WE ASKED, Y(O)U ANSWERED
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also a huge plus!

"It has been heartbreaking to see much of the Orthodox community throw themselves at the feet of Donald Trump like a modern-day *Egel Hazahav*. Anti-Semitism and all forms of hate have increased in these last four years, as the worst of humanity feels emboldened by his vile remarks. President Trump is a *menuval* with no redeemable qualities. Some things transcend politics. Voting him out is one of them. I'm so happy that many of the conservative YU students I've spoken to feel the same way, choosing to either vote for a third-party candidate or support Biden even if they disagree with some of his stances."

Anonymous (YC '23)
Party Affiliation: Libertarian
Method of Voting: Mail in/Absentee Ballot

"I feel that both candidates are pretty underwhelming. On one hand, you have the incumbent, President Donald Trump, whose morals are greatly in question, and his IQ may be lower than a high schooler's. On the other hand, you have Joe Biden, a classic politician and great guy. However, I am skeptical of his leadership and deference to the far left.

"The political parties of said candidates show vastly different policies and opinions on a wide array of issues, including my most weighed issue, Israel foreign policy. I will be voting for President Trump. Although his methods are unorthodox, to be put gently, his administration has done more for Israel and this country than any other administration in my lifetime. Since there are issues bigger than all of us (Israel), I cannot push them aside just because he is immature and acts like a child. I have to take into account his administration's effectiveness and that propels me to vote for him. But, I'm not voting for him. I'm voting for his administration.

"Joe Biden is a great candidate and

would act with dignity and restraint when leading this great nation. However, I am a bit concerned by his own lack of confidence in his opinions. He is a classic politician; therefore, he plays the fence and the situation which removes himself from controversy. I'm a bit afraid he'll give in too easily to the radical left, which to me is infectious and terrible for society. I am nervous that the left would push him and this country into chaos. Some may call it irrational, but if the Democrats win the Senate, it could happen.

"The key issues for me are Israel, the economy, coronavirus and taxes. The Trump administration totally bungled the virus, but I believe the other three issues were better during the last three years. Although I did not pay any taxes, and the economy does not really affect me, it affects many around me and my family. Israel holds a very special place in my heart and it's the most important to me. I believe that Trump has done more for Israel than his predecessor, and I want it to continue. He may not be traditional, but he's effective,

and that is what is causing me to vote for him."

Editor's Note: There were many responses that were not included in the column. An overwhelming majority of the students — even those not included here — wrote that they were going to be voting for President Donald Trump. In a survey conducted by The Commentator, it was found that the student body supports Trump over Biden 60% to 23%. Thank you to everyone who responded to the survey!

SURVEY ANALYSIS
Continued from Front Page

program in the university with 71% identifying as Republicans, 4% as Democrats and 13% as Independents. 83% of Syms-Men consider themselves conservative, 15% as centrist while only 2% identify as liberal. Regarding YC, 47% identify as Republican, 8% as Democrat and 31% as Independent; 64% are conservative, 16% are centrist and 11% are liberal. At SCW, political affiliation is more evenly balanced, with 37% identifying as Republicans, 26% as Democrats and 27% as Independents. 46% of SCW students are conservative, 18% are centrist and 32% are liberal.

A previous [trend](#) in 2018 that found older students tending to lean more liberal did not hold true for this survey. In fact, third-year students were the most conservative in the student body. 59% of first-year, 57% of second-year and 68% of third-year students identify as conservatives while 11% of first-year, 19% of second-year and 16% of third-year students identify as liberal.

Overall, 68% of respondents believe that the YU student body, in general, leans Republican while only 12% believe it leans Democrat. 20% were unsure of which political direction the student body leans.

The Election

If the presidential election were held today, 60% of students would vote to re-elect Donald J. Trump, 23% would vote for Joseph R. Biden, 5% would vote for a different candidate and 12% were undecided. 55% of women and 64% of men indicated that they support Trump while 30% of women and 18% of men said they would vote for Biden.

When it came to who students believe would win, the results were more evenly split, with 29% believing Trump will win, 30% believing Biden will win and 41% stating that they were unsure as to who will win the election. When broken down by party affiliation 36% of Republican, 5% of Democrats and 29% of Independents said they think Trump will win, whereas 27% of Republicans, 45% of Democrats and 29% of Independents think that Biden will win.

Overall, 34% of respondents think that the Democratic Party will retain control of the House of Representatives, while 22% believe the Republican Party will gain control; 44% stated they were unsure about the outcome. The opposite was true regarding the Senate: 42% believe the Republicans will retain control of the chamber, 16% picked the Democrats to flip the Senate and 43%

stated they were unsure of the outcome.

wrong track and 20% were unsure. 56% of Republicans, 90% of Democrats and 63% of

support court-packing, 68% oppose it and 9% were unsure. Of Democrats, 20% would support packing the court.

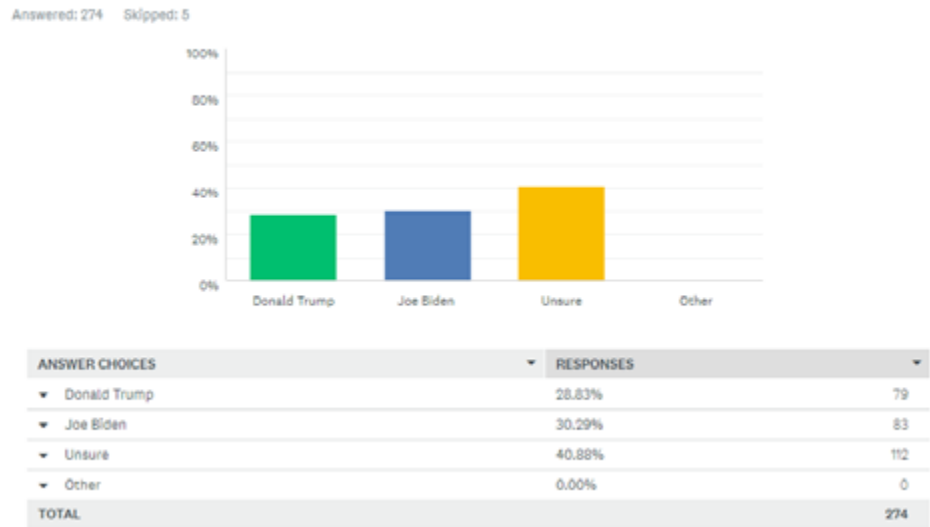
A plurality of students would like to see the Electoral College system remain in place. 49% support the Electoral College system, 26% would like to see it replaced with a popular vote system, 3% preferred another system and 21% were unsure. When broken down by party, 70% of Republicans, 15% of Democrats and 39% of Independents would prefer to keep the Electoral College system, while 9% of Republicans, 60% of Democrats and 35% of Independents would like to see the implementation of a popular vote system.

When students were asked whether they "approve or disapprove of the Black Lives Matter movement," 50% noted their disapproval, 29% indicated their approval and 16% neither approved nor disapproved of the movement. 73% of Republicans, 3% of Democrats and 36% of Independents disapprove of the movement, while 10% of Republicans, 82% of Democrats and 35% of Independents approve of it. (What exactly the "movement" represents was left up to the respondent to decide.)

What almost all students agreed upon was the idea that Israel is an important factor when considering who to vote for. 92% stated that it was an important factor (of that number, 64% indicated it was very important), while only 7% said it was not an important factor. 95% of Republicans, 95% of Independents and 70% of Democrats indicated that a candidate's policies regarding Israel is an important factor in their decision.

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If the presidential election were held today, who do you believe would win?



Job Approval

54% of students polled approve of the overall job performance of the Trump administration, 13% neither approve nor disapprove and 30% disapprove. Trump's approval rating jumps to 82% among Republicans, sinks to 5% among Democrats and sits at 39% among Independents.

More of the respondents disapproved than approved of the Trump administration's handling of the coronavirus pandemic. Overall, 33% approve, 17% neither approve nor disapprove and 45% disapprove of the administration's response to the pandemic. However, 59% of respondents say they think a Biden administration would have handled the pandemic worse.

Trump's economic and foreign policies, in contrast, received large support from respondents. 68% approve, 9% neither approve nor disapprove, and 14% disapprove of Trump's economic policies over the past four years. 70% of respondents believe that Biden's economic policies, if implemented, would not have been better than Trump's. Regarding Trump's foreign policies, 70% indicated approval, 10% neither approved nor disapproved and 15% disapproved. When asked whether Biden's foreign policies would have been better than Trump's, 70% responded in the negative.

Overall, Republicans, Democrats and Independents believe this country is heading in the wrong direction. A mere 18% of respondents say this country is headed in the right direction, while 62% say it's on the

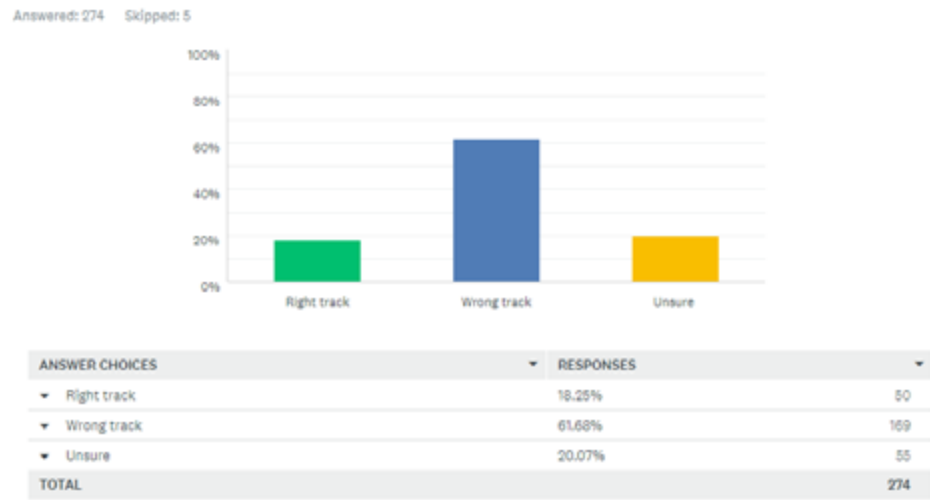
Independents say America is on the wrong track.

The Issues

Students were asked whether they approve of Amy Coney Barrett being appointed to the Supreme Court. (The survey closed before Barrett was confirmed by the Senate.) 56% indicated their approval, 18% disapproved, 17% neither approved nor disapproved and 9% were unsure.

Overwhelmingly, respondents stated that they would prefer to not add justices to the Supreme Court if their preferred party wins the White House and the Senate; 23%

Overall, do you think things in the nation are generally headed in the right direction, or do you feel things are off on the wrong track?



Why I Volunteered to Be a Poll Worker on Election Day

By Dr. Jeffrey Freedman

Presidential elections in the U.S. occur every four years, but this is no ordinary election. It is taking place in the middle of a pandemic and against the backdrop of several major efforts at voter suppression by officials affiliated with the Republican Party. We've witnessed, in Georgia, the [purging](#) of voter rolls; in Texas, the [reduction](#) of drop-off sites for mail-in ballots to just one per county; and, in Wisconsin, a legal challenge by the state's Republican Party — [upheld](#) yesterday by the Supreme Court — to a ruling that would have allowed the counting of mail-in ballots post-marked before election day and received up to six days afterward. Meanwhile, the president himself is trying to undermine confidence in the election and rather openly [encouraging](#) the intervention of heavily armed right-wing militias ("stand back and stand by") such as the one that [occupied](#) the gallery of the Michigan statehouse in April. In the light of such developments, it is hard to avoid the conclusion that American democracy is hanging by a slender thread.

What is a concerned citizen to do? One way to counter the president's repeated efforts to cast doubt on the legitimacy of the election is to vote in person. In order to maintain polling stations, however, we need poll workers, who are in short supply this year

because of COVID-19. Poll workers tend to be older and as such are more vulnerable to the risks of contagion. This combination of circumstances prompted me to volunteer: I'll be working the scanning machine at my local polling station in New York on Election Day this Tuesday.

On a normal Tuesday, I'd be teaching classes at both Stern and Yeshiva College — one class on The Enlightenment, the other on the history of Media Revolutions. I will not be holding those class meetings on Tuesday. Instead, I will prerecord and post lectures on Canvas. It's my hope that this small disruption of our normal routine may serve to remind students of the importance of exercising our voting rights as a lynchpin of our democracy.

Earlier this year we lost John Lewis, a congressman from Georgia, who, in his youth, had participated with Dr. Martin Luther King in the struggle to extend voting rights to disfranchised populations. It is a bitter irony that precisely in the year of his death, the accomplishments of his life's work are under renewed threat. I can think of no better way to honor his memory than by affirming our belief in the value of an inclusive democracy.

Dr. Freedman is a professor of history at Yeshiva College and Stern College for Women.



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One way to counter the President's repeated efforts to cast doubt on the legitimacy of the election is to vote in person.

SURVEY ANALYSIS

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Methodology

The methodology for this survey mostly followed that of previous surveys. The Commentator has conducted for the past two years, including the 2018 Commentator Midterm Election Poll. We first collected the names and emails of 305 students through the Wilfevents and Berenevents email service for YU undergraduate students. We sent

each student an individualized copy of the survey via SurveyMonkey. Of the 305 students who received a survey, 274 responded in full, and five partially answered the survey. Students were incentivized to participate through a raffle for a \$25 Amazon gift card, among other prizes. All responses were completely anonymous.

Unlike previous surveys, we were not able to advertise the survey using posters in buildings, such as the batei midrash and the libraries; rather, we relied purely on emails to spread the word. While we realize

that this may have contributed to sampling bias — in that only people who regularly check their emails, who may have different political leanings than the overall YU population, would respond — the only available platform available for us to accurately survey YU undergraduates was via email.

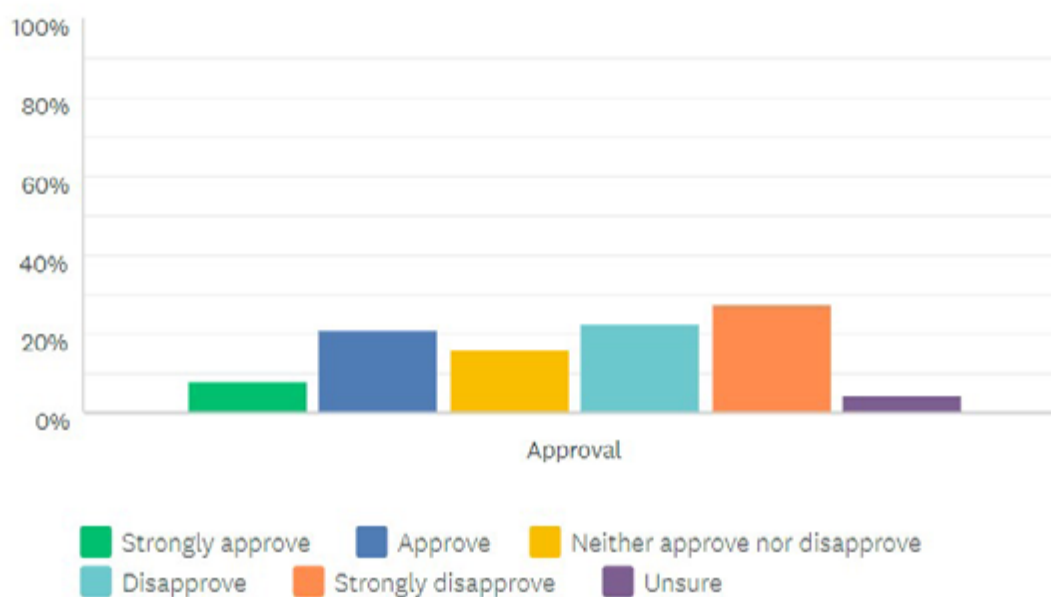
A factor that may have contributed to an imbalance in the survey results was the relatively low percentage of Syms-Men and high percentage of YC students who responded, as was the case in previous surveys. Only 18% of respondents are in Syms-Men, even

though it is the second-largest undergraduate program in the university, comprising 26% (517 students) of the undergraduate student body. In contrast, YC students comprised 39% of our survey's respondents while comprising 25% (512 students) of the student body.

The Commentator received the enrollment numbers referred to in this article from YU's Office of Institutional Research and Assessment.

How strongly do you approve or disapprove of the Black Lives Matter movement?

Answered: 274 Skipped: 5



What is Originalism?

By DANIEL MELOOL

On Oct 26, the Senate confirmed President Trump's nominee to the Supreme Court, Judge Amy Coney Barrett. During the Senate hearings, she [professed](#) to be an originalist, the same judicial philosophy as the late Justice Antonin Scalia, who Barrett formerly clerked for. Her jurisprudential beliefs led to an outcry from many who opposed her nomination. Hillary Clinton, for example, tweeted in response: "At the time the Constitution was ratified, women couldn't vote, much less be judges." Former CBS News anchor Dan Rather tweeted: "If you want to be an 'originalist' in law, maybe you should go all the way. Cooking on a hearth. Leeches for medicine. An old mule for transportation. Or maybe you can recognize that the world changes." Both of these comments caricature originalism and inaccurately explain what it really is.

So, what is originalism? Dare to know! As Scalia explained in a [speech](#) at Catholic University of America: "The theory of originalism treats a constitution like a statute, and gives it the meaning that its words were understood to bear at the time they were promulgated." In essence, what did the words mean at the time they were written? When the Eighth Amendment prohibits "cruel and unusual punishments," what is a cruel and unusual punishment? To interpret those words, an originalist would look to their definitions when the Bill of Rights was ratified in 1791, not which punishments today are considered "cruel and unusual." This clause in particular was a pet-peeve of Scalia who vehemently disagreed with those who contended the death penalty violated this clause. Scalia thought this notion was "absurd." He firmly [believed](#) that the death penalty did not constitute a "cruel and unusual" punishment since it was given for every felony at the time the Bill of Rights was adopted. Since it was not unconstitutional then, "it isn't now."

This should not be construed to mean that we are forever stuck in 1787 or 1791. Originalists recognize that laws can and do change. Should an amendment that changes the text of the Constitution be ratified, that amendment shall reign supreme to what the text said previously. No originalist will tell you that slavery is legal because it was allowed when America was founded. The Thirteenth Amendment changed the law to clearly prohibit slavery. Additionally, no originalist will tell you that women can't vote since they did not have that right at the time the Bill of Rights was ratified; that too is absurd. The Nineteenth Amendment clearly states that the right to vote shall "not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any State on account of sex." Both of these amendments, ratified through the amendments process, changed the law of the land and are currently binding upon all citizens.

Still, some may wonder: could people writing in 1787 have really accounted for everything? Is it possible to properly interpret the Constitution in the modern day with an originalist interpretation? Here too, originalism recognizes that new technologies come into being, and must be properly adjudicated according to the original meaning.

A good example of applying original meaning to new technologies is found in the [case](#) *Kyllo v. United States*. The Department of the Interior used a thermal imaging device outside Danny Lee Kyllo's home in Oregon. The device detected an unusually high amount of heat emitting from his garage roof. The assumption was that there was marijuana being grown since the plant

requires such high heat to photosynthesize. As such, a warrant was obtained to search Kyllo's garage where marijuana was

also [pushed](#) his fellow Justices to overrule cases: "When faced with a demonstrably erroneous precedent, my rule is simple: We

Many of the criticisms of [Amy Coney Barrett's] judicial philosophy have been an inaccurate account of what originalism actually professes.

found; he was subsequently arrested. The Supreme Court ruled that the use of thermal imaging devices against a home violated the Fourth Amendment's clause prohibiting "unreasonable searches and seizures." The Court's opinion, delivered by none other than Justice Scalia, explicitly [stated](#) that new technologies are not outside the realm of the

should not follow it."

The divide between Scalia and Thomas over the application of *stare decisis* is apparent in their views on the *Slaughter-House Cases*. The [cases](#) were a consolidation of many cases challenging a Louisiana law that granted slaughterhouse operations to a single company, this giving that company

applies to the states — Scalia [chided](#) attorney Alan Gura for arguing that the amendment could be applied through the Privileges or Immunities Clause: "why are you asking us to overrule 150, 140 years of prior law, when — when you can reach your result under substantive due — I mean, you know, unless you are bucking for a — a place on some law school faculty[?]" The Court ultimately [held](#) that the Second Amendment applies to the states through the Fourteenth Amendment's Due Process Clause. Justice Thomas, however, [wrote](#) a separate concurrence agreeing with the outcome, but argued that the *Slaughterhouse Cases* should be revisited: "the right to keep and bear arms is a privilege of American citizenship that applies to the States through the Fourteenth Amendment's Privileges or Immunities Clause... With the



Judge Bork and Justices Scalia, Barrett and Thomas (clockwise from top left), judges who are known for their originalist jurisprudence.

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SUPREME COURT OF THE UNITED STATES

Fourth Amendment merely because they did not exist at the time it was adopted: "It would be foolish to contend that the degree of privacy secured to citizens by the Fourth Amendment has been entirely unaffected by the advance of technology." The advent of new technologies poses no difficulty to originalism.

It is important to note that not all originalists reach the same conclusions in every case, nor do they necessarily all think alike. The differences between Scalia and fellow originalist Justice Clarence Thomas illustrate how originalists can differ in their jurisprudence. Scalia was an adherent of *stare decisis*, the doctrine that precedent commands that a new case with similar circumstances to a previous case be decided the same way. This often led to Scalia refusing to overrule cases he believed were decided incorrectly. Justice Thomas takes a very different approach to this matter. The fact that a case is precedent fails to have any sway on Thomas' judgement so long as it was incorrect. He has

a monopoly. The plaintiffs challenged that by granting a monopoly to one company and preventing others from engaging in the operations, the law violated the Privileges or Immunities Cause of the Fourteenth Amendment, which reads: "No state shall make or enforce any law which shall abridge the privileges or immunities of citizens of the United States." The Supreme Court decided, among other things, that the Privileges or Immunities Clause did not apply to the states, but rather only to the federal government. This decision has been severely criticized in legal academia. Harvard law professor Laurence Tribe has [said](#): "the *Slaughter-House Cases* incorrectly gutted the Privileges or Immunities Clause." Despite the criticism that the decision was incorrect, Scalia refused to overrule the cases and apply the Bill of Rights to the states through the Privileges or Immunities Clause.

In a notable exchange during oral arguments in *McDonald v. City of Chicago* — a case deciding that the Second Amendment

inquiry appropriately narrowed, I believe this case presents an opportunity to reexamine, and begin the process of restoring, the meaning of the Fourteenth Amendment agreed upon by those who ratified it."

Another point of difference between Scalia and Thomas is their views on the Fourth Amendment in criminal cases. Scalia tended to side with the defendants, while Thomas often sided with law enforcement. Two high profile cases display the differing views of the two originalists.

One such case is *Maryland v. King*. In 2009, Alonzo Jay King Jr. was arrested on assault charges. Pursuant to the [Maryland DNA Collection Act](#), a DNA sample was taken from King using a cheek swab. His DNA was matched to an unsolved rape case from 2003, and he was subsequently charged. King then moved to have the DNA evidence suppressed on the grounds that the DNA Collection Act violated the Fourth Amendment. The

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‘Countryside, The Future’: A Review

By NAFTALI SHAVELSON

Walking down the “Museum Mile” section of Fifth Avenue, a stretch of Upper East Side asphalt billed as “one of the densest displays of culture in the world” and undoubtedly one of its priciest, you’d expect to see cabs, Cadillacs and cyclists fighting for attention and lane real estate. What I found when I reached the Guggenheim Museum’s block, though, was a Deutz-Fahr 9340 Warrior TTV. In layman’s terms, a massive, green tractor.

That 30,000-pound farm tool hadn’t just taken a wrong turn somewhere near Mifflinburg. It was part of an exhibit at the Guggenheim called “*Countryside, The Future*” by Pritzker Prize-winning architect Rem Koolhaas, his associate Samir Bantal and their think tank AMO. By taking over the museum’s entire rotunda (and much of the sidewalk outside, apparently,) with their ambitious installation, they hoped to “explore radical changes in the rural, remote, and wild territories collectively identified... as ‘countryside,’ or the 98% of the Earth’s surface not occupied by cities.”

This was an interesting pivot for one of the most famous architects in the world who has spent most of his career bringing to life grand, expensive commissions in major urban centers. Koolhaas’s portfolio includes projects in Beijing, Berlin, Chicago, Seattle and Seoul, to name a few, and he’s currently working on some luxury condos in Manhattan’s own Gramercy Park. Why would an icon of urban architecture abruptly shift to talking about farming?

Turns out, Koolhaas’s relationship with the city has long been love-hate. While maintaining that “the city is all we have,” he also feels that many of today’s cities are “deeply tragic,” with poor planning (and bad architecture) leading to modern metropolises’ recent decay. “*Countryside, The Future*” doesn’t propose any solutions — Koolhaas & Co. have tried that in the past — but instead aims to explore alternative ways of living that have been sidelined by a rush over the past few

decades out of the rural and into the urban.

The main question of the exhibition, then, is really this: What happens to the countryside as people slowly leave it, and what could a meaningful return to rural areas possibly look like? To find answers, Koolhaas looks at a cornucopia of case studies across dozens of countries, peoples and eras. He tracks the ways governments, societies and inde-

Great Man-Made River, a massive venture to irrigate the Sahara Desert and the world’s largest irrigation project to date, opened my eyes to aspects of a country and an era with which I was previously unfamiliar. The exploration of contemporary Pixel Farming techniques was similarly informative.

These case studies through time are easily the strongest part of “*Countryside, The*

Fundamentally, it presents a vision of the natural world that seems stuffy, theoretical and needlessly academic at the best of times.

pendent actors attempted to tame, develop and exploit nature based on their unique needs, wishes and desires. The case studies follow a loosely chronological format, starting with ancient Roman and imperial Chinese approaches near the bottom of the Guggenheim’s grand, spiral ramp before ascending through Manifest Destiny and Chairman Mao’s Great Leap Forward towards even more contemporary examples from Kenya and Qatar.

Each case study comes with illustrations, charts and archival footage (when available) that tell the story of that specific attempt to relate to the countryside in a new way. The main element, though, is decidedly text. A lot of text. Hundreds of words per presentation are broken up into various colors, fonts and sizes for easier consumption, but there’s no getting around the sheer amount of reading necessary to effectively take in the exhibition, especially considering the dozens of stops viewers must make in their quest to ascend the museum’s quarter-mile of sloped ramp. This isn’t some cutesy museum vanity project. It’s a lot of work, for both Koolhaas and anyone who dedicates their Sunday to tackling the installation.

Nevertheless, I thoroughly enjoyed the case studies, which served as eye-opening history lessons about diverse societies’ visions for their natural landscapes. For example, the section on Muammar Gaddafi’s

Future.” If you’re patient, you’ll learn a lot from them. Unfortunately, the same can’t be said for other elements of the exhibition, which raise the all-important “what’s next” question without providing a satisfying answer. Gesturing back towards the case studies’ historical precedents only goes so far — and there are so many of them that any retrospection leaves one confused and disillusioned.

Ultimately, that sense of confusion becomes the dominant theme of “*Countryside, The Future*.” By the end, you’ve seen a life-size sculpture of Stalin and a collection of plastic Barbie dolls without much explanation as to how either one relates to the central theme. (No, the Stalin statue is nowhere near the Soviet case study.) More broadly, you’ve just spent three-plus hours in an art museum looking at an installation that has nothing to do with art. Its visual presentation, while sometimes aesthetically pleasing, isn’t trying to be artistic, and the artworks it incorporates as part of its case studies are all reproductions.

As such, I can’t help but wonder what Koolhaas’s historical-philosophical installation is doing in an art museum at all. It would almost definitely find a more thematically appropriate home in a place like The Museum of Natural History, or even The New York Historical Society. Of course, that would rob it of its greatest asset: Frank Lloyd

Wright’s magisterial Guggenheim building and its beautifully undulating rotunda. “*Countryside, The Future*” is built for the Guggenheim, and would be unable to hold visitors’ attention at all without the help of the landmark building’s timeless grace and perennial upward gesture.

However, my problem with the exhibition goes further than its ambiguous identity. Fundamentally, it presents a vision of the natural world that seems stuffy, theoretical and needlessly academic at the best of times. It’s not Koolhaas’s fault, but now, in the age of pandemic-induced lockdowns and unprecedented urban flight, his ivory-tower project isn’t just gratuitous but unbearable. City dwellers don’t want romantic pictures of “the wild” — they want to terminate their Brooklyn leases and move somewhere with a backyard where their kids can actually stretch their legs. And rural residents don’t want to philosophize about their supporting role in contemporary urbanism’s story — they want infrastructure and investment after years of governmental ambivalence and neglect.

It’s a shame. I love Koolhaas’s work, from the flagship Seattle Central Library to the unprecedented Casa da Música in Porto, Portugal. The architect has an uncanny ability to design breathtaking spaces, spaces that make us question the very definition of built environment in the modern age, but he’s somewhat out of his depth in “*Countryside, The Future*.” I admire his efforts to shift our focus towards the “other” 98% of our planet and applaud the work he’s done in developing such a colorful collection of case studies. Nevertheless, I think he’s the wrong man for the job. Coupled with the exhibition’s strange choice of venue and exceptionally poor timing, “*Countryside, The Future*” ultimately falls flat as the noble social commentary Rem Koolhaas so wanted it to be.

The tractor’s still cool, though.

“*Countryside, The Future*” is on view at the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum through Feb. 14, 2021. Timed tickets can be purchased [here](#).



Installation View: *Countryside, The Future*, February 20–August 14, 2020

DAVID HEALD © SOLOMON R. GUGGENHEIM FOUNDATION

Oh, to Open the World and Send it Reeling

By JOSH LEICHTER

As the plane took off, I watched from the window as the buildings got smaller, the famous City of Stars twinkling out of sight as their celestial counterparts are prone to do in the face of morning sunrise. I watched until there was nothing more to watch to the point that the structures outside were not structures at all but puffy wisps of air and gases, delicately cut by the butter knife wings operated by fine engineering and mechanics. It was at this point that I closed the window and drifted peacefully, floating as though I was as weightless as the jet fuel and exhaust being expelled from the engines or wherever it comes out of.

I've been interested in the concept of hometowns for quite some time now. We hear of these ideas of state pride and flaunting a state's perks such as produce, natural resources or no income tax. States market themselves to us throughout our lives like it's "The Bachelor." Our blueberries tell us they come from New Jersey and our apples are "proud New Yorkers" as if it means something to a shopper. Or every few years we hear about a new tourism campaign highlighting the splendor of vacationing somewhere like Arizona or Vermont. In a way, people see their hometowns as an extension of themselves like they are a part of some tapestry that has ceased to exist in an increasingly commercialized world.

I come from Los Angeles, one of the most popular tourist destinations in the world when the industry isn't ground to a halt, and there are plenty of reasons that I should be fascinated by the city. From the seedy nature of Hollywood Boulevard to the countless movie studios, the allure of Beverly Hills and its endless array of palm trees and never-ending sunshine peeking its way through the now fire-kissed skies, it's the stuff of dreams. For those who are familiar with the Dust Bowl era and John Steinbeck's "The Grapes of Wrath," they'd know that beyond the silver screen glamour and hopes of having it made in Hollywoodland, the state of

California represented other new opportunities, in many ways a New World within the New World of America. Going back even further, there was the great Gold Rush of 1849, perhaps a twinkling precursor to the studio stage lights that would eventually replace them a little over seventy years later.

While there has certainly been this romanticizing of Los Angeles, I've always found

an embodiment of the saying "Nice place to visit, but I wouldn't want to live there." That at a certain point, tapping into the perks of a state causes it to run dry of any uniqueness it had when I first arrived or perhaps this is because of a broader problem of the idea of a Nomadic spirit. We look at our hometowns and at some point, look toward the window and wonder "What's beyond that horizon

hurricanes or waking up in the early hours of the morning to go salt driveways. "Sure, you have fires," they say, "but are they ever *really* near where you live?" And it's true that my area of southern California is seldom bothered by the environmental eradication that our northern counterparts often endure, save for the long-term effects that forest damage brings to the world at large. But even so, there's a sort of dusty dullness that falls over the city when I think about it, that the stars others chase, the ones they hope to attach themselves to, are the same ones that long ago burnt out trying to win me over.

I think about the past three years I spent in New York and with it the overhyping of Manhattan. Though not the place of my youth, its fulfillment as a (thus far) temporary hometown has been met with mixed success. While I would never be caught defending the city, after spending so much time here, some of the natives have knighted me as an Honorary New Yorker which just means that I've ridden the subway enough times without getting mugged. This is in sharp contrast to the leadup of my arrival in August of 2017 when I watched too many films that paint the city as the sprawling cosmopolitan metropolis — the original that can't be beat — and was dumbstruck with a sense of confusion at the rather drab brick buildings still bearing the nuclear fallout shelter signs on their chests like hearts worn on sleeves as some sort of eerie foreboding that in a moment's notice a blast is on its way condemning us to a life of basements, canned food and irradiated water.

I can recall a time in the winter that I stood in Times Square, the epileptic lights flashing above the stores branded and embossed with iconography from all areas of culture, stalls selling the familiar "I Love NY" shirts get rained on and color fades away like the ability to have a clear night sky above the LEDs or my desire to remain. So I leave again.

Maybe there really is something wonderful about it all. Or maybe it's just one more dream from which I cannot wait to awake.

We look at our hometowns and at some point, look toward the window and wonder "What's beyond that horizon line?" We crave to see the rest of the world, to chase the dreams that so many others are looking for just like us. So we leave.



As the plane took off, I watched from the window as the buildings got smaller, the famous City of Stars twinkling out of sight.

JOSH LEICHTER

it to be rather underwhelming. Maybe it's because after spending nearly my entire life in the same spot, it's not excitement I feel, but a sense that, like a mime, I'm stuck in a box trap with no way out. Sure, I spend fewer and fewer months there nowadays, but the idea that another place will replace it isn't freeing. It's as though every place becomes

line?" We crave to see the rest of the world, to chase the dreams that so many others are looking for just like us. So we leave. We move to cities across the country and take trips to anywhere but our starting point. We stare in befuddlement at the people that pepper us with questions or enviously bemoan the fact that we never have to worry about

The Lakers' Challenges to Narratives

By NETANI SHIELDS

By now every sports enthusiast has probably consumed an ungodly amount of media related to the recent, spectacular NBA playoffs and the Los Angeles Lakers' victory. I would even go so far as to say that folks are probably getting weary of hearing about the gold and purple championship.

Well, get excited, cause here's another piece!

In my view, this recent Finals series spades far deeper than many of the summarizing tropes in circulation. Many analyses of the last six games of the season are true: small-ball was [exposed](#); Anthony Davis is the most impactful and versatile [defender](#) in the league; "[Playoff Rondo](#)"; the list can go on forever. The most important takeaway to be had, however, is that the Lakers perfectly embodied what it means to stand in the face of negative portrayals and completely disregard them.

Preceding the most tumultuous year in NBA history, the players employed by the League's most storied franchise faced tremendous amounts of collective deflating press. The Lakers were predicted to have a phenomenal season — after all, they had

Lebron — but one which Colin Cowherd, among others, [declared](#) would not result in a championship. The team had just come off of a mediocre 37-45 record, and the Western Conference, mainly the L.A. Clippers, was just too stacked. The addition of a top ten player in Anthony Davis would certainly help, but the venture wouldn't end in a parade. The team was simply one piece from glory, and until it procured a proper third fiddle for James and Davis, the title was out of reach.

Many of the team's players had been immaturely categorized by the basketball community, which assumed a recency bias regarding the limitations of said players. Dwight Howard, for example, was determined to be too old, too paint-centric and too much of a locker room cancer to be any help for the aspiring team. Rajon Rondo seemed to share similar characteristics, in addition to having an obsession with dribbling out the play-clock until he could pass the bad shot off to a teammate. No one considered that leadership from the King could force the players around him to maximize their impact by specializing their roles.

After all, swallowing pride and facing criticism was nothing new for Lebron. He has been criticized heavily for many myriads

of reasons over the two decades the world has known him, sometimes legitimately and oftentimes wrongfully. And as Lebron's game has matured, his attitude regarding people's perception of him has as well. He approaches the game the way he wants to and his media

All season long there was always a negative comment to be addressed to the Lakers, yet the team's absolutely phenomenal outing gave them the final say on their legacy.

presentations are often regarding details much more significant than stuffing the pumpkin into the net.

Anthony Davis too had to answer some tough questions. He was obviously a remarkable talent, but his team had missed the Postseason for five out of the seven years that he had been operating as lieutenant. Would he be able to extend his impact to the levels of a Kevin McHale, or was his destiny to be this generation's Charles Barkley?

Following a three month hiatus of the season, the NBA continued the season in limited capacity, wherein the Los Angeles Lakers again were faced with jabs from the media. In an [article](#) for USA Today, the team was branded as a "loser" of the Bubble seeding games by Scott Gleason. At the time, it was indeed a fair criticism because losing the majority of any set of games, no matter how insignificant they were, was not the kind of production typically demanded of an organization that could win a ring. They would quickly dispel the notion that they were not ready for a championship run.

The team from L.A. was presumably aware of all of the different tropes uttered regarding them, they just didn't care. Their playoff supremacy was remarkable to see. They decimated the Trail Blazers. They eviscerated the Rockets. They steamrolled the Nuggets. And they handily beat the Miami Heat. All season long there was always a negative comment to be addressed to the Lakers, yet the team's absolutely phenomenal outing gave them the final say on their legacy.

Complex Torah for the Serious Student — A Review of 'Cornerstones: the Bible and Jewish Ideology'

By AHARON NISSEL

The contemporary world of Tanakh study is perhaps as diverse as it has ever been. There's a tremendous outpour of Tanakh-related publications from every possible lens and ideology. When the contemporary Orthodox Tanakh learner encounters these publications, there can often be some confusion. For example, there is scholarship about Tanakh coming out of academic institutions that seems to be at odds with traditional Jewish approaches to Tanakh. Additionally, there are a host of issues and dilemmas that religious readers of Tanakh encounter that have little to do with academic study. How, for example, are we meant to approach incidents in Tanakh that appear to rely on superstitions? How are we supposed to relate to laws that clash with our moral compasses today? How are we meant to understand Midrashim that seem to have little in common with the *p'shat* of Tanakh?

These topics, and many more, are discussed in "[Cornerstones: The Bible and Jewish Ideology](#)," a quick new book from Kodesh Press by former Commentator editor Rabbi Hayyim Angel. Rabbi Angel, who serves in a number of pedagogical capacities, including teaching at YU, presents 12 compelling and insightful essays on a range of topics related to Tanakh study.

Let me state my biases clearly. I am a big fan of Rabbi Angel and his work, and am currently enrolled in three of his courses in the Isaac Breuer College (IBC). But please believe me when I say that this book deserves all the praise it will receive and I am not simply pandering for extra credit.

Of course, one needs to understand the genre of this work. The title of the book is "Cornerstones," but the book itself is not an attempt to set forth a comprehensive methodological program of study. That being said, readers will be quick to note Rabbi Angel's consistent methods and approaches that point towards a larger program of Tanakh study. It is one that is deeply religious, honest and respectful of both classical *meforshim* and the contributions of contemporary scholarship.

Some essays summarize Biblical passages and commentaries, some add new insights and analysis and some editorialize. Rabbi Angel's sources are just as diverse as his subject matter. Everyone is fair game for Rabbi Angel. Of course, we find the classical commentaries, but Rabbi Angel is sure to also include some more obscure,

The title of the book is "Cornerstones," but the book itself is not an attempt to set forth a comprehensive methodological program of study. That being said, readers will be quick to note Rabbi Angel's consistent methods and approaches that point towards a larger program of Tanakh study.

lesser-known commentaries, in particular Sephardic commentaries that are underappreciated in normative Tanakh study. Rabbi Angel also draws from a well of academic knowledge and scholarship and quotes from academic Bible scholars (of various religious orientations). The classes he gives in IBC are

very much in this style as well, summarizing and synthesizing a broad array of approaches to different Biblical books and passages in a clear, accessible way. Thus, within his own essays, Rabbi Angel is practicing what he preaches in articles such as "Tanakh and Sephardic Inclusion in the Yeshiva High

School Curriculum" and "Traditional and Academic Tanakh Study."

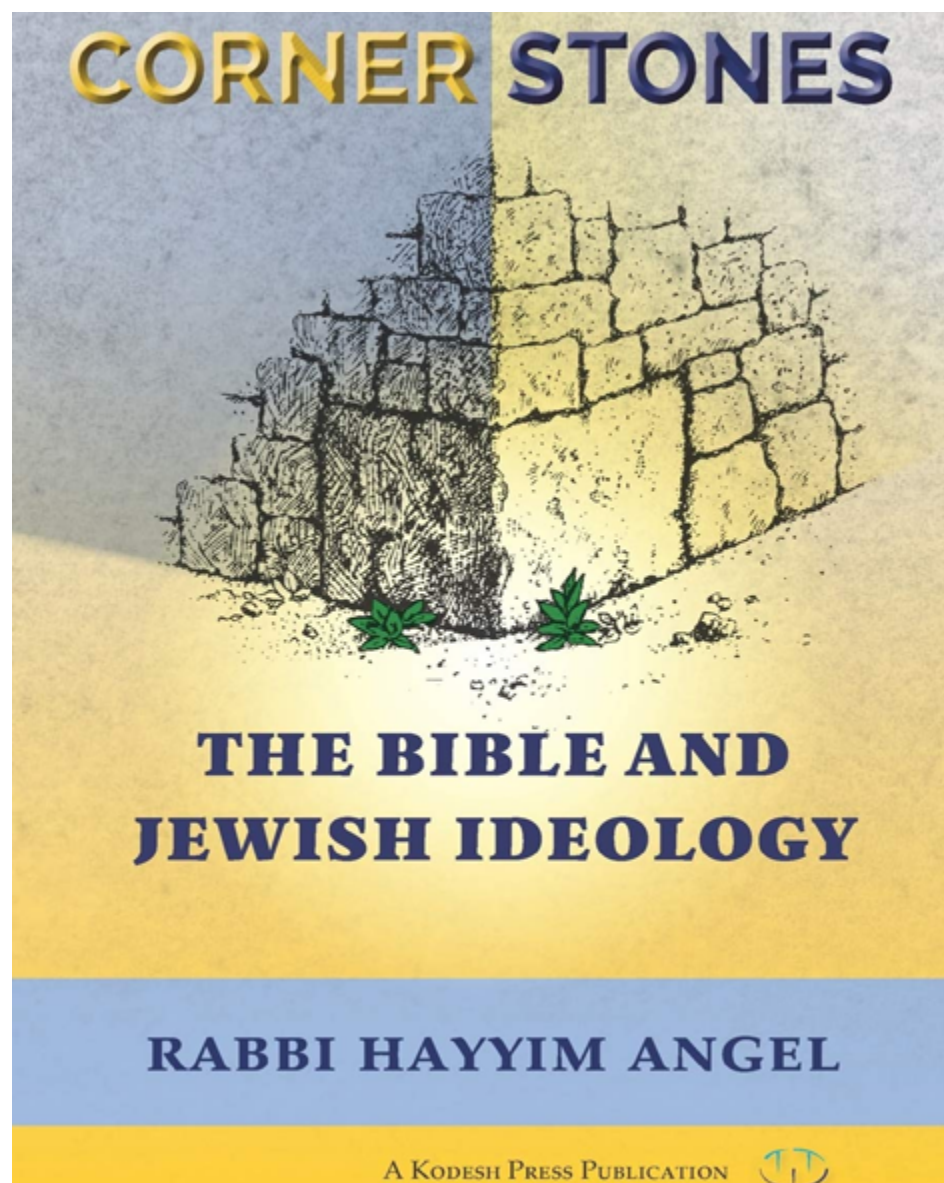
The articles are written in the clear and accessible English that has come to define Rabbi Angel's style. Rabbi Angel is not one to go on irrelevant tangents or obscure his insights in unnecessarily flowery or impenetrable language. With a few exceptions, he presents the ideas clearly and simply, while still maintaining the complexity of the topics at hand. But there were a few times when I thought a conversation could have been taken further or explored a bit more in-depth.

Each of these essays, besides one, has been published elsewhere before the publication of this volume, in journals or other books. Only the first essay, "The Land of Israel in the Bible," which is the longest in the book, has not been published in print form elsewhere, but was given as a four-part series of *shiurim* for the Institute of Ideas and Ideals, for which Rabbi Angel serves as National Scholar. While this means that none of the content is new, it does not take away from the wonderfully illuminating content of the essays.

The essays themselves do not relate to or reference each other in any way. The result is that the same ideas are in a few instances repeated in different articles. For example, the *machloket* between Rambam and Abarbanel regarding monarchy (whether it is the preferred government structure, or simply a tolerated one) is discussed in both "Ideal and Evolutionary Morality in the Torah" and "Where the Rules of Peshat and Pesak Collide." And we find the same exact quotation from Rabbi Yom Tov Lipmann Heller (Tosafot Yom Tov on Mishnah Nazir 5:5) about interpreting *p'sukim* differently than the Gemara does, in two consecutive essays.

But this is really only an issue for someone who is reading the book straight through (which is fairly doable — the book runs a little over 200 pages, and the font size is rather large). If one is taking breaks between essays, then the repeated content is helpful. Further, individual essays can be revisited or shared independently, without a need to reread earlier parts of the work for context. In short, the format is appropriate for the book's purpose. And regardless, the repeated ideas are interesting and bear repeating.

Rabbi Angel has once again produced a collection of essays that is relevant, engaging and accessible. The reader is left wanting more, not because the essays are unsatisfying, rather because of just how satisfying they are.



"Cornerstones: The Bible and Jewish Ideology" book cover

KODESH PRESS

ORIGINALISM

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Supreme Court, with Thomas in the majority, upheld the act and the usage of the DNA since: "When officers make an arrest supported by probable cause... taking and analyzing a cheek swab of the arrestee's DNA is, like fingerprinting and photographing, a legitimate police booking procedure that is reasonable under the Fourth Amendment." Conversely, Scalia penned a scathing dissent where he warned: "Make no mistake about it: As an entirely predictable consequence of today's decision, your DNA can be taken and entered into a national DNA database if you are ever arrested, rightly or wrongly, and for whatever reason." He then concluded his dissent with a polemic: "I doubt that the proud men who wrote the charter of our liberties would have been so eager to open their mouths for royal inspection." Scalia

took the unusual step of delivering his dissent from the [bench](#), a move that signaled deep disagreement.

The other case that contrasts their views on the Fourth Amendment is *Navarette v. California*. The Court was asked to decide if there is enough reasonable suspicion for police to stop a vehicle after receiving a single anonymous tip. The driver in question was stopped by police after his vehicle matched a complaint for reckless driving, and was found to have marijuana in his vehicle. The Court answered in the affirmative, this time with Thomas [writing](#) for the majority: "the stop complied with the Fourth Amendment because, under the totality of the circumstances, the officer had reasonable suspicion that the driver was intoxicated." Once again, Scalia did not hold back his discontents with Thomas' opinion, and delivered a fiery dissent that asserted the opinion "serves up a freedom-destroying cocktail." Scalia further

[stated](#) that the opinion evaded the essential meaning of the Fourth Amendment: "This is not my concept, and I am sure it would not be the Framers', of a people secure from unreasonable searches and seizures."

Likely the greatest misconception about originalism is that it is interchangeable and associated with conservatism. In actuality, nothing could be farther from the truth. Originalism is a judicial philosophy that can be practiced by all political stripes. As Yale legal scholar Akhil Reed Amar has [observed](#): "Originalism is neither partisan nor outlandish. The most important originalist of the last century was a towering liberal Democratic Senator-turned-Justice, Hugo Black..." Black was the first appointment to the Supreme Court by President Franklin D. Roosevelt. Amar along with fellow Yale legal scholar Jack Balkin happen to be the most [cited](#) originalist scholars by the Supreme Court, and still, they are both "self-described liberals

and registered Democrats." Originalism is in no way confined to political ideology.

The recent confirmation of Amy Coney Barrett to the Supreme Court has caused a stir around her professed adherence to originalism. Unfortunately, many of the criticisms of her judicial philosophy have been an inaccurate account of what originalism actually professes. I have attempted to explain the idea of originalism, demonstrate that not all originalists apply it the same way in all cases, and show that one can adhere to any political belief and still be an originalist. Although I have sought to clarify what originalism is, there are still many points that I have not addressed here. While honest people can disagree in good faith about the philosophy and application of originalism, I hope to have given the subject a reasonable overview.

We Feel Threatened, Too: The Universal Danger of YU's Continued Ambiguity

By YEHUDA DOV REISS

For years, I eagerly anticipated joining the ranks of the YU undergraduate student body. I yearned for the day when I would be privileged to learn from YU's many outstanding *roshei yeshiva* and explore countless fascinating subjects and courses with YU's stellar faculty. I could not imagine being anywhere but YU; perhaps no other place in the world better offers both uncompromising Torah learning and values while confronting and engaging with the complexities, challenges and ideas of the modern world. I see this as an important and noble ideal deeply rooted in Jewish tradition, and YU is uniquely suited to help properly implement that ideal and equip its students to do likewise.

While YU was a dream come true for me, I was deeply saddened to discover how many students did not share my positivity. It was a revelation to me that many students, across the full breadth of the ideological spectrum, felt highly frustrated, or, more accurately, apathetic towards YU and what it stood for. I myself, being part of a vibrant and involved YU family, naturally have a different perspective. I see the balanced and nuanced, yet firm, Torah values YU embodies and I believe that YU will remain committed to those values. But as the weeks and months pass, I am beginning to see more and more how other students confronted with the ambiguous messages YU currently sends, especially regarding contentious issues such as addressing LGBT matters, would lack confidence in YU's strength and integrity, and I recognize the danger that this poses to YU's long-term viability.

While YU's policies have more or less remained firmly committed to Torah values, the communication of that commitment has been far less clear, thus estranging much of the student body and causing YU to appear, across the board, as ideologically weak. Perhaps one of the most poignant examples of this phenomenon is the recent [statement](#) by President Ari Berman's committee (previously led by former Vice President and Chief Operating Officer Josh Joseph) to address LGBT issues in our community. While there was nothing in the statement that I disagreed with — as I have [written previously](#), I strongly agree that these issues must be dealt with the utmost sensitivity, love and nuance and am glad to see the administration taking action to promote that — the statement failed to unambiguously affirm where Orthodoxy draws a red line, namely, that acting on homosexual urges are strictly forbidden, and that any blurring of this line, in theory or in practice, will not be tolerated.

The statement did include the following clause:

The message of Torah on this issue is nuanced, both accepting each individual with love and affirming its timeless prescriptions. While students will of course socialize in gatherings they see fit, forming a new club as requested under the auspices of YU will cloud this nuanced message.

However, this statement is too ambiguous for an issue that is so important to the entire YU community, avoiding any explanation on what this “message of Torah” is while simultaneously underplaying how essential that message is to dealing with these issues. I have heard multiple concerns that the statement represents YU's fear to openly affirm their commitment to *halakha* or condemn

those who oppose it, and even those who demand a more progressive approach have [criticized the ambiguity](#) of this statement. It can be argued that in a theoretical world, such an explicit affirmation would be out

fundamental dispute about where to draw the line that is not going away and is only becoming exacerbated as elements of the secular and religious worlds continue to shift to opposite extremes. This is an issue that the

the table, that is a battle many have fought and I don't expect to win in an article for the school newspaper.

However, I think that the administration needs to carefully consider just how

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of place and should be taken for granted, but public reaction and the social context surrounding it clearly indicates that we do not live in such a world. This is ultimately just one manifestation of a growing unrest

students need to hear YU address, or they will, as they have begun to do, abandon the YU community for communities that take a far more liberal or stringent approach towards Jewish law. The ambiguity is not

much they're losing with their ambiguity. Is it worth estranging so many students and faculty members? Is it worth compromising on the future of YU's vision? Surely whatever edge is gained in court with ambiguity is not worth the sacrifice of so much of what YU's fighting for. Instead, YU should pursue other avenues to help ensure victory in court. And if YU still can't win in such a case and simultaneously remain non-sectarian, I wonder whether it will truly be any more viable in carrying out its mission than if it lost government funding.

YU is widely perceived as one of the most influential and authoritative voices for Centrist Orthodoxy. A broad community depends upon it for guidance; YU cannot simply expect the students to ultimately rise up and forge an ideal future on their own. In order to build tomorrow today, Yeshiva University must first build today, today.

As previously noted, most of the difficult issues YU has to navigate require extensive nuance and sensitivity, and I think that on a practical level the administration has been pretty good at doing that. At the same time, a strong message of abandonment is being felt by much of the student body as they contrast the strong voices of some with the apologetic-sounding or nonexistent voice of the YU administration. I have heard numerous faculty members and administrators question the continued viability of the YU model within a framework that refuses to clearly distinguish itself from the way other originally religiously-oriented universities have gone, such as Yale and Harvard. This sense of frustration can clearly be felt by the lack of confidence or pride that so many students feel in their institution or its vision, as well as the relatively small size of our community sandwiched between a booming right and a boisterous left.

I believe YU has vision, and I believe that vision is fundamental to the future of Orthodox Judaism. I believe that, but fewer and fewer people share that belief, and if YU fails to emerge with a decisive voice, I fear that the vision will become a fading dream. I urge the administration to carefully reconsider how it responds to the difficult challenges of the community it represents, and recognize the awesome responsibility that lies in its hands.



President Berman addressing YU students

YESHIVA UNIVERSITY

across the entire YU community as a result of YU's failure to firmly and explicitly articulate its positions, making it appear incapable of addressing the challenges that plague it.

There is little room to wonder why YU has taken the approach it has. One reason could be that the university leadership does not want to cause unnecessary polarization or alienate any segment of its broad-spectrum community. This is very understandable. We do not want to push people away, and it's tempting to use words that won't offend anyone too much, while adhering firmly to Torah values on a practical level and hoping for an organic imbibement of these values and a stronger community. There is something wonderful and idyllic in assuming a model where the students, inspired by the larger, more abstract values of YU and the resources within its community, ultimately come together and formulate a clear and idealistic plan for Orthodoxy on their own. Yet practically, this approach makes an important assumption that is highly questionable.

The fact is that polarization is already happening in the YU community — it's inevitable. While I think that even the battling moral forces within YU ultimately agree about far more than that with which they disagree about, there is ultimately a

preventing polarization; it is feeding it as students feel that the YU world is ill-equipped to pave a path for the Orthodoxy of tomorrow. On the other hand, a firmer and more explicit infrastructure of values will cause many more people both from within and outside the community to gain a greater respect for YU and help it continue to maintain and attract a larger following.

There is another, perhaps primary, reason that YU has taken the road of ambiguity. The reason is the courts. It is no secret that YU, as officially a non-sectarian institution, must cloud aspects of its religious character to continue to receive government funding. Especially with an [impending lawsuit](#) by members of the Pride Alliance, YU may feel that sending a message that plays down aspects of *halakha* that clash with certain progressive sensibilities will help it continue to win the court's favor. The administration may feel that if the choice comes between the financial viability of YU in the future or less ambiguous communication about values while largely preserving the implementation of those values, then it may very well make sense to choose ambiguity. While I would question whether making the undergraduate schools more sectarian should really be off

Intro to 5G

By MAX ASH

Imagine if Alexander the Great had access to a telegram machine when he was fighting his battles. Imagine if Eisenhower's army had cell phones during the Second World War. Different outcomes, right? The power of communication, and how its evolution has changed society throughout history, is overwhelming.

If you were to compare current network speeds to ones in the early 2000s, the difference would be glaring. That being said, if one were to experience both 4G and 5G bandwidth speeds, they wouldn't necessarily notice such a dramatic increase in performance. The incremental contrast between one generation to the next will not be as stark as the comparison between 5G and, say, 2G. So, while this difference isn't that noticeable to the average consumer, society's growing demand for instant gratification has been a major driver of innovation within the world of network speeds.

What is 5G? 5G, 4G's successor, is the fifth-generation technology standard for broadband cellular networks. First introduced in 2019, it boasts greater bandwidth which allows for faster download speeds. What's unique to 5G is that it not only benefits mobile; it also offers beneficial opportunities to cloud technology and data centers. 5G use varies by country, as each country is approving a specific spectrum on its own timetable. With its implementation comes a host of factors involved as it becomes more widely used.

Focusing on technology, 5G chipsets, which are used in 5G consumer mobile devices, have seen their market become increasingly consolidated in recent years as numerous competitors have dropped out due to high research and development costs. Major players focus their energies on manufacturing 5G modems (Sub-6GHz) and RF-front-end-components. When comparing companies within this industry, the key differentiator is normally seen as to whether they have mmWave capability or not, and more specifically, whether it can be

implemented commercially. mmWave is a spectrum that allows for larger bandwidth, thereby offering faster speeds. What makes mmWave so important is that they require a considerable amount of engineering and are very difficult to implement into mobile devices. Qualcomm has been a leader in both, as it was the first to [introduce 5G](#)

obvious application of the technology is to mobile devices. Unanimous among industry experts, [Samsung is the clear leader in this category](#), as it was the first to ship out 5G-enabled phones. What separates them from the pack is that they shipped products in multiple geographies on multiple carriers *with both* Sub-6GHz modems and

[5G connectivity](#), dropping Intel, whom they had relied on for 4G along the way.

Before anything is rolled out, though, there needs to be a viable infrastructure in place to carry the new spectrum. Infrastructure is split into two categories: single-purpose and multi-purpose infrastructure. Single-purpose refers to companies that have cemented themselves as producing supporting equipment for wireless network build-outs. Multi-purpose infrastructure refers to various enterprise technology companies that have packaged and certified their own offerings (hardware, etc.). Within single-purpose infrastructure, there has been a tremendous amount of activity within the industry. Samsung and Ericsson have been the consensus industry leaders. Where it gets interesting is where Huawei, a Chinese company, comes into play. Recently, there has been a resounding global backlash over Huawei regarding security concerns. In the U.S., [Huawei access has been restricted under the Trump administration](#). In the U.K., the government has initiated a process that would effectively erase Huawei's presence in 5G connectivity there. Recently, BT, the leading telecom provider in the U.K., [has announced deals with Nokia and Ericsson](#) to provide 5G connectivity throughout the country, replacing Huawei.

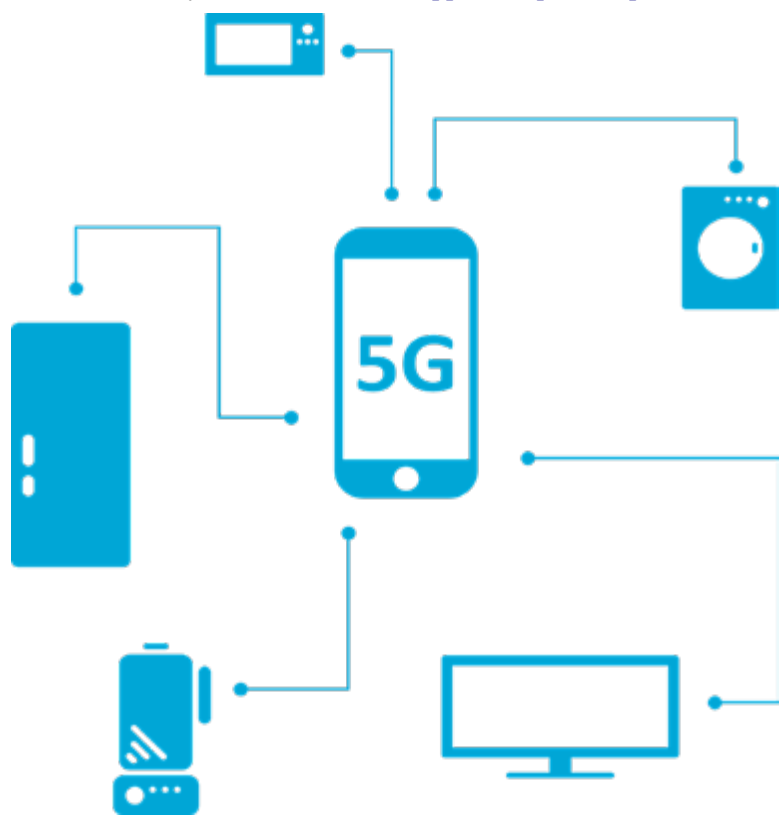
The world runs on connectivity — one minute without Internet globally would throw the world into chaos. With advancements in technology moving at paces quicker than ever thought, 5G is only expected to be here for the next 10 years. After that, it will be replaced by 6G, then 7G, and so on. The future of this generational technology only makes the mind spin at its potential. Could we keep up?

As 5G takes the world by storm, telecommunication companies are scrambling to stay ahead of the pack. But what is the industry made of?

modems and ship them out in commercial devices. Right on Qualcomm's heels are Samsung and Huawei, who have both shown substantial growth and innovation as the technology standard evolves.

While 5G has many uses, the most

mmWave. In the U.K., their Galaxy 5G offers *over* Sub-6GHz. Surprisingly, Apple has remained pretty quiet considering the dynamism of the industry; they have only just introduced their first 5G-enabled phone. [Apple also picked up Qualcomm for their](#)



5G, the future of technology

PIXABAY

Let's Talk About the Ant in the Room

By NACHUM LEIBMAN

Six years ago, Jack Ma made history by raising the [largest initial public offering \(IPO\)](#) ever with the e-commerce conglomerate, Alibaba. Now, the billionaire tech tycoon is rewriting history once again with his newest venture, Ant.

The culmination of Ma's first IPO took place on Sept. 19, 2014. Alibaba, the world's largest retailer and e-commerce company, opened on the New York Stock Exchange with cheers erupting from the trading floor and a wave of money flowing onto the company's balance sheets. After Ma raised [a record \\$25 billion](#) with Alibaba, then the largest IPO of all time, the oil titan Saudi Aramco beat his record with a [\\$29.4 billion public offering](#) last year. Many successful businessmen would have been content with breaking one of the most impressive records in business one time; Ma was not one of them. This month, he managed to top his old record, along with Saudi Aramco's, breaking the IPO record not once, but twice.

Ma's latest venture, Ant Group, operates Alipay, a "digital wallet" that is the world's largest mobile and online payment

platform, and Yu'e Bao, formerly the world's largest money-market fund. It also runs Zhima Credit, a third-party credit rating system. Ant is the world's largest fintech firm, with a sky-high valuation of [up to \\$320 billion](#). Let's put that number

online shopping industry. There was a persistent issue of the only viable option for most consumers and business owners being inefficient state-run banks with poor customer service. For example, a small shop owner who would only need a few hun-

market funds.

An important thing to note was Ma's remarks at a recent business conference in Shanghai. "It's a miracle," said Ma, that the pricing for the IPO was determined in China, not the typical New York's Wall Street route. He indicated that there is a shift in China's major cities that are becoming an alternative to Wall Street. Especially with the tensions between the United States and China at the moment, Chinese companies may follow suit and begin taking this alternative path. The Ant IPO will certainly increase the Chinese stock markets' credibility and pave the way for more local IPOs.

As far as Ma's personal wealth is concerned, due to his 8.8% stake in Ant, the IPO will catapult him to a net worth of \$71.1 billion, placing him 11th for the wealthiest individuals in the world. With more eye-popping valuations and money flooding into the tech industry in recent years, one cannot help but wonder if this time next year there will be an even higher IPO, shattering records yet again as the wheels of the economy continue to spin.

Many successful businessmen would have been satisfied with breaking one of the most impressive records in business; Ma was not one of them. He managed to top his old record, and Saudi Aramco, breaking the IPO record not once, but twice.

in perspective for a minute — Industrial and Commercial Bank of China, the world's largest bank by assets, still has a lower valuation than Ant. This incredible success has allowed Ant to [raise nearly \\$35 billion](#) in the most highly-anticipated IPO of the year, which will be a dual listing on both the Hong Kong (priced at \$10.32) and Shanghai (priced at \$10.27) exchanges. To further continue illustrating the massive investor interest, the stock's order books were oversubscribed only [one hour post-launch](#).

Alipay was merely started by Ma as a side-project with the intent to aid China's

dred dollars to make it through the month would feel as if the loan process was not worth the trouble. This was clearly a serious problem for a large number of China's citizens and, ultimately, the economy as a whole. Therefore, Ant was a game-changer for an industry desperately in need of an efficiency boost. Now, because of Ant, the loan process is easier than ever before. People can quickly apply for and get decisions on small loans. Additionally, they can pay for items with only the tap of a button (similar to Apple Pay), and invest as little as the equivalent of 15 cents into big money