

Yeshiva University Commentator

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Student delegation attends a reception at Gracie Mansion for Israel's Foreign Minister David Levy. The event marked the kick-off of the 50th anniversary celebration of Israel's founding. Also in attendance were Dedi, Ambassador Ben Elissar and host Mayor Rudy Guiliani.

Death Threats E-mailed to College Professors Alleged Perpetrator an Undergrad

BY ARI KAHN

Nearly three weeks of quiet confusion mixed with fear came to an end last week as YU security announced that they had uncovered the identity of a student who had been sending death threats to professors via e-mail.

The first set of threatening letters was sent on Thursday, September 11, from the ymail account of Edward Zoltan. The Commentator obtained a copy of the correspondence sent to Rabbi Shalom Carmy, Associate Professor of Bible in Yeshiva College:

"so many students here don't believe in it [Torah U'madda] so how come all the intellectuals do. what am I missing? If G-d wanted us to believe in it, he would have put it in our heads. The next guy who writes anything about it here at yu is going to get it. and i [sic] mean the real thing, I will kill you or any of your henchmen."

The immediate response of R' Carmy was to forward the letter to various members of the administration including Deans Adler, Hecht, and Horowitz, as well as R' Blau and Yeshiva Security. He also formulated a five part response to the letter which indicated the serious manner in which he dealt with the threat:

"Dear Mr Zoltan:

1. The tone of your note indicates an appalling lack of yirat Shamayim and simple kevod ha-briyot.

2. It is possible to be a good human being and a good Jew without believing in the value of a liber-

al arts education conjoined to a commitment to the primacy of Torah. Many admirable talmidei hakhamim regard liberal arts as unnecessary and some even as an impediment in the quest for ahavat Torah and yirat Shamayim. It is impossible, however, to be a decent human being or an acceptable Jew if one is lacking elementary yirat Shamayim and kevod ha-briyot.

3. It is Elul. Do teshuva!

4. I cannot comment on the intellectual substance of your note. It stands to reason that you were aroused by something published recently and readily available. The only thing published recently in which Torah U'Madda—the place of liberal arts education in the context of a Torah education was championed is Rav Lichtenstein's piece in "Judaism's Encounter with Culture." But he can hardly be described as my henchman. I am, in fact, his student.

5. I have tried to take your communication seriously. In that light, and given the Mitzva of Pikkuah Nefesh, you will understand why I am forwarding our correspondence to others, including, if deemed advisable, the local police.

If you are contacted by the police, I would suggest that you act with greater civility than you have displayed to your brother in Torah u-mitzvot,

Shalom Carmy"

It was subsequently learned that on that same day Dean Norman Adler received a letter from Zoltan's account that hinted to thoughts of suicide. The writer spoke of "stepping in front of oncoming trucks."

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Rosen Resigns

MAN BEHIND THE MESSAGE SUCCEEDED BY LIVING LEGEND

BY MORDECHAI FISHMAN

David Rosen, Director of the Yeshiva University Department of Public Relations and the "Man behind the Message" of the University for the last four years, has announced his resignation. His departure for one of the pre-eminent public relations firms in New York, Howard Rubenstein and Associates, promises to leave a sizable void at the helm of YUPR.

YUPR was founded by a man Rosen calls "a living legend," Sam Hartstein. Created by Hartstein in 1943 and headed by him for more than fifty years, YUPR grew from a single desk in 1947 to the series of offices and studios staffed by nearly 30 people on the fourth floor of Furst Hall. After Hartstein served YU for five decades, he retired to the position of Senior Advisor and passed the

publicity torch to Rosen, calling him "the ultimate professional."

Rosen arrived at YU with an impressive public relations resume and extensive contacts in the media world. He spent ten years as a journalist in New England, during which he was a two-term president of the Massachusetts State House Press Association while working for publications such as the *Boston Herald* and *Newsweek*. Moving to the public relations field, Rosen worked as the Director of Public Information for the US Commodity Futures Trading Commission, and then as the Chief of Staff of former Massachusetts Lieutenant Governor Evelyn Murphy.

His true calling, however, Rosen found in the field of university public relations. He was an Associate Vice-President for News and Public Relations at Harvard University, an Associate

Vice-President for Public Affairs at the University of Chicago, and the Vice-President for Public Affairs at Brandeis University. From Brandeis he was recruited by YU to head the department left leaderless by Hartstein's retirement.

"One of my major concerns coming here," said Rosen, "was succeeding Sam Hartstein. He was a living legend with 50 years of service and a genuine pioneer in university public relations. He was one of those who created the field." And successfully succeed him, Rosen did.

He revamped and computerized the entire YUPR office, and redesigned the alumni magazine, updating its features and improving its graphics to reflect the more modern standard for such publications. He also inaugurated a new university news-

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Attempted Burglary Causes Concern Among IHP Residents

BY ADAM MOSES

The attempted burglary of an Independent Housing Program (IHP) apartment underscored student concerns that security efforts effected by the University to its fledgling emergency housing program are inadequate. The incident occurred on Sunday, September 14, in an apartment at 475 186th Street. The apartment is a University-controlled studio occupied by Josh Muskat, Yossi Mosak, Benjamin Balint, and Alex Usdan.

Josh Muskat returned to his apartment in the evening. He had moderate difficulty opening his apartment door but thought little of it at the time. Once inside, he found that the dead bolt lock had been nearly entirely dislodged from his door and dangled tenuously with the support of a solitary screw.

Muskat relayed his findings to his roommates who promptly summoned YU Security officials to the scene. The New York Police Department was also alerted, however, its officers took a good deal longer to arrive. Both University Security and NYPD suspected that the would-be burglar attempted to kick down the door. They also observed that a protective steel door panel that adorns every other apartment door on the floor would probably prevent

the effectiveness of this type of apartment break-in.

The IHP residents surveyed their building and observed that virtually every door in the building except those that the University is utilizing for the Independent Housing Program bore a protective steel panel. They were displeased that their apartment had not been furnished with basic protection and contended that the University was saving money at the expense of student safety.

Yossi Mosak, a YC senior, wondered why "Stern has security personnel operating elevators in Brookdale [Hall] and serving as glorified doormen while I can't even be assured that my University residence is minimally protected from the dangers of a rough neighborhood."

Current University provided protection measures directed at maintaining the security of Independent Housing Program apartments are limited to a patrol by a Daihatsu security vehicle that circles the region of the brick tenements and a University security escort service for those who request it. Unlike residents of the adjacent University dormitories, IHP residents do not enjoy the protection of a constant security presence in their buildings.

Students have requested additional University protective provisions to allay their concerns

with security matters. Some propositions advanced by students include alarm system installation, triple locks, and protective steel door panels that would impede the picking of locks.

Belief that current security conditions are inadequate was not, however, shared by all. University Chief of Security Donald Sommers indicated his conviction that "current security measures are sufficient. All necessary precautions are being taken to make sure students are safe."

Dean of Student Services Dr. Efrem Nulman expressed his interest in "doing his utmost to make sure students are secure. I want them to feel safe and more importantly to be safe." He also noted that an IHP student representative body was assembled to provide students with a mechanism for voicing concerns with the apartments.

The representative body which Nulman mentioned is to be comprised of IHP residents designated by YCSC President Ira L. Tannenbaum Jr. Delegates include IHP Resident Advisor Avi Goldenberg in addition to other students not associated with the Office of Residence Halls. At press time, however, the body had had two scheduled meetings postponed and had not yet conducted a session.

Watch and Learn

If a student said that something "could only happen at Yeshiva University," people would expect the next words out of his mouth to be negative. With all the exasperations that students here face, this kind of jaded response is understandable, but in the past week we have witnessed events that would never be seen anyplace else.

When Rav Kahn stood up to give a mussar schmooze to the students before Rosh Ha'Shana, he made a mistake. In an attempt to bring in a counterpoint illustrating the strength of his own hashkafic position, R' Kahn attributed the position he attacked to R' Lamm. This miscalculation resulted in more students remembering the attack than the message of the mussar.

This could have been a typical university occurrence in which a faculty member attacks the administration. However, the nature of the intellectual disagreement and the personalities involved combined to produce an atypical result.

The following week, R' Kahn again stood before the students in the beit medrash where he publicly apologized to R' Lamm. R' Kahn showed a great deal of courage and conviction by admitting that he was wrong when he gave the impression that the statements quoted from R' Lamm's speech represented the philosophical positions of R' Lamm with regards to the nature of our yeshiva and university.

R' Lamm, who by taking philosophical positions in the middle, finds himself under attack by both the Right and the Left, showed enormous restraint by not responding to the attack and instead, reportedly forgave R' Kahn.

Chazal tell us that we are to be *Ro'eh divrei cha'chamim*, not *sho'meah*, to hear what they say, but *ro'eh*. Seeing how our rebbeim conduct themselves is the best way to learn from them. The actions of R' Lamm and R' Kahn provided the real mussar.

Electronic Crime and Punishment

The technology that graces our modern era, like so many other human advances, is a double edged sword. A most pertinent example is electronic mail. This past week a Yeshiva University student was accused of sending death threats to professors, some of which were sent through e-mail accounts belonging to other students at YU.

Though it is understood that the student was not expelled but for the content of his e-mails, we hope that this event will also serve to highlight that hacking into e-mail accounts will not be taken lightly.

Breaking into someone's account is akin to and perhaps worse than breaking into someone's dorm room. It gives the offender access to an individual's personal information and the ability to perpetrate further crimes under the account holders name.

Just as students feel safe after locking their dorm room doors, so to students should feel safe that their e-mail accounts are equally protected. The Yeshiva University Student Handbook warns against any unethical conduct over the Internet or e-mail and the time has come to enforce those warnings. As account break-ins become more frequent, we urge the University to begin addressing the seriousness of these offenses by taking real actions against these crimes.

The Commentator
wishes to extend its deepest
condolences to
Professor Leo Taubes and
Rabbi Michael Taubes
on their loss of Rena,
wife and mother.
Hamakom Yenachem Etchem
B'toch Shaar Avlei Zion
V'yerushalayim

The Commentator

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ARI GRUEN
Executive Editor

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MESSAGE FROM THE
YCSC PRESIDENT
SRULI TANNENBAUM

As we approach Succos break, I would like to take a moment to recap the many events that have taken place over the past several weeks. Club Fair '97 was a huge success. Over 30 clubs were represented and student turnout was phenomenal. This is the beginning of an eventful year for all YC clubs, so keep informed of upcoming activities and get involved.

Several weeks ago YCSC played host to New York State Assemblyman and Yeshiva University Alumnus Jules Polonetsky. Close to 100 students turned out for Mr. Polonetsky, a candidate for New York City Public Advocate, as he addressed a variety of political and city issues. The event was put together by the J.P. Dunner Political Science Society in conjunction with the College Democrats and College Republicans.

Finally, our first student council event of the year was run by the Junior and Senior Classes. The event, a Shabbaton at Stern, was a great success, with demand for hotel space greater than capacity would allow. I would like to thank Junior Class President Jeff Bander and his entire council for running the event. Look for more class sponsored events after Succos break.

Speaking of class councils, I would

like to discuss the Freshman/Sophomore elections. Due to a technical difficulty in the Registrar's Office, we were forced to push-off the elections until after the Succos vacation. All those who submitted their names will be informed of the election rules after Succos. Students, keep an eye out for election signs that will be posted after the Chagim.

Finally, you will notice an ad in this *Commentator* for various committees that are open to student participation. I urge all students to take an active role in campus affairs and submit an application for one of the many committees. As a committee member you will meet with the Student Council and the administration to discuss issues pertaining to student life. This is an opportunity to be a part of the student government, as well as to become acquainted with members of the administration.

Lastly, I would like to take this opportunity to wish all students and their families and happy and healthy New Year.

G'mar Chasima Tovah,

Sruli Tannenbaum
President YCSC



FROM THE EXECUTIVE EDITOR

ARI GRUEN

Rosh Hashana and the Ten Days of Repentance are a time for self-evaluation, for understanding who we are today, and who we want to be in the future. It is a time for pondering the successes and failures of our personal development during the previous year, and for planning our growth for the coming one.

Thus, these days are also an apt time to reflect upon and appreciate those who have influenced our lives and helped us grow and develop into the people we are today. I'd like to tell you about one such person in my life.

After graduating high school, my parents granted me the opportunity to study in Israel at Yeshivat Sha'alvim. It was in the Yeshiva's library several weeks after Sukkot that I first met Moty Hornstein. It is to his inspiration that I owe a large measure of my personal maturation and spiritual growth during the last several years.

Moty was a dynamo in Yeshiva, always doing, always involved in one project or another. On top of the already rigorous schedule of learning in Sha'alvim, Moty took upon himself the commitment to learn Tanach every night immediately following supper. At various times during the year, he also volunteered to shelve books in the library, raised funds for various Tzedakah drives, and designed the annual Yeshiva sweat-shirt.

In an essay he wrote several months after leaving Sha'alvim, Moty explained that his extraordinary drive to achieve was based on "a civic responsibility to accomplish something significant with my life." Moty believed that he had to achieve simply because he could. He knew he was blessed by G-d with a multitude of talents and he was determined to impact the world with the gifts G-d had bestowed upon him.

Towards the end of the year, Moty polled all the Americans at Sha'alvim with a survey meant to gauge their commitment to making Aliyah, moving to Israel. He asked three questions: Do you want to make Aliyah, do you think you ever actually will, and if so, at what age? Moty was not satisfied with "paying lip service" to ideals such as living in Israel. He was interested in checking the results of his poll every few years to see how many of his friends had remained true to their dreams. He himself intended on making Aliyah and, following a year of study in Israel, made his course selections at Harvard University based on which degree would most likely facilitate his entry into Israeli politics.

Moty was critically injured in a freak accident while walking in a park with his parents on Shabbat Shuvah in 1989, and passed away a day later, on Erev Yom Kippur. He was 19.

I never had the chance to meet Moty in the true sense of the word - I attended Sha'alvim in 1993-94, four years after his untimely passing. Instead, I "met" Moty in the library, in the pages of a book on prayer which Moty's friends and Rebbeim put together in memory of their friend and student. Included in the book are personal recollections of Moty by some of those who were touched by

his life and death. It was through these words that I had the opportunity to know, admire, and be inspired by Moty.

As a teenager, it was very hard for me to imagine my own death. Death was something that happened to old people. I don't think I was ever naive enough to believe that I would live forever; I think I just went on the assumption that I would be around for a very long time. After reading of Moty's life and death, that assumption no longer held any validity in my eyes. I was forced to face the reality that my days in this world are limited, and only G-d knows how limited they truly are. For seventeen years I had read the Unetaneh Tokef prayer of Rosh Hashana and Yom Kippur which reads: "On Rosh Hashana it is inscribed, and on the fast of Yom Kippur it is sealed: How many will pass away, and how many will be created; who will live, and who will die; who will go in his appointed time, and who before his time," yet the words had never affected me.

Twice a year, the liturgy forces us to consider our mortality, to consider that we might not live to see the next Rosh Hashana. How many of us take that lesson to heart? How many of us focus on devoting the time G-d grants us to what is truly important in our lives? For that matter, how many of us have actually taken the time to decide what we consider to be most important in our lives? Is it our friends, our family, our jobs? Are we committed to learning Torah, to living in Israel? Assuming we've come to some conclusions on these issues, do our daily choices reflect the decisions we've made? Are we living our beliefs and ideals or do we push off having to make tough choices by assuming "I'll be around for a long time; I have plenty of time to make the choices I should be making, to live the way I really should be living later on in my life?"

A teacher once shared with me the idea that on Rosh Hashana when G-d inscribes one in the "Book of Life," and decides to let an individual live, he does so as an investment in our future. G-d is counting on each individual's desire and ability to do something with the life he has been granted. G-d puts in the capital - our specific talents and abilities - and He counts on each of us to produce a return for His investment.

Moty Hornstein was aware of this awesome challenge and responsibility. He was an unbelievably talented and gifted individual - and he knew it. But despite all his gifts - his intelligence, wit, and artistic ability, to name a few - and his awareness of these traits, Moty was able to retain his humility because he realized his abilities were a challenge from G-d to do more, rather than a G-d-granted excuse to put in less effort while still achieving results comparable to some of his

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less talented peers.

And Moty never took for granted the greatest gift of all, the single gift that G-d grants to each of us every single moment of our lives - the gift of time. In almost every personal recollection recorded in the book dedicated to his memory, Moty's friends and teachers write in awe and admiration of his zealous use of his time. Whether in high school, where Moty juggled commitments to the math and wrestling teams, while participating in the Model United Nations and fulfilling his responsibilities as editor-in-chief of the MTA newspaper, or in his three short weeks in Harvard, where, in addition to his classes, he set aside time for daily Torah study and Hebrew tutoring, while becoming active in the local AIPAC chapter and a student leader in the campus Hillel, Moty was aware of the preciousness of his time.

In an essay titled "A Message for Moty's Friends and Would-Be-Friends," Moty's mother writes: "As you, Moty's peers, forge ahead with your life-long goals, I posit to you that the true measure of success in life is not in what you have amassed for yourself, but what

you have contributed to others. It is not what gifts and talents you are blessed with, but how you utilize them to change the world.

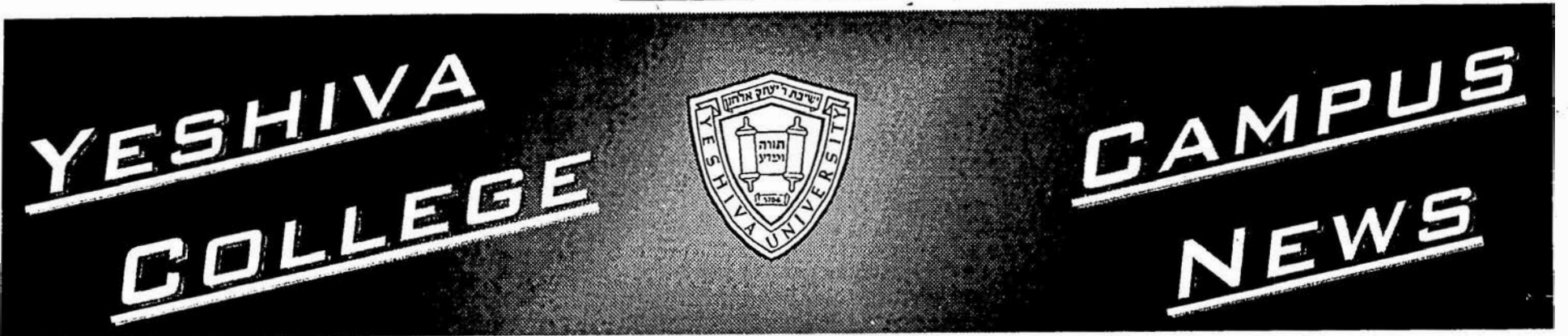
The partnership we entered into with G-d at the time of our creation is an everlasting one. It is not only of Adam that G-d inquired, "where are you?", but the question lingers eternally for each and everyone of us. It is our daily responsibility to make the choices in life that will allow us to stand proud and tall so that we too can respond, as Avraham did at the Akeyda, "Hineni": I am here, I accept the challenge, I will do my share, I will help complete your picture. I will make a difference.

Just like Moty did."

Moty, "Some people come into our lives and quickly go. Some stay for a while and leave footprints on our heart and we are never, ever the same." The impression you've made on my life since that first time we "met" in Israel has only gotten stronger in the years that have followed. I can only imagine the effect you've had on the lives of those who were fortunate enough to have known you in your lifetime.

Thank you, Moty. I will not forget you.

Kesiva V'Chasima Tovah.



Caf Under OU Supervision

BY URI GOLDSTEIN

In an effort to raise the standards of kashrus to a higher level, YU has secured the services of the Orthodox Union to supervise the cafeteria at each of the university's four campuses. A brief statement issued by the Office of Supporting Services stated that, "The University has arranged for the Orthodox Union to assist in kashrut supervision of its food service operations at all four New York City campuses. As you know, the OU is a national leader in providing kashrut supervision to countless number of food processors, institutions and food establishments."

The OU was brought in after a kashrut controversy, centering on a shipment of Uncle Ben's rice with non-kosher seasoning that led students to question the standards of supervision in the Cafeteria. Last year the *Commentator* reported that students on the Student Organization of Yeshiva (SOY) Kashrus Committee discovered that the flavor packets and seasonings of the Uncle Ben's Wild Rice and Rice Pilaf, which was being served in the Cafeteria as side dishes during lunch and dinner, lacked any symbol of Kashrus certification. Taking their own initiative, the students contacted the Uncle Ben's Plant in Houston and inquired as to the status

of the rice seasonings. The students were alarmed to find out that Uncle Ben's utilized products from non-kosher animals.

After confronting Rabbi Reiss with this information, he assured the

Commentator that once the Kashrus Committee members informed him of their discovery, he made sure that the kitchen staff refrain from serving the rice and had all the packages sent back to Uncle Ben's. In addition, Rabbi Reiss said that he had all "of the beaters and serving utensils that had come into any contact with the rice kashered immediately."

Notwithstanding R' Reiss's response to the kashrus problem, the occurrence alerted many of the officials and students at YU to the fact that even YU Food Services is not immune to the kashrus problems that plagues many mass food production kitchens. In response to this incident, YU officials told the *Commentator* that "there will be a mechanism to fix them [any cafeteria complications] and prevent any mistakes that are possible even in the strictest kitchens."

Remaining true to their word, last spring, YU administrators drafted a food services application and submitted it to Rabbi Lenny Steinberg, Rabbinical Coordinator for the OU. Upon acceptance of this application, Rabbi Steinberg took over as the main *mashgiach* at YU. Rabbi Steinberg, explained that the OU was

working on "bringing facilities up to OU standard." The duties of the OU, said Steinberg, are to remove problematic ingredients and products, and to set up a proper system for the management of the kitchen.

Rabbi Steinberg described the system by which the university kitchens had been run up to this point as appropriate for a private kitchen, but not for an industrial one. Noting that the OU is still in the process of bringing the YU kitchens up to par, Steinberg would not specify any of the problems encountered by the *mashgichim*, stating only that "the Uncle Ben's rice was a symptom of a problem that was there before."

Rabbi Zevulun Charlop, dean of MYP, said that he was unaware of the problems in the kitchen management, as he never was involved in the kitchen until the problems arose. "The *B'nei Ha'Yeshiva* came to me, so I was under an obligation to see what we can do."

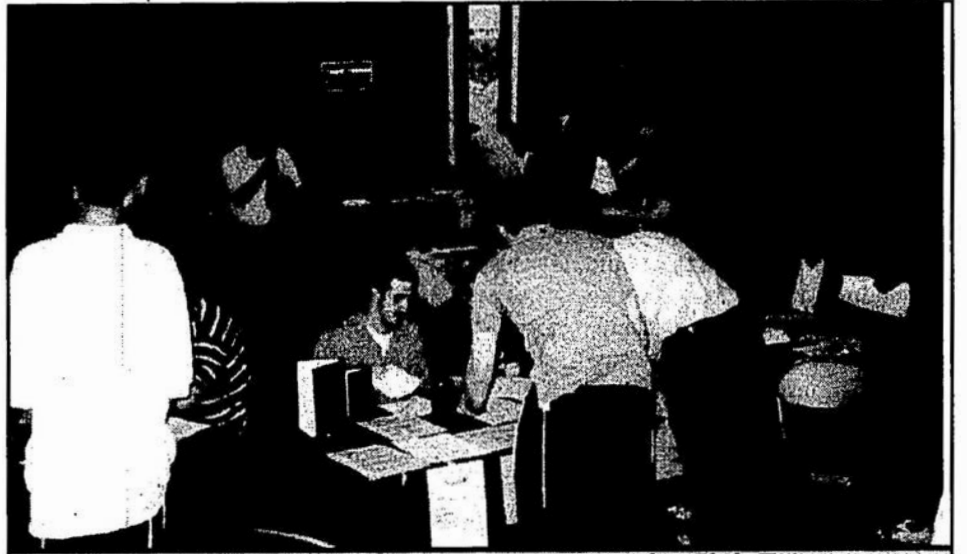
Defending Reiss, R' Charlop stated that he believes there had always been an honest, and extremely competent attempt to oversee university Kashrus. Both R' Charlop and Director of Supporting Services, Jeffrey Rosengarten, also pointed out that Reiss has been at Yeshiva for the last ten years had previously been a member of the OU administration.

Rosengarten added that aside from Reiss, it was primarily semicha students who supervised the cafs and kitchens.

Rosengarten had much praise for the OU, and their handling of the various Cafs.

"They are on board as much as someone could want them to be on board. The OU is a huge organization, and we have become a huge food provider. They have the wherewithal, backing and number of people which makes it easier." He did, however, defend the caf's previous policies. "We've always been and we'll always be kosher, it's just a question of how you do it." Regarding the rice situation, Rosengarten said, "Things aren't so black and white. Products for a big user are not in little containers. Hashgacha is not like in stores. Kosher products which are ordered may come from different plants. On day one, the OU would probably also have been confused."

Student reaction to the new supervision has been mixed. Although most students are glad that the Caf is now under stricter Kashrus supervision, many students were saddened by the demise of many of their favorite Caf dishes. Most noteworthy among these is the perennial favorite, scallops. "I remember," reminisced one student, "I had a roommate who never got out of bed. On scallops day he would be the first in line at the Caf."



Students checking out their options at the Club Fair.

YCSC Holds Club Fair

BY PINCHAS SHAPIRO

Continuing its efforts to invigorate extra-curricular activity on campus, the Yeshiva College Student Council held Club Fair 1997 on Tuesday September 16 as a forum for students to explore opportunities to get involved in student-run activities. The fair, which was held in Belfer Hall's Weissberg Commons, was the second of its kind at YU in many years. It featured representatives from all registered clubs and societies under the jurisdiction of YCSC.

Even with a relatively small turnout, most clubs reported that there were satisfactory numbers of new students interested in their respective societies.

The Yeshiva University Debate Society, a society that is making its first appearance on campus in over thirty years, came away with the most impressive enrollment numbers. It boasted over seventy-five students expressing interest. "We were hoping to get the society off to a good start, and it seems as if we did just that," said Elan Weinreb, the society's executive officer.

The founding of the Yeshiva University Film Analysis Society by Adam Moses and Oren Margulies represents an institutional first. Moses, the society's co-president, reported that approximately sixty students enrolled in the student organization during the course of the fair. According to Moses, the society "seeks to publish insightful, coherent criticism of contemporary motion pictures, organize a formal school-wide annual film festival, and lay the groundwork for talented, ambitious students to prepare and shoot an independent film production."

The excitement generated over the recent additions to the pool of clubs and societies complemented the interest in the perennial club favorites. Organizations like *The Commentator*, in its 62nd year, the J.P. Dunner Political Science Society, the Yeshiva College Dramatics Society, and Sigma Delta Rho, have remained popular.

In the past, many clubs, despite having large membership bases, failed to conduct a reasonable amount of credible activities during the academic year. "As far as I'm concerned, the majority of the clubs in school exist merely for people to pad their resumes," said Mendy Miller, YC '98, commenting on his observations of club activity last year. "There seems to be a serious deficiency of true club activity."

YCSC, recognizing the concern over club inactivity, has decided to continue the crack down on idle clubs. The Club Affairs Committee, which YCSC President Sruli Tannenbaum chaired last year, is prepared to take all necessary action to ensure that clubs exist merely on paper," said Tannenbaum, who will personally keep a watchful eye on the clubs this year to guarantee that they perform as they should.

Commenting on the success of Club Fair 97', Dror Barber, the fair's organizer said that it was "far more productive than I had expected." One enthusiastic first year student said, "I was very impressed by how many clubs there were and by how well club fair was run...If Club Fair was any indication as to what the students can expect from student life, then this could end up being very exciting this year."

KOSHER-D



2551 AMSTERDAM AVE. (BTWN 186-187 ST.)
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Entrepreneurial Institute Established at Sy Syms

BY MICHAEL GEWIRTZ

In an effort to expand options for undergraduate business students, the Sy Syms School of Business has established the Rennert Entrepreneurial Institute. The Institute, according to SSSB Dean Harold Nierenberg, is "the next stage of the Sy Syms School of Business' growth and development." The Rennert family contributed \$2.5 million to the University to enable the creation of the Institute, which has already begun operation.

"The forerunner of the Entrepreneurial Institute," according to YU Vice President for Academic Affairs William Schwartz, "was the Entrepreneurial Seminar that gave students the opportunity to hear from captains of industry from every conceivable industry." In addition to the Entrepreneurial Seminar, the Institute already offers classes in entrepreneurship, retail management, industrial marketing as well as an internship program.

The Institute will add classes in venture capital and international export promotion this spring. It also seeks to add classes in organization and structure, globalization, regulation and law, import-

export, and small business at some point in the future. Dean Nierenberg also hopes "to develop entrepreneurship into a concentration" of its own, and then "to expand it into an MBA program."

In addition to the in-class instruction that the Institute will provide, the Dr. William Schwartz Entrepreneurial Prize Competition has been announced. It is slated to be an annual competition that will award monetary prizes the most impressive student entrepreneurial venture proposal. The competition will be judged by a University advisory council that will include Dean Nierenberg, Dr. Schwartz, and members of the Rennert family. "The significant prizes that will be awarded," explained Dr. Schwartz, "are designed to motivate students to follow the spirit of entrepreneurship."

The Institute also plans to publish a newsletter, a research journal and looks forward to having both professional conferences and continuing education courses. These continuing education classes will be geared toward the business community and will be similar to the program sponsored by SSSB last year entitled "How to Run a Family Business."

The Rhodes Ahead

BY DAVID MIRSKY

With hopes of effecting an increased presence of Orthodox Jews within the halls of prestigious institutions providing Master of Arts degrees, Yeshiva College Dean Norman Adler has created the tentatively dubbed Mentorship Program, which will equip qualified students with the supportive resources required to compete for the Marshall, Fulbright, and Rhodes Scholarships.

Students who possess a strong, well-rounded academic record complemented by a colorful *curriculum vitae* of athletic and community involvement are being actively encouraged by the Office of the Dean to apply for the highly sought after prestigious scholarships.

The Office of the Dean coordinated a series of informational meetings for students interested in applying for such scholarships. Dr. Louis H. Feldmans, YC Professor of Classics and Literature, serves as the faculty advisor for those interested in finding out more about the various scholarships and guides students through the application process.

Kathleen Fitzgerald, Director of the Yeshiva College Writing Center, spearheads the all important essay component of the application process. Each scholarship requires applicants to write an original, soul-bearing essay, much like those required for law school applications. In fact, the quality of the essay serves as one of the most crucial factors in the decision making process of the selection committees.

Students apply to either the region in

which their school is located or to their region of legal residence. A number of students from each region are selected to undergo a rigorous interview process which culminates in the selection of a few students to receive a scholarship. There is, however, no obligation on the part of the regional selection committees to accept any applicants if they feel that none are deserving.

The scholarships allow the recipients to attend a foreign university at which they conduct in-depth research leading to a Master of Arts degree in their chosen field of study. The Marshall and Rhodes Scholarships are intended specifically for study

in prestigious British universities, while the Fulbright Scholarship is designated for study almost anywhere in the world.

Dean Adler feels that the unique "ethnicity" of YU students as defined by our Orthodox way of life is highly desired by the scholarship committees. YU has not had any recipients of these scholarships for many years partly because there has not been a concerted effort to make students aware of the unique opportunities that these scholarships offer.

Seniors and underclassmen wishing to find out more about these scholarships can stop by the writing center in Furst Hall to pick up application packets. Dr. Feldman is also available to answer any questions students may have concerning the various scholarship opportunities.

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Rosen Resigns

Continued from page 1

paper, the *YU Today*. "I created it as a house organ for people to rely on, and to be lively, informative, accurate, positive and truthful, which differentiates it from the *Commentator*," said Rosen. He enhanced the PR department at the Cardozo School of Law, and oversaw improvements in all of YUPR's five departments; graphics, media, photography, development, and Midtown.

Rosen presided over PR stories such as the Anne Scheiber inheritance, which he considers his largest *coup* in office. He convinced the University administration to hold off announcing the news of Scheiber's gift until the annual Hanukkah dinner, magnifying the impact of the news and allowing YUPR to prep the media. The results were impressive, with widespread national media exposure, and international coverage reaching as far as China, which ran a segment about the gift on Chinese national television.

During the term of his tenancy of the corner office on the fourth floor of Furst Hall, YU was transformed from a school perennially delegated to the bottom tier of academic rankings to a first tier school. This put YU in the distinguished company of some of the finest institutions of higher learning in America. Rosen orchestrated the University's media blitz about its ascendancy to the upper level of educational heights. "During my stay here in YU we have gone from a third tier school, to a second tier school, to a first tier school two years running," said Rosen. Many attributed this to the higher media profile of YU, and by proxy, to the work done by

YUPR.

He also directed damage control for PR disasters, such as the controversy over organizations for gay and lesbian students at YU's graduate schools, which Rosen termed "a couple of students cranking this thing up and the religious right outside of YU seeing some advantage in being critical." Assisting him in his spin control efforts was Bruce Bobbins, who was the Assistant Director of YUPR and extremely instrumental in portraying the University in the best light for much of Rosen's tenure.

Bobbins departed last year to Howard Rubenstein and Associates, the same firm Rosen is now headed for. The firms disparate client list includes other universities as well as a large group of celebrities. They specialize in what is euphemistically termed "damage control," and recently represented the disgraced sportscaster Marv Albert in his biting personal public relations disaster.

"I will still work with Yeshiva, but now they will be one of the clients in my portfolio," says Rosen. Some of YU's PR business will be handled by Howard Rubenstein, but for now the leadership of YUPR is right back where it started, in the hands of Sam Hartstein. The Senior Advisor is currently running the office while a search committee is formed under the auspices of Jefferey Rosengarten, Head of Personnel. During the transition period Rosen has "an understanding" with Howard Rubenstein and Associates that he will continue to assist YUPR until a fitting successor is chosen.

What Does the Future Hold for YUPR?

BY MORDECHAI FISHMAN

As the official vehicle used to disseminate YU's message to the University community and to the wider audience of the outside world, YUPR plays a crucial role. And as one of the main fundraising organs of YU it plays a large role in University development as well. Yet it now is leaderless, lacking an entire upper command echelon and the public relations wizard needed to guide it.

David Rosen was an acknowledged master of his craft. Whether you agreed with his message (or as some termed it, propaganda) or not, there was a consensus that the man knew what he was doing. He had the impeccable credentials and the insider media contacts needed for his job. And for a fellow who expressed a desire to be a musician playing at Jewish weddings and bar-mitzvahs, he orchestrated some extremely intricate dances. Political dances involving the varying factions of the University and their different demands, and tap dance routines around potential public relation landmines. He was the spinmeister; the man who wore a kippah even though he was not an orthodox Jew, and the man who could put even the most negative of YU's aspects in a positive light.

He was an expert promoter as well. In the tradition of the finest circus barkers he could draw one's attention to the bright lights of YUPR's successes while glossing over any defective features that might catch someone's eye. He turned minor stories such as a student's small-time community literacy program into full scale PR campaigns with national media exposure. Columbia University has a community literacy program with a far larger scope than our program

here at YU. Yet they did not receive anywhere near the media coverage afforded to the YU program. Columbia University recently received a 26 million dollar gift from a Chinese businessman, which in sheer numbers eclipses Anne Scheiber's famous gift of 22 million dollars. Yet the media coverage of the Columbia gift was paltry in comparison to the media saturation given to Scheiber's endowment to YU. What was the difference? Some would say that it was David Rosen.

Assisting Rosen in running YUPR was Bruce Bobbins, who was affectionately known in various quarters of the University as B.S. Bobbins. He was the nuts and bolts man, the guy who took the PR football and ran it all over the YU field. Bobbins was in Rosen's own words "unique and irreplaceable," and was his right hand man in running YUPR. He also preceded his superior in the trek downtown, leaving at the end of the last school year to work for Howard Rubenstein and Associates, the firm now employing Rosen. Or as one anonymous YU administrator put it, "He got a real job."

So who is left to direct the staff of YUPR? The venerable sage of Yeshiva public relations, Sam Hartstein is holding down the fort while a suitable replacement is found for Rosen. But the patron saint of YUPR can only man the battlements for a limited amount of time, due to his age and his unfamiliarity with modern day computing techniques. There is a photography director overseeing a staff of three photographers, an art director in charge of layout and graphics, and an events director. None of these are really qualified to head the office. Yvonne Hudson is the publications manager and the head administrator of the office, but she is not a candidate for the position. Also, the senior writer editing the *YU Today*, Daniel Shure, is by his own admission a public relations neophyte not possessing the necessary credentials for the job.

Therefore, the University must look outside its own walls for someone to fill Rosen's significantly sized shoes. A search committee must be formed, and candidates wooed and interviewed. Two potential candidates nominated by Rosen have already seemingly failed to pass muster, and have been rejected by the powers that be. The position to be filled is an extremely sensitive one, and requires someone with extensive contacts and media savvy, not merely YU connections. One can only hope that the twin time-honored YU traditions of nepotism and favoritism do not come into play in the selection process, because this is not just another useless administrative position; it is an important job requiring a person with skills commensurate with the task.

News Analysis



David Rosen

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The Tenth Siyum Hashas

Personal Reflections

BY YISHAI FLEISHER

Standing outside Madison Square Garden I contemplated the irony of this building's purpose. Today the vendors would not sell Rangers and Knicks apparel, but instead the vendors offered commemorative Talmuds. The traditional hot-dogs and beer were not sold, but kosher snacks were offered in their place. The fans were as loud, but their cheers controlled and unified in prayer and song. The fans were decked out for the important event, but their attire more somber. And yes, there was a main event, an event that drew many. However the event was of a distinctly Jewish character as opposed to the conventional Greco-Roman offerings.

A sense of anticipation and excitement brewed within me. I was about to enter the Tenth Siyum Hashas of Daf Yomi. Seven and a half years ago my Rabbi took me to the same event. However, there was a stark contrast between my previous experience - youth has a way of overshadowing events, and this experience was no exception. I have spent time in yeshiva, I have partaken in the study of that which was to be celebrated. I have matured. And as I entered Madison Square Garden, I felt prepared to truly partake in this momen-

tous occasion and experience.

The event celebrated the culmination of the Daf Yomi cycle, but in essence it far exceeded a mere celebration. The approximately 26,000 Jews that filled the building gave off a sense of unity that, sadly, has most often been achieved through death and destruction. "Unity," seemed to be the catch word of the evening, stressed by every speaker.

As so many will attest, the Siyum climaxed during the Mincha and Ma'ariv services. 26,000 Jews praying in unison; the audience's responses bouncing off the walls of MSG in a deafening roar. I felt the shivers running down my spine.

There were many speeches in Yiddish (they were translated to English and transmitted on an FM frequency within MSG) which served to give the event a sense of authenticity and history. On the dais sat Rabbis representing a huge cross

section of Orthodox factions, from Chassidic Rebbes to YU Rabbeim, among them: University President Rabbi Lamm, and MYP Rebbeim, Rabbi Parness, Rabbi Bronspiegel, Rabbi Ben-Haim, and Rabbi Schachter; Ashkenazim and Sephardim; Americans, Brits, and Israelis. Past, present and far expanses were bridged to form a rare display of Jewish power and unity.

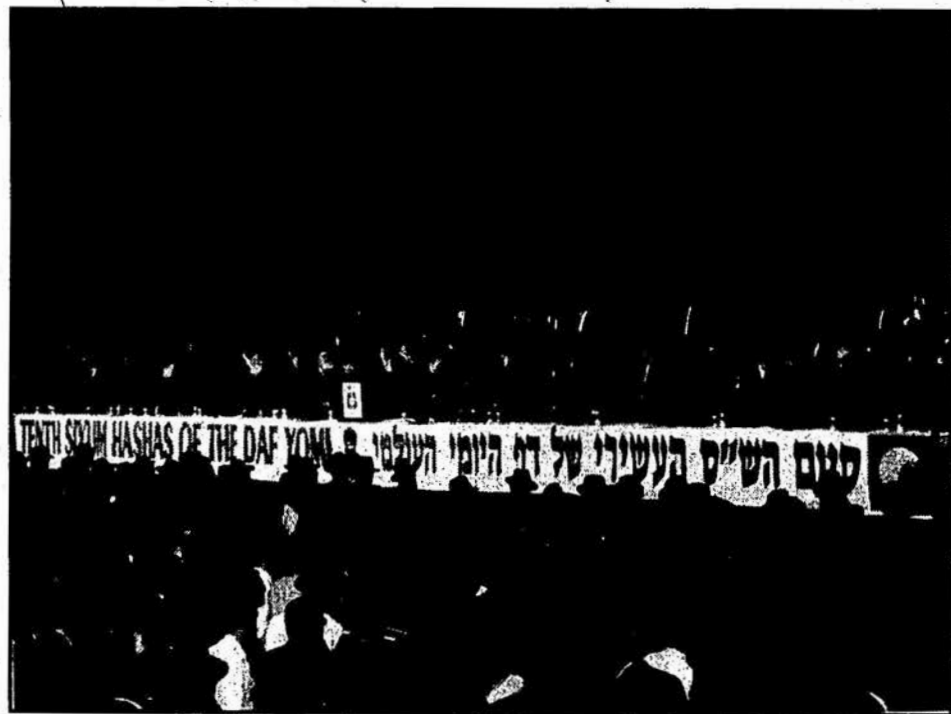
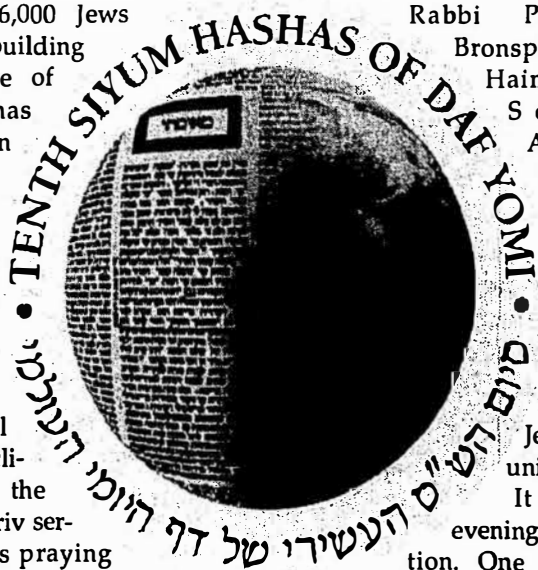
It was also an evening of commemoration. One cannot celebrate unity without remembering those whom we have lost. The contrast between our reality at this moment and our grandparents' reality only fifty years ago suddenly dawned on me. The sight of great *Talmidei Chachamim* who have gone through the Shoah singing and dancing at the Garden was a powerful testament to our survival. It's unfortunate that it usually takes a tragedy like

that of Nachshon Waxman to bring Jews together in song and prayer.

Notably absent was the mention of Israel or of controversial issues that separate world Jewry today. The organizers of the event chose to put aside the differences and viewpoints that would inevitably alienate one group from another. This was not a night for solving problems, this was a night that transcended the differences and stressed that which we have in common. As Rabbi Lamm told me on the dais, "This magnificent event is a great tribute to the organizers, and it is a healthy and hopeful sign that Orthodox Jews can achieve *achdut* through the study of Torah."

On a technical note, the Aguda deserves great praise for their incredible organization within the Garden itself. With the exception of several speeches running overtime, everything ran smoothly and punctually. Furthermore I was most impressed with the coordinated simulcasts between MSG and Nassau Coliseum and the fact that the Siyum Hashas was broadcast to groups across the world.

The Tenth Siyum Hashas was an extraordinary night which saluted those who have diligently studied Torah, and acknowledged the tenacity of *Am Yisroel* throughout the generations.



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It's the Morality, Stupid: Jews for Gingrich

BY BENJAMIN BALINT

WASHINGTON, Sept. 24 — If the views of Rabbi Daniel Lapin are any indication, the long-standing monopoly liberalism has exercised over Jewish loyalties is crumbling. Lapin and the organization he founded, Toward Tradition, sense that we stand on the verge of a major shift in the political history of American Jewry, and Lapin is working actively to hasten that shift.

In the past, Jews - seared by centuries of persecution - fought to heighten the wall keeping Christianity from encroaching on, or influencing the sphere of public policy or governmental affairs. As a religious minority, Jews believed that religion was best kept far from the reins of political authority.

But, according to Toward Tradition, the tide is shifting as Jews realize that liberalism, along with its ideological partners - relativism and secularism - actually poses a far more pernicious threat. For liberalism, say Jewish conservatives, has shown itself responsible for this country's moral rot which threatens to undermine the very values of ethical decency which Jews stand for and rely upon. Toward Tradition declares that "Judaism and its eternal values have little in common with modern American liberalism," and more in common with believing Christians.

This was essentially the message of a major conference held September 21 to 23 calling itself "Toward a New Alliance: American Jews and Political Conservatism," the second such conference organized by Toward Tradition, attracting about 300 to 400 participants to Washington.

The conference, with a touch of happy irony, coincided almost exactly with the capital's AIDS Walk, drawing its diverse crowd of an estimated 25,000 to within a block of the staunchly conservative gathering. (The next day's *Washington Post* amusingly featured a photograph of two members of the "Atlantic States Gay Rodeo Association" participating in the walk.)

Jack Kemp (Bush's Secretary of Housing and Urban Development, and ex-Vice Presidential candidate) began the conference by insisting that "those of us who share these values, Jewish or Christian, must be on the same side." He also emphasized the religious roots of the American nation, claiming, for example, that "the great events of American history were led by men and women of faith," taking the Revolution, the Abolition, and the civil rights movement as his examples.

Ralph Reed, former Executive Director of the Christian Coalition, said: "We read the

same Scriptures; we seek the same things for our children and our nation," and vowed that the evangelical Christian community, unlike the liberal American Jewish community, "will never walk away from Israel."

Secularism vs. Conservatism

Rabbi Lapin, in his charismatically cadenced keynote address, proposed that the ideas of liberalism, though not necessarily those who espouse them, are the "condensed essence of evil." Citing, among others, the late Columbia University literary critic Lionel Trilling as evidence, he proposed that "the central thesis of the liberal project is to dismantle the root of the Judeo-Christian tradition."

In Lapin's view, one is confronted with a stark philosophical choice: one must choose either the religious, theocentric ethic, divinely inspired, or the atheistic ethic of "rampant secularism and total materialism." This is essentially the choice of which Deuteronomy 30 speaks: "See, I have given before you today life and good; and death and evil . . ." If one chooses the latter, one chooses the materialistic view of the human being which declares him to be not qualitatively different than the animal. Making just this choice, socialism governed its subjects as zookeepers manage the animals in their care, as if to say: "We'll distribute your food/goods equally. We will look after you, but in return, we will rightfully take the products of your labors just as we shear the sheep of its wool."

Speaker of the House Newt Gingrich (R-GA), introduced as "the most pro-Israel Speaker in American history," also spoke of a basic divide in American society between those who recognize a higher Being and transcendent meaning, and those who do not. Clearly, Gingrich continued, the Founders did have this recognition, a recognition enshrined in the Declaration's references to "self-evident" natural law truths, to rights "endowed by the Creator," and to "Divine providence."

He also sharply criticized the "continuous onslaught to drive God out of the public arena," and spoke of welfare reform as "a moral cause," and of affirmative action quotas as "morally wrong."

In Dennis Prager's view, the deep crisis which so afflicts contemporary American society and culture is rooted in the fundamental atheism and irreligiosity of its liberal ideology.

For Prager, (popular talk show host, essayist and lecturer) if there is no God,

then life is meaningless. The threat of such meaninglessness compels the atheistic individual or society to look elsewhere for meaning; hence the two great evils of our century, Nazism and Communism. "Why would I want the decline of Christianity in America when I know what it brought in Europe: Stalin and Hitler?!"

If there is no God, Prager said, then there must be only orderless chaos, a chaos reflected today in the arts. In fact, Prager continued, the most chaotic beliefs propagate themselves in the drivel and stupidity of that secular temple known as the university, "where more nonsense is believed in than anywhere." (Later, Rabbi Meyer Schiller called universities "Stalinist loonybins.")

If there is no God, Prager concluded, then sensitivity to the holy, to the metaphysical, to the transcendent, disappears, and a materialistic emphasis on physicality predominates. Hence, the American preoccupation with health. And hence, a culture more concerned with pollution of the environment than with "pollution of the soul."

Liberal Jews - The Enemy

For Jewish conservatives, it is as sadly ironic that Jews, charged with bringing God to the world, are instead at the forefront of keeping the Ten Commandments out of America's classrooms and courtrooms as it is lamentable and embarrassing that American Christians have become the voice of traditional morality in our society. For this reason, many of the more vehement condemnations were aimed not at liberalism *per se*, as much as at liberal Jews.

One speaker announced to stirring applause that liberal American Jews are "the enemy . . . the intellectual backbone for everything that's wrong about this country."

Another compared the 20% of American Jews who identify themselves as Republicans with the courageous one-fifth of Egyptian Jewry who (according to one interpretation of the word *va'chamushim*) left with Moses for the Promised Land.

Don Feder, syndicated columnist for the *Boston Herald*, accused the self-selected Jewish establishment leadership and the "regrettably misnamed" secular organizations which include the adjective "Jewish" in their names (e.g. American Jewish Congress, American Jewish Committee) of *hillul Hashem* - desecration of God's name. "In general, when the AJC

and ADL say one thing," Feder said, "the Torah says precisely the opposite." Elliot Abrams (former Assistant Secretary of State) concurred and said of these organizations: "They are not secular because liberal, but liberal because secular."

Global Conservatism & GOP Gedolim

The conference, it is true, sometimes digressed from its strict agenda and forayed into more general conservative topics. Dinesh D'Souza spoke persuasively against affirmative action, William Kristol (editor and publisher of *The Weekly Standard*) rather monotonously meandered through modern conservative history, and Rabbi Meyer Schiller (MTA rebbe and hockey coach) spoke of the steady decline of "European civilization" and of "Anglo-Saxondom" caused by the left, which, in his opinion, represents "egalitarianism, secularization, global destruction of white peoples," and the "third-worldization" of America and Europe.

And expanding the conservative discussion beyond its domestic American confines, Dan Polisar asserted that in its political culture, Israel is stuck in the late 1960's. Just as during that period the New Left thought the United States to be imperialist and exploitative, so today the liberal Israeli intellectual elite believes that Israel was born in sin and compounded that sin by occupation and rejecting offers of peace. "The Oslo Accords," he said, "read like a confession of guilt." Indeed, Israeli liberals "want to strip Israel of all its nationalism, of all its Judaism, of all its heritage."

Also gracing the conference with their speeches were a group of what the *Forward* newspaper called "GOP gedoylim": Senators John Ashcroft (R-MO), and Slade Gorton (R-WA); Representatives Jon Fox (R-PA, one of four Jewish Republicans in Congress), Ernest Istook (R-OK), Jennifer Dunn (R-WA), Chris Cox (R-CA), and Tom DeLay (House Majority Whip, R-TX); and Jim Nicholson (a life-long Catholic and Chairman of the Republican National Committee).

As a piece in the *Washington Times* concluded: "Conservative political discourse has always resonated with the categories of Christian thought and law. But this may well be the first time Jewish law and reasoning has offered itself to the conservative movement as something more than the vague Judeo of the Judeo-Christian heritage."

YCSC Elections Postponed

Freshmen and Sophomores Await Council Representation

BY OREN MARGULIES

Complications in the implementation of the new banner system in the Office of the Registrar have delayed the completion of official class rosters forcing the postponement of the YCSC freshman and sophomore class elections. The elections, originally scheduled for Thursday, September 25th, will be held after the holidays.

The main problem was the omission of transfer credits and yeshiva credits in the new system. As a consequence, many students received improper class standing assignments. "In the previous system," explained Melvin Davis, Director of the Office of the Registrar, "transfer credits were kept in a free form entry. The delay was caused when we brought the transfer credits from the old system over to the new one. This switch required electronic editing, which takes time."

Dror Barber, Director of the Canvassing Committee, commented, "The elections are a two or three week process including the collection of signatures, the elections, and the tabula-

tion of votes. With the amount of time needed for the elections, and the holidays quickly approaching, we were forced to postpone the elections until after the holidays."

Though last year's elections were pushed off a couple of days, this is the first time that the elections were delayed for a prolonged period of time. "It's very frustrating," remarked Sruli Tannenbaum, YCSC president. "The system that was implemented with the objective of helping the students has impeded the election." Mr. Tannenbaum also expressed his distress with the uncooperative nature of the Office of the Registrar. "We went to them a month ago and they kept telling us to wait. This is a problem that could have been solved in a week had they put in the effort, according to their own estimates."

Positions available for both the freshman and sophomore classes are president, vice-president, secretary, and treasurer. The names of the candidates, for all positions, have not yet been released by YCSC.

We would like to sincerely express our Hakaras Hatov to the Office of Student Services for providing transportation to Nassau Coliseum for the Siyum Hashas Celebration.

Thank you,
SOY

Coming Out of the Cave

Rav Kahn Challenges Rabbi Lamm's Statement, Then Apologizes

BY NIR KNOLL

The Rambam writes that regarding sins between an individual and his neighbor, Yom Kippur will only atone if the person personally apologizes to his friend. Last Monday, MYP Rebbe and Rosh Kollel Elyon Rav Aaron Kahn demonstrated the practical application of this principle in front of the Beis Medrash, when he publicly apologized for statements which he made a week ago during an hour-long mussar schmooze concerning a speech made by Yeshiva University President and Rosh Yeshiva, Rav Norman Lamm.

Rav Kahn opened his mussar talk of September 29th by referring back to the history of RIETS and noting the sacrifices made by the early RIETS rebbeim and their wishes to create a bastion of Torah in Washington Heights during a time when America was "a barren wasteland, when the notion of someone learning [Torah] seriously did not exist." Rav Kahn described the vision of RIETS as "the history, the amalgamation of the histories of the Roshei Yeshiva and the bnei haYeshiva from the day that it was established." In addition, Rav Kahn explained that the original vision of the Yeshiva was

twofold: to establish a place where learning would take place on a high level in the tradition of the European Yeshivas, and to give students the opportunity to study secular subjects "al taharas haKodesh." Then, as he began to explain his current vision of YU, Rav Kahn described the current talmidim as a generation that the early rebbeim would have been proud of and would have felt honored to give shiurim and teach Torah to.

As he continued to discuss the current status of the Yeshiva, Rav Kahn referred to Rav Lamm's centennial address. Rav Kahn quoted Rav Lamm's statement that "We who study and teach at Yeshiva essentially live in a private community — a marvelous enclave, one of study and thought and research, of vibrant ideas and creative concepts and novel interpretations and spiritual growth, all on the very highest levels. But it is an enclave, not a cave; we are not hermetically sealed off from the world. Yes, the 'cave experience' can be, and indeed is, a vital element in one's Torah development, and that is why we recommend (at considerable cost to us!) a year of intensive immersion in Torah in Israel and, for Semikha students, at our Gruss

Institute in Jerusalem. But the cave is not the natural habitat of Torah; a 'house of study' — a beit ha-midrash — is where Torah flourishes, not a 'cave' of study. We do not and should not aspire to educate our students to live in caves once they have left the Yeshiva."

Rav Kahn went on to challenge the description of the Gruss Institute and the Yeshivas in Israel as "caves." In addition, Rav Kahn questioned the expressed contentment with only one year of intense Torah studying asking "Are we then to allow that it is sufficient to be in the cave, which is a valuable thing he [R' Lamm] admits, for one year?" Rav Kahn continued by explaining that it is hard to believe that so much can be accomplished in one year, as he referred to the fact that previous gedolim, such as the Rav, immersed themselves in years of study before they could reach any level of prominence in Torah or enter the secular world of study. In shock Rav Kahn stated that "I cannot believe what I am reading" and evoked laughter from the crowd by making reference to his now famous schmooze on fraternity life by saying that "I once said that about something else."

Rav Kahn then discussed the sacrifices made by Rabbi Akiva to learn and teach Torah on the highest level. Rav Kahn explained that "Rabbi Akiva knew that what he was doing was suicidal, but in that act of suicide he saved klal yisroel from suicide." Rav Kahn demonstrated how this intensive *limud haTorah* did not affect his love for his fellow Jews by reminding the students that it was Rabbi Akiva who said "Vahavta l'reiacha kamocho, zeh klal gadol baTorah." Moreover, Rav Kahn said that "I suggest that *davka* only one who knows no limits to the learning of Torah, *davka* such a person has *ahavas yisroel*, no one else. Because only someone who understands the very essence of the *neshamah* of *yisroel* can have real *ahavas yisroel*." Rav Kahn brought down the sacrifices of the Chafetz Chaim to foster Torah in *Klal Yisroel* in conjunction with his immersion in *limud Torah*.

Rav Khan began to lament the attitude that one should be content with a minimal Torah education. He warned that YU could become a place that produces "sophisticated *amei ha'aretz*" with no relationship to other yeshivas. Rav Kahn went on to state that this "will not be. This Yeshiva is producing *talmidei chachamim* and *talmidei chachamim* means years of serious learning of Torah. *Talmidei chachamim* means a *mesiras nefesh* for Torah on the highest level. *Talmidei chachamim* means that you cannot a couple of hours a night watch the ball game and a couple of hours a night schmooze with your friends, and a couple of hours a night stay up on the Internet, and then the next day your going to go back to the *Beis Medrash* in the morning." It is this vision that Rav Kahn feels should define YU and be the *kiddush Hashem* described in the statement "Ashreinu matov chelkeinu u'ma nayim goraleinu." Furthermore, Rav Kahn demonstrated that the history of the Jewish people serves testament to the fact that Torah can flourish even in

the pogroms of Chelminitski, Bolshevik Russia, and Nazi Germany. Therefore, Rav Khan argued that there is no excuse for *Limud haTorah* to die in YU, within the comfortable confines of America. However, Rav Khan said that he understood that YU students had their own problems and distractions, but urged that students not be discouraged and continue to learn as our ancestors did despite the greatest horrors of Europe. Rav Kahn added that students must overcome the various challenges which life puts in the path of their Torah study as a responsibility to the past rebbeim of YU and for their own self respect.

Although Rav Kahn used Rav Lamm's statement as a polemical device to describe the centrality of Torah in one's life, stating that "I am not playing to the gallery and I don't see any television cameras," many students interpreted his disagreement with Rav Lamm's statement as an attack on R' Lamm's philosophies.

In his shiur the next day, Rav Kahn expressed his regret that students did not take what he said as a way to clearly illustrate his point of view by using a counterpoint, but instead viewed it as an attack on both R' Lamm and his ideology. Therefore, in order to clarify any misconceptions, to the shock of the entire Beis Medrash, Rav Kahn approached the Bimah exactly a week later and offered an apology for the statements which he had made.

Rav Kahn began by admitting that he had "inadvertently and unintentionally violated the words of *chazal*: '*chachamim hizha'aru b'divreicheim*.'" However, Rav Kahn did not feel that he was absolved of responsibility, stating that "even a *shogeg* must use the *nusach* of '*chatati aviti pashati*' ... because for the human being there is no such thing as a complete *shogeg*." Rav Khan explained that in the heat of the moment he had erred and that "my quotation was meant to serve as a speaker's foil, a speaker's device."

"I failed to convey R' Lamm's *mesiras nefesh*; the sleepless nights; I failed to convey his tremendous achievements for Torah here in Yeshiva. In many ways we can all say: '*Sheli v'shelochem shelo hu*' [my Torah learning and your Torah learning belong to him.]"

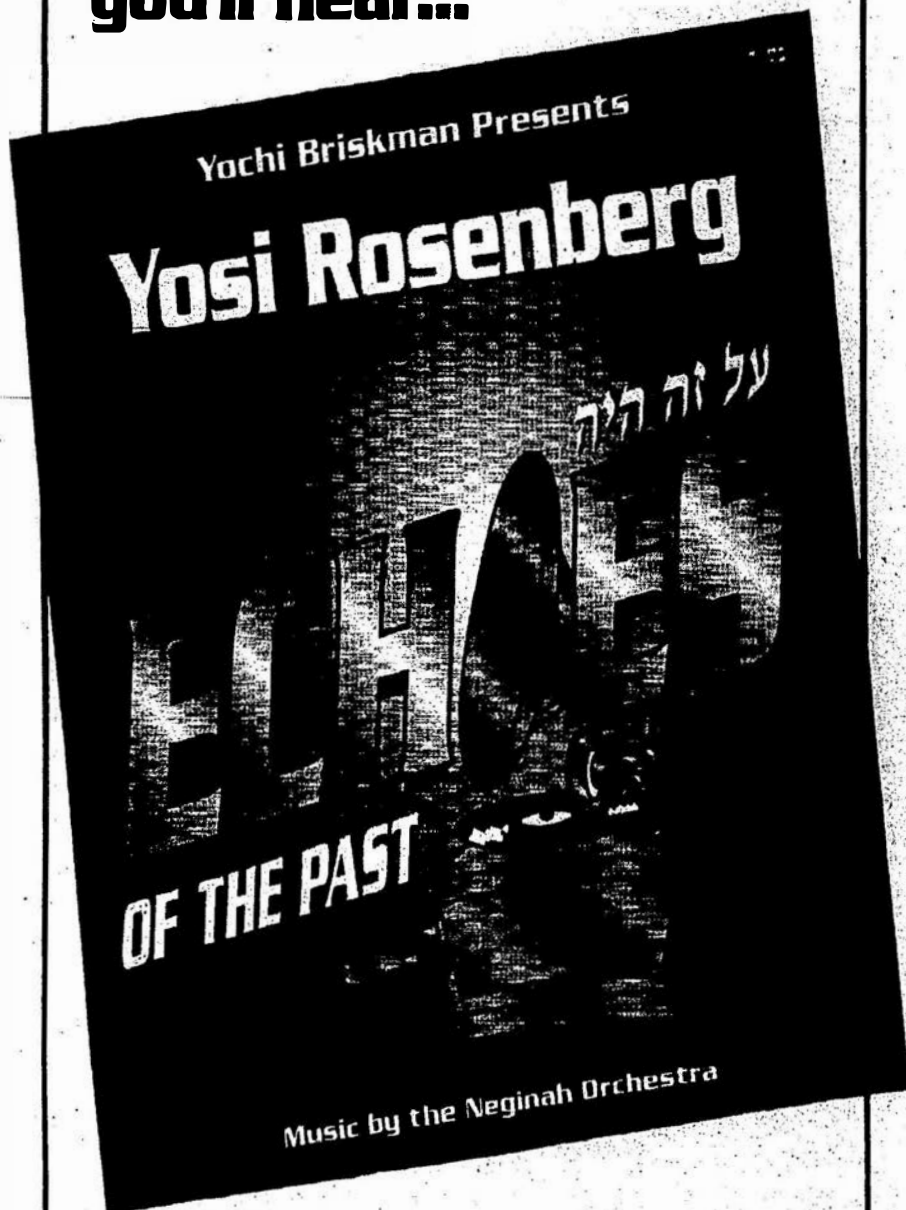
Rav Khan also stated that he was remiss in not conveying his "personal *hakaros haTov* for Rabbi Lamm for taking me *me'achurei haTzon* ... and providing me with the opportunity... to be able to teach Torah with so much dignity. It is all, *all* to his credit."

Rav Kahn concluded by saying that "I crave from you, the *talmidei yeshiva*, *mechila* for not making my words of last week more perfect and more pure."

"And of course, *bifnei kohol am*, I crave and ask respectfully of the *Nossie*, R' Lamm himself [for forgiveness]. I did him an injustice and I publicly admit it, *bein keshah le'esor*. May Hashem accept this moment as a *kiddush shem Shomayim* and may it serve to achieve, as R' Lamm often concludes, *L' hagdil Torah u'l'ha'adero, Omien*."

And the Talmidim, certain with the knowledge that Rav Lamm would grant *mechila*, felt the shalom invading the *Beis Medrash*.

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RIETS Refuses to Place Musmach in Orthodox

BY HILLEL LEVIN

Rabbi Dr. Bernhard Rosenberg, a YU *musmach* and the spiritual leader of the Conservative egalitarian Congregation Beth-El in Edison, New Jersey, has been very critical of modern Orthodox institutions as of late. Rosenberg came through the ranks of the James Striar School and received *semicha* from RIETS in 1974, at which time, he says, he accepted a position in a "non-mechitza, Conservative" synagogue recommended to him by YU/RIETS. Rabbi Rosenberg asserts that the RIETS placement service has since refused to refer him, against its own policy as well as his own wishes, to an Orthodox synagogue. Because he was unable to secure a position in an Orthodox shul, Rosenberg maintains that he was forced to accept several rabbinical positions in Conservative egalitarian synagogues. Rabbi Rosenberg also explains that these factors led to his joining the Rabbinical Assembly (RA) of the Conservative Movement.

Until the late 1980's, Rosenberg sat on the Rabbinical Council of America's (RCA) Holocaust Commission, under whose auspices he co-edited the popular *Theological and Halachic Reflections on the Holocaust*. However, after accepting his current position, Rosenberg was asked to leave the RCA, whose policy it is not to accept members who serve in egalitarian synagogues.

Local Jewish newspapers have picked up on Rosenberg's story, making it a hot topic in the Jewish world. A June, 1997 article in *The Jewish Voice* characterized the situation as follows: "The only institution that seems to want nothing to do with him [Rosenberg] is his alma mater and its affiliates in the Modern Orthodox community."

Such depictions of Rosenberg's situation have caused many members of the Jewish community to criticize YU for its actions. In a letter to *The Jewish Voice*, a YU alumnus condemned YU/RIETS and the RCA for, what he terms, "the shameful treatment meted out to Rabbi Bernhard Rosenberg."

This particular alumnus, identified only as Catriel, points to the fact that neither YU nor the RCA would deny - or even respond to - Rosenberg's allegations as proof of their guilt. As Catriel puts it, "they [YU and Rabbi Steven Dworken of the RCA, identified by Rabbi Rosenberg

as the man behind many of his problems] 'courageously' take refuge behind a bureaucratic 'no comment,' no doubt hoping that will end the matter..."

Catriel is correct in his statement that YU/RIETS and Rabbi Dworken will not comment on Rabbi Rosenberg's case. However, Rabbi Hirt explained this "no comment" policy in an interview with *The Commentator* by saying, "it is inappropriate from a Halachic standpoint [and] from the point of view of professional ethics to discuss the personal or professional life of any individual with whom we have, or are in contact." He went on to say that such a discussion would be in violation of the ethics of confidentiality, and that it would undermine any credibility that RIETS has amongst those it deals with.

When asked whether RIETS has a right to defend itself against attacks such as this, Rabbi Hirt responded that "[YU doesn't] need any defense. We're open. We have a track record." Rabbi Dworken also indicated that he would not speak to *The Commentator* about individuals with whom he has had dealings because it would be inappropriate.

Anonymous sources familiar with the situation have suggested that YU/RIETS may also be acting cautiously because they are concerned with the possibility that Rabbi Rosenberg will sue. Rabbi Hirt denies this as motive for refusing to comment on specifics of the case; Rabbi Rosenberg would only say that he has not yet decided whether he is considering legal action. When pressed on the matter, Rosenberg replied, "I am not saying anything. I am not saying anything."

Though it is true that YU/RIETS and the RCA will not comment on Rosenberg's case, both are very open about related policy issues. Furthermore, while it is impossible to disprove any of Rosenberg's allegations, certain questions about those allegations must be addressed.

Rabbi Rosenberg points to the fact that YU/RIETS will not accept contributions and support that he offers as one manifes-

tation of his being "ignored" by the institution. On this matter, Rabbi Hirt is very clear: "Every Jew, regardless of where he is on the spectrum is welcome to support the Torah of this institution ... any Jew; it has nothing to do with ideological labels or affiliations."

While discussing his situation with *The Commentator*, Rabbi Rosenberg frankly stated that it is his belief that "a vendetta, largely of Steven Dworken" is behind his current situation. Rosenberg points to the fact that, prior to working for the RCA, Rabbi Dworken was the Director of Rabbinic Services at YU (and in charge of placement); in other words, Rabbi Dworken has been involved with the two organizations that Rabbi Rosenberg feels have wronged him.

The painting of Rabbi Dworken as the mastermind behind Rosenberg's "destruction as an Orthodox Rabbi" is a bit curious, though, since Rabbi Dworken did not work in YU until 1988 - fourteen years after Rabbi Rosenberg was sent to his first pulpit. In fact, between 1974 and 1988, Rosenberg had been placed by YU in two other non-mechitza congregations. Moreover, Rabbi Dworken did not take a position in the administration of the RCA until 1994 - two years after

Rabbi Rosenberg was officially asked to resign. The question of how this entire history could be a "vendetta" of Dworken's, who was not involved from the beginning, remains unanswered. Rosenberg still maintains that "Dworken hates my guts," even though he admits that he has "never had words with the man."

Rabbi Rosenberg's fundamental claim, that RIETS would not forward his resume to "mechitza" shuls, does deserve investigation. According to Rosenberg, this was in violation of RIETS' own 1982 revision of Rabbinic placement policy, which states that any *musmach* of Yeshiva University would be referred, upon request, to any available positions.

The Commentator obtained a copy of the policy, which states that, "except in extra-

ordinary cases, the [Rabbinic Placement] committee will honor all requests for referral." This document, found in a 1982 edition of *Chavrusa* was drawn up by Rabbi Hirt himself. When Rabbi Hirt spoke with *The Commentator*, he expanded on the ambiguous "extraordinary cases" clause, and stated that one who "identified himself Rabbinically" with other Jewish movements (including Reform, Conservative, and Reconstructionist) "would not [be] consider[ed] ... as a candidate that would be appropriate for referral to Orthodox congregations."

This in itself is unclear, because though it was not official policy, RIETS did send some *musmachim* to Conservative-affiliated synagogues. Rabbi Hirt insists that this was only in cases in which proper Halachic authorities were consulted. In fact, Rabbi Hirt prefers to refer to these synagogues as "Orthodox with deviation," even though some (including Rabbi Rosenberg's) were openly affiliated with the Conservative United Synagogue organization.

When asked why he is making this an issue if he is happy with his current position, Rabbi Rosenberg answered, "this fight isn't on my behalf." He explained that it is his goal to ensure that no future *musmachim* of RIETS will ever let the placement service send them to Conservative synagogues.

According to Rabbi Dworken, though, when he worked in the placement office of RIETS (1988-1993), it was his policy to tell job-seekers that taking positions in Conservative synagogues might "impact" and "jeopardize" their futures in Orthodox synagogues. Moreover, when asked whether such a situation could even arise in modern-day America, spokespeople for RIETS indicated that YU placement services will no longer refer/place recent *musmachim* in Conservative synagogues. Thus, at the very least, Rabbi Rosenberg need not worry about this issue - RIETS graduates are no longer sent to Conservative synagogues, anyway.

Through all of this, Rabbi Rosenberg professes a deep love for Yeshiva University and many of the values it advocates. He says that he considers the institution to be his family and his home; he hopes his children will attend Yeshiva College. He adds that he is "not here to hurt YU. This is just not the YU I want to exist."



Rabbi Bernhard Rosenberg

An Evening With Rabbi Goldwicht

BY YISHAI FLEISHER

Walking down a hallway of 475 186th St., people nearing apartment 4E heard the warm and familiar voice of Rav Goldwicht, speaking in a tone that soothed the soul. Upon entering through the wide open door they were greeted by a room packed full of YU students, enticing cakes, and a source sheets for the shiur the rabbi was about to give. The whole scene, coupled with the booming Hebrew emanating from the rabbi's lips was a reminder of evenings spent in Rabbis' homes far away in the Holy Land.

This is precisely the atmosphere that Rav Goldwicht is attempting to cultivate. As he explained, through giving a shiur in his apartment he is striving to give talmidim a sense of home and openness,

something he feels is integral to the yeshiva experience and Torah learning.

The Rabbi plans on giving a bi-weekly *shiur* which would have a dual-curriculum. Half of the subject matter will be dedicated to issues of halacha, the weekly parsha, or a timely topic. The second half will deal with the sensitive issues of dating and shidduchim and would encourage students to ask questions on these pertinent topics, utilizing Rav Goldwicht's vast guidance experience in these matters.

The Rav's charismatic personality and the informal atmosphere will undoubtedly make the shiurim stimulating, while being both informative and pleasurable. These shiurim are scheduled to continue throughout the year and are open to all students who wish to attend.

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YU Alum Running for Public Advocate

BY CHANAN HOSCHANDER AND
ADAM MOSES

Jules Polonetsky, a graduate of TMSTA and Yeshiva College, is running for the position of Public Advocate of New York City. He is challenging incumbent Mark Green, who is vying for a second term. Polonetsky is currently serving in the New York State Assembly for the 46th District, which comprises the communities of Brighton Beach, Coney Island, Sea Gate, and Bay Ridge.

Following his graduation from YU, Polonetsky earned his law degree from New York University School of Law. He then practiced law with the Wall Street Firm of Stroock & Stroock & Lavan. In September 1990, Polonetsky served on the staff of Congressman Stephen J. Solarz as district representative to the communities he currently represents. In 1992, Polonetsky acted as Jewish Community Liaison for New York Attorney General Robert Abrams' U.S. Senate campaign. Subsequent to that campaign, Polonetsky was enlisted as a legislative aide to U.S. Congressman Charles Schumer. In 1994, he was elected to the 46th District Assembly seat in a February special election.

Throughout his political career, Polonetsky has involved himself with a wide range of issues. While working with Congressman Schumer, Polonetsky dealt with New York City issues as well as foreign policy concerns. There he devoted his efforts to the Pollard case, the Crown Heights difficulties, and aid for Israel. He also had a significant hand in the Congressional passage of the Religious Freedom Restoration Act. In the Assembly, Polonetsky serves on the Codes, Agriculture, Health, and Housing committees.

Polonetsky has a record of standing against bigotry and intolerance. After learning that the Nation of Islam was simultaneously distributing propaganda while fulfilling a contract with New York State to provide security for a state-run housing complex, Polonetsky headed the successful effort to have that contract terminated.

The office of the Public Advocate of New York City was created in 1993 to replace the City Council President. The Public Advocate is elected independently and is next in line to the Mayor. He serves as the middleman for the citizens of the city, acting as their representative, thereby allowing them access to the City government. The New York City Charter states that the Public Advocate is responsible for reviewing "complaints... relating to services and programs, and make proposals to improve the city's response to such complaints..." Also among the requirements of the Public Advocate is the maintenance of government compliance with the City charter. Mark Green won the first election to the post. He was elected to the newly established office in 1993 and began his term on January 1, 1994. The upcoming election is to be held on November 4.

In a somewhat uncharacteristic political move viewed by pundits as yet another example of Republican Mayor Rudolph Giuliani endeavoring to blur party lines in

the coming election, the Mayor asked Polonetsky, who is a lifetime Democrat, to join him on a fusion ticket. In response to a *Commentator* inquiry, Giuliani's office provided the following statement. Concerning the launch of the partnership, the Mayor asserted that, "Jules Polonetsky, with his Albany legislative experience, understanding of the rich cultural diversity of New York City and abiding commitment to working solely to protect the interests of New Yorkers make him the perfect running-mate."

The following is a transcript of an interview *The Commentator* conducted with Assemblyman Jules Polonetsky:

Commentator: What aspect of your Yeshiva University experience was most useful in your subsequent political career?

Polonetsky: One aspect of my Yeshiva



University experience that was useful in preparing me for political life was my early morning to late evening schedule. If you're going to make it in politics, you need to be able to work incredibly long hours. Secondly, the big picture idea of Torah U'madda as a basis for understanding many aspects of life experience has been helpful. I find insights into Judaism in legislative issues. This approach adds a dimension to whatever you encounter. Thirdly, as a legislator who wears a yarmulke while working, I appreciated having had a college environment in which I could comfortably practice my religion. It assisted me in realizing that my religion is part of who I am. YU helps to integrate the religious identity with the professional identity.

Commentator: Your campaign contends that you will enjoy greater success in securing federal and state funds for New York City than your opponent will. How do you intend to do so?

Polonetsky: It's very simple—my opponent doesn't intend to ask the federal and state governments for more money.

Let me explain my position. Every year, New York City gets shortchanged in Albany. For example, the city school system educates 38 percent of the state's children, however, we receive only 34 percent of the state education aid. That doesn't seem like a tremendous difference, but it equals about \$300 million each year. That's a lot of money that could be used to buy more books, computers and to pay

for more teachers. Another example is that city residents pay about 66 percent of the tolls collected by the Triborough Bridge and Tunnel Authority, but a large share of that money goes to subsidize suburban commuters.

What I am saying is that the Public Advocate has an enormous bully pulpit. When the Public Advocate decides an issue is worth talking about, people pay attention to it. If elected, I would use that bully pulpit to focus on the fact that Albany and Washington are shortchanging New York [City]. My opponent has used the bully pulpit to focus attention on himself.

So it's a very easy question to answer. I would do a better job of getting more money from the state and federal governments because I'm the only one who thinks it is an important part of the job.

Commentator: How do you balance your identity as a religious Jewish politician with your responsibility to a wider constituency and range of issues? Does a conflict exist?

*Polonetsky: There really isn't a conflict between my religious beliefs and serving a constituency that includes people of other religions. My Assembly District is the perfect example. It's made up not only of people of many diverse religions, but many different ethnicities as well. Yet, I have been very popular in my district because I try to do what is right and most people support me for that. I think a very good example of that was when I found out that a Nation of Islam security company was patrolling a state regulated housing complex in my district. They were providing good security, but they were also handing out copies of their racist, anti-Semitic newspaper, *The Final Call*. I did not think it was right for the state to be supporting Louis Farrakhan. I convinced Governor Pataki to end the contract. Some people may think it was a "Jewish issue" because of Farrakhan's anti-Semitic record. But Jews, gentiles, and people of every ethnicity supported me for standing up to Farrakhan. If there were a similar situation, but the person involved had a record of discriminating against Catholics, Muslims, or any other religious group, I would have done the same thing and people would have supported me for it.*

Commentator: What inclined you to

cross party lines and join Mayor Giuliani in his bid for reelection?

Polonetsky: Four years ago, when I traveled around this city, to be honest it wasn't a very pretty situation. People were moving out of this city because drugs and crime were taking over. People did not feel safe, they didn't want their children growing up here, they felt like the city was unmanageable. If someone said to me four years ago that they were going to make New York the safest large city in the country, I would have said it can't be done. If someone said I'm going to take on the unions and the welfare advocates and start a workfare program — I'm going to start a program where people are asked to earn their welfare checks — I would have said it can't be done. But, Mayor Giuliani made those promises and he has kept them. He has turned this city around.

Although I am a Democrat, I don't want things to go back to the way they were when David Dinkins was the mayor. I want to see the city continue to move forward, I want to see crime continue to fall and I want this to continue to be a city where more and more people are moving to, rather than away from. That is why I am supporting Mayor Giuliani and why I am honored to be running for Public Advocate as his running mate. He kept his promises and he should be commended for that.

Commentator: When elected Public Advocate, what favorable contributions do you wish to make to the city?

Polonetsky: The Public Advocate has been given the responsibility of being the city "watchdog" — he's supposed to watch over city agencies and identify problems. My opponent believes that "watchdog" means city "critic." For the past four years, every time he has discovered a problem, he has written a report and called a press conference so he can get himself some publicity and announce to the world that there is a problem.

I don't think that this is the most productive way to do things. I will also be the city watchdog. But when I find a problem, I will handle it differently. I will go to the Mayor and tell him that I have found a problem. Then we can come up with a solution and announce that we have solved a problem. It may not get me as much publicity as calling a press conference, but I think that is a much better way to contribute to the well-being of the city.

Also, as I have said, I will be fighting to make sure New York City gets its fair share from Albany and Washington. It is not a "sexy" issue, but if we are going to solve the city's problems, we have to have the money to do it. Remember, I'm not asking for more than our fair share, but right now we send more to Albany than we get back. That's not right.

Commentator: Why might a voter be inclined to view your candidacy more favorably than that of your opponent, Mark Green?

Polonetsky: There are so many reasons, but let me outline just a few. First of all, Mark Green has already said he no longer wants to be the Public Advocate. Although he is running for re-election, he

Continued on next page

Jules Polonetsky Addresses Students

BY SHAYA SHTERN

New York City Public Advocate candidate Jules Polonetsky addressed over sixty undergraduate students at the downtown campus at the request of the College Democrats, Republicans, and Political Science Societies.

Polonetsky began his address by encouraging all in attendance to go out and get involved in the political process, saying, "Just because you are young doesn't mean you can't do it." He also told the crowd that "The Mayor is Yarmulke blind," and judges people on merit not on their religion.

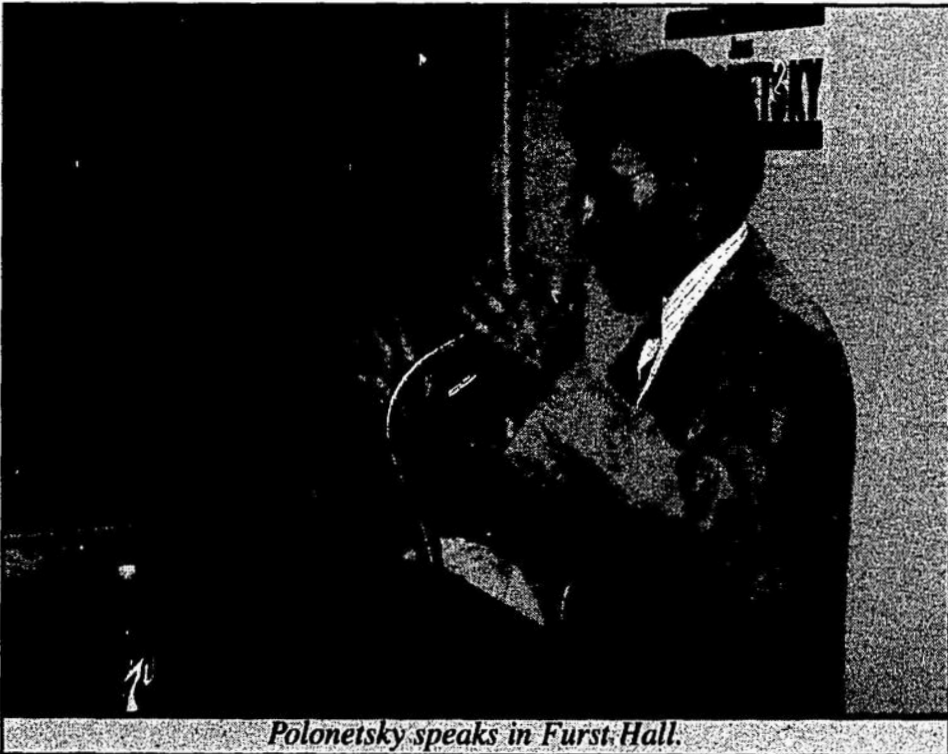
Polonetsky emphasized that he was not running on Jewish issues, but on broader campaign issues. He said he is looking forward to another four years of reduced crime and improved economic performance in New York City. He noted that he is running for Public Advocate and not "Publicity Advocate," a reference to his opponent, Mark Green. Green is planning to run for the Senate in November '98 and

Polonetsky believes that, if reelected, the incumbent Public Advocate would use his position to gain publicity for his campaign for Senator, while ignoring his responsibilities to the people of the city.

Polonetsky concluded by saying that "the future of the city is ours and it is our responsibility to go out and vote. Because if we don't go and vote then those who believe in Sharpton will go out and vote!!"

Student reaction to the speech was positive. The College Republican director, Andrew Weiss, said, "It is a great honor for us that the Assemblyman was here and that the students are getting involved in the political process. We hope that this will be the first of many successful political functions." J.P. Dunner Political Science Society President Ben Mackler remarked, "This event is only the beginning."

Any students interested in helping with the Polonetsky campaign should call (212) 451-9800.



Polonetsky speaks in Furst Hall.

Continued from previous page

has already announced that in 1998 he is going to run for the United States Senate. That means that the day he takes office, if he is re-elected, he will be spending a tremendous amount of time traveling around the state campaigning for another job. In fact, he is already doing it. The Public Advocate is supposed to preside over all City Council meetings, but since he began campaigning for Senate, he has attended only 50 percent of City Council meetings. That is not a very impressive record considering there are only two City Council meetings each month. So my first reason is I want to be Public Advocate. I will do the job for a full four-year term and I will show up to work. Mark Green only wants to be the Public Advocate if he doesn't get the job he really wants. And instead of serving the city, he will spend the first year of a second term campaigning for that job. By the way, if he does get re-elected and then becomes a U.S. Senator, the city will have to spend \$5.2 million on a special election to elect a new Public Advocate. I also think it is important for people to know that Mark Green worked for David Dinkins and

campaigned for him in 1993 when he lost to Mayor Giuliani. Mark Green supports Ruth Messinger. Do you want the city to return to what it was like in 1993? I don't, Mark Green does. And that is a very important thing to remember because if anything happens to the Mayor and he can no longer serve, the City Charter says the Public Advocate takes over as Mayor.

Finally, people should know that Mark Green refused to distance himself from Rev. Al Sharpton. When Green was asked who he would support for Mayor if Sharpton were the Democratic nominee, he refused to answer that question. Reporters asked him over and over, yet he still refused to answer. I made it very clear that I do not think that Sharpton is qualified to be the Mayor of this city or of any city for that matter. He is a divisive person who says he is trying to bring people together, but only moves them further apart. I think all responsible elected officials should have done what Comptroller Alan Hevesi had the courage to do and should have said that they would not support Sharpton. Mark Green refused to do that.

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Death Threats

Continued from page 1

Adler also forwarded his letter to Security, and on the following Monday, Zoltan was interrogated by the Office of Student Services out of concern for his own safety as well as the safety of others.

Zoltan was immediately cleared of all wrongdoing during that meeting when it was determined that someone had broken into his account from a library computer.

After eliminating Zoltan as the primary suspect, the investigators led by Don Sommers, head of YU security, were left with few clues or leads until exactly one week from the day the first letters were sent.

A second round of threatening letters were sent to YC professors on Thursday, September 18.

The letter sent to Rabbi Moshe J. Bernstein was short and to the point:

"To: mjbrnstn@ymail.yu.edu

Subject: you

be carefull when you walk around this neighborhood, I'm always watching, and death comes swiftly"

"My wife ... checked my ymail account as she does every Friday," R' Bernstein said, "She saw it and was very upset."

Sources in the administration reported that both Student Services and Security took the threats in these letters very seriously. With no way to determine if the threats were genuine or just a prank, University officials took the threats very seriously.

This time, the letters originated from a Hotmail account and not a ymail account. Hotmail is a provider of free, web-based e-mail accounts, and they do not check the identity of their customers. A person can open an e-mail account using a fake name and any address they want. The name on the account where the second series of letters originated was Fred Robenzadeh; the address was fredzl@hotmail.com.

Mr. Robenzadeh, also a student at YU, was soon cleared of any involvement. Security officials were able to determine that the messages were sent from a computer on the 11th floor of Belfer Hall.

Four days later, on Monday the 22nd, a final series of letters was mailed to every recipient of a previous threatening letter:

"Subject: confession, and apologies

Dear Sir,

During these last two weeks I may have done, I must have done, that is, sent out a number of messages that I now regret. I'm a YU student and I suffer from manic-depression for which I take rather large doses of lithi-

um. I feel terrible for what I did and would "turn myself in" but I'm really not at fault. I simply did not take my medicine for the last few weeks and for that I'm terribly soory.

Sincerely, xxx xxx"

Once again a Hotmail account was used. The address on the account, yustudent@hotmail.com, was different but the computer on which the letter originated was again located on the 11th floor of Belfer Hall.

Throughout the YU community, this letter seemed to have eased tensions a little bit since it implied that the threats were not serious. Nevertheless, Sommers continued to gather evidence until he and Student Services felt they had the right suspect.

Last Tuesday, Mr. Sommers stated that the investigation was over on his end and referred all questions to the Office of Student Services saying that it was now a student disciplinary matter. Mr. Sommers refused to comment on the result of his investigation and on the techniques he employed to track down the suspect.

Dr. Efrem Nulman, Dean of Students, also refused to comment on the specifics of this case except to note that this was the first time YU had to deal with such a serious disciplinary case focusing on technology.

He did speak about the general procedures for all disciplinary cases saying, "In the first part of the process my staff makes a decision after seeing all the evidence and giving the student a chance to reveal all pertinent information."

Nullman distances himself from this first decision because the student has one final chance to appeal directly to him. Nullman says the distance helps him keep an open mind during the appeals process but, his decision is final.

"W.H. Auden once observed that 'there is a children's game called cops and robbers; there is no children's game called saints and sinners,'" remarked R' Carmy upon learning the investigation was over. "Why and how people go wrong and how to mend it is a very grown-up occupation and this time of year is the best time to think about it."

The student who allegedly sent the threats has accepted an offer to voluntarily withdraw from the university pending his appeal, and was escorted off campus on Tuesday by Rabbi Adam Miller of Student Services and three Security Guards.

PERSONALITIES:

Dr. Barry Potvin

BY BEN-ZION M. RADINSKY

Barry Potvin, Ph.D. has been a mainstay of the Biology Department at Yeshiva College for nearly seventeen years. Potvin is an associate professor of Biology at Yeshiva College and a visiting professor of Cell Biology at the Albert Einstein College of Medicine (AECOM). Potvin earned his B.A. from Brandeis University and his Ph.D. in Genetics from University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, under the tutelage of Harry Gooder, where. Potvin's primary research was in bacterial genetics. Currently, Potvin is working with Dr. Pamela Stanley at AECOM. Their present research involves determining the role of carbohydrates on the surface of the cell membrane and how this relates to the immune system, to the growth of cancer cells and to the general development of the cell. In addition to his 17 years of service to YU, Potvin has been an esteemed member of the AECOM staff for eight years.

Although his stature is unassuming, his mind is piercing. When one experiences the jolting lectures of Dr. Potvin, one can only marvel at his wealth of knowledge and the speed of his delivery. Potvin attributes his teaching method to his undergraduate Molecular Biology professor. While describing this professor, Potvin remarked that "this teacher was a sadist!" Potvin recalled that the professor would begin the semester in a very disconcerting manner. Shortly into the lecture, students began to notice that several obvious mistakes were being made. The students justified the mistakes of the teacher thinking it was they who erred. Several moments later, the professor astounded the class by calling them names and insulting their intellect. The professor then exclaimed that he expected the students to find his mistakes, and in this way he engaged the class in active learning. As the semester progressed the students became more involved in the class, learning not only a body of knowledge, but a method of thinking. The final obstacle of the semester was an exam that did not test the knowledge of Microbiology per se, but the application this science in the research world. The tests were given without a time limit and the students were told that the test should take between ten minutes and five hours. This, however was only the beginning of the misery. The test, several pages long, consisted only of results from experiments. The students were then expected to develop a theory from the newfangled data. As the last page approached students began to sigh in relief, however the final instruction was to deliver the test to the professors office. Once the student had made the delivery, he/she would receive another test sheet with the answers to the first section, and was asked to develop new experiments to test these hypotheses. Potvin stated that it was the unique style of this professor that gave him the skills he needed to conduct scientific studies as he exclaimed that "nothing could have prepared me more for life in a research lab." Despite this experience, Potvin laments his inability to fully prepare students as his professors had, but claims that with the dual curriculum of Yeshiva College



time is sparse and these conditions do not allow for full implementation of these interesting teaching techniques.

Nevertheless, Potvin feels that the dual curriculum molds the minds of Yeshiva College students. Potvin stated that he believes that the dual curriculum is one of the reasons for their competitiveness with top students from other universities. Potvin explained that, "the AECOM staff believes that [Yeshiva University] students are competitive, and come to medical school equally prepared to those students from top universities." According to Potvin, the one area which needs improvement is our student's writing skills. Potvin also noted that most students entering medicine from Yeshiva University are science majors and hence, have a weaker background in the humanities.

However, Potvin does maintain that these students come fully prepared in the sciences. In his opinion, although the majority of students from other universities are humanities majors and are more qualified in worldly skills, they are not as qualified as YU students in the advanced sciences required in medical school.

In order to improve the education of Yeshiva University students Potvin has charged the school to build new labs which will use the latest in technology and have the ability to utilize the art techniques in scientific research. Also, he hopes that professors will be given more research opportunities so that they will be able to provide students with means to become more involved in research. Dr. Potvin does have positions available in his laboratories in AECOM for summer research, but he wishes he could offer more.

Discussing his own personal decision regarding research, Potvin said, "I was convinced to enter Genetics after my undergraduate research with Charles Fulton. Together we designed several new drosophila [fruit fly, i.e. a primary research tool for geneticists] experiments, and it was through him that I decided to go into Genetics." Potvin believes that Genetics is a new and exciting field and encourages students to enter this discipline. However, Potvin has qualified this advice by stating that "you had better get a second job!" as he mused over how the lack of funding for research is permeating all areas of higher study. Potvin also warns that in the future many ethical problems may occur. However, he does not believe that these problems should impede research, rather he believes that legislation should prohibit the use of genetic information by insurance companies and employers to discriminate against any person.

During his seventeen years on the YU campus, Professor Barry Potvin has become one of the most popular biology professors in the university. While describing Dr. Potvin, Yehuda Burns said, "They don't come much better than Potvin. He is very interesting and is obviously well versed in the sciences." During the semester his students can be seen entering Belfer Hall at very strange hours of the evening. These young scientists are perpetuating the discipline of genetics and biochemistry taught to them by Dr. Potvin.

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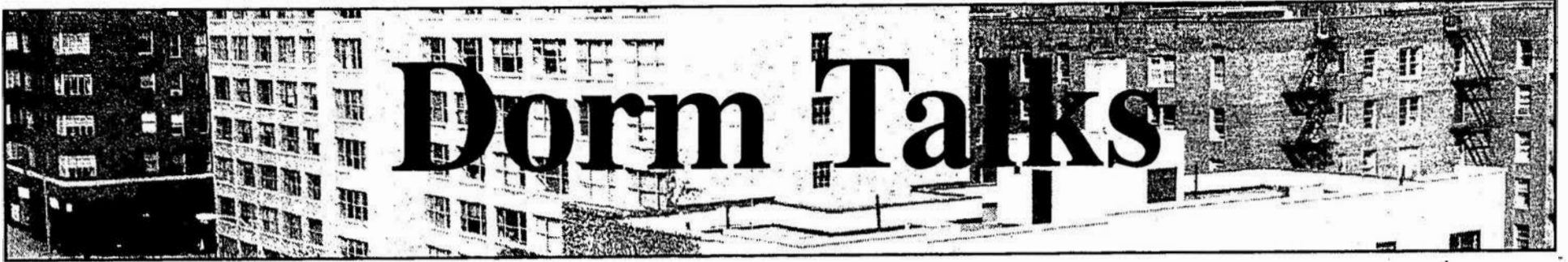
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Dorm Talks

Business Ethics

BY GIL BLOOM

This past week, YU students once again convened in Morg Lounge to listen to and respond to Rosh HaYeshiva Rabbi Norman Lamm's discourses on contemporary religiocentric matters. The selected topic of the evening was "Serious Business: Jews on the Edge of the Law," largely focusing on the range of white-collar crimes committed by Jews with more frequency than the vast majority are willing to admit.

The atmosphere was somewhat different from that of the "de rigeur" Dorm Talks, mostly as a result of the largely diminished audience. Apparently, corporate crime and workplace ethics doesn't possess the draw of a talk on polygamous dating. The panel consisted of Rabbi Yosef Blau, RIETS and MYP Mashgiach Ruchani, Rabbi Joshua Cheifetz, Director of Residence Halls, Rabbi, Dr. Norman Lamm, President and Rosh HaYeshiva, and Rabbi Dr. Michael Shmidman, Dean of Undergraduate Jewish Studies.

Several aspects of business ethics were tackled. The overall topic was subdivided into three scenarios, beginning with the highly visible offenses, moving on to those that may even seem justified, and closing with the more common situations nearly every young Jew will encounter on his rise up the corporate ladder.

Chillul Hashem vs. Kiddush Hashem

The first issue discussed was painfully apropos - illicitly using federal funding for Jewish-oriented causes. It may well have been this topic which was the entire motivation for this session of Dorm Talks, where only a few weeks prior to the discussion, "ultra-Orthodox" Jews were caught utilizing federally-funded Pell Grants to finance yeshivas and other Jewish causes. Pell Grants are intended to be used for attaining a college education, providing school lunch money and the like, and no matter how worthy the perpetrator's ends, the means was judged unilaterally to be unquestionably unethical.

Rabbi Lamm primed his response to the presented issues by quoting the Rambam in *Hilchot Geneiva V'aveida*, where the Rambam states that to return the lost object of an idol worshipper is forbidden, because to do so is to "support the wicked." Rabbi Lamm qualified this statement by explaining that this law is not applicable today due to contemporary circumstances. "This halacha applies to a society where the goyim were *rishei olam*, the most wicked, where they were...cruel, indecent, sadistic people. Otherwise...the whole thing does not apply, [since] they are not *rishei olam*." Rabbi Lamm then came to the heart of the relevant halacha, and quoted the Rambam further: "[I]f [the Jew] is returning [the object to the non-Jew] to be *m'kadash et Hashem*, to glorify G-d, in order that Israel be praised, and all will know that [the Jews] are *badei emuna*, truthful people, this is praiseworthy; in a place where there will be a *chillul Hashem*, a denigration of G-d's name, one is obligated to return the object." Thus, expressed the Rabbi, the root of the matter is set in whether or not one is creating a *chillul Hashem* or *kiddush Hashem*, "that expresses the real moral intent of halacha."

Rabbi Lamm brought the discourse from

the theoretical level to the applicable. "Do I defend the actions of the Orthodox Jews [involved in illicit handling of federal funds] to my goyish friends and acquaintances? Of course not!" Rabbi Lamm boomed. "Unless, of course, I want to defend *chillul Hashem* to them. Now, what fool is going to do that?!"

The President sent the message home with the fearful and enraged sentiment that such a defense may come to greater harm. "Defend the actions of your Orthodox friends? What? Stealing? Cheating. How about killing, are you going to defend that too?"

"Orthodoxy"

The next issue on the agenda was Orthodoxy vs. Observance. Orthodoxy is a misused label in today's Jewish communities observed the Rabbi, "regardless of the shul [a Jew] davens at or is the Rabbi of." Likewise, he claimed, a Jew's dealing falsely in business is no less a *chillul Hashem* than were he to incur an *issur d'oraita*, an express prohibition of the Torah. "I would not say that a Jew who cheats on his income tax is an Orthodox Jew...He is not an Orthodox Jew! He's dressed like an



Orthodox Jew, he speaks poor English like an Orthodox Jew (audience and panel laugh), [but] say what you will, He's not an Orthodox Jew," stated R' Lamm

To cheat the government, expressed the President, is a violation of *dina d'malchuta dina* ("the law of the land is the halacha"), and that *klal* is one held almost universally to be on level with any *issur d'oraita*.

A subtopic of the first issue questioned the handling of a situation in which rabid anti-Semitism was the cause. Rabbi Lamm responded that in those cases he blamed the Jews for "giving the anti-Semite more reason than is absolutely necessary to hate Jews." He stated his belief that these cases are Hashem's method of teaching us that we must change something; if we are doing something illegal, then Hashem makes us look bad. "And if we are guilty," concluded Rabbi Lamm, "than we will have to have a red face, and simply swallow our pride, and make sure that we expel such cancers from the body of Orthodoxy."

Stolen Torah

"Can you steal to help torah institutions?" was the next subcategory

addressed. To respond to this inquiry, R' Lamm related a story attributed to the Rav. A yeshiva in a certain community was having financial troubles. One of its *rabbaim* went to the Rav and stated, "Rebbe, if we don't produce some money through some illegal method, we will have to close down the yeshiva." The Rav, unhesitatingly answered, "then close it."

"To study Torah which is acquired by *gneiva*? That is unthinkable!" cried Rabbi Lamm, "That's not Torah. Better to have less Torah and [not to] steal...This [question of stealing for the sake of Torah] is a tragic question, because the reason most [often] given [as an explanation] why [one] cheated or stole is to give to their institutions, especially torah institutions."

Rabbi Dr. Lamm closed the first segment of Dorm Talks with advice for those entering the professional fields, and particularly those entering the business world: "If you wear a yarmulke or your head... that sensitizes people to who you are. It means that whatever you do that is

in China...let's face it, the Western world is a pretty damned indifferent group of people, and if every group that was persecuted decides that it is going to continue its life by violating [laws] and hurting everybody else, then we are back to a civil war of global extent. It is not an excuse."

Dina D'Malchusa Dina

In consonance with the second topic, which involved the smuggling of valuable contraband into Soviet Russia, R' Lamm invoked the concept of *dina d'malchusa dina*. He established that even in this particular case, in which the offense was not punishable, except by confiscation of the item in question, the smuggling was *assur*, it being a violation of *dina d'malchusa*. The parameters of the law according to the Rambam, and explained by R' Lamm, are that the law be "a continuation of that country's constitution, or at least its legal traditions from the past," and that it refers "only to when the law applies to equally to all citizens." Otherwise, "it is *prima facie* unjust. When the law is obviously unjust, the law does not have to be observed."

The Rabbi further commented that "The [law dealing with a contraband item] applies to all people...to Uzbeks, to Ukrainians, to Russians, to Jews, and you have to obey it, and that's the law." In a show of emotion, the President claimed, "If they say you can't bring in *tefillin*, then you tell them to go to a warm place. That they have no right to do, because then they are discriminating against Jews, or if you will...against religion. And in that case, it is not *dina d'malchusa dina*."

At one moment of wry humor, the Rosh HaYeshiva addressed the question of whether or not it is permissible to cheat the government of Israel if not the Soviet government. "I don't get it," he mused, shaking his head, "Does that mean that Russia you cannot cheat, but Israel you can cheat? That sounds like a Neturei Karta question to me. No, you're not even allowed to cheat Israel."

Tzedek Tzedek Tirdof

The final topic was perhaps the most applicable to the lives of the burgeoning young Jewish professional; should one, if asked to participate in a questionable business practice, even one that is not uncommonly practiced, involve himself in such an activity, even if it means receiving a pink slip? The answer, said R' Lamm, is absolutely not. To demonstrate the prioritization that one must undergo when weighing torah ethics versus job security, the Rabbi cited his father as the appropriate model. In the early part of this century, when it was nearly impossible for Jews to remain shomer shabbos and work simultaneously, the Rosh HaYeshiva's father refused to work on Saturday. "How did you manage to do it?" I asked him. He said 'How can I work on shabbos? A Jew doesn't do such things.' That's really the sacrifice you make for *ben adam lamakom*. Why shouldn't the same element of sacrifice exist for *ben adam lachaveiro*? How can you take a job where you have to steal? The *Ribbono Shel Olam* made us into

beautiful... is tenfold more beautiful because you are religious. And if you do anything that is deplorable or unethical, then it is ten times as bad as if anyone else would do it. [Your religiosity] magnifies whatever you do."

On Civil Disobedience

—Dean Norman Adler, seated to the rear rather than with the panel, took advantage of the question and answer period to ask the status of civil disobedience. R' Lamm reflected for a moment, and made a judgment call that his "heart tells[him it is OK]." He then rationalized the situation: "You're not doing it for profit, you're not doing it [in and underhanded way], you simply are demonstrating, and you are demonstrating in a way that you want to break a law that in your mind is immoral. I think it is OK."

Dean Adler followed up with another question: How does one respond to those who claim they are trying to rebuild institutions the Western world attempted to destroy in the Holocaust, and will do so even if it means violating their laws? "I don't buy it," R' Lamm firmly answered, "That the Western world was indifferent to us, yes...but you have to understand that the Western world was indifferent to Biafra, and to the plight of Christians



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Music, Theatre, Restaurants, Cinema

ENTERTAINMENT

L.A. Confidential

Starring Kevin Spacey, Danny DeVito, and Kim Basinger

FILM REVIEW
BY YAIR OPPENHEIM

Does the phrase "trouble in paradise" ring a bell? Do you consider lines like "Just the facts ma'am" or "Thank you for the assistance, ma'am" tiring clichés? Look further, because this film will make you forget all of those cliché-ridden *Dragnet* teleplays, as you'll start thinking that this was their source material. *L.A. Confidential* is a smart, well written, well acted, and well directed crime-drama, whose only vice lies in the fact that many people won't see it until it gets nominated for handfuls of Oscars. For those of you who only enjoy watching the best of the best, this one is it. I can guarantee, based on the mutual opinions of a majority of critics, that nominations for best picture and director, along with numerous acting nominations, are not out of its reach.

This film is a thinking film so filled to the brim with numerous subplots and intricately written character relationships that any attempt to summarize it would do it injustice. It's a story about cops, drugs, mobsters, duplicitous blondes and tabloid journalism. Sound familiar? This is the basic plot description of film noir. Notable director Martin Scorsese (*Raging Bull*, *Goodfellas*, *Casino*) sums up the genre nicely in a recent *New York Times* article (September 26, 1997): "It created an image of the world . . . because of its brooding nature, because of its sense of fatalism. [The plot] is all in the mood and atmosphere. In film noir, the plot is never sewn up too tightly. Most of these films touched a chord; they were about descending into a labyrinth where any-

thing can happen, including the death of the protagonist." The specific plot of this film revolves around the death of drug kingpin Micky Cohen in Los Angeles, along with the succession of murders that result from some unknown individual's particular interest in acquiring the franchise of the deceased. In comes the police department, a crew of mostly unredeemable souls. They are so far removed from the true image of a cop, that any movement towards the route of pure intentions would be met by awkwardness. It was well put by one of the characters: "Don't start doing the right thing boy-o, you haven't had the practice."

The characters are very clear cut. Kevin Spacey plays Jack Vincennes, a popular narcotics cop, who answers to the calls of Sid Hudgeons (played by Danny DeVito), the local tabloid journalist, who offers him money for the "Jack Vincennes retirement fund" by having him bust criminals for the stories that he follows with his press entourage. Spacey gets involved in the investigations of officers Bud White and Ed Exley, played by unknowns Guy Pierce and Russell Crowe, respectively. These two are such contrasting personalities that when they aren't at each other's throats, they define the game of "good cop, bad cop" to such perfection, you'd have thought they invented the idea. Other casting includes James Cromwell as Dudley, a wise, experienced police captain, and Kim Basinger as Lynn Bracken, the obvious femme fatale.

Films like these shouldn't be virtual wonders to the audience. To the average eye, everything works. Nobody seems to

look to why the elements mix so well. The casting of a group of relatively unknown actors (with the exceptions of DeVito, Basinger, and rising stars Spacey and Cromwell) works for a reason other than helping a low budget film get off the ground: it provides suspense. If the cast list included Harrison Ford or Sylvester Stallone, we'd all know that neither of them would come to any real harm during the course of the story. This is why new actors are easy fair game to the twists and turns of the plot (and boy, does this plot have them). This film also includes the best duo you could ever find: a good plot and interesting characters. The film's script is directed with clockwork and precision; there's not a moment wasted. Every scene is included for advancing the plot or developing a character. The film's score kicks in at the right moment to provide tension with the rumblings of a tuba or a trombone; not to just add generic sounds that "should be there." Everything works.

The most interesting part of the film was the acting. The performances were top notch, and for a reason: the script developed the characters to the point where they could exist outside of the film. That, to me, is the best part of a film. When relationships between characters are so well developed or familiar, they can transcend the situations of the films themselves. Case in point: The relationships between Ray Kinsella and his father in *Field of Dreams* was so powerfully formed that I can easily make a case and say that the movie wasn't about Kevin Costner's love for baseball; it was about the relationship between a father

and a son.

The actors in this film are lucky to work with a script like this. They don't play the parts of detectives or journalists; they play the parts of people. It appears that the actors worked on this idea, which is why they didn't offer clichéd performances. What stunned me in this film was the fact that the actors played out who they were to a point of uniqueness. There may be five different cops in the film, but they don't play "cops." Kevin Spacey was supposed to be a popular cop, so he played his cop like he was a Hollywood star. Russell Crowe played a tough cop with a touch of honesty, so he had the chance to show it. Even Danny DeVito was able to shine in his performance as a sleazy journalist, because every time he got a dirty story, he smiled like a kid who ate his first piece of candy. The actors played people, not roles. This is what separates the hackneyed from the fresh.

Another surprising part of this film was that even the director and writer were virtually unknown. If I was to tell you that director Curtis Hanson previously directed second rate thrillers like *The River Wild*, and *The Hand That Rocks The Cradle*, and that writer Brian Koppelman's previous credits include *Nightmare on Elm Street 4* and *Assassins*, you'd be quite surprised. It makes no difference, though, because a film like this makes you forget all your troubles, even the fact that you'll never see another film like this in a long time.

★★★★ Stars of David

STOMP!

THEATER REVIEW
BY MORDECHAI LEVOVITZ

Finding a respected play with no sex, no love, and no women singing is a difficult task indeed. This must have been a dilemma for the student council when they decided to take YU out to a play during orientation week. Finally it hit them; "STOMP," the popular off Broadway show which features people making music with janitorial tools, would be the perfect solution. Hence, during orientation week the student council managed to give a good part of both YC and Stern...a massive headache.

In small lettering, on page nineteen, the play's playbill, reads *Stomp* is performed with out an intermission." This line should be printed on every ticket as a surgeon's general warning. It's not that I was not impressed with the incredible percussions one can make with a broom, I totally acknowledge that each performer must be incredibly talented. The problem is basically that the show is too long.

The play is made up of approximately nine thirteen-minute acts, of which each

of them in its own right is astounding and amusing. If the play was over in three acts it would have been an enjoyable evening. There is no reason to play all nine acts; it is just the same gimmick every time. The actors expect that by the seventh number we should still be surprised that they can make music with spoons. It is at this time when the audience starts to appreciate the creation of the musical instrument. During the eighth act, I for the first time yearned for the sweet sounds of the cello, the moving harmonies of the piano, or even the cheerful ping of the triangle. I mean after an hour the show starts to sound like an annoying neighbor endlessly knocking on the door. The show should have been called "STOP!"

"Stomp" had the potential of being a good full length play; it just needed characters. I wanted to see stomping with personality. "Cats" has no plot either, but it has characters. It is the stage personalities that make the show. Personality instills flavor into whatever is being done, even if it is banging tubes on the floor. Interesting characterization would have

created the intrigue necessary to carry the show for two hours.

The only "stomper" that expressed personality and aroused intrigue was Anthony Sparks. He single-handedly stole the show. This skinny flamboyant African-American stomped with style. He enhanced his motions with slinky femininity. His provocative twists subtly added sexuality to the dance (and not just any sexuality, but homosexuality). This was incredibly refreshing being that the rest of the cast, including the two women seemed exceedingly macho. But while the audience could not get enough of him, the cast seemed almost embarrassed by Anthony. This was yet another flaw in this romp.

The play's rave reviews and popularity only exemplify a current phenomenon, the new respect for bohemia. "Vive la boheme." Bohemia (as a movement), dead for almost two decades now, seems to have come back to life and to have taken theater by storm. The media seems to be attracted to this counter culture. Anything that in the slightest form challenges the traditional form of

culture is automatically brilliant. Just look at the success of "Rent." It won the Tony award for best musical, and is the hardest play to get tickets to. Yet after waiting a whole day to get twenty dollar front row seats, I was extremely disappointed with the play. It was loud, over-acted, and simple. There was no emotion that lingered on with you after the play. There was no tune that you find yourself humming the next day at work. In short, as a musical, *Rent* sucked! Yet, because it represents the rebirth of bohemia, it is now the best reviewed play on Broadway. People say they like *Rent* just to fit in with the latest fad. *Stomp's* bohemian tones certainly accounts for it's success.

To end on a lighter note, if I had to pick a play to attend, that could not have sex, love, or *kol isha*, I would choose the new play *Barrimore*. Christopher Plummer (of *The Sound of Music* fame) returns to Broadway and gives a knock-out performance. The play is smart, funny and touching. A full review of this play will follow in a few weeks. For now, keep this in mind: If you are interested in music, learn to play an instrument, not the broom.

ENTERTAINMENT

Music, Theatre, Restaurants, Cinema

The Game

Starring Michael Douglas and Sean Penn

FILM REVIEW
BY YAIR OPPENHEIM

Close your eyes for a brief moment and reflect upon your childhood. Do you remember finding yourself the victim of a cruel game orchestrated by one of your best friends? I'm sure you have. In retrospect, an occurrence like that would be meaningless; like a drop in a bucket. Now stop in your tracks. Catapult this situation to the nth degree. You're now talking to your friend in present day 1997 when suddenly, he pulls a gun on you. You notice it's really loaded. You then wonder: is this some sick joke?

This is the premise of David Fincher's slickly executed thriller, *The Game*. Fincher successfully convinces his audience that even a sliver of suspicion is a sign of trouble. The less-convoluted version of the plot is as follows: Nicholas Van Orton (played chillingly well by Michael Douglas) is a billionaire without a soul. As a birthday present, his estranged younger brother Conrad (played by Sean Penn) decides to offer him what he calls "a profound life experience", which, by his standards, translates into a gift certificate for a "service" offered by the vaguely named company, Consumer Recreation Services (CRS). After a bit of hesitation, Douglas, infatuated by curiosity, accepts the challenge and redeems his certificate, still unaware of the implications. As he continues his daily routine, Douglas has unknowingly made the first move in what could only be considered "the Twilight Zone of games." Little accidents start to befall Douglas, and puzzling as they may be, he dismisses them because what else could they be, but "little accidents?" Soon little accidents become bigger accidents and the game seems more than a string of coincidence.

Though initially maintaining a rather flat trajectory as "game pieces" spring to confront him, the challenges that Douglas needs to overcome begin to contain a higher amount of dramatic significance. Gone are the silly annoyances of day to day work, and thus arrive more life-threatening situations and issues that provoke retrospection. As the situations become more and more extreme, Douglas' level of tolerance is put to the test. Being that CRS has a complete file on him, no stone from Douglas' life is left unturned. Every object or person with whom Douglas has been in contact with is part of this game, and therein lies the problem. Douglas is compelled to second-guess every uncertainty that occurs during the day. This is a pleasure for any viewer who wants to keep guessing at what comes next, because it's impossible. There is no end to the open amount of possible "game targets" that could be used; it is the largest possible canvas for a storyboard: someone's life. It generates excitement within the audience, as every camera movement or close-up may

appear intentional, and this is exactly what keeps the film riveting: audience involvement.

The film makes an effort to show how it's possible to yank the soul out of someone's life. The screenplay does it piece by piece. First, it starts with simple contraptions not working, continues with sensitive pushes of privacy invasion, rejection, loss and other feelings that can potentially hurt. It's largest blows come with financial insecurity, loneliness, and, ultimately, full-blown depression. The total loss of a sense of security is one that can drive anyone to undertake extreme measures. This is exactly what fuels Douglas' breakdown.

The acting potential is maximized by the stars of the film. Michael Douglas returns to familiar territory as he plays a rich investment banker with the same cruel elegance that he had in his Oscar-winning role in *Wall Street*. As Douglas' rage and patience hit their boiling points, he relies upon the experience he got from his role in *Falling Down*, where he portrays an average Joe that suddenly cracks. Sean Penn also revisits the past as he plays a reckless youth dealing with the results of bad choices, a role he played once too often in such films as *Fast Times at Ridgmont High* and *Racing With The Moon*. The production design, score, costumes and editing are all of average quality, as there was nothing special that this film needed.

As far as direction goes, it seems that David Fincher will soon be able to pronounce himself as the new king of cinematic suspense. Though only having three films to his name, he has managed to touch on different aspects of the nature of suspense. *Alien 3*, though suffering from a lack of amiable characters, gave Fincher a conduit to express the nature of fear. By using the audience's familiarity with the alien and through a creative use of camera angles, Fincher was able to force a long-hidden fear of the unknown to come to light and add a sense of claustrophobia to boot. *Seven* offered Fincher the chance to portray suspense through an avenue of moral decay and gruesome shocks. *The Game* offers Fincher an opportunity to do this from a classier angle by throwing real life-crushing blows to an already broken man. There are no monsters or serial killers that are used as tools to convey this message, only a feeling of insecurity. The audience is instead offered a very realistically controlled (compared to his other films), Hitchcockian take of a suspense story; a character study of a man in a situation gone wrong, and all that's needed to heighten the suspense are a cup of soda and your complete attention.

★★★1/2 Stars of David.

Know Your Alternatives

BY DAVID RAPPAPORT

Vote Tipper Gore this upcoming presidential election. Her policies regarding censorship in music are not only appealing, but refreshing as well. Why should America's youth be exposed to harmful language in a society already degraded by violence and talk shows featuring obese white trash declaring, "I take care of my kids and I ain't never been to jail," all while presenting an open palm into their neighbors' face? What place do these colloquialisms have in a society filled with people whose entire existence is defined by their undying desire for the betterment of mankind? I endeavored to find a glimpse of the first hand reaction of the "right" people. In order to achieve my goal I decided to assemble 3 upstanding mothers of children in their early twenty's and placed them in front of the MTV and observed their respective reactions.

Mom 1: Why are those bees chasing that poor man?

Me: Those bees will turn into the Wu-Tang Clan.

Mom 2: What religion is that?

Mom 3: Are you in a cult young man?

Me: No. Of course not.

Mom 2: I don't like this in the least bit.

Mom 3: Look at him. What in the world is he meant to be?

Me: That's Beck.

Mom 1: I don't like his brazen hand shandy.

Mom 2: Nor do I like his foot action.

Mom 1: He's got way too much foot action.

Mom 3: Who are those half naked women?

Me: That's the Spice Girls.

Mom 3: My daughter would never buy this.

Me: Too late.

Mom 2: You know who I like?

Me: Who?


Mom 2: Those three young blonde boys....

Me: Hanson.

Mom 2: Yes!!!!

We have a winner! Why should we even bother wasting our time on a devilish mastermind such as Marilyn Manson whose only desire is to initiate more young naïve children into his nefarious cult? Not only does he insult the public's intelligence, he is downright banal. And what of our young slacker friend Beck? I'm unsure as to whether I can recall one article written about him that did not use the term "slacker" at least ten times. Many people like to call him brilliant. Young people see him on the TV and say "wow! look at that dance! that's brilliant!" or "his lyrics are brilliant man!" "I've got a devil's haircut in my mind." Since when is being vague considered brilliant? I've read horrible college poetry in homage to the beat writers that have three times as much substance. Beck is about as brilliant as my left cheek. This leads us right to Hanson. Their lyrics aren't oblique, they write nice melodies, and are wholesome and clean. They make music fun again. They don't stand in one place while singing their songs like all forlorn, obsequious college complaint rock artists do. They move around, smile and entertain. They give me more bang for my buck. They represent everything right about America today...

I've got one turntable and a lot of Beatles records.




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EQUAL OPPORTUNITY EMPLOYER

It Takes All Sorts of People

BY COMMENTATOR STAFF

The Torah portion read annually before Rosh Hashana is parshat *Nitzavim*. In it, Moses assembles the Jewish people to receive his final charge and to hear his last words to them as their leader. The parsha begins with a description of the way the entire Jewish people appear standing before God, "*Atem nitzavim hayom kulchem lifney Hashem Elokeychem*." The pasuk delineates who is included in Kahal Am Yisrael: "*Rosheichem shifteichem, zikneichem, v shotreichem— kol ish Yisrael*." - "The heads of your tribes, your elders, and your officers — all the men of Israel." The Torah tells us that the Jewish people are headed by their leaders and the prominent members of the nation. But that is not all, that does not complete the demographic makeup of the Jewish people. The pasuk continues and says "*Tapchem, nesheichem, v gercha asher bekerev machanecha, mechotev eitzecha ad sho'ev meimach*." - "Your children, your women, and the convert in the midst of your camp, from the wood chopper to the water carrier."

There is a klal, a general rule, that what we are told in the Torah is everlasting, and is as pertinent today as it was when it was said or written. This is the foundation of our faith as Jews. Torah is immutable and unchanging, and the passage of time does not dull the message nor modify it in the least.

Therefore Moses it not merely describing how the Jewish people appeared to his eyes on that day in the distant past some three thousand odd years ago. He is prescribing for all time and for all generations of Jews the requirements for standing before their Maker, "*Li hvrecha b brit Hashem Elokecha*," (to pass into the covenant of Hashem your God).

And how must the entire Jewish people appear? As one entity, one continuous unit, which encompasses all the segments of the Jewish population from the elite

strata of the leaders to the lowest of the water carriers. If any of the Jewish people are missing or excluded, all of us are lacking and none of us are complete. It is utterly unacceptable to separate oneself from any of his fellow Jews even if they are not on the same level of society or religious observance. A group composed solely of the "*Rosheichem*," of the leaders and heads of Jewry is not only incomplete in its composition, it is a group that is unfit to stand before God.

The Ohr Hachaim Hakadosh takes it a step further. He explains that not only was Moses bringing the entire nation together before God, but he was enjoining them with a sacred pact. This was a covenant of "*Areivut*," of literally making each and every Jew a "guarantor" for his fellow Jew. Every Jew was required to strive to help his fellow Jew in his observance "*L bal yaavor pi Hashem*," (in order that none should transgress the word of God). Each and every Jew is inextricably intertwined with all of his Jewish brethren in one overarching living entity of the "Kingdom of Priests and a Holy Nation."

One of the Hasidic masters expounded and elaborated on this principle. We know that prayer before God should be done with a "*Tzibbur*," a quorum of Jews, and this is the optimum manner for our prayers and supplications to be accepted before the heavenly throne. The word "*Tzibbur*" is made up of the Hebrew letters "*tzadi*," "*bet*," and "*reish*." These letters, said the Hasidic Rebbe, are an acronym representing the three major classes of Jews: "*Tzaddikim*," the righteous ones; "*Beinonim*," those who are in the middle of the scale and are neither perfectly pious or grave sinners; and "*Reshaim*," the wicked sinners amongst us. To truly be a "*Tzibbur*," to truly represent the Jewish people and present our prayers before the Almighty, one must be part of a group

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consisting of all of these classes. It is not possible for one group of Jews to exclude or denigrate another section of the Jewish people and still be a viable conduit to request celestial blessings. Rather it is only an all inclusive body with representation from each of the segments that make up the Jewish Nation that is able to stand before our

creator on the Judgement Day and ask for his forgiveness and blessing.

May it be the will of the Almighty that all of his people be inscribed in the Book of Life and that no Jew should be excluded from the Achdut of the Jewish people.

Gmar Chatima Tova! L'Shana Tova u' Metukah!

ALTRUISM ON CAMPUS

A Club Devoted To A Kind, Yet Onerous Task

BY AKIVA HERZFELD

She is certainly not a Stern girl, nor is she even Jewish, but every Saturday Yonaton Kaganoff pays her a visit. For the past three weeks, after a lunch of kugel, kishka, and cholent, Yonaton has staved off heat and rain to walk 15 minutes to visit Peggy Anderson. He sings songs to her, he shakes her hand, and he happily reminisces about life with her. But Yonaton is not alone in his visits to Peggy — over 20 Yeshiva bochrim have gone with Yonaton to talk to and joke with Peggy.

They are the members of the bikur cholim club, and on shabbat they hike up to the Fort Tryon nursing home to visit the sick and the elderly. In comparison to years past, the student turnout this year for the bikur cholim club has been tremendous. Mike Samuels, the public relations director for the bikur cholim club said, "last year we averaged five to six students, while this year we have had more than twenty every week." Mike attributes this year's successful turnout to his savvy PR skills. He has started to publicize the club, putting up signs and personally asking students to come.

It is no easy job to market the bikur cholim club. With other Sabbath afternoon activities such as sleep, constipation, and meditation drawing large crowds, it

has been difficult for the bikur cholim club to attract a large following. Bikur cholim means visiting the sick, and references of visits to the sick date back to when the angels visited Abraham, but in the twentieth century the sick and elderly don't seem to be as interesting to youngsters as they used to.

Daniel Robbins, the president of the club, said, "People seem to be concerned with other things." He added that the number of students participating always declines in the winter because of the bad weather and short afternoons. As for Robbins, he has been making trips to the nursing home for almost three years, and he has undertaken a commitment to stay in YU for the Sabbath to make sure the club functions properly.

From a practical point of view, there is not much incentive to be active in the bikur cholim club. While other community active clubs (i.e. community literacy club) have received widespread news attention and generous praise, the bikur cholim club continues to wallow in anonymity. Moreover, for those students preoccupied with ameliorating their resume to impress Joe Finance, their potential boss, to Joe, the words "bikur cholim" sound more like gibberish than serious substance. But, perhaps the most negative aspect of the club, which leads the most students to stay far away, is the

pleasure factor. The small turnouts indicate that most students do not view visiting the sick and elderly as enjoyable. One student, Pinchas Kunin, who participated in the club only once, described himself as "downright miserable" after performing his good deed for the day. The leaders of the club describe how they actually get very few second time customers. Unfortunately, while a student might be convinced to participate on one Sabbath, when the next week comes, the chances are that he won't be there.

In describing the club, Robbins was hard-pressed to find practical benefits for students. Robbins suggested that walking up to the nursing home often facilitates the digestion of the cafeteria food. In addition, he initially stated that talmidim build long-lasting relationships with elderly patients. However, Robbins quickly retracted this, when he remembered that all the patients whom he had strong relationships with have passed away.

Mike Samuels, assessed the value of the club with more success. "The students learn to appreciate the elderly more," he said, "both in terms of understanding what they are going through, and, more importantly, by realizing that there is sometimes much to be learned from them. A few patients have told us stories about

World War II, and others have told us stories about Stalin."

The point about Stalin made Mike recall something else: "We need a student who speaks Russian," he said. "There is one patient there who only speaks Russian, no English. Although his wife does speak English, she is the only one he can talk to, and he looks lonely."

The bikur cholim club needs all types of students. The club leaders put out a special call to "charismatic" students who are jovial and friendly, but they said they will take anyone. There are six floors in the nursing home, but because there are not enough students for all the floors, the students have only visited patients on three. In future weeks, as student participation continues to decline, the club will visit two floors, and then only one floor.

Although this year the bikur cholim club has had record numbers of students participating, with each week the number of students involved has declined. Despite the obvious lack of things to do at YU on a Shabbat afternoon, little interest in the club has been shown. With no signs that this is likely to change in the future, no sign that more students will join, when winter comes only the same five to ten altruistic and magnanimous students will participate; and if one week a few can't make it, Peggy will be lonely.

Editorials OPINION

THE FUTURE OF ORTHODOXY - MUCH ADO ABOUT NOTHING

BY ADAM MOSES

Much ink has been spilled and institutional blood let in contentious intra-Judaism denominational crusades. These repugnant displays of resentment have accelerated in their vociferousness over the past few years culminating in the unparalleled imbecility of the fatwah issued by the Agudath Harabonim earlier this year. While reprehensible and absolutely unjustifiable, these conflicts have been predicated on fundamental dissension over core theological matters. In contrast, the emerging chasm between "modern" Orthodoxy and "yeshiva/chasidic" Orthodoxy is all the more appalling since it is bereft of any substantive theological difference.

American Orthodox Judaism is minuscule relative to the Conservative and Reform denominations. Estimates vary but generally place American Orthodox Jews at 8-12% of the American Jewish population. Despite our minute ranks, we have devised an artificial means of engendering that divisiveness which at times unfortunately appears to be the preeminent element of our collective Jewish identity. Entire institutional structures

have been erected in the Orthodox community to advance the spurious distinction between the warring fledgling factions. The Orthodox Union, although encompassing a larger constituency in its scope of kashruth authority, has been pigeonholed as a body predominantly reflective of philosophically "modern" Orthodox perspectives. Agudath Israel represents the "yeshiva/chasidic" Orthodox community and defends its interests.

A comprehensive arsenal of deprecating rhetoric has been assembled and is employed in fervent, animosity-driven exchanges between the two sects. "Yeshiva/chasidic" Orthodox Jews are characterized as closeminded, unable to cope with contemporary times, uneducated, intellectually dishonest, having an outmoded lifestyle, extremist, conformist masses. "Modern" Orthodox Jews are viewed as not according *halakha* adequate respect, placing modernity before Orthodoxy, Judaically unlearned, *halakhically* revisionistic, materialistic, overly liberal exhibitors of rabbinic irreverence.

Yeshiva University has not been absent from this melee. YU is considered the intellectual bulwark of "modern" Orthodoxy. In this capacity it has provid-

ed important leadership for the "modern" Orthodox community. However, by virtue of this role it has also served to perpetuate the egregious fallacy that there is some semblance of a denominational distinction between the "modern" and "yeshiva/chasidic" approaches to Orthodox observance.

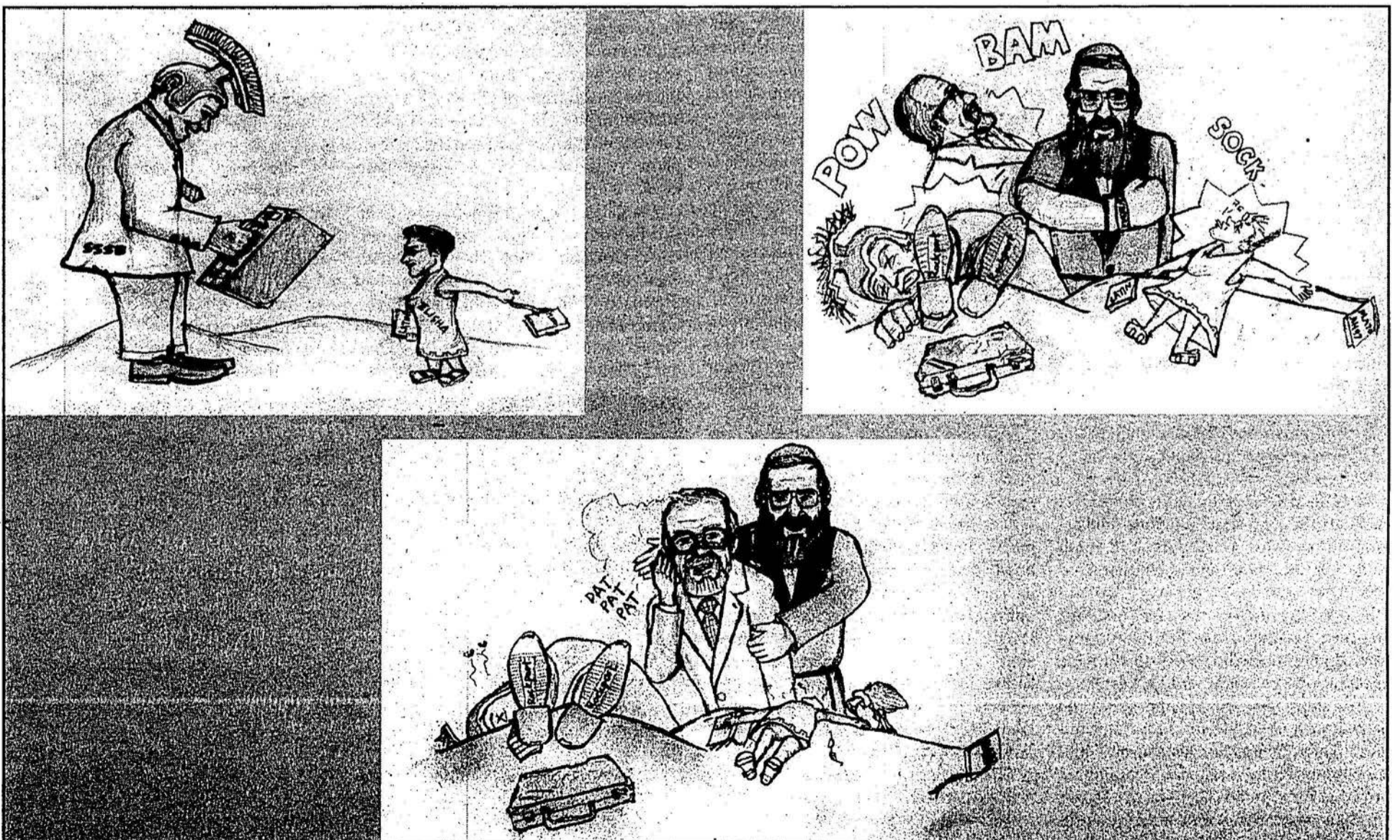
The conception of either an independent "modern" or "yeshiva/chasidic" Orthodox denomination is misguided, ill-conceived, and unfortunately portends communal calamity. This is primarily a result of the fact that there is no doctrinal distinction between the "modern" and "yeshiva/chasidic" groups on an elemental theological level. Any denominational divide is therefore gratuitous and contrived.

In an era in which the once powerful torrent of Jewish continuity has been reduced to a meek trickle and an increasingly combative tone has emerged among existing Jewish denominations, additional fractiousness within one denomination cannot conceivably yield a productive outcome. There is an obvious confluence of interests and values among Orthodox Jews. Differences in religious philosophical orientation, although integral to a

healthy sense of personal theological identity, should not provide the impetus for dividing an institutional rubric whose supporters do not differ in their essential theological conviction of the primacy of traditional religious observance.

While Yeshiva University and its leadership are undoubtedly showered with a veritable multitude of denigrating epithets related to their purported "modern agenda," and I am convinced we at YU receive the brunt of this odious invective, we must assume a mature leadership role in fostering communal unity. It is not our role to civilize the primitive chasid or enlighten the savage yeshiva devotee just as it is not the role of adherents to a "yeshiva/chasidic" philosophical perspective to reveal the truth to the heathen infidel who professes centrist convictions. We can appreciate a Rousseauesque nobility in the simplicity of the "yeshiva/chasidic" lifestyle even if we do not concur with every facet of what it represents philosophically. If we, as an institution, are to facilitate the maintenance of an effective, productive, cohesive sense of Orthodox community, we must take decisive and affirmative action to encourage coalescence not division.

P I C T O R I A L



LETTERS

To the Editor

Tolerating Sy Syms

To the Editor:

Upon reading your last issue, I came across Elisha Goldberg's column on the Op-Ed Page thanking the Sy Syms School of Business for being the foil of Yeshiva College. I must admit that since I am an alumnus of SSSB, upon reading it initially I grew quite distraught. However, after more closely examining the contents, or lack thereof, of his piece, the direction of my hostility changed.

I was no longer angry at the "shots" that he took at the SSSB Administration, for they are capable of defending themselves. Nor was I incensed at the lack of respect for his fellow student, since I am not. I was completely enraged by his complete and total lack of tolerance.

You see, dear Editor, YU is a very fragile place.

YU is a smorgasbord of people with a plethora of different beliefs and needs. What makes YU such a remarkable and unique place, is that it goes out of its way to cater to those individual needs with four Judaic Studies schools and two Secular Studies schools, covering majors from Accounting to English Literature.

In his diatribe, Mr. Goldberg demonstrated two things: First, that he knows

how to use the thesaurus function in Microsoft Word, and second, that he has no tolerance or patience for anyone engaged in anything other than in what he is interested.

In his attempt to support his argument with words of Torah, Goldberg uses the traditional "Issachar/Zebulun" accord to help deliver his point. I believe that he used the wrong reference; his column more closely echoes the relationship of Yaakov and Esav, in which one was completely intolerant of the other. "In a modern corollary" - Elisha Goldberg vs. The Student Body of SSSB.

Please don't get me wrong, I am not suggesting that Mr. Goldberg is a modern day Esav. I am simply submitting that if he were in a position of authority, YU would resemble a small communist country.

I would like to conclude by thanking Mr. Goldberg for attempting to create yet another 'rift' on campus. It was not enough that one exists between the Judaic Studies programs, now one has to exist between the Secular programs as well.

Yasher Koach, and Shana Tova.

Joshua M. Feldman

SSSB '97

Commentator Editor-in-Chief, '96-'97

Where Have I Heard This Before?

To the Editor:

There was something oddly familiar about Elisha Goldberg's article on SSSB. He claimed, if I understand him correctly, that the school's existence is justified because the revenue it generates enables Yeshiva College to offer courses in Classics and other humanities departments for the chosen few. In what obscure author do I recall something like that argument?

Mr. Goldberg's possible precursor is, in fact, so well known that sick people in Borough Park, Anglo-Jewish journalists, and their accountants, all know his name. The Rambam (Maimonides), in the introduction to his *Perush haMishna*, asks why G-d created so many people who waste their lives in a vain quest for useless riches, vapid pleasures, and meaningless status. He offers two answers.

In brief:

1. The labors of the inferior masses facilitate life for a small religious-intellectual elite devoted to the pursuit of Torah and wisdom, who merit undistracted leisure to study.

2. Wise people are few and far between. Isolation is not healthy for anyone. Ignorant, mediocre people provide the elite with company and amusement.

The Rambam was young when he wrote this, and he never used such a blunt formulation again. But his sense of religious-intellectual aristocracy remained strong until the end. Early in the *Moreh* he showers contempt on pseudo-philoso-

phers who think they can attain wisdom in the fugitive hours when they are not eating, drinking and pursuing other mundane goals. In the grand finale of the book he appears to exclude from the circle of the elite the mass of journeyman *talmidei hakhamim*.

In any event, the parallel between the Rambam's outlook and Mr. Goldberg's is remarkable. Whether the resemblance is accidental or deliberate; if the latter, whether Mr. Goldberg neglected to refer to his illustrious predecessor because of space limitations, or because he didn't want to embarrass the Administration with the legal problems attendant upon injecting *divrei Torah* into a secular university debate—these matters must, of course, be left to future intellectual historians.

Another question is whether the Rambam would have endorsed the legitimacy of the analogy. Perhaps he would have drawn the line differently, identifying as the elite, not a small number of majors in Classics and similar subjects, but an even more select group of individuals dedicated to the religious-intellectual quest for *ahavat haShem* and *yediat haShem*. (Might this group include a couple of SSSB majors?) Elisha and I must, of course, leave this difficult question to the experts on the ideology of Torah U'madda. I await expectantly YU's next press release.

Shalom Carmy
Associate Bible Professor
YC

Tentative F

To the Editor:

I received your essay ("Thank You Sy Syms," Commentator, September 9, p. 15), but am forced to return it to you for revision. Please consider the effect of boasting about your superior intelligence, evidenced by your training in English, when said boast is filled with grammatical and usage errors. You display a fine grasp of business principles and have a shrewd contrarian instinct. However, at Sy Syms, we demand more in an essay, it must be written in intelligible English.

I suggest you start by pulling out your dictionary and learning the difference between "disinterested" (impartial) and the word you obviously intended "uninterested" (bored, indifferent). While you are in the "D's," go back a few pages. I hope you meant you wanted to "depreciate" Sy Syms and its students (belittle, mildly disparage), not "deprecate" (deplore, condemn) them as you said. You use "prototypical" when plain "typical" is the correct word. "Burgeon" means to put forth buds, you apparently think it means to grow. These are similar concepts, but each has its own words. "Etc." should be italicized and refers to other unspecified things of the same class. It is incorrect to use it to break off a quotation before the end (ellipsis is the proper tool for that). "Corollary" does not mean "parallel."

Mixed metaphors obscure your message. The "spleen" is a highly vascular lymphoid organ. It does not "froth." It is sometimes metaphorically vented, but what are we to think when you claim yours has turned into bubbles? You seem to have an obsession with bubbles, in another mixed metaphor a "burst bubble" stops an "overflow." I can imagine a burst bubble causing an overflow, albeit with some difficulty, but how does it stop one? A "stance" cannot "burgeon" even if we allow your misuse of the word "burgeon."

I am sure all your readers were gratified by your promise not "to simply reiterate" previous writing. They would have been even more grateful if you had promised not to split infinitives. Unfortunately you filled your essay with others such as "to categorically squander," "have greatly contributed," "has

actually declined," etc. Note the proper use of "etc."

"Both A and B" is adequate conjunction, "both A as well as B" is redundant. Either "cultivate" or "nurture" is sufficient, you repeat yourself when you use both words. If something is already "extreme" and "overwhelming," you do not need to refer to a "full measure" of it. When you "send a message" it is assumed to be "explicit" unless otherwise specified. To my ear, the problem is not redundancy, it is overuse of modifiers. Simple prose is more powerful than exciting, wordy, and spectacular literary fireworks that distract rather than dazzle.

You use "whom" as the object of the verb "decided," "who" is the correct pronoun. If you cannot learn this distinction, I suggest you always use "who." You may be incorrect on occasion, but you will not be both incorrect and pretentious. Your "whom" is doubly offensive since it applies to the Sy Syms School of Business, which is an "it."

I was puzzled that your second-year Latin class studies "the fluid poetry of Homer." Perhaps it would have more than two students if you studied works written in Latin, or if it were renamed second-year Greek.

Please do not be discouraged. I am impressed with your business acumen and I am further impressed that you devote yourself to English classes despite your difficulty with the subject. Your essay is arrogant, but arrogance flows from defensiveness. Once you learn to express yourself as an educated person, your shame will disappear, and your arrogance will mellow into confidence. I much prefer a student with the intellectual energy to be arrogant than a passive student. Energy can be directed through education, education does no good to a passive person.

Take heart! If you continue your English studies, one day you will be able to do work at the level demanded in Sy Syms. I suggest you resubmit your essay next semester.

Sincerely,
Aaron Brown
Professor of Finance
SSSB

The Commentator

welcomes letters from its readers.

Letters must include the writer's name, address and telephone number. Students should also include school enrolled in and graduation date.

The Commentator reserves the right to edit all letters for syntax and size.

The Commentator
500 W. 185th St.
New York, NY 10033
comment@ymail.yu.edu

LETTERS

To the Editor

Mature Mussar

To the Editor:

Whatever happened to the halcyon days of the past, when a good "mussar schmooze" was a pithy anecdote about how the Parsha, and the central conflicts and themes found within it, related to our lives? When relating these moral teachings, Rabbis, all of a sudden evolved into reconnoiters, infusing life into the staid environment of the classroom or synagogue. Although sometimes didactic, these sermons usually left their mark on a captivated audience, who, for the most part, gleaned the underlining messages while sifting through the flowery language.

Unfortunately, today it has become increasingly en-vogue for rabbis to see themselves as sociologists; social pundits who shamelessly use the pulpit to share their "witty" insights and personal ruminations with their congregants and students. Most of the time, these speeches are well-packaged rantings, devoid of any substance. The "mussar schmooze" becomes another chance for rabbis to become fire breathing demagogues, lamenting the celebrated hedonism of an increasingly perfidious and pervasive American culture; another chance to air out certain agendas, no matter how inappropriate to the situation at hand.

Case in point: earlier last month three prominent Rabbis in this Yeshiva launched into fiery diatribes concerning the public's reaction to Princess Diana's sudden death. Taking the moral low road, these rabbis chose to comment on the more salacious details of her life; the cavorting half-nude on the beach, the bulimia. They branded her a "harlot"; a "common street hooker," whose only claims to fame - adulterous liaisons and profligate spending expeditions - helped put the monarchy in the precarious situation it is now in today. That her companion at the time of the accident was a "lowly" Arab (Dodi Al-Fayed) only lent humor to the tragedy.

The putative point behind this fiery rhetoric was simple: the public's emotional outpouring was yet another manifestation of the spiritually vacuous lives people live today. The press' deifying of some lascivious, middle-aged temptress as a saintly figure only underscores the diminutive stature of G-d and morality in contemporary Western society. While their underlining message might have been worthy, the crass and tasteless way these Rabbis went about presenting it was certainly not. Instead of trying to play up this angle, they spewed venomous innuendoes aimed at inciting servile "talmidim" into raucous fits of laughter.

Most students missed the point. The weekly, or daily, "mussar schmooze" became showtime at the Apollo: another chance for these Rabbis to hone their stand up skits before performing over the weekend in primetime at their respective congregations.

Unfortunately, these three Rebbaim, by using such inflammatory language and broad generalizations, only undermined their roles as conciliators - voices of reason - in the Jewish community. Impugning the name of a dead mother loved by millions three days after her death, and finding light in the fact that a dead man is an Arab, are callous and classless acts anyway one looks at it. The cackling Rebbaim were incarnations of Beavis and Butthead: tactless nitwits and grinning yodels, reveling in the tragedy of others, finding humor in the most solemn situations. And to think: these sophomoric barbs came minutes after erudite words of Torah had emanated from their mouths.

Clearly, being recognized communal leaders absolved them from adhering to basic social etiquette. Clearly, being respected educators gave them a green light to engage in puerile antics.

The Talmid-Rabbi relationship is a symbiotic one predicated on a tacit consent: the mentor is empowered to do whatever is needed to mold the prodigal

student into a fine, upstanding individual, who is able to comprehend - and at least attempt - to grapple with the discrepancies between the temporal and religious worlds. Mussar serves a vital niche in our daily lives. If done correctly, it can be paramount in facilitating this metamorphosis. The fiery orations about our storied heritage and daily struggles engenders great pride and introspection. It can be the easiest way to increase one's observance.

But when Rabbis use the "mussar schmooze" as a time of grandstanding and showmanship, the contract has been broken. Their minimizing the power of mussar is malpractice; an affront to the audience's integrity. If rabbis want to feel in touch with today's student and think humor is the only way to do it, then let them go perform at a comedy club in the village.

While some talmidim might deem it blasphemous, the obvious must be stated: Rabbis, especially ones that teach in this institution, are not omniscient; their words are not divinely inspired. If one claims otherwise, then maybe he should not be giving a shiur in this yeshiva.

Sincerely,
David Anziska
YC/MYP '99

Declaring Independence

To the Editor:

Once again the students at YU have reacted to changes in the status quo like frightened cubs. Independent Housing at 475 West 186th St has been in unofficial existence for years. As a Senior in 1990-91 my roommates and I lived in Apt. 3D at 475 and loved every minute. The added privacy, additional living space, and increased freedom of living "off-campus" more than made up for the lack of cleaning services. Best of all, we had a full kitchen. We worked together to keep the apartment clean and stocked with all necessities including food, bathroom supplies, and cleaning supplies.

Some advice to the students and administration to make the program work (and to make it an Independent Housing Program in fact, not just in name):

1) Limit the program to volunteer Juniors and Seniors who want to escape the noise and cramped living conditions of the dorms. This should get rid of complaints like "for 4 times market rent all I get is a dirty bathroom and broken mailbox" and help ensure that the participants are mature enough to handle an independent existence.

2) TURN THE STOVE ON AND MAKE THE CAFETERIA CARD OPTIONAL. The point of living in an "independent" environment is to be independent. Cooking one's own food at

the time of your own choosing is cost and time effective.

3) Limit the number of students per apartment to keep the living room a common space, and reduce the strain on the bathroom and kitchen facilities.

4) Dorm rules and regulations are not appropriate in an independent environment. A set of standards and rules must be written and enforced but they should be different than the rules for a dormitory.

5) Assign the apartments based on a lottery system: Students should choose their potential roommates and sign up as a group for a lottery to determine which apartment will be awarded to each group. (This system works effectively on campuses around the country).

In 1991, three people sharing a one bedroom apartment with the dinette used as a second bedroom cost less than three dorm room fees. If the cost of living in an apartment will be the same as the dorm, then the students are definitely entitled to be reimbursed in the form of cleaning services and additional security and/or a discount.

In general, students and the administration need to understand that living independently is a privilege, not a punishment.

Sincerely,
Richard Langer
SSSB '91

Nobody Cares!

To the Editor:

Benjamin Balint, in his column "The New Age of Torah U'Madda," makes a crucial error in his evaluation of "the Yeshiva University student." His loosely veiled reformulation of the hackneyed Matthew Arnold - Jerusalem/Athens chakirah misses the mark entirely about the intellectual vantage point of the students of YC/SSSB. They reside neither in Greece nor in Palestine (except for those few who wish to live in the old yishuv), but in Teaneck and the Five Towns. They have no "critical and discerning eye" staring from "outside of Western intellectual tradition." They care not for his Ibsen or Hemingway, or, for that matter, Paul Johnson. They condemn it all without reading it for reasons of religion and/or laziness. The holocaust has little to do with their view of society, as he claimed, except as a post-facto justification for rejection. Of course, they are not sitting in Jerusalem either, for their Judaism is almost as superficial as their general knowledge. They are neither thinkers nor doers, except when thinking involves absorbing a Tosfos or cramming for an

Orgo exam, and doing is an NCSY Shabbaton or building a resume.

If Mr. Balint wishes to look for the best in his fellow students, the failure embedded in his overestimation is two-fold. It wastes precious time and energy from one's own efforts at moral and intellectual advancement. Those who are self-aware should focus on sharpening their own swords rather than plowing the fields of the masses. It also leads to a fruitless effort to try to encourage students to "learn the classics" instead of methods of coercion, which are necessary to lift them from the muck of their sty of ignorance.

If what Mr. Balint means is not "[w]e, the students of YU", but rather, 'I, the philosophy major', then he should say so. Do not try to pretend that the students will follow you in your existential trips and moral ramblings. Build for yourself an enclave within the college; share your creed with all those who may join you, but do not be disappointed if your table lacks apostles.

Yonatan Kaganoff
YC/MYP '98

The Unbeatable Tennis Team

BY SHAI SAMET AND JON BANDLER

The YU tennis team, coming off an unprecedented three straight undefeated seasons, will try to extend its 29-match winning streak when competition begins this spring. The Mac stars look forward to another promising season in the yet to be established IAC, and for good reason.

Six of the team's top eight players return from last year's record-setting 11-0 record, including the top three seeds, senior captains Josh Hasten, Zvi Zilbershteyn, and Shai Samet. Zilbershteyn, a fourth year player, has a shot at setting the Yeshiva record for most career singles victories.

David Schwartz and Edon Hirt will also see regular action at singles following the graduation of Doron Katz and Daniel Kraft. Swiss import and 1996-1997 rookie-of-the-year Steve Langer is nursing a sore knee but hopes to be ready by March. He will be counted on for strong play in singles and doubles.

Other returning players Oren Koslowe and Jeff Rothman provide power and extra strength for the team. For the second year in a row, Koslowe will team with Schwartz in #3 doubles, and Zilbershteyn will join Langer in #2 doubles. Hasten and Samet, who have been unstoppable the past two years, will pair up for a third time in #1 doubles.

In his fourth year as coach, Jon Bandler took seven new players this year including Chaim Herman and Steven Pollack, two hard-hitting contenders from last year's practice squad. Other new team members such as juniors Joseph Weilgus

and Danny Nassimi hope to add team spirit through their desire to play and will to win. Finally, freshman Adam Aftergut and sophomores Jeff Taub and Micha Porat, high school competitors at Taft High, HANC, and MTA, respectively, will demonstrate their experience on the court as well.

To get a head start, on Friday, September 26, the top 3 seeds traveled to Vassar College in Poughkeepsie for the Rolex Northeast Division III Championships, the first time YU has participated in the tournament. The tournament featured 64 players from 16 colleges around the region, some nationally ranked. Top-notch teams like NYU, Binghamton (ranked in the top 10 of Division III), Vassar and many more entered the competition.

Each YU player lost in the first round; Hasten to Vassar's Ryan Lee, Zilbershteyn to Hamilton's Greg Nussbaum, and Samet to Nazareth's Chris Peets, the 5th seed overall in the tournament. In the consolation round, Hasten rallied from a 5-2 deficit before losing in a tiebreaker to Skidmore's Dan Cummings. Rich Whitmore of the Rochester Institute of Technology defeated Zilbershteyn, while Samet's comeback was not enough to beat Minh Lu, also from RIT.

"The caliber of players of the tournament was far superior to anything we've seen in the past 3 years," said Bandler. "Getting a few wins would have been nice but I think it was a good experience for our guys."

The official matches will resume in the 1998 Spring semester. Good Luck!

YESHIVA SPORTS

The Center of Attention

BY JEREMY KROLL

He stands an imposing and menacing six feet, seven inches tall. He weighs a rock solid two hundred and fifty pounds. His enormous frame is supported by two equally enormous feet, that require custom made size fifteen shoes. Yet despite a body of such colossal proportions he is quick and nimble. He moves his six foot seven inch frame with the flair of a flamenco dancer and the grace of a ballerina. The fluidity of his motions are breathtaking. This immensely talented individual is Joel Jacobson, a star on the Yeshiva University basketball team.

Player Profile

Joel was born in Champagne, Illinois, a small college town in the heartland of America, where he attended University High School. His first love was soccer. He was a star forward on his soccer team as he lead the team to a division title, but that summer Joel grew an amazing seven inches and realized that basketball was his calling. "I am the tallest Jew in all of Champagne and I realized that my great height would be best utilized playing basketball," said Jacobson.

Joel began to climb the ladder to greatness in basketball, winning numerous awards. Displaying consistency, he was selected as a four time conference all-star. He was paid tribute to by his high school in a touching ceremony before his final home game. Joel was elected into the school's hall of fame, and had his legendary number 1 jersey retired and raised to the rafters of the gymnasium. Joel was extremely grateful to his high school for bestowing these honors upon him. "It was one of the proudest moments of my athletic career. I could hardly contain my emotions out there. I had to battle back the tears. Having my number retired meant so much to me; it was a culmination of a career that I built with hard work and dedication."

Joel moved on to YU amid much fanfare and immediately secured a starting position on the basketball team. His combination of strength, speed, and explo-

siveness made him a sensation. Opponents gaped in awe at the awesome talent that he possessed. Joel lead the team in scoring and rebounding last season with averages of 16.8 points and 9.7 rebounds respectively.

Jacobson is also the team's captain, which carries a special responsibility. "My job is to keep the team on the same page. I have to make sure that everyone is comfortable and relaxed in the system. Team unity and the cohesiveness of its players is essential for success."

Jacobson, praising Coach Jonathan Halpert about the great influence that Halpert has exerted on his game, said, "He always stressed the mental aspects of the game. As for the physical part of the game, Coach Halpert has really polished my skills; I'm not strictly a post up player anymore, I can now play effectively facing the basket."

Joel has also accumulated a long list of awards and accomplishments, including ECAC player of the week, MVP of the Metropolitan Collegiate Basketball Festival, and the Red Sarachek Award.

While Joel has devoted countless painstaking hours on the basketball court attempting to perfect his game, he has spent many more hours in the classroom attaining the skills necessary to succeed in life. Joel is an economics major, who takes a high concentration of computer science courses. This year he created his own computer consulting firm called Compuhension Inc. He serves as both its president and C.E.O.

This past summer Joel participated in the tryouts for the Maccabi Games, competing against top Division I players. He made a tremendous impression on the coaches, and made it all the way to the final cut. Joel also maintained a rigorous workout schedule, which included hours a day of jumping rope to increase his agility.

In regards to the upcoming season, Jacobson envisions great success. "We lost some important players due to graduation, but the core of the team is returning, and I have confidence that the new players coming in will do a nice job."



Midnight Madness Hits Y.U.

BY JOEL JACOBSON

Midnight Madness at Yeshiva University is quickly becoming a popular annual event at the Max Stern Athletic Center. On Sunday, October 28, Yeshiva University students will be entertained with an event usually reserved for fans of big name universities. Midnight Madness, for those who are not familiar, is an interactive varsity basketball practice that is open to all students. Beginning at 11:30, there will be free pizza and drinks outside the gym in addition raffle tickets will be given out for

student competitions. Following the refreshments, the Y.U. basketball team will be introduced and will showcase their various talents with a short scrimmage, slam dunk contest and three point shooting contest. Some fans will be randomly picked to participate in a number of competitions with a chance to win a variety of prizes. Last year's event was attended by nearly four hundred students. With more pizza and prizes to be given away this year, it promises to be an exciting evening. All students are encouraged to participate in cheering on their team.

The Commentator

500 West 185th Street

New York, NY 10033