

# The COMMENTATOR

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

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Issue 3

## Rabbi Dr. Ari Berman Elected President of YU

By Doron Levine

On November 15, the Yeshiva University Board of Trustees voted to elect Rabbi Dr. Ari Berman to succeed Richard Joel as Yeshiva University's president. Rabbi Dr. Berman will become YU's fifth president, joining the ranks of Rabbi Dr. Bernard Revel, Rabbi Dr. Samuel Belkin, Rabbi Dr. Norman Lamm, and Mr. Richard Joel. The vote took place during the afternoon of the 15th in the Gottesman Board Room on the fifth floor of the YU Beren Campus building located at 215 Lexington Avenue. The result of the vote was revealed to The Commentator by Trustees as they exited the building and was announced the next day by Chairman of the Board Moshael Straus. Rabbi Berman will take over as president on July 1, 2017.

The Board of Rabbi Isaac Elchanan Theological Seminary convened for a meeting soon after the YU Board meeting was adjourned and voted similarly, electing Rabbi Berman to the twin position of President of RIETS. However, Rabbi Berman will not hold the position of "Rosh HaYeshiva" of RIETS. President Joel's predecessors all held this position in conjunction with the presidency, but, due to President Joel's lack of rabbinic credentials, Rabbi Lamm retained the position of Rosh HaYeshiva even after President Joel took over. The bifurcation of the position which began with President Joel will continue un-

A quadruple alumnus of YU, Rabbi Dr. Berman graduated from MTA in 1987. He graduated magna cum laude from Yeshiva College in 1991 and then received his ordination from RIETS and his masters in Jewish philosophy from the Bernard Revel Graduate School. Rabbi Dr. Berman taught Talmud in YU's Stone Beit Midrash Program and served as first the assistant rabbi and then the head rabbi of The Jewish Center of Manhattan. He left his post at The Jewish Center when

### President-Elect Rabbi Berman Discusses Vision and Goals for YU

By Doron Levine, Avi Strauss, and Yitzchak Fried

As he launches his transition into the YU presidency, Rabbi Berman is beginning to develop his vision and goals for the university. Reflecting on YU's mission statement and guiding principles

generation needs to be defined." Even as he paid homage to his predecessors, he emphasized the need to move forward and keep YU relevant to the modern age. "The messages of all our past presidents continue to nourish us, but we need to think about what YU means today." Not afraid to project a grand vision, he said, "we're in a moment in history where we can embark, and we will embark, on one of the great Jewish endeavors of our generation: to transform Yeshiva University." He added that this is "one of the exciting parts of this position."

When asked to explicate the relationship between the secular and religious aspects of YU, Rabbi Berman said that our goal should be to unify all elements of the institution. "Our ideal situation," he said, "is to move YU in a direction where all of its parts are moving in the same direction." Unwilling to pay superficial lip service to modern values, Rabbi Berman argued that we need to examine "the underlying assumptions of modernity" and to ask, "do they complement or clash with tradition?" When pushed for more details on his specific vision, Rabbi Berman cautioned against being too hasty. "Listen," he said, "this is the first day, so I'm not giving you a defined plan. I'm not getting into office for many months."

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Rabbi Dr. Ari Berman meets students in the Glueck Beit Midrash the day after his election.

he moved to Israel in 2008, and recently completed a PhD in Jewish thought from Hebrew University under the guidance of

on the day after his election, Rabbi Berman explained that "Torah Umadda is our banner; it gives us distinction; it's our guiding principle. YU is about integrating the world around us into our Torah lives." He recognized his place in

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**"HE IS THE ULTIMATE BEN YESHIVA. HE WAS AND IS A TALMID OF SEVERAL OF OUR ROSHEI YESHIVA. HE HAS WINNING WAYS. HE SPEAKS BEAUTIFULLY. HE'S A TALMID CHACHAM. AND I'M VERY EXCITED ABOUT HIS BEING NEXT."**  
-PRESIDENT RICHARD JOEL

der President-Elect Berman. Though he will not be Rosh HaYeshiva, as president of RIETS Rabbi Berman will be involved in the selection of future Roshei Yeshiva.

Rabbi Hy Arbesfeld, a benefactor of Yeshiva University and its programs and a member of the Board of RIETS, said he was "very pleased that our new president will be Rabbi Dr. Ari Berman, whom I know very well from his days of being rabbi at the Jewish Center."

Dr. Moshe Halbertal. He resides in Neve Daniel with his wife and five children.

Was the outcome of the presidential vote a foregone conclusion? One YU administrator, though reticent to speak to the press, heavily implied that Rabbi Dr. Berman's appointment was anticipated and expected by those close to the process. Trustees have been less forthcoming.

SEE BERMAN,  
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**"WE NEED TO EXPLAIN THE VALUE OF YU TODAY IF WE WANT TO INCREASE ENROLLMENT AND IF WE WANT TO BROADEN OUR DONOR BASE."**

the unique history of YU: "We're trying to create the YU of tomorrow, but it has to be built on the past. This is an august institution with an important history, and we're building on that."

But he also emphasized that our university's mission is not fossilized. "Yeshiva is in a position where it needs to constantly reenvision itself because the world around us is constantly changing," he said. "Torah Umadda is the guiding light, but what exactly it means in every

Under Rabbi Berman, YU will once again be led by a rabbi-scholar who will hopefully be capable of helping YU to clarify and project its fundamental values. Rabbi Berman said that he believes that our community needs to engage in a conversation about values, and that he envisions an inclusive conversation which expands beyond students who at-

SEE VISION,  
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# The EDITORIAL

## *A Letter to Rabbi Berman*

Dear Rabbi Berman,

Over the past few months, you have met with the elites and the bigwigs, the university stakeholders who run this institution on the macro level. You have conferred with board members and administrators, and presumably developed some impressions of the university that they run.

But now it's time for you to meet us. The students. We are a patchwork, a collection of young adults more diverse than we might appear. We are inspired and disaffected, wealthy and indigent, athletic and awkward, diligent and dilatory, frum and krum. We are math whizzes and aspiring poets, foreigners and New Yorkers, Gemara learners and atheists, staunch Zionists and complacent Americans, future doctors and more future doctors. We can be amiable, and, no doubt, we can be disagreeable at times. And now we are your students. Though the elegant office that you will soon occupy might be safely tucked away on the twelfth floor of Belfer, your job begins and ends down here with us, in the libraries and lounges, in the cafeterias and classrooms.

In the coming months, as you begin to spend more time on campus and familiarize yourself with day-to-day life at YU, we ask you to make a serious effort to get to know us, the students. We thank you for already setting a positive tone by taking time out of your busy schedule to sit down with student leaders and newspaper editors, and we hope that you continue to reach out and connect with the broader student population. Because as much as you might have learned from trustees, and as much as you might remember from your time as a student and then as a teacher at YU, we understand life on the ground here and now better than anyone. We live and breathe YU on a daily basis. So talk to us, ask us what we like and dislike about YU. Learn from

us what makes the current student body tick. We respect good leadership and appreciate those who listen.

As the editors of the student newspaper, it is our job to create a forum for campus discussions and a medium for communication between faculty, administrators, and students. The newspaper's relationship with the administration and the president over the past few years has varied – it has been strained at times and peaceful at others, sometimes antagonistic and other times symbiotic. This is because a school and its student newspaper are separate organizations with distinct noble goals – they are neither natural allies nor natural enemies. The Commentator is independently funded and independently managed for this very reason. So our diverse group of students will continue to express their assorted views in the newspaper, both complimentary and critical, and we cannot promise that you will love everything we publish. But despite our differences, please don't forget what we share in common. No matter what we write, remember that we all value the welfare and success of an institution that we love.

Perspective is in order. This is, no doubt, an historic moment for YU, but the institution is bigger than any one group of students and any one president. Yeshiva University is the lifeblood of a community, a culture, a movement; it will outlast its current administration and, with your guidance, will continue to thrive for generations to come.

Congratulations on being appointed our president. May God grant you the strength to lead our community with dignity and courage.

*The Commentator Editorial Board*

## *Not a Theocracy*

By Doron Levine

I rarely furrow my brow. But Rabbi Brander's recent email condemning one student's display of a Confederate flag at the election-night party in the Morgenstern Lounge inspired in me an uncommon display of forehead gymnastics. Appealing to "our foundational Jewish values" based on the teachings of Avraham and "the values of Halacha," Rabbi Brander offered this southern student the benefit of the doubt while simultaneously denouncing any display of the Confederate flag since it is "a symbol too closely linked to the forces of regression and hate antithetical to our religion."

Somehow, though, I doubt that particular Jewish values inspired this missive. More likely it was some combination of pressure from outspoken students ("the highly personalized condemnations and calls for the university to expel him"), fear of backlash should this incident become more publicly known ("news and pictures of this incident have been widely publicized"), and reflexive submission to modern sensibilities. Perhaps this proclamation did, in point of fact, uphold traditional Jewish values. But in light of our administration's sparse history of Halachic condemnation, it seems to me that any overlap is merely incidental.

A student wears a Confederate flag to an election party, and the administration strongly denounces this display as non-Halachic. But violations of traditional Jewish norms are, while not the norm, far from uncommon at our university. I have seen students violate Shabbos publicly in the dormitories. I have seen students purchase meals at local non-kosher restaurants. I have seen students walk around campus without head coverings and without tzitzis. I have seen students publicly deny the existence of God, both in classrooms and outside of them. I have been forced by a teacher to study nude paintings even after I informed him that such analysis made me religiously uncomfortable. But the specific examples really supervene on the

fundamental attitude -- our university enforces academic standards, not religious law. Should students who violate Halacha be invited in for a talk with Dean Nissel and Jonathan Schwab? Do these students also deserve to be publicly shamed by a Vice President in terms that clearly reveal their identities? Public opinion says no, as does prevailing administrative practice. So why did this student merit special treatment?

It seems that we selectively emphasize Jewish values. When faced with potential backlash from broader society, we ape the boilerplate outrage that we've seen erupt from secular institutions in similar predicaments, and call our anger righteous. But in so doing, perhaps we reveal the weakness of our religious leadership and our inability to consistently profess our unique system of laws and values. Maybe this is an unavoidable peculiarity of exilic Jewry; a small values-driven community stripped of independent authority and implanted into a foreign cultural climate will naturally have trouble proudly affirming its particular ideals when they conflict with the ideology currently in vogue. But it's something to at least be conscious of.

The question is cliché at this point – is YU fundamentally Y or fundamentally U? And the policy debate straightforwardly follows: to what extent should our administration denounce infringement of Jewish law and values? If a student deserves criticism from the administration for a brief display of an attitude incongruous with Halacha, then it appears our leadership has cast their lots with the Y. If we can presume consistency, we might reasonably expect more Halachic edicts to emanate from Belfer. But I personally am not concerned. The appeal to religious authority in Rabbi Brander's email strikes me as a technique for framing a fundamentally areligious condemnation, not as the dawning of an administrative theocracy. Time will tell.

## The COMMENTATOR 2016-2017

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

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



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# 1 Commentator Poll Accurately Predicts Trump

For all you haters who questioned our poll, we're the only ones who got it right. Ha!

# 2 Fantastic Beasts

A fantastic way for J.K. Rowling to make millions of more dollars.

# 3 Pardoned Thanksgiving Turkey

Presidential decision to spare a turkey from becoming a delicious dinner dish. Rav Schachter approves!

# 4 Shmoneh Esrei

Great time to think of random things (including *this 7up!*).

# 5 Alec Baldwin

Has secured a good job as SNL's Trump impersonator for the next several years.

# 6 Legalized Marijuana

One of the underrated outcomes of the recent election. Tough break for the esteemed dealer on Library Floor 3A.

# 7 Test Banks

Recent studies suggest that these are by far the most honest means of achieving success in the Sy Syms School of Business.

## 7 UP 7 DOWN

# 1 Library Bathroom Doors

Make a really irritating squeaky sound when you open them. As if the sounds I would hear in the bathroom anyway aren't enough.

# 2 "Not My President" Protests

Bad timing for the popularization of this chant, right when Rabbi Dr. Ari Berman prepares to assume the presidency at YU.

# 3 November Supermoon

Makes headlines and floods Facebook feeds, rises and sets, before proceeding to be forgotten about forever.

# 4 Construction on 185th

Seriously, what the *heck* are they doing??

# 5 Midterms

Well, those sucked. Thank God they're over.

# 6 Movember

For just one month, YU becomes a safe haven for sexual predators looking to blend into the crowd.

# 7 Leonard Cohen R.I.P.

The generation that grew up with Shrek is forever indebted to this baffled king who composed "Hallelujah."



## Alabama and the Confederate Flag: An Interview with Nate Trudeau

By Yitzchak Fried

By this time, it is well known that someone wore a Confederate flag at the YU election party. A widely circulated photo shows the student from the back, the flag draped around his shoulders like a cloak. For many, if not most, students on campus, the image was highly disturbing, with its clear connection to white supremacy and racism. Rabbi Kenneth Brander assured students in a recent letter to the student population that "Mr. Jonathan Schwab and Dr. Chaim Nissel promptly identified and met with the student involved, conveying to him our deep sense that the Confederate flag and the reprehensible immoral ideas it often symbolizes are entirely incongruous with our foundational Jewish values."

However, Rabbi Brander also made clear that the incident resulted from a cultural misunderstanding. As he wrote, "we believe [the student] is mistaken that the Confederate flag can be divorced from the hateful ideology and racism of its past, but we also believe that wearing it was a mistake made by a student whose personal background, atypical of our institution, caused him to make this error; anyone who has spent time with him, discussing this or any other issue, knows him to be a sensitive young person. The highly personalized condemnations and calls for the university to expel him by parties unfamiliar with him are inappropriate."

The "student involved" is Nate Trudeau. Trudeau was born in Texas and raised in Alabama. He describes himself as a ba'al teshuva, back in America "on a high" after a recent yeshiva experience in Israel. He was initially reluctant to release his name; judging from the brief time I spent with him, the events of the past couple of weeks have left Trudeau shaken. When approached, however, he was willing to speak with The Commentator and share what he was thinking on the night that he briefly donned the Confederate flag.

What emerged from our conversation was that, for Nate and others like him, the Confederate flag is a symbol of community, like the school flag one might wave at a high school football game. "When someone grows up with a symbol, it's like a security blanket – people have their pillows, their teddy bears. Your brain releases endorphins...the Confederate flag, for someone who grew up in Alabama, it's like a security blanket. It's a way for us to all get along as a community. For people who haven't been to the South it's hard to understand. What I did was nothing; people in Alabama have flags hanging off their houses, off their trucks." For Trudeau, draping the flag didn't seem controversial. The last thing he expected was to cause a ruckus.

Trudeau was disgusted to be associated with white supremacy. "I am not okay with racism at all. I accept everyone for who they are, whatever their race or sexual orientation. And there is racism in the Orthodox community that has to be dealt with. But I am not one of those people." Trudeau's last comment seems to be a reference to a recent lecture given by Rabbi Jeremy Wieder in which he vigorously denounced all manifestations of racism and interpreted Trudeau's flag-wearing as a visible sign of racism in the Orthodox community. "People just don't get it," Trudeau said. "I have friends who tell me, 'Ya, wear the flag – good for you!' But they don't get it either. I wasn't trying to stick it to anyone."

Trudeau acknowledged that wearing a Confederate flag at a YU event was a poor decision, and that he had not considered what the flag would mean to other students on campus. He expressed that he felt terrible that he had so disturbed people. "I feel really bad that it made people upset. I'm not the type of person to want to upset people, and I feel that something like this made people...furious actually."

At the same time, however, Trudeau felt that he was deeply misunderstood. "I abhor labels. I don't like hearing 'us Northerners' – we are all one nation under God. I want us all to be one nation, I don't want it to be 'us Northerners', 'us Southerners', 'us West Coasters'". But despite his reluctance to acknowledge regional labels, Trudeau was sad that people who did not share his Southern heritage could only see the Confederate flag as a hateful symbol of white supremacy. He urged people to pause before jumping to judge their fellow students. "I think that it's something that's fair to say that jumping to conclusions is not something that should be done in cases like this, not without doing proper research." He reiterated that racism was despicable, but stated that "what I'm not okay with is people looking at me and assuming that I am a racist. I am talking about prominent members of YU...rabbis, looking at me and making a stereotypical judgement about me that isn't true."

Asked about Rabbi Brander's letter, Trudeau expressed his support, approving his own condemnation. "Rabbi Brander is a smart man and he knows what he's doing. If he thought that letter helped, I'm on his side. I know him, he knows me. I think he did it justice. He is, obviously, a rabbi, and if he thought it was right then it was right. He needed to settle people." However, Trudeau did find the reactions of some of the yeshiva's other faculty members upsetting. "I abhor labels, but if I can use one, I would

SEE ALABAMA, CONTINUED ON PAGE 18

## Despite Political Differences, Students Gather for Election Party

By Sam M. Gelman

On election night 2016, the Yeshiva University community came together for an election viewing party. Over 200 students shuffled in and out of the Morg Lounge to cheer on their candidates while enjoying pizza and snacks.

The event was hosted by the College Republicans, College Democrats, J. Dunner Political Science Society, and YU Observer, and was part of a series of events surrounding this election including a debate between the College Democrats and College Republicans and a viewing party of the first presidential debate. “It was great to see everyone come out,” said Yossi Hoffman, one of the presidents of the YU College Republicans. “The room was completely full and the students really cared. It’s great to see people so invested in their country.”

Aside from the occasional “lock her up” chant, the event stayed relatively civil, with both candidates receiving cheers from supporters and boos from detractors when winning a state. On the whole the crowd favoring Donald Trump was louder -- a large group of his supporters gathered on one side of the room, cheering wildly whenever he climbed in the results or won a state. One Trump supporter even came with a shofar to blow upon the expected announcement of Trump’s victory.

Nolan Edmonson, a first-year student, one of the attendees, said, “I think it’s a fantastic show of why this country is already great that students can sit together and be civil while still disagreeing.” Not everyone, however, was pleased with the reactions. “This is terrifying” said Aryeh Rothstein, a first-year Yeshiva College student. “It is remarkable that people can’t learn from history that campaigns built on hate only lead to destruction.”

Regardless of one’s opinion on the outcome, one can only hope that this level of political engagement and debate continues in YU in the years to come.



Photo by Etan Vann

## Hisoriri: Enhancing Shabbat for YU Students and Diverse Communities

By Josh Blicher

Many small Jewish communities struggle to run lively, engaging services for all of their congregants. Enters Hisoriri, an organization started by RIETS student Dov Winston. Hisoriri sends Orthodox college students, from YU and other institutions, to enhance the religious community experience for those who live in smaller to medium sized Jewish communities by running programming for Yamim Tovim (Jewish festivals) and Shabbatot throughout the year.

Student Hisoriri participants run a number of educational and recreational programs specifically designed for a given community on each Shabbaton, a weekend-filled bonanza of religious and social activities for adults and children alike. On Friday night, the students organize and run engaging prayer filled services with inspirational singing and dancing. The students also provide explanatory prayer services—a running commentary of the meaning of each prayer during services—depending on the interest and religious education of the congregants.

Throughout the Shabbaton, the students give formal and informal sermons to members of the community—in place of the rabbi’s formal sermon or in a more informal setting, such as a small group— and lead prayer services. Hisoriri’s four Shabbaton coordinators work closely with communities to ensure that students create content and run activities that will prove engaging for each community. The students often run social programs custom-designed for each community, such as Torah oriented activities for the youth and discussions of topics that are of interest for community members.

Since September of 2015, Winston has created and filled a number of administrative and leadership positions to enhance the quality of the programs that Hisoriri runs. For example, the Torah committee, headed by Yeshiva College junior Yair Lichtman, creates engaging pamphlets that explain the Torah reading, rendering the religious service more meaningful for the congregants.

Similarly, the organization has created the position of Shabbaton coordinators, individuals who work closely with communities to arrange the student led Shabbatons. There

are currently three full-time Shabbaton coordinators: Eliot Heller, Rachel Lelonek, Sharon Cuchacovich, a group of YU students who communicate with the leaders of different communities to ensure that Hisoriri provides them with the best students and activities for their congregation. According to Hisoriri’s assistant director, Moshe Kurtz, the personal attention Hisoriri gives to each community enables the organization to fulfill its mission statement: providing custom-designed programming for each community to which it sends students, enhancing the Shabbat experience of both the students and communities involved.

Hisoriri primarily sends groups of four students—typically comprised of two male and female students—to each community, to enable the group to provide more inclusive programming for community members. In specific cases, communities may request more male students to help arrange a minyan or more female students to run other specialized programs.

The organization rarely sends more than six students on a Shabbaton, for it may “ruin the cohesive team bonding experience,” Kurtz asserted. Kurtz also said that his experience with Hisoriri has enabled him to “improve my ability to give shiurim on a wide array of topics and expand my social circle beyond the people with whom I attended yeshiva and those who I see on a regular basis.”

YU students can choose to run Hisoriri programming for a host of reasons—from making new friends to spreading the beauty of the Torah lifestyle with others, to name a couple. Moshe Gelberman, a YC junior student majoring in Political Science, enjoyed his experience on Hisoriri, because “it allowed me to visit a new community, lain [publicly read] from the Torah and bring simcha [happiness] to the members”.

Winston and Kurtz have increased the frequency of the Shabbatons, especially as the number of its student members and participating communities have increased as of late. The student members of the organization have proven so exceptional that a number of new communities have started reaching out to the organization via the Orthodox Union’s department of Synagogue services. In the fall 2015 Semester, Hisoriri ran 14 Shabbatonim and they ran an ad-



ditional 12 in the Spring semester of 2016. At print, Hisoriri had just completed their 10th Shabbaton for the fall 2016 semester. They plan on running at least 7 additional Shabbatonim between November 2016 and January 2017. They have also started to plan Shabbatonim for the Spring 2016 semester.

The immense success of Hisoriri programming can be highlighted by the following anecdote. Last semester, a group of Hisoriri students ran programming in Bayonne, a growing Jewish community located in New Jersey. After a student had delivered a particularly inspirational speech, he was approached by a middle-aged woman: “I stopped attending synagogue for the past few weeks, because I have not found it engaging, but today, for some reason, I felt compelled to come. Then I heard your speech, which has inspired me to start attending on a more regular basis,” the woman stated. Upon visiting Bayonne a few weeks later, Hisoriri student participants noted that the aforementioned woman was in the audience again.

The story mentioned above barely scratches the surface of the indelible positive impact that Hisoriri has had on countless Jews and Jewish communities since its inception. Under the leadership of Winston and Kurtz, Hisoriri’s future, and that of North American Jewry, looks brighter than ever before.

## YU Lowers AP Exemption Standard

By Noam Beltran

Advanced Placement courses are university level classes taught in high school, which culminate with a challenging standardized test in May that is graded on a standard of 1 through 5 (with 5 being the highest). Due to the rigor of these courses, it is accepted practice amongst a large number of universities to honor scores of 3, 4, and 5 as sufficient to fulfill a college requirement and exempt the student from taking that class.

Yeshiva University has always taken a stricter perspective towards their acceptance of Advanced Placement high school courses. Yeshiva College's policy has always been not to accept scores below 5, while Stern's policy includes scores of 4 as well. However, YU's rigid policy has officially been discontinued. In an unprecedented move, the Yeshiva College faculty has decided to accept AP scores of 4.

In an exclusive interview with the Commentator, Dr. Karen Bacon, Dean of the Undergraduate Faculty of Arts and Sciences, related a unique perspective regarding the University's new policy. Although considerations for the change did not appear on the faculty agenda this summer, Dean Bacon decided to ask for review of the AP policy in Yeshiva College. "It is a good idea to have as many policies as uniform as possible between Stern and Yeshiva College," explained Dean Bacon, who also serves as the Dean for Stern.

Previously, the Yeshiva College faculty had been adamant in saying that only a score of 5 reflected a sufficient grasp of the material to warrant an exemption from taking the class in YC. Under Dean Bacon's advisement, the YC faculty worked for many months researching other successful and esteemed universities, such as Princeton University, and their policies regarding Advanced Placement courses. Their research led them to conclude that accepting 4s as well as 5s was a reasonable amendment, and that scoring a 4 on an AP examination did reflect a significant grasp of the material. In addition, the faculty agreed that the change was pragmatically beneficial when recruiting potential students from co-ed high schools for the University who had previously been disturbed by the discrepancy in policy for classmates of different genders who had earned the same mark.

The policy began with students whose first time on campus was for the Post-Pesach Program in 2016 as well as the current Fall 2016 students, and will be in effect going forward. Dean Bacon expressed her care for the students at YU through a psychological explanation of human nature. "Although the change in policy will most likely have a minimal effect on the University as a whole (while AP courses earn legitimate credits and can be extremely valuable for major-related courses, Yeshiva students have a minimum residency requirement of 6 semesters on cam-

pus regardless of how many credits they had coming in), psychologically, the policy change validates their hard work and accomplishments in high school. You received a 4, and a 4 is a good score, and therefore you will be rewarded at YU for that achievement." If students feel that their grasp on a subject is not sufficient, they are encouraged to meet with Academic Advising and discuss whether it may still be worth their while to take the class again in college. Dean Bacon urges students to consider their time at YU, and

**"[THE ADMINISTRATION'S] RESEARCH LED THEM TO CONCLUDE THAT SCORING A 4 ON AN AP EXAMINATION DID REFLECT A SIGNIFICANT GRASP OF THE MATERIAL."**

not rush through the years for the sake of graduating. "College is not just about expedience, but to know the material for the major- to grow the brain bank and figure out what you want to do and who you want to be as an individual." She went on to express her admiration for high school students who worked hard and received AP scores of 4s. "The faculty must be reasonable- accepting scores of 4s has not limited the students ability to perform (in Stern), and Yeshiva College will be the same." Ultimately, this is sure to be a positive adjustment of policy for Yeshiva College and Sy Syms School of Business.



## Winter Sports Season Commences for YU Teams

By Ilan Atri

Many would say that the most exciting extra curricular activities our University has to offer are sports. With the temperature dropping and the wind speeding up, winter sports season is upon us!

With the Men's and Women's Cross Country and Soccer seasons coming to an end, we turn to basketball and fencing to fill the excitement void our YU Macs fanatics are craving.

All four teams have already started competition this season. Our beloved fencing team showed a lot of promise at the Vassar invitational. Both the Men and Women's team notched wins against Hunter College, with the Men's team also beating Incarnate Word. The star for the men was Junior Spencer Brasch, leading the way in foil winning 18 out of 23 bouts. On the Women's side, Senior Jamie Baum earned 14 victories in epee bouts, and Freshman Shoshana Ciment earned an impressive 8 wins in foil in her first experience as a collegiate athlete.

At the Temple University Open, the Men's team continued their success with a handful of its athletes working their way into the round of 32. At the Matt Lampell Hudson River Invitational, the women's team failed to earn a win but still showed plenty of heart, talent, and competitiveness. In terms of goals, the athletic department is looking to the fencing teams to once again send multiple athletes to the prestigious NCAA Regionals.

The Men's Basketball team is off to a 1-2 start, with a win against City College of New York, and losses to the United States Coast Guard Academy and Connecticut College. They still have not played a game at home. Freshman Simcha Halpert was just named Skyline Conference rookie of the week, and he will certainly be one of the team's stars to watch as the season develops.

The Women's Basketball team also has not yet played a home game. They have started off the season at 1-1 with a win at Pratt institute and a loss at Ramapo College.

Men's basketball has added two new assistant coaches, ex-Mac and 1000-point scorer Benjy Ritholtz and

ex-European-pro Daniel Tamir. Many are wondering how the team will do this season after a historically successful season last year in which they earned a spot in the playoffs and won their first home playoff game in 15 years. Athletic Director Joe Bednarsh displayed a positive attitude, saying, "I would love to host another playoff game this year!" He also mentioned that newly created divisions within the skyline conference presents

the Macs with the opportunity to continue to be a force.

The main headline for the Women's Basketball team is the arrival of brand new jerseys, including optional matching skirts, instead of shorts, for players who wish to wear them during games.

Be sure to come out and show your support and love for the Maccabees. Follow @yuathletics on Twitter and check out YUMacs.com for more information.



## Yeshiva University to Begin Fellowship Mentorship Program

By Yitzchak Fried

The Dean's office has announced an exciting new mentorship program, designed to help students apply to fellowships abroad. The program will target strong students in sophomore and junior year, with the aim of cultivating their awareness of academic possibilities beyond the sometimes cloistered walls of the YU campus. In a recent letter to faculty, Dean Jacobson recruited professors to identify "YU undergraduates who would be strong candidates for external fellowships". The letter directed faculty to seek out students with a number of personal and academic qualities, including "maturity, resilience, and adaptability" and an "academic passion that can be focused and developed into a fellowship project at a particular university."

Dean Jacobson hopes that the mentorship program will help raise students' global consciousness, and encourage them – without compromising their Jewish values and identities – to consider themselves members of an international academic community. To this end, the program will do more than provide guidance through the fellowship application process. It will also involve programming designed to ensure that students are sufficiently culturally informed to be competitive fellowship candidates. Programming could include lectures on current events and on arts and culture, museum trips, movie viewings and other enrichment activities that would provide students with discussion material for a fellowship interview.

When asked about the program's similarity to the existing Honors Program, Dean Jacobson stressed that the two programs would be distinct. Students need not be honors students to apply for fellowship mentoring, so long as they are strong academically and have a G.P.A. of at least 3.75. Admission to the Honors Program currently depends on having achieved an SAT score of 1400, a criterion that can prove irrelevant to a student's ability and passion for a particular discipline. For example, strong humanities students may have achieved SAT math

scores that were insufficient for honors admission. Dean Jacobson has already begun reaching out to students, based on faculty recommendations, to encourage them to consider applying for a fellowship abroad. The students were told that, if they qualify, they'd join "a small cohort of YU undergraduates for whom we will be providing mentorship and support in preparing for fellowship applications."

Qualifying for the program will involve a selection process. Interested students can fill out an application form, and, assuming that they fulfill the basic requirement of having a G.P.A. of 3.75 or above, will

### "DEAN JACOBSON HOPES THAT THE MENTORSHIP PROGRAM WILL HELP RAISE STUDENTS' GLOBAL CONSCIOUSNESS, AND ENCOURAGE THEM – WITHOUT COMPROMISING THEIR JEWISH VALUES AND IDENTITIES"

be asked to meet with Dean Jacobson to determine whether or not they will be "strong candidates for fellowships". However, Dean Jacobson emphasized that despite the use of teachers to identify strong potential candidates for this coming year, applicants do not need a teacher recommendation.

Because the program is in its infancy, it will target a limited set of fellowships that support post-grad study abroad, as well as a few that fund students' tuition while they are still in college. These include the Fulbright scholarship, which provides for students to study in institutions across the world, as well as the Marshall (for study in the UK), Mitchell (for study in Ireland) and the Gates and Rhodes (for study in Cambridge and Oxford respectively). These fellowships are all highly selective, but Dean Jacobson believes

that YU students have what it takes to compete. Even for students who are not successful in winning fellowships, Dean Jacobson thinks that the preparatory experience will be enriching. Imagining a student who pursued law school after not managing to win a fellowship, Jacobson said that such a student would nonetheless almost certainly be "a stronger, more interesting law school applicant and a lawyer with a broader point of view."

The foundations of the program were laid by the late Dr. Norman Adler, who had tackled the project of identifying and mentoring students for external fellowships almost entirely on his own. Dean Jacobson expressed gratitude to Dr. Adler, while emphasizing that the new mentorship program will be more developed. "I want to thank the late Norman Adler, who really got this started. We'll be using the foundations that he laid, and taking it to the next level." The updated program will rely on a number of faculty mentors who are themselves recipients of at least some of the external fellowships targeted by the program. Mentors will be able to draw on their personal experience to guide students through fellowship applications. The program will also have an annual timeline for students going through the fellowship application process, which will be visible on the web.

Above and beyond the particular students it benefits, the Dean's office hopes that the mentorship program, by raising the profile of external fellowships on campus, will make all students more aware of the larger academic world. Asked how she felt about encouraging students to submit to intercollegiate undergraduate journals, Dean Jacobson said that she'd love for the mentorship program to be a springboard for other student participation in the broader academic community. (Journals that accept undergraduate submissions include The American Journal for Undergraduate Research, The Pi Sigma Alpha Undergraduate Journal of Politics, The Columbia Undergraduate Journal of History, Foundations and The Yale Historical Review, to name a few).

## New Minyan, Coffee and Tea, and Free Meals: Shabbat at Wilf Gets a Makeover

By Elliot Heller

The 2016-2017 school year is well underway, and several changes to the Shabbat programming on the Wilf campus are as well. Members of the SOY student council (Student Organization of Yeshiva, the body in charge of religious activities on campus) are hoping that new initiatives, as well as some minor tweaks to existing programming, will cause the familiar question "Are you in for shabbos?" to be answered with a confident "Yes!"

In addition to the previously existing Shabbat morning minyan options on campus, on the Shabbat of December 2nd, a new, student-led "community minyan" will begin to operate on campus. Ten months in the making, the minyan will be held in the Klein Beit Midrash, beginning at 9:00 am. The goal of the new minyan is to create an opportunity for students to be placed at the forefront of the religious atmosphere that fits their needs. In addition to facilitating the regular minyan operations, the minyan's board of students will focus on creating new initiatives and programming based on student input to meet this goal. "There are a lot of minyanim on campus, but it's hard to find a minyan where people say 'this is my minyan,'" explained Dovid Simpser '18, vice president of SOY, who co-founded the minyan along with SOY president Shua Brick '17 and IBC Vice President Aryeh Laufer '19. "We're hoping to create a real community feel; something that people will truly look forward to as a way of enhancing their Shabbos experience."

The idea for the minyan was inspired by the tremendous success of the Friday Night Carlebach Minyan, which as recently as last week was forced to move locations from the Klein Beit Midrash due to an overwhelming number of attendees. "We hope to have a meaningful davening that has nice, inspiring singing, while still going at a reasonable pace that will keep people engaged," said Simpser.

The minyan will be preceded by a student-led chaburah at 8:45, and followed by its own special kiddush, sponsored by SOY. Rabbis Matt LeVee and Benny Rofeh will serve as strong religious personae to enhance the minyan with their warmth and guidance. As a "community minyan", there will be a focus on making enough room for both the men and the women who would like to attend, and to make sure that everyone's needs are met.

The changes to Shabbat on campus don't end there. "Club Shabbatot," where individual clubs are called upon to give divrei torah and run programming relating to their club's theme, will occur next semester on the Wilf campus, after many years of proven success on the Beren campus. Another new addition to shabbos is the hot water machine that will be present in the Morgenstern Lounge throughout Shabbat offering tea and coffee to all who want.

And finally, as possibly the most unprecedented Shabbat initiative that campus has ever seen, on the Shabbat of December 23rd-24th, which is also the Shabbat of reading week and Erev Chanukah, SOY will be sponsoring Shabbat for all interested students. This means that Shabbat meals in the cafeteria will be FREE! As the whole campus comes together for Shabbat, along with Dean of Undergraduate Torah Studies, Rabbi Menachem Penner and "The Mashpia", Rabbi Moshe Weinberger, the Shabbat is set to be a true opportunity for inspiration and community building for all.

"When I came to SOY, making shabbos something people can connect to was a big goal of mine," said Simpser. "If this [free] Shabbos is a success we might be able to do similar things in the future. We want people to feel like 'this is my Shabbos, this is my campus.'" Overall, the changes share a common theme: making Shabbat more exciting and engaging for everyone on campus.



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## More YU Real Estate Sold, But This Time, Properties Will Stay within the Family

By David Rubinstein

Yeshiva University sold the Alabama Residence, a student housing building near Cardozo's campus, earlier this month. Collegium Capital, a real estate firm specializing in student housing, bought the property for \$58 million together with other New York-based real estate firms. Collegium Capital is a subsidiary of Pebb Capital, whose managing director, Todd Rosenberg, received a J.D. from Cardozo.

This transaction is in discord with a statement made in March 2015 by the managing director of Alvarez & Marsal, the firm hired by YU to find cost-cutting strategies. "There are no plans to sell any other real estate right now, other than what was sold almost a year ago last May [2014]," Rob Hershan told The Commentator at the time. According to Cardozo's announcement, the Alabama Residence was "put up for sale in 2015."

When contacted for comment, Mr. Hershan said his comments made in March 2015 were "entirely true and accurate" at the time. "I have been away from YU for more than one year, so the recent sale of the Alabama Residence must have been decided well after Alvarez & Marsal completed its work at the University."

Matt Yaniv, Yeshiva University's Director of Mar-

keting and Communications, said the sale "presented a great business opportunity for the university" and was based on "strong market conditions."

The sale of the Alabama follows a years-long series of real estate handoffs. In winter 2013, YU sold four office buildings in Midtown for a combined \$202.5 million. In May 2014, YU sold ten Washington Heights apartment buildings for \$72.5 million.

This month's transaction brings the total real estate sales to \$330 million over the last four years, excluding the \$371.8 million in properties that were transferred as part of the 2015 deal that gave ownership of the Einstein College of Medicine to Montefiore. YU's disclosed financial statements reported that the university holds a book value of almost \$223.4 million in land, buildings, and equipment.

The sale of the Alabama is somewhat different in kind than the real estate sales that precede it, however. Under its new ownership, the Alabama Residence will be renovated and is expected to reopen by fall 2017 with priority access offered to students at Cardozo Law. While other properties were sold to third parties for non-YU usage, Cardozo's building will maintain ties to the law school despite its new ownership.



## YU Thanks Police and Firefighters in Student-Run Initiative

By Zach Sterman

On Tuesday, November 22, the ground level of the Gottesman Library was occupied by a rotation of NYPD police officers and FDNY firefighters. The occasion was a student-led initiative to show solidarity and support for those who risk their lives for the protection and betterment of society around them. Students were encouraged to express appreciation by thanking the officers and firefighters in person and by signing posters emblazoned with YU's logo to be framed and presented to the NYPD's 34th precinct and FDNY Ladder 45.

Students stopped by to greet the officers and firefighters, shaking their hands and taking pictures. Among those who took the time to share their thanks was President Joel, who expressed great pride and gratitude both to the servicemen for their courage, and to the students for spearheading this effort.

The goal of the event was to show support and spread the sentiment of appreciation through social media, primarily Snapchat and Facebook, encouraging participants to use the tag #ShareYourThanks. The organizers conveyed that this was "the first part of what we hope will be a larger campaign," and stated that they were looking to running a similar event on the Beren Campus in the near future.

It is no secret that this showing comes in the midst of unrest and mixed feelings toward law enforcement officers

around the country. One student-organizer said, "We are simply looking to show due appreciation for those who put themselves in harm's way for our protection and for

the betterment of our society. There are many, many fine, upstanding officers risking their lives, and we want to make sure they receive due appreciation."



## Growing Hospitality and Management Club Expands Annual Visits

By Aaron Szydlo

Have you ever seen a hotel or restaurant and wondered what goes on besides making the food? If this sounds familiar, then the Hospitality and Management Club is the place for you. The club aims to meet with the management of restaurants and hotels and to get a behind the scene look into their daily operations. Yosef Kerendian (Sy Syms, '19), a board member for the club exclaimed, "there is great triumph in understanding the behind-the-scenes of a world class hotel and restaurant in the heart of New York City."

In past years, the club has aimed to meet with one hotel and one restaurant per year. Last year, they took a trip to Hotel Edge, a local hotel on 168th Street in Washington Heights, as well as to the Midtown restaurant, Mr. Broadway. This year, however, there is a new initiative. Board members such as Matan Horenstein (Sy Syms, '17), Sabrina Benmoha (SCW, '18), and others have decided that the club should meet with two hotels and restaurant per year. Sam Gelman (Sy Syms, '19) stated, "even though I really did not

know much about Hospitality Management before joining, I am so thrilled to be a part of the club. I think we are doing great things and the club provides a fantastic learning op-

**"THERE IS GREAT TRIUMPH IN UNDERSTANDING THE BEHIND-THE-SCENES OF A WORLD CLASS HOTEL AND RESTAURANT IN THE HEART OF NEW YORK CITY!"**

portunity. I would encourage anyone who even has a slight inclination of joining to do so immediately." The Hospitality and Management Club is making a reputation for itself around both the Stern and Wilf Campuses.

Though the exact establishments to go to for this year have not been chosen yet, board members are working tirelessly to connect with a number of hotels and restaurants. Benni Besalel (Sy Syms, '19) mentioned, "We have been contacting a lot of different places, but it is not so easy to reach all of them. The emailing and calling back and forth definitely takes its toll on you." Members of the club are working remarkably hard to make this year better than any year in recent history.

The Hospitality and Management Club is one of the most interesting clubs on campus. It offers a remarkable learning opportunity and a chance to build new relationships. Tyler Hod (Sy Syms, '20) said, "After speaking with some friends and members of the club, I think I am definitely going to join." The time to join is now, spots are being filled and events are happening. You do not want to miss being a part of this club. When the first event happens, where will you be?

## Do You Know the Muffin Man Who Lives in Washington Heights? Eizenshtein Bakery Is Back

By Etan Vann

On Monday November 13, the Eizenshtein Bakery reopened its doors after a five-month hiatus. While not under new ownership, the bakery is taking a new angle on how to best serve the YU community than it had previously, focusing on offering a wide selection of items at a price that is affordable for the student body.

While for many years the Heights has had countless different kosher dining and grocery options, the one thing that it lacked was a kosher bakery. Seeing the need for a bakery, Eizenshtein opened last March. The initial approach of the bakery was to offer a vast amount of gourmet pareve baked goods. However, while the bakery did receive positive reviews (4.8/5 on their Facebook page), the business was not present, especially over the summer. The owners decided that in order to make their business profitable, they had to find a way to cater towards the budget of the students.

In addition to the new prices, there are some new goods

that the bakery provides. The baked goods available for purchase on a daily basis include cookies (baked daily at 8:00 AM), muffins, croissants, and pre-packaged cake slices and cookies. Towards the end of the week, the bakery makes Challah and fancier treats in honor of Shabbos. Eizenshtein also has a new café section in the store and sells lattes and espressos as well. The store's new seating area creates a nice and quiet place to be somewhere peaceful, and a comfortable place to hang out or study.

Still, it seems the best part about the store is the prices. In what used to be an expensive bakery, one can now walk in and find it hard to spend more than ten dollars on his purchase. The owners hope that this will help increase business and give them the clients that they were not able to have before. For those who wish to have the delicacies that were served last semester, one can preorder specialties such as birthday cakes with a 48 hour notice. As of now, the application to put the bakery on the caf card is still pend-

ing, with hopes to get approval in the coming months. The bakery is under the Kashrus of the Vaad of Riverdale and will surely be a valuable asset for the YU community.



### BERMAN, CONTINUED FROM FRONT PAGE

ing, repeatedly rebuffing The Commentator's requests for comments throughout the entire search process. When approached by a Commentator journalist less than a week before the vote, YU Trustee and Treasurer of the Board Philip Friedman shared these cryptic words: "We will try to find common ground and I'm sure we will."

For Rabbi Berman to be elected president of Yeshiva University, he needed at least eighty percent of its Board to vote in his favor. RIETS, a corporation that is legally separate from Yeshiva University, has its own set of governing rules – to become President of RIETS, Rabbi Berman needed the votes of just over fifty percent of the Board of RIETS. But though the two institutions are technically independent, at least twelve trustees sit on the Boards of both corporations. One such trustee is Julius Berman, the Chairman Emeritus of the Board of RIETS and uncle of President-Elect Berman.

Another such trustee is President Richard Joel, who sits on both the Board of Yeshiva University and the Board of RIETS and was therefore granted a vote in both elections. President Joel felt that it would not be appropriate for him to personally attend the two votes, but he called in to cast his votes in support of Rabbi Berman. "I know Rabbi Berman," said President Joel. "In this vote, my responsibility is to support the board leadership. It was a heartfelt vote." In fact, President Joel believes that he "might have been the first person to mention Rabbi Berman to the Chairman of the Board." Since his position on the board is in virtue of his position as President, Richard Joel will no longer sit on the Board once he steps down this coming July. He will continue to live in his current house, which is owned by Yeshiva University, even after he is no longer president.

Many have noted that, judging by his history and background, Rabbi Berman looks to be a very different sort of presidential figure from President Joel. Rabbi Berman is an ordained rabbi with a doctorate in Jewish thought and little experience managing large institutions, while President Joel is a layman who, before he became president of YU, served as Associate Dean of Cardozo School of Law and President of Hillel. When asked what he makes of the fact that the Board's choice for his successor is markedly different from him, President Joel said, "He certainly is far more learned than I am. But we have not-dissimilar hashkafas. I don't think that went into the choice. When they were looking for me they were looking for someone to put more emphasis on student life and on building the faculty. That was my mission. My background is not in finance, but I know how to run a company." President Joel had high praise for Rabbi Berman: "He is the ultimate ben yeshiva. He was and is a talmid of several of our Roshei Yeshiva. He has winning ways. He speaks beautifully. He's a talmid chacham. And I'm very excited about his being next."

Dr. Moshe Halbertal, a world-renowned Israeli philosopher and PhD mentor to Rabbi Dr. Berman lauded

his student: "Rabbi Berman's work combines meticulous textual analysis with a fine conceptual grasp and a deep philosophical understanding of the larger ramifications of the subject on the relationship between particularism and universalism in the history of Halakhah. YU is blessed to have as its future president a wonderful scholar and a genuine 'mench'."

Dean of RIETS Rabbi Menachem Penner who, along with Vice President Josh Joseph, attended Yeshivat Har Etzion with Rabbi Berman, spoke highly of our president-elect. "It will be wonderful to have him join the Yeshiva," said Rabbi Penner. "He's a significant talmid chacham, a terrific speaker, and he will address the yeshiva on a regular basis. We will work very closely on details of what's going to happen in the yeshiva." When asked to gauge the reactions of the Roshei Yeshiva, Rabbi Penner said "On the whole they're really looking forward to working with him." This is a significant departure from last election cycle – when Richard Joel was being considered for the position, semicha students organized an "emergency tehillim rally" to protest Joel's candidacy and were joined by Rabbi Schachter, Rabbi Twersky, and Rabbi Willig.



The Board's vote followed quickly on the heels of a highly secretive selection process. The JTA published on September 12th that Rabbi Berman was the top candidate for the position and Chairman of the Board Moshael Straus confirmed the next day that Rabbi Berman's candidacy had been advanced by the presidential search committee. For the past two months, Rabbi Berman has been meeting with various YU stakeholders in preparation for the Board's vote. Notably, his only meeting with YU undergraduate students to date took on the night before the board's final vote, when he sat down to dinner with YU's undergraduate student council presidents.

Faculty had some input during the presidential search. Several members of YU's Faculty Council interviewed Rabbi Dr. Berman when he was being considered by the board beginning this past September and then presented their opinions to the board. Dr. Charles Swencionis, a professor in YU's Ferkauf Graduate School of

Psychology and Einstein College of Medicine who serves as the Speaker of the Faculty Council, was present at the Faculty Council's interview of Rabbi Berman. He explained what he likes about Rabbi Berman: "I see him as a man who listens, an open man. He seems aware of the major difficulties of the university beyond the financial ones." Professor Swencionis acknowledged that "the university has some deep problems" and said that our president-elect "strikes me as a man who could inspire people to get behind the university again."

When asked if he had any specific concerns about Rabbi Berman, Dr. Swencionis said, "It would be nice if he had a lot more experience running a major university." But he explained that "the spiritual aspect" was an important consideration during the presidential search alongside experience with finances and management and the "we couldn't find anyone with both. There isn't anyone like that in the modern orthodox world." Swencionis maintained that he is satisfied with the Board's decision. "I didn't feel like we were settling," he said. "I think he's gonna be a real plus."

Administrators of several of YU's graduate schools were less forthcoming with their thoughts on our president-elect and the search process in general. Interestingly, one administrator of the Albert Einstein College of Medicine, a school that YU continues to claim strong ties to despite recently handing over its financial and operational control to Montefiore Medical Center, turned down a request for comment about the presidential search with these words: "Given the 2015 transition of Einstein, no [Einstein administrators] would consider talking about the YU search appropriate." In September 2015, Dean of Einstein Dr. Allen Spiegel wrote in a letter addressed to the Einstein community that, though YU currently retains its role as Einstein's degree-granting institution, "Under the comprehensive terms of the agreement, Einstein is seeking the authority to grant degrees (which is expected to be approved in approximately three years' time)."

Rabbi Berman's transition into the presidency is expected to mirror the transition of his predecessor. President Joel was elected president in the beginning of December 2002 and officially became president on June 16, 2003. During the interim months, he spent two or three days a week in Yeshiva University and the rest of his time in Washington D.C. since he remained President of Hillel during his transitional period. He sat in on cabinet meetings and met weekly with Rabbi Dr. Lamm, working from what he called a "tiny little cubicle behind Dr. Lamm's office".

Similarly, Rabbi Berman will take over on July 1 and President Joel will be in charge until then. In the interim, Rabbi Berman will be travelling back and forth between Israel and America, but as time goes on he will become increasingly more of a presence on campus. President Joel explained, "We will do everything to welcome him and help with an onboarding process as he desires. On the night of June 30, I will take my photographs and diplomas and I will leave the door and close it. Maybe I'll leave him a note on my desk wishing him luck. And the next day he's in here."



## New Shabbat Programming Database Aims to Better Determine Students' Wants

By Elliot Heller

The Office of Undergraduate Housing and Residence Life is doing its part to enhance Shabbat on campus. Through a new data-driven initiative called 'Shabbat Report', the administration hopes to better determine which parts of Shabbat programming students like more than others. The office hopes that the database, which tracks everything from attendance and event type (tisch, panel, etc) to more nuanced factors, like the weather that day and the type of food that was served, will them be able to get a more exact science of what works and what doesn't, and aid in planning future programming.

"The true benefits lie in the data collected over the long term," said Yair Strachman. "After time, the database won't just tell us whether a specific program

(like a tisch with a specific Rosh Yeshiva) was successful or not, but tells us what the necessary qualities of a successful event are. For instance, a panel discussion with excellent speakers could end up with very low attendance. But that doesn't mean no one likes panels or that the topic was uninteresting!"

"If we looked at the data, we could learn that in fact, the time slot of the panel, let's say immediately after Shabbos lunch, always generates low turnout, whereas panel discussions overall do bring positive results in other time slots. This has obvious benefits for anyone who wants to plan events in the future.

"Overall, everyone working on student and residence life on the Wilf Campus is committed to listening and learning from the students themselves," said Strachman, "and this is one of the best ways to do that."

## News Update- Delay in Opening of 16 Handles in the Heights

By Elliot Heller

YU students will have to wait a little longer to enjoy frozen yogurt in the Heights. A representative from 16 Handles, the popular frozen yogurt and smoothie franchise which has been planning a branch on the corner of Audubon Avenue and 185th Street (across from Dunkin' Donuts) for several months now, said there have been delays in acquiring some of the millwork needed for the store. They are working on fixing the issue, but no definitive timetable has been set for the opening. The permit on the property expires in May of next year.



## This One Line, A Short Story

By Akiva Schick

Jonathan Kohl had a perfect beginning to his story. Actually he had six. Six beginnings, but only one story. At the moment, it begins like this: "I used to think of myself as a pacifist. Then my next door neighbors installed floodlights outside my bedroom window."

I think we can agree that, as an opening, this sentence has quite a lot to offer. It neatly establishes the central conflict in the story, while retaining a playful tone. Now, Jonathan would be in an excellent position to continue his story if not for the small inconvenient detail that he is utterly bumfuzzled over how to proceed from here.

Watch him, sitting at his desk, nobly fighting the urge to open Firefox (the poor boy thinks he can resist switching to Chrome) and check Facebook, his emails, and a horde of other frankly useless websites. Jonathan's problem, to put it plainly, is that he is scared. Well, he's also not a particularly good writer, if we're to be blunt, but poor writing is no excuse to put down the pen. It's certainly never stopped me as you may learn to your dismay as your eyes skim down the page and see just how long this story is.

Getting back to Jonathan, he is currently running his hand through his curly black hair, wishing he could use some of his other excellent opening sentences more than once. But that would be rather like running back and forth over the same patch of a racing track. Amusing perhaps, but it won't get you anywhere. Of course, a writer may sidestep his or her dearth of second sentences by endlessly writing about the first sentence, but who would want to read that sort of thing?

No, Jonathan, if he's to be successful, must get over his fear. What fear is that? Well, it's the same fear that all men and women who have had the audacity to put their words on paper feel. It is the fear of failure, and of rejection. Poor Jonathan Kohl has never published a thing in his life. Not even his charming little story about a cat named Barnaby who loses his tail in a car accident. He has submitted his work to countless magazines, and even his friend's blog, yet has received nothing but terribly polite rejection letters from them all (to be fair to his friend, that blog is about car mechanics, so he was somewhat justified in rejecting the story).

I wish I could give him some advice - like, "don't come up with a fanciful story if you don't have a proper ending," or "don't be self-indulgent by writing silly dialogue," or "above all, do not let your characters become self-aware." You know, the usual list. But he never listens to my advice.

I know what you must be thinking. You're thinking, "well, this story isn't going anywhere at all, I'm losing interest." I understand the sentiment. Do you think I'm having any fun either? Yet we can't just abandon Jonathan Kohl to his lonely desk. To stop reading would be to condemn him to an eternity of running his hand through his curly black hair, never overcoming writer's block. You wouldn't be so cruel as to do that to him, would you? For one thing, he'll go bald rather quicker than he would otherwise. For another, don't we all deserve a chance to be the best we can? To take our greatest talents and soar with them?

No? Oh. Well, how about this. How about we give Jonathan Kohl some privacy. Maybe he's simply having some trouble performing with all of us watching. How would you

feel if a room full of people watched you write? Let's step out for a few minutes, and allow Jonathan Kohl to make some progress with that tale of neighborcide. In the meantime, why don't I tell you the story of Barnaby the cat, and how he lost his tail in a car accident. I promise you it's wonderfully thematic.

Barnaby the cat had white fur and a boring life. He lived on West 13th street in Manhattan (you know, that funny line between New Jersey and Long Island), and rarely got out, save for when Diana, his owner, asked him to pick up the groceries. This was an unusual occurrence as Barnaby always ended up buying far more fish than Diana ever had an appetite for. But on the rare Tuesday when Diana was busy, Barnaby was given the task. On one such Tuesday, Barnaby lazed in the sun, shining in from the clean-enough-to-be-getting-on-with apartment windows, licking himself in areas that have been described quite enough by other writers. The phone rang, and, reluctantly breaking from his grooming, he got up to see who it was. He only ever answered Diana; her friends were all dog owners, and he simply didn't have the time to associate with trash like that. If he were especially bored he would answer her mother's calls. Mrs. Johnson usually had some choice things to say about her daughter's dating life, and the odd tip on how to cook better salmon.

It was Diana on the other end, so Barnaby answered.

"Yes?" he asked by way of greeting.

"Good, you're awake," said Diana. "I need you to go to the supermarket for me, I won't have time later."

"Fine," said Barnaby staring at his flicking tail.

"And," Diana paused. "I have some medicine I need from the pharmacy. It's further away, so you can take the car if you want."

Barnaby's interested soared. He hadn't been allowed to drive the car since the nasty business with the kitten and the raccoon in February. He hung up without saying goodbye - which was his usual sendoff, grabbed the car keys, his crocodile leather jacket, and swept out of the apartment.

Diana owned a vomity green Honda Accord from the nineties. It wasn't Barnaby's style, but he worked with what he had. Pulling out of the apartment's parking garage, he began speeding down Hudson Street, nearly empty at this time of day. Now, most unfortunately for Barnaby, he was

a cat, and cats have infamously short attention spans (everyone knows that Napoleon lost the Battle of Waterloo due to his trust in a regiment of Belgian cats. Well, that and his fear of the dark). Barnaby, as was inevitable, soon grew bored with driving, and very fixated on a fly in the car. Suddenly he swiped a paw, jerking the wheel, and thereby sending the car careening into the other lane, where it promptly crashed into another.

Well, that's Barnaby's tale. Honestly, the part of him losing his tail is fairly anticlimactic; let's just say it occurred in the crash. Shall we return to Jonathan Kohl? Yes, I rather think so. Oh, oh dear. He hasn't made any progress at all. Oh no! he's playing minesweeper! What an utter shame. Well dear reader, I suppose Jonathan will never be a writer worth -

"You know, you're being very unkind."

Oh no. Jonathan has noticed us.

"Yes, I have. And I can hear you Akiva. You're being very rude to me. Also, you completely changed the Barnaby story."

I am sorry to all the readers. I have to address this. I assure you it will be very dull - why don't you skim down past this conversation.

"Don't try to cover this up, you're always doing that, always trying to smother other people's voices," said Jonathan.

"That's not fair," I said, "I'm just trying to keep things interesting for the readers. We could use a little levity in this climate."

"Well you don't have to be mean. You keep insulting me, calling me a bad writer, saying I'll never accomplish anything, and changing around the stories I write."

"Yes, well your version of the Barnaby story wasn't that good."

"That's not true!" shouted Jonathan indignantly.

"Actually," said Barnaby, hopping onto Jonathan's desk, (quite gracefully for a cat without a tail) "I have to agree with Akiva here. You didn't give me that much to do Jonathan. Your character work isn't great. At least I have an attitude in the new version."

*SEE ONE LINE,  
CONTINUED ON PAGE 10*



## Peres and Moral Leadership: Dreams and Lessons for the Future

By David Aaronson

In the current world of politics and diplomacy, it's more than fair to question the existence of morality and wisdom in the minds of today's leaders. At times, it seems that all we hear from government officials these days are messages of fear, incitement, and divisiveness. We often read about the inexcusable behavior of our leaders toward others and how they lack common decency and respect. We then ask ourselves: What happened to mo-

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**"PEACE IS NOT A POLITICAL  
EVENT. IT IS A BASIC, HISTORIC,  
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AND TAKE THE RISK, OR PEACE  
AND PAY THE PRICE."  
-SHIMON PERES**

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reality? When did decency disappear? Why do we stand divided? How come optimism is no more? Have we lost all hope? Can there be a brighter future? The answer to all these questions can be found in the life of a man who lived by these basic values that many lack today. A man who, in his recent departure from this world, taught us that one who lives in fear is doomed and that one who lives in hope is destined to succeed. This man was none other than former Israeli President and Prime Minister Shimon Peres, of blessed memory, who passed away two months ago.

Many words can be used to describe Shimon Peres, his image, his impact, and his legacy. I choose to focus on one word: dreamer. As one of history's greatest visionaries, Shimon Peres dreamed a great dream. In doing so, he followed in the footsteps of dreamers like Joseph, Theodor Herzl, and Martin Luther King. It was precisely the dream of Shimon Peres that made the desert bloom, revived an unspoken language, and returned an ancient people to their national homeland. And like most dreamers, Shimon Peres never gave up hope, even in the worst of situations. He didn't give up hope when his beloved grandfather was burned to death by the Nazis while praying in synagogue. He didn't give up hope when he, as an eleven-year-old young Jewish boy, was forced to flee Poland with no place else to go. He didn't give up hope when he boarded a train to Israel with nothing but the clothes on his body.

Instead, Shimon Peres began a new life in Israel, rebuilding what he had lost in Europe. He married and had children, creating for himself a new family and a new reason for hope. He fought for the right of Jews to live as a free people, joining David Ben Gurion's team and helping to re-establish the Jewish State of Israel. Shimon Peres defended his reborn nation as the first Director

General of Israel's Ministry of Defense, securing enough soldiers and weapons to win the War of Independence in 1948. He oversaw the construction of Israel's nuclear facility in Dimona and worked hard in 1967 to rebuild the Jewish blocs of Judea and Samaria. As Defense Minister in 1976, Shimon Peres coordinated the successful raid on Entebbe that rescued Jewish passengers taken hostage by terrorists on a hijacked airplane. In 1979 and in 1994, he was instrumental in negotiating and facilitating Israel's successful peace treaties with both Egypt and Jordan, as well as opening the first-ever direct talks between Israel and the Palestinian Authority, the latter winning him the Nobel Peace Prize.

It was in these fulfilled dreams that Shimon Peres rarely concentrated on the past, or even on the present for that matter. His eyes were always focused on the future. His dream for the future was one of peace, coexistence, and bridge-building. It was his optimism for the future that often brought him to meet with young people in Israel and around the world - including his visit to Yeshiva University in 1987 - educating the youth generation about the benefits of peace: "Peace is not a political event," Peres stated. "It is a basic, historic, and moral choice: Either war and take the risk, or peace and pay the price." These values led Shimon Peres to establish the Peres Center for Peace, an organization which works to promote peaceful cooperation between children and adults from different cultures and faiths in areas of sports, science, innovation, technology, education, and public service.

At times, it was difficult to imagine how it was possible that an Israeli leader could be so optimistic about the future while living in such a very dangerous world.

He proclaimed that his dream was that of a voyager. "I am a voyager from the defense of Dimona to optimism of Oslo," Shimon Peres remarked to Ambassador Danny Ayalon, the YU Rennert Visiting Professor of Foreign Policy Studies, in one of their many conversations together. Similarly, when I had the great honor and privilege of meeting Shimon Peres at the end of his presidency, he told me: "We must always be hopeful and choose peace over war, to save lives and prevent death and destruction. The Talmud teaches us that to save one life is to save an entire world. It is thus our duty to save this world from war and hate by filling it with peace and respect."

It is the belief of the Jewish tradition, enshrined by Biblical prophecy, that the seventy nations of the world will one day all assemble together in Jerusalem to pay respect to the Jewish people and its leaders. Indeed, at the funeral of Shimon Peres on Mount Herzl, world leaders from seventy different nations gathered to pay their final respects to a dreamer who was the most respected Israeli abroad. A dreamer, as Prime Minister Netanyahu proclaimed, "whose memory will dwell in the heart of the nation, and more importantly, in all the hearts of all the nations."

We now embark on a concerning era of uncertainty with a lack of moral leadership in this world. In contrast to today's leaders, Shimon Peres was a dreamer of unity, not of divisiveness. He was a dreamer of hope and courage, not of fear and despair. I can only hope that our new government officials will follow in the footsteps of Shimon Peres and his dream to "create a new future for our children, to live differently from us, to live in peace."



Peres at YU in 1987

### ONE LINE, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 9

"My character work isn't great?" sputtered Jonathan. "What about Akiva's! I'm clearly a thinly veiled stand-in for him, just a cheap way for him to mask his fears about writing!"

Barnaby rolled his eyes. "Come on Jonathan, don't be dramatic, all characters are reflections of the writers who created them."

"I don't care! I won't take this anymore! I'm sick of being a one-dimensional stand-in. I don't even want to be a writer, I want to go into business!" And with that, Jonathan stood

up, and stalked out of the story forever, leaving the tale of the homicidal neighbor forever unfinished, and depriving a fictional jury of a fascinating murder case (it would have eventually been ruled a mistrial).

"This all must be very embarrassing for you," Barnaby said to me.

"Well, yeah. Somewhat. I didn't think the story would get away from me so dramatically."

"Yes. It happens to the best of us," said Barnaby sagely. "When I was a young writer, I always ended up in holes that I had no way to dig myself out of. If it helps, you can go back and edit the earlier parts of the story in a way that foreshadows this conversation. It will look very clever."

"Do you really think that'll work?" I asked.

"Depends if you can resist publishing this part of the conversation." With that, Barnaby curled himself up on Jonathan's desk, and fell right asleep.

Now, dear reader, we are at an impasse, for this story has lost its characters. Jonathan Kohl has begun a new path in life, and Barnaby is napping indefinitely. I suppose if there is a lesson to be learned from all this (a questionable assertion, no doubt), it is that none of us - you, me, that odd fellow pacing about the library muttering, "why yes of course!" - should take ourselves too seriously, even in such serious times. And with that, so ends this silly tale, of Jonathan's story, and Barnaby's tail.

## How *Interstellar* Reaches Beyond and *Arrival* Falls Short

By Benjamin Koslowe

As I sit on my couch this late Thanksgiving night, I find myself scratching my head. Having an open mind, and, equally essential, a few rare open hours, I decided I would treat myself tonight to some new holiday dessert. But I speak not of my aunt's apple pie; no, the latter was both quite familiar to me and was quite swiftly gobbled down by me at an estimated rate of three tartlets per jiffy (an impressive feat of mastication indeed). I refer, rather, to a fresh treat in the form of visual dainty. Some film critic from *The Atlantic* opined, I was informed by radiotelephone-missive, that the newly-released film *Arrival* "is precisely the kind of science fiction movie, at once epic and intimate, that *Interstellar* tried (and failed) to be." Intrigued at the possibility of a film outdoing Christopher Nolan's 2014 imaginative tour de force, I hopped on over to my local multiplex to try out the acclaimed talkie.

Humans explore. Heck, they've always explored. The same itch that drove voyagers to islands, to the far corners of the earth, drove them to the deep trenches of the sea, to the craters of the moon. Such accomplishments notwithstanding, as curiosity produced manifold discovery in the scientific revolution and until today, modern man finds himself wanting as ever. The fastest amongst us cannot keep up with the pace of technological invention and scientific discovery; the fattest amongst us suffer from innovation starvation, despite the creation feast that is the 21st century. No matter the development down here, there is always an ever-expanding universe out there. Abraham's speckled firmament, outshined by today's screens and products, is rendered more countable than ever before; and yet, modern man continues to look upward with squinted eyes toward the light-polluted sky, desperate to catch a glimpse of some star light-years away. He knows there are galaxies, planets, mountains, opportunities, mysteries out there. He knows there's something *more* out there.

Still, we mostly remain grounded. When Murph begs her father to stay home on the farm, her case is compelling.

Cooper (played by the superb Matthew McConaughey), Murph's ex-pilot science-enthusiast father in *Interstellar*, of course accepts the opportunity of a lifetime to leave his blight-stricken earth, travel through a wormhole near Saturn, and search for a new habitable planet for the remnants of mankind. If some people desire to discover, then Cooper was born to reach for the stars. But he does not go gentle into that good night. As he drives away from the

### "OVERALL, ARRIVAL STRETCHES TOO WIDE WITHOUT CUTTING ALL THAT DEEP!"

ranch, knowing that he may never see his daughter again, Hans Zimmer's soundtrack blasting in its sublime majesty, Murph's bitter goodbye ("If you're leaving, just go!") still ringing, tears stream down Cooper's face and the faces of viewers alike. The adventurous spirit that seeks to discover new worlds is pulled back to earth by the tug of a gripping father/daughter relationship.

*Interstellar* was the second-greatest film released in 2014 (after *Boyhood*, but let's stay on topic). In prayer-like fashion, Murph pings out messages to her father, knowing that he is listening somewhere in the cosmos beyond. Her father and the other astronauts are, in a way, like God, discreetly helping humankind from far away. The film's visuals are gorgeous, the science is really interesting, the relationships are believable, and the stakes are high. Time itself is a huge factor as well, tying much of the film together from quiet beginning to roaring end.

Is *Arrival* of the same caliber as *Interstellar*? Well, no. Sure, it has some interesting ideas about linguistic relativity, and it's certainly refreshing to encounter a film about alien invasion that doesn't jump straight to yippie ki-yay warfare. And with neat special effects and a convincing Amy Adams in the lead, it's probably even worth watch-

ing. But overall, *Arrival* stretches too wide without cutting all that deep. In its ambition, it is only minimally compelling in the many topics it attempts to dissect in under two hours. By jumping straight to chaotic "the aliens are here" in the first five minutes, the protagonists remain essentially strangers to the audience. The theme of communication and the related motif of allied countries "disconnecting" from each other is interesting, as are the ideas of circular causality due to nonlinear time, destiny conflicting with free will, a semi-surprising plot twist, and coping with the death of a child. Each of these elements has potential to be a central plot in and of itself. The salad of all these diluted subjects together, though, yields a dry, bland, raw result.

Whereas *Interstellar* taps into the innate desire to reach way (way!) beyond usual horizons, *Arrival* just... well, it kind of just arrives. The latter, both in literal plot and in inspiration potential, is simply too earthbound. Instead of stimulating a sense of awe about how far humanity can reach, how loving relationships can stand the test of time and space, *Arrival* induces mostly confusion about what exactly to think. The story in its entirety is here on planet earth, leaving next to nothing to the imagination.

After watching *Arrival*, I look not up at the stars. I lie not in bed for hours contemplating the big questions of the universe. I just sit here on my couch scratching my head.



## Finally! A Movie About Wonder Woman!

By Shoshy Ciment

Science fiction is a genre that celebrates the strange. We constantly raise our glasses to the dorks, cyborgs and mutants while secretly wishing we could be a part of their extraordinary world. For some reason, we never tire of seeing the underdog become the hero they never thought they could be, regardless of the countless remakes of these very stories that dilute each concept's originality. Science fiction captivates us because we delight in seeing our world reimagined into something different, something better. We've seen orphans become chosen ones and losers become saviors. Why then, has it been so hard to place a woman in the role of the hero without screwing it up?

Since the beginnings of superhero films, female superheroes have been known to fight uphill battles against a society that does not want them. They've been handed one-dimensional scripts and overly sexualized versions of their characters and have been expected to make them work. It is no wonder that most of the movies that centered around a female superhero never did well in the box office. *Catwoman* (2004) and *Elektra* (2005), both

flops, are often cited as proof for why female superheroes just don't work. Of course, it doesn't matter how bad the last 5 remakes of Superman were, a new one will be remade every few years, and people will still go and see it. On the other hand, poorly developed female-led superhero movies are like lambs to the slaughter. And they get no second chance at redemption.

But now, it seems as though the efforts of the science fiction feminist fans have finally paid off. The latest addition to the *Star Wars* saga, featuring a powerful female lead, catalyzed women's previously slow climb towards greater representation in the Sci-Fi world. More recently, *Wonder Woman* marks a giant leap for women in the superhero film category, and is therefore a highly anticipated superhero film in the coming season.

In addition to *Wonder Woman*, with this fall's introduction of two female-led superhero shows, *Supergirl* on CBS, and Marvel's *Jessica Jones* on Netflix, it seems like the tide of male-centric superhero shows has finally begun to ebb. Both shows have received stellar reviews and have left viewers itching to know "what comes next" in this new world of entertainment. One thing is for sure: A new superhero is on the rise, one that sheds her house-

coat for a cape and her hairbrush for a sword.

Needless to say, the face of science fiction is changing, and not only in regards to movies and television. Nowadays, it is not unusual to see competitive female video gamers at national conventions like Comic con. Although their numbers still remain smaller than their male counterparts, women are forging a path into a world that was at one point, predominately male. It is more important, now than ever before, that science fiction films and shows pay respect to a gender that has supported them through flop after flop.

And why stop with women? The LGBTQ community has long bemoaned their lack of representation in the science fiction genre, a genre that's sole purpose is to celebrate the atypical. They too, desire role models and heroes that they can identify with.

The progress of the past decade cannot be dismissed as a passing craze any longer. It is clear that heroism should be grounded in reality and attainable for all genders, races, and sexual orientations. Hopefully, this rise in female-led science fiction films and shows carries enough momentum to propel the genre to explore much more uncharted territory.

### VISIONS, CONTINUED FROM FRONT PAGE

tend YU to the wider Jewish community and to society in general. "We need to broaden our base," he said. "We need to start the conversation and invite people in - anyone who's rooted in their Judaism and who aspires for a great Jewish future; anyone who's thinking about the way society is in flux and what traditional values have to say about that; anyone who wants to hear from people who understand the fundamental assumptions of our contemporary period and speak from the authentic voice of tradition - we want to hear their voices."

Of course, YU's precarious financial situation will be a critical piece of Rabbi Berman's agenda as president. But when pressed for details of his finan-

cial plan, Rabbi Berman encouraged patience, noting again, "I've been president elect for fewer than 24 hours." But he reassured that YU's finances are "certainly important to me," and said that he has "spent a significant amount of time" familiarizing himself with YU's financial situation. "Before I accepted the position," he said, "I needed to have an understanding of YU's finances."

Offering few specifics, Rabbi Berman maintained that "YU is moving in the right direction" in terms of "streamlining operations, having a handle on the budget, and creating liquidity to ensure security for the future. We've made great strides; there's still a ways to go, but I'm very optimistic. The finances are a crucial piece, we need to strategically handle, analyze, and act responsibly with our finances. We need to increase our revenue sources, whether it's by increasing enrollment

or broadening our donor base."

But even as he discussed YU's finances, Rabbi Berman warned against divorcing the discussion of YU's finances from questions of values and vision: "If we don't have clarity, if we don't explain how our Torah is translated into the world around us, we're not going to get the means either. We need to explain the value of YU today if we want increase enrollment and if we want to broaden our donor base." To support this argument, he quoted the famous adage from Pirkei Avot 3:21, "without Torah there is no flour" - financial success is inextricably linked to pursuing our spiritual and academic missions.

He emphasized that this perspective will be critical in the coming years: "This is the direction for YU -- to not just balance our budget, but to grow and thrive."

## Be Like Ms. Honey

By Lilly Gelman

As midterms drew nearer, and the stress of studying for exams ensued, I found myself longing for elementary school days, when my greatest concern was who would be “it” during tag at recess, or whether or not I forgot my lunch-box on the kitchen counter. Having recently seen *Matilda the Musical*, a Broadway adaptation of the best-selling children’s novel by Roald Dahl, I found these same nostalgic feelings towards childhood and the naivety that comes with them expressed throughout the show. The musical tells the story of Matilda Wormwood, a genius, book-loving, five-year-old girl born into a corrupt, TV-obsessed family that neither wants nor appreciates her one-of-a-kind mind. Matilda finds herself in a school

**“WHEN I LOOK AT MS. HONEY, I SEE AN IDEAL ADULT FIGURE, ONE WHO RECOGNIZES THE RESPONSIBILITIES OF ADULTHOOD WHILE HOLDING ON TO THE PRECIOUS ASPECTS OF CHILDHOOD.”**

with a child-hating headmistress, Ms. Trunchbull, who bullies everyone, including Matilda’s caring and supportive teacher, Ms. Honey. As the story progresses, Matilda discovers that being small does not make one wrong or unable to “change their story.”

Matilda, aside from being a genius, possesses a supernatural telekinetic gift that she utilizes to drive Ms. Trunchbull out of the school and turn Crunchem Hall Elementary into the warm, motivating, and inspiring environment that every educational institution should be. Matilda embodies the magical energy and full potential inherent in children. The opening number of the show is titled “Miracle”, and while one of the motifs expressed is that of the coddling and spoiling of children, it also portrays the confidence and ambition that parents should instill in their young ones. Matilda’s love for reading and her endless storytelling imagination depicts this attitude, in spite of the fact that her parents were not the motivating types.

The notion that the positivity in children should be inspired and motivated is crushed once the kids arrive at Crunchem Hall Elementary, where they are repeat-

edly told by Ms. Trunchbull that they are worthless, “revolting” children. Ms. Trunchbull, despite having chosen a career which requires constant interaction with children, sees childhood as nothing but the unfortunate state of people before they become adults. She makes no effort to nurture their growth. She refuses to listen when Matilda’s teacher, Ms. Honey — who is revealed to be Ms. Trunchbull’s niece— insists that Matilda is too bright for her first year class and should be moved up to one of the older grades. Ms. Trunchbull has lost all sense of adolescent innocence and enthusiasm and refuses to encourage these virtues in her students.

In her role, Ms. Honey is the antithesis of the other adult figures in Matilda’s life. Matilda’s parents, the Wormwoods, want nothing more than the physical pleasures in life. When they are not focused on a new, dishonest, money-making scheme, Matilda’s family members channel their energy into television and criticizing Matilda for her love of reading. Mr. and Mrs. Wormwood lack any sort of imaginative ambition to explore the world, and they find no meaning in a curious life. The Wormwoods, combined with Ms. Trunchbull’s relentless suppression of hope and imagination, leave a vacuum that is filled only by Ms. Honey. Ms. Honey is a teacher who pours her heart and soul into her students. Despite having a tragic childhood, she still holds a positivity and light, similar to what is seen within Matilda and the other children in the show. Ms. Honey, of course, grew up to adulthood, but she did not grow out of the magic and innocence that are present in one’s youth. When I look at Ms. Honey, I see an ideal adult figure, one who recognizes the responsibilities of adulthood while holding on to the precious aspects of childhood.

The view that adulthood should contain remnants of childlike positivity is demonstrated in one of the most touching moments of the show — the song “When I Grow Up,” sung in the middle of the second act by

an ensemble of school-children, set in an old-school playground complete with a slide and wooden swings. The beautiful, slow number illustrates the children’s dreams of adulthood. As grown-ups, they “will be brave enough to fight the creatures that you have to fight beneath the bed each night to be a grown-up” and “will eat sweets every day on the way to work.” The children are expressing their restriction-free vision of an adult life, one in which they hold the freedoms and responsibilities of maturity while maintaining the excitement and carefree air of childhood. During this performance, the audience senses the innocence of youth, where the future is bright and adventurous, but feels a tinge of sadness in recognizing that adult life is not as simple or sweet as the children anticipate. While the sentiment expressed by the children seems naive, there is truth to it that we should all take to heart.

Growing up need not mean losing all that childhood had to offer. It need not mean throwing your imagination to the waste bin or replacing passion with practicality. Growing up should mean discovering the balance of responsibility and risk taking, commitment and curiosity. As college students, this is expected of us. On the one hand, these four years are supposed to be the formative ones, where we take the foundational steps towards creating a life and a future for ourselves. The world is screaming at us to be responsible, thoughtful, and held accountable for our actions. On the other hand, these are the years during which we can focus our imagination and passion into any and every opportunity that crosses our paths, even if it will not have an immediate effect on our resumes or future careers. As we move through these four years and on to full adulthood, we should try our bests to retain this balance and embody the spirit of Ms. Honey. We should remember to keep the magic of youth within us as we shape the adults that we are going to become.



## My Love For Theater Is... Weird

By Chaviva Freedman

I’m sitting here in my dorm room, attempting to write a paper that is due in the next few days, and my mind is shifting to other places. I look at my calendar and I see that my schedule is filled with school and... meetings. I always seem to be in a meeting for the play that the Yeshiva College Dramatics Society will be performing in the spring semester. It’s like my life is constantly filled with theater, and yet at the moment... my heart isn’t in it.

It’s funny. My relationship with theater has definitely developed into the “love-hate” phase as of late. I go through these cycles where I’ll find a show tune that my mom used to play for me as a child and I’ll play that song ad nauseum until I can’t stand it anymore and have to listen to something on the Top 40 radio. And then, I find something that my roommates told me to listen to and the cycle repeats again. It’s almost like a Ferris wheel, and as soon as you’re at the bottom, someone pulls you to go back on it and suddenly you’re at the top again.

Now, let me be clear. I do not consider myself a “theater geek.” I can’t stand talking about the latest Broadway show that has been the talk of the town for the past six months. I actually prefer to discuss what’s going on in my friends’ lives than focus on theater. I get so annoyed at people who can only express their favor-

ite Broadway show with screams and cries about their favorite actor/actress. Don’t get me wrong - I do have some favorite shows and actors (remember Danny Zuko from *Grease: Live?* Yeah, that’s Aaron Tveit - he started out in theater. Also, no one can forget Lin-Manuel Miranda, AKA *Hamilton* superstar). It embarrasses me that people can’t formulate the right words to express themselves and have to resort to sounds. It makes no sense to me why people have YouTube channels and social media accounts dedicated to Broadway stars that they most probably will never meet again after going to the stage door to get their Playbills autographed. I’ve seen it when I go to a show - it’s downright weird to me. But if I have so many issues with the people, then why do I find myself so attracted to it?

That question is something that has haunted me for a long time. Since I started college, I always said my dream job was to stage manage a Broadway show. It’s been my dream since my senior year of high school. But after working as a stage manager for various YU productions and interning at an Off-Broadway theater over the summer, maybe I need to reevaluate things and look at what makes me happy about the theater.

I contemplate the thought, and something occurs to me. It never was about the people who were fans of the one show that they deem to be the best piece of theater.

It was the in-betweens that would make theater so exciting to me. It’s the heart and soul that the actors bring to each character in order to shape them to be what the audience is going to react to. It’s the directors who meticulously go over stage directions again and again to ensure that the vision that they want to portray is accurately depicted. It’s the stage crew who does the brunt of the work and never gets a thank you for moving a prop from one side to another. It’s the people like me - the stage managers who just want the show to go as smoothly as possible, without worrying about major hiccups and something terrible happening. It’s about the team - not the individuals. If all these so-called “Broadway” fans took the time to see how much work actually goes into a show and not proceed to have a panic attack in the process, then maybe I’d be more understanding of them. Until then, I will cower behind the curtain, watch everything unfold and watch the cycle continue.

So where does that leave me? Are all these thoughts a hint that the world is saying I should abandon theater and what it represents? I honestly don’t know. It’s definitely something for me to consider as I finish school. I’m a Media Studies major - even if theater isn’t the end result, I have many other roads to walk on. The theater doesn’t define who I am - I am the person who defines the theater.

## Every Man's Burden: A Call For a New Era of Benevolent Globalism

By Aryeh Schonbrun

I write to you in the wake of one of the most stunning elections America has ever seen, and I write in suspense and fear. I hope to God that the changes we now experience not manifest themselves as the harbinger of more difficult times to come, but I reserve the right to profess my profound skepticism as to the direction of the U.S. and similarly for the world at large. The election itself presents no novelty in itself (we've seen populist campaigns before), but the polarization of peoples, whoever they are and wherever they reside, should alarm everyone. Profound distrust of institutions frightens us all and economic stagnation that seems to fuel most of this political change presents unprecedented threats to our standards of living. While I do not intend to participate in the discourse surrounding this past election, as there exist too many factors to conceivably capture in a short piece such as this, and, additionally, out of the fear of offending the sensibilities of those who may differ in their opinions, I do wish to outline for the reader the shared challenges and difficulties that *all* of humanity faces in the near future. It becomes increasingly apparent that this generation and the next hold the key to so much more than just their own livelihoods. The significance of the decisions we make over the next few decades will have tremendous ramifications for all of us, and all who come after us. For that reason, we must come together and discuss the issues that are critical to our survival.

In order to minimize the effect of seeming too alarming or apocalyptic, I would have liked to skim over the potential obstacles that may encumber our continued progress as a species, but, considering the significance of the challenges at hand, I must indulge. The challenges present themselves threefold: Economic, Socio-Political and Environmental. These do not represent three separate, distinct categories, but rather overlapping generalizations.

To begin with, we can talk about the environment. As we all know, levels of Carbon Dioxide as well as other greenhouse gasses continue to pour into our atmosphere. Most scientists now agree that governments worldwide must work together to reduce the amount of greenhouse gases that escape into our atmosphere. While we've witnessed some progress in the past, much work remains in order to effectively deal with the threat of a warming climate. The warming of just a few degrees could potentially wreak havoc on low-lying nations and damage the global ecosystem, as rain and dry patterns tend to shift with the temperatures. We are making great strides in research and development of cleaner technologies, but the task remains immense.

In addition to global warming, general air and water pollution affect the lives of millions of people throughout the world, diminishing their life-expectancies, damaging their health and encumbering innovation and progress. When you have to worry about the counts of airborne particles to measure the air's breathability, or the purity and quality of your supply of water, you won't have much time or motivation to devote to research, higher education, or spirituality. In most developing countries, smoking remains the norm, with the government either unwilling or unable to deter its citizens from slowly killing themselves. These blights on society expose humanity's utter apathy to the lives of those less fortunate, with no end in sight (well, you wouldn't see it through the smog anyway).

In the developing parts of the world, where these problems present the most difficulty, other abuses occur. Forests are felled by criminals and opportunistic farmers alike, indifferent to the destruction they inflict. According to National Geographic, on average, an area of forest corresponding to the size of Panama (over 2.5 times that of all of Israel!) is felled annually. The loss of animal life associated with the encroachment of humans upon their natural habitats even has a name, the Anthropocene Extinction, and threatens biodiversity on every continent. The

decimation of wild spaces does not just mean fewer animals and less green; the ability of trees to process the vast amounts of CO<sub>2</sub> in the atmosphere has been compromised, hence the loss of the fertile tracts of hungry forests further exacerbates the problem of global warming.

The final category of environmental ills that plague humanity has trailed us since the beginning of time. Maladies such as malaria, tuberculosis, HIV,

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cholera, polio, dengue, now zika, and so many others severely handicap the developing world (and sometimes the more-developed countries too). They kill, maim, disable, and strike fear in those affected by these terrifying diseases. Treatable cancers go untreated, infection and disease decimate populations (UNICEF estimates that in some parts of Sub-Saharan Africa upwards of 20% of the *entire* population has HIV/AIDS), as the world watches. Sometimes doctors or medical personnel (e.g. MSF) succeed in delivering life-saving treatment to those in need, but many people continue to suffer.

If proper medication arrives, then liberal use of antibiotics may help in the immediate treatment of the sick, but the side effect of treatment, antimicrobial resistance, can become a significant problem if not dealt with quickly and efficiently. This headache of the increasing inefficacy of standard antibiotic treatment of disease does not occur only in developing countries, ineffective and wasteful use of antibiotics everywhere (e.g. agriculture/livestock) has created a nightmare for the next generation of medical professionals. The medical world continually works on developing new antibiotic drugs, but, sadly, the rate at which they produce effective drugs dwarfs the high

turnover rate required to deal with new resistances. According to an article titled "The Antibiotic Crisis," published in the journal "Pharmacy and Therapeutics," a surprising 15 of the 18 large pharmaceutical companies have discontinued investiture in new antibiotic research. They prefer to invest elsewhere, as antibiotics don't offer the same lucrative advantages as, for example, drugs for chronic ailments (since usually you only take a few doses of antibiotics and are cured). While the public has not yet fully appreciated the gravity of the situation, many doctors and politicians have seized upon it as one of the most critical hurdles of the century. The UN General Assembly held a series of high-level meetings late this past September, wherein this topic was explored at length, and priority was given to the concerns of many doctors and scientists worldwide (especially the WHO). Without proper surveillance of the use of antibiotics, and the incentive to invest in our further protection from disease, severe illness may become as widespread as the common cold!

Clearly, humanity's current trajectory does not offer great dividends. We deplete our natural resources without sparing mother nature a thought, and, when granted the tools with which we may forge greater civilizations, we pollute the world and endanger everything and everyone alive or yet to be born.

The cause of these great embarrassments of and threats to worldwide civilization trace back to fundamental matters of economics and politics. Without a stable government, progress cannot take root and without basic economic and social infrastructure, a country cannot develop enough to maintain control over its citizens and environment. Consequently, crime ravages great swaths of all of humanity, but particularly affects those already less fortunate. Coups, corruption, disease, and war all collude to counteract the opportunities of underdeveloped nations to grow and prosper. For example, the BBC reported that *currently* a famine brought on by Nigeria's violent conflict with Boko Haram threatens the lives of at least 75,000 children! Compared to life in developed nations, the worries and dangers of daily life must exact a cruel toll on anyone subjected to such extreme poverty.

*SEE GLOBALISM,  
CONTINUED ON PAGE 14*



*Intense smog blanketed New Delhi last month. This vivid image shows a man trying to shield his young child from the stinging, suffocating, acrid, dense smoke that plagues the city. (NYT 11/7/16)*

## YU Roller Hockey Team Finds Another Gear in Division 2

By Joseph Robin

Every promotion in life brings with it greater challenges. Your responsibilities multiply and you need to maintain a heightened focus in order to succeed at your new task. After all, the easy part is getting a promotion. The hard part is proving you deserve it.

For Yeshiva University's roller hockey team, an exciting move from Division 4 to Division 2 of the Eastern Collegiate Roller Hockey Association (ECRHA) meant tougher opponents, a taxing schedule, and more grueling practices. In the previous season, their inaugural season in the league, Yeshiva cruised to the Regional Championship with a stunning regular season record of 11-0-1 while outscoring opponents by 70 goals. The team was the brainchild of Amir Gavarin, Avi Margulies, Ari Drazin, and Jesse Gordon who were seeking a way to playing hockey competitively while representing the school. After much coordinating with the school and league, the aforementioned students found a way to make playing a full season feasible while adhering to a shomer shabbos schedule. The inaugural campaign ultimately culminated in a 5-1 championship victory over Millersville University, and the team quickly shifted their gaze toward the following season.

Seeking a greater challenge, the team was prepared for the jump. As captain Amir Gavarin put it, "We felt that we could compete and represent the school at a higher level so, with the approval of the league, we moved up two divisions." And with most members of the championship team returning for another semester, the team was poised to make some serious noise in their new grouping.

While some felt that the decision to move on up was an impulsive one, the team was ready to prove the doubters wrong. After all, this team has grown accustomed to fighting through adversity. From forming the team to funding the whole operation on their own, seemingly every aspect of this team has come with its challenges that the devoted players had to deal with. While the lack of funding from YU is a substantial hurdle, the team also has to schedule all of its games for Sunday mornings. This leads to some scenarios where the team must play four demanding games between the hours of 7am and 2pm. Wherever the squad looks, it always seems as if there is yet another obstacle in their way. But once they step on the court, the only battle that matters is the one with their opponents in front of them.

At the halfway point this season, Yeshiva sits atop the

Division 2 standings with a sterling record of 9-1. Along the way they've beaten several stalwarts like Endicott College, Villanova University, and Penn State University. Most recently, Yeshiva got their revenge against Northeastern University in a thrilling game that culminated in a shootout victory for the Maccabees. Northeastern was the lone team to hand Yeshiva a defeat to that point.

SEE HOCKEY, CONTINUED ON PAGE 15



### GLOBALISM, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 13

Woe to the world, for the difficulties that lay ahead may at times seem insurmountable. However, only a few years ago the outlook was significantly cheerier. Between 2000 and 2012 most of the developing world experienced levels of sustained, almost miraculous growth. For example, as reported by The Economist (9/13/2014), China's economy grew (GDP growth) at the awesome catch up rate of around 12% annually, along with much of the rest of the emerging world (excluding sub-saharan Africa). (In comparison, the U.S. economy, while significantly more robust than the EU's, has not grown faster than 4% annually since the year 2000, and is projected to average less than 2.5% through 2020.) But, alas, the rate of growth in the developing world has since receded to pre-2000s levels. It now lies at around 6-7% for China, and appears to be dropping further. Whereas many dreamed that the convergence of the emerging world's economy (when countries achieve levels of affluence equivalent to those in the developed world) would occur in as little as 30 years, today that estimate has risen to 50 or even 115 years (!) if we exclude China. What had appeared as natural growth now seems unsustainable. Our resources are finite, time scarce, and obstacles abound in the forms of political instability, disease, and environmental concerns. This quagmire in which we find ourselves has baffled humanitarians and economists for at least the greater part of the past century, and today remains unsolved and increasingly menacing.

You see, now that the world experiences the effects of globalization, the Third World's problems can migrate to the rest of the world at a surprising pace. Political instability begets terrorism and refugee crises, intense poverty combined with the accessibility of international air travel and trade allows for disease to spread to all the corners of the earth (e.g. ebola, zika, HIV, avian flu, drug-resistant TB) in record time. Intense inequality also allows the richest citizens in the developed world to add to their wealth by investing heavily in underdeveloped economies. While the receiving countries sometimes benefit from the influx of foreign investment (in the form of Foreign Direct Investments, FDIs), usually, the rich investors end up richer at the expense of the local population (e.g. paying locals less than the minimum wage of the investors' home countries saves the investors money but does not reward workers fairly for their labor). This also leads to social and political tensions in the investors' home countries, since increasing personal incomes from investments abroad lead to a highly stratified society at home. In America today, the rich have diversified their investments into industries abroad, while average Americans continue to struggle to find jobs to replace the ones that were moved offshore. If

you doubt the significance of this predicament, just take a look at this past election.

We in the developed world must begin to think of the other upwards of 80% of humanity that does not enjoy the luxuries of advanced societies. We have been blessed with freedoms of expression, mobility, and enterprise. We benefit from relatively stable governments and economies, from societies heavily nurtured by both the sciences and the arts, but we are not alone. We must invest heavily in our underdeveloped brethren, or face the consequences. Years ago, I may have written this as a moralistic argument in an attempt to convince you into thinking more empathetically about your poor brothers and sisters, but I need not choose that path today. As time goes on, we become more cognizant of the fact that the Third World's problems affect us too, and that their plight has now become a globalized phenomenon. In order to help us, we must help *them* first.

While I cannot offer a perfect solution guaranteed to solve all these problems at once, I can share with you the sense of direction you get from exploring the subject. After getting acquainted with the harsh realities, some trends stick out as universal. Much of the issues at hand don't originate in isolation. Most of them, in fact, develop out of our own corruption and neglect. Humans tend to lack the foresight necessary to anticipate all of the problems facing the world, and then they tend to make matters worse by trying to ignore them. But don't despair! Upon considering the situation, we are far from beaten.

However, in order to effect positive change, a shift in ideology as well as in the economy is required. This era of neocolonialism must come to an end. The capitalistic exploitation of less-advanced countries robs them of their motivation and freezes them in dependent relationships with the rich world. While some western nations, NGOs, and charitable funds make some large sums of money available to developing countries, the overly-ambitious capitalistic structure of big-money banks and international corporations hampers the economic and sociological development of weaker countries. Even Adam Smith, the author of capitalism's bible, *The Wealth of Nations*, admits that the government must sometimes involve itself in the economy. He realized that sometimes governments (in our case, foreign capital) need to make unprofitable investments in order to maintain public order, and general safety and well-being. In his words, some of the government's responsibilities involve "erecting and maintaining those public institutions and those public works which may be in the highest degree advantageous to a great society," but "are of such a nature that the profit could never repay the expense to any individual or small number of individuals." Why invest in a computer factory when the local population lacks potable water? Why employ workers in textile production when they lack the basic health care to ensure the proper monitoring and management of

disease? What use does a peasant have for an HDTV when he doesn't have enough money for basic subsistence? Developing countries desperately need foreign investment, but not necessarily those that specifically favor returns on capital. Instead of profitable investiture in the industrial sector (e.g. mining, manufacturing), foreign entities should think about investing in critical sectors (e.g. sanitation, health care, basic infrastructure, public transport) projects and education. While some investment is always necessary in industrial and manufacturing sectors, the system as is greatly favors foreign investors, and does not return profits to locals either fairly or efficiently (trickle down does not work well enough). I don't think that every single person needs to own a car, multiple televisions, or air-conditioners, but the quicker we help poor countries achieve the basic *minimum* that their citizens need, the easier for us to deal with the bigger threats.

How can we fund such a revolution in global trade, you may ask? Well, by encouraging the rich countries to forego some of their wealth as an investment in the future of all peoples, we can fund immense structural improvements in poorer nations, as well as in research and development critical for solving some of these issues (of which Israel should take a significant part). Thomas Piketty, a French economist, calls for a global tax on wealth. Bill Gates, the famous billionaire, proposes a tax on the consumption of goods (related to carbon emissions per capita). Using these inherent inequalities, we can maybe gain insight into the actual numbers that such an overhaul would require. Internally, richer countries may suffer temporarily, some instability may ensue, and they would need to perform a restructuring of their internal economies as well (i.e. dealing with domestic wealth gaps). Some consumers would probably need to cut back on some spending, but weaning ourselves off the drug of consumerism offers us some benefits too. This would take a revolutionary approach to global spending, but the benefits are endless, and the risks of not acting are catastrophic. An awakening of the population must occur; we must discard the infantile, wasteful mindset of colonial capitalism, and adopt a responsible and realistic vision for our shared future.

For those interested: The Yeshiva University Medical Ethics Society's annual conference, taking place on Sunday, December 4th (9:00-13:00), will discuss the perils of infectious disease ("Humanity's Biggest Rival"), including antibiotic resistance. For more information, visit their website at [www.yumedeethics.com](http://www.yumedeethics.com).

"Wake us up when the Messiah comes to close the hole in the Ozone [layer]."

- Arik Einstein

## Gottesman Library Photography Gallery

By Shlomo Friedman

The story begins, as do most articles in these pages, with the inimitable Connie Rose. In the wake of her master-mural, which impressively drew the ire of both art critics and Shulchan Aruch Yoreh Deah 141:1, much noise was heard and much suggested that the students of Yeshiva University design and paint the Nagel's Bagels vault door. Other students, taking up the call, decided to express the artistic spirit of the student body in a different capacity. The Photography Club (of which I'm a member), with the generous support of the Office of Student Life and the continued guidance of Director of Yeshiva University Libraries, Paul Glassman, decided to put together a gallery of student photographs, with the goal of displaying a new series of images each academic year. The gallery resides on the second floor of Gottesman Library, to the right of the main desk.

Here, I offer the beginning of an interpretation of the gallery as a whole. By no means is it authoritative or even coherent. But that's the beauty of art, and especially true in a photography gallery, which, by its very nature, allows for an incredible range of interpretation. As opposed to a book, which sequentially lays out the images in a specific order for a specific vision, a gallery displays all of its content at the same time. The gallery, therefore, demands contemplation, its themes, genres, and techniques investigated. As such, what is the gestalt, the cohesive vision, of the gallery as I see it?

The first thing that catches my eye when inspect-

ing the gallery is the nicely contrasting and conflicting black and white frame colors, and the haphazard, disorderly arrangement of the pictures themselves. As such, the first impression of the gallery's theme is that of chaos and incoherence. However, under further inspection, a thread of meaning begins to appear. Centrally located are three black and white pictures of old men in Israel, two of them taken by Shimon Lindenblatt, and one color image by David Freilich of an ultra-Orthodox child staring at a scroll. This juxtaposition of contrasting themes of old and young, color and its absence, religious and not, seemingly puts these two styles at odds, worlds apart. However, the gaze of the child seems to mirror the gaze of the wizened old men and we rediscover the same child-like innocence in each of the old men.

Yet, the comfort of man within the society, as perceived in the above images, is challenged by a series of shots that emphasizes the solitude of the human in the face of the environment. Tzvi Benoff's *North of Jerusalem* and Navah Maynard's *Untitled* both emphasize the loneliness of man, whether it's the wilderness in the former or New York City itself in the latter. Maynard further complicates that loneliness with her second image, *The Exchange*. It shows a man buying food from a street vendor at night, cloaking the vendor behind a pane of frosted glass, demonstrating how even an exchange with a vendor on a street corner is fraught with the anxiety of loneliness. Aaron Gold's *Haredi-birds* shows one woman feeding birds on a beach by herself, but she is certainly not lonely. For her, the

birds are a comfort, her way of deriving meaning amid the endless ocean and sky that stand so ominously in the background.

A bird is also featured prominently in Yossi Hoffman's *Soaring*, where an eagle soars above distant hills. This, along with the other natural landscape images, emphasizes the sublime vistas, and, if just for a second, transports us to those same scenes of transcendence. Matan Horenstein's *Crater Lake Oregon*, Tzvi Levitin's *Taking Flight*, and Aryeh Korman's *Robin* all succeed in highlighting the exquisiteness of our planet. The only work by hand, Ari Kaye's *Drops on a*

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### "THE GALLERY DEMANDS CONTEMPLATION, ITS THEMES, GENRES, AND TECHNIQUES INVESTIGATED."

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*Window*, mimics the presence of raindrops on a window. Makena Owen's *Setting Sail 3* foregrounds the form of a majestic ship as it sails through the sunset.

The form as it bends into the abstract performs as the gallery's last experiment. Gabby Glick shatters our sense of comfort in *Cracked Wheel*, as she artfully emphasizes the upward movement of the spokes of a wheel as they reach for the heavens. This same longing for the beyond is captured in a stunning shot by Eliyahu Ebrani of Israel's famous light-rail bridge. Yet, this movement for the beyond is tempered when finally achieved in David Reich's *Mechanical Sunset*, where the wing of an aircraft, having reached the ideal of above-ness, now horizontally blends into the early dusk sky.

However, the well-defined forms and man-made structures of above are questioned in the gallery's more abstract pieces. A minimalistic and thoughtful meditation on the nature of light and self is conveyed through Aaron Ishida's playing with light and shutter speed in his two images. There, multiple beams of light and self are imprinted on each respective image, suggesting a multitude of truths in interpretation and being. The most controversial piece, by Shai Berman, contemplates the meaning of humanity and lunch in his sparse though well-lit portrayal of a tomato soup from above. As we peer into its murky, red abyss, we are reminded of the dangers of homogenization and sameness. Indeed, both experimental pieces of the gallery emphasize the need for diversity amid a world of broken grand narratives.

The gallery as a whole features a rich, diverse stream of ideas and techniques. However, these themes emerge only when contemplated thoughtfully. So take a break from (not) studying in the library, and visit the gallery. Once there, pause, and look closely at each image. Ask yourself what this image is trying to achieve and how it does it. But above all, appreciate their solid existence, their shocking realness, and reflect on how images reveal their authenticity only after transformed from pixel to ink and paper.



### HOCKEY, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 14

"Coming out of that first half of the season I'd say that we're super confident," said defenseman Benjy Shulman. "We know that we have the talent to beat any team in the league and we're hoping to carry this momentum into the second half."

With the impressive start, it's no wonder that students are starting to notice this team on campus. While last year's championship didn't garner so much attention by the students, word is finally beginning to spread about this successful YU team. The team's social media presence has been on point this season as well, consistently doling out quality content, be it game updates, photos and videos, or topical jokes and shenanigans. The follower count on their Instagram (@YURollerHockey), Twitter (@YURoller-

Hockey), and Facebook (Yeshiva University Roller Hockey) is well over a hundred each, indicative of the fandom that this team has earned and is finally receiving.

"I vaguely knew about this team last year, but once I heard about how they started this season, I was hooked," said YU student David Kor. "It's pretty cool having a team that's a powerhouse in their respective sport, and following their games is always so fun and exciting."

As the players' fellow classmates start to notice the dominance on the court, so too has the National Collegiate Roller Hockey Association (NCRHA). The second half of the season is just around the corner, and so is the official reveal of the national rankings of the NCRHA. With Yeshiva looking sharp through their first ten games, it seems as if these Maccabees are destined to win a bid for the national tournament, which will be taking place in the picturesque Fort Myers, Florida this year. But the team knows they

can't get too ahead of themselves and that they still have a long road ahead of them.

"We know that winning Nationals is the ultimate goal this season, but we can't take our eyes off what's right in front of us," says rookie sensation Avi Edell. "We have to make sure to play each game with intensity and we have to make sure to vaporize each team we face with hard work. And hopefully by the end of the season we'll leave all of them in our smoke."

Regardless of how this season ends, it's evident that the players on this magical team are just happy to have the chance to play hockey on a high level with the added bonus of being able to represent the blue and white of Yeshiva University. And while the obstacles and challenges of participating in the league are many, it'll hopefully keep fueling these combatants to bring home another championship for YU.

## From the President's Desk: SYMSSC – Autumn in the Heights

By Akiva Koppel

Now that the Jewish holiday season has ended, we have returned to school with almost half of the fall semester still ahead. Some students around the country, in other schools, would probably be devastated if they woke in mid-November to learn that they still had an entire half semester ahead of them. I, however, am looking forward to a high-intensity, compressed semester lasting just two months. It is almost as bracing and invigorating as the cold weather that is certainly on its way.

While some students respond well to an accelerated semester when the *chagim* are late, others seem to flounder. Those who might be new to YU or who have not found extracurricular activities may be at special risk for remaining alone on the sidelines as the activities around the campus continue to ramp up.

There are many in the YU community who have not yet started to participate in some of the programming that is waiting for them, and I am concerned that some of us isolate ourselves in our dorm rooms between classes and study sessions, allowing boredom to set in. Ennui can lead to performance problems at school and, as a leader, it is my job to help inspire other students to be active around campus. People who are bored have time and ability to be creative and plan future activities, but instead waste moments and hours that they will never have back. People who are bored spend time with interests such as frequently refreshing Facebook, checking sports scores that they already know, or shopping online for stuff that nobody will ever buy. Bored people just whittle away at time when they could be learning something new, enjoying time with others, or being active outside their rooms. Moreover, boredom can lead to unhappiness and to other unhealthy lifestyle habits, such as smoking, drinking, or excessive eating. It can even be associated with depression or other psychological problems. I feel that the number one key to excitement and a feeling of fulfillment is doing something that you love to do, and boredom is the enemy of fun and enjoyment.

As we commit ourselves to our coursework, we owe it to ourselves to become fully involved in the rest of the YU community that is available to us. We may not have the same patterns of foliage and other hallmarks of autumn that other college campuses around the Northeast have at this time, but we have an autumn spirit, drive, and desire that could rival any campus

full of leaf peepers. I for one have rejoined the Macabees' fencing team, and I am looking forward to some good tournaments and camaraderie. I am aware of some terrific clubs and other teams that are beginning to get busy as well, and this is the perfect time of the year to find a new area of interest to explore. As the weeks pass, we will all find ourselves with less and less time outside, but we still have a steady set of two months of uninterrupted time for school, campus, and community. The clubs and teams are a terrific antidote to boredom and isolation.

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If you have not yet gravitated to a club or organization that fits an interest of yours, here are some suggestions you may want to consider:

**Exercise:** The YU fitness center isn't the fanciest gym known to mankind. However, it certainly has everything necessary to get a full body workout. Additionally, exercise for those who aren't engaged in exercise programs can yield many extra benefits, including stamina improvement, weight control, stress reduction, and might even help prevent certain diseases and health conditions. The YU pool, one of the most underutilized facilities on campus, also provides an excellent workout option. For convenience sake, the basketball gym, the fitness center, and the pool are all located in Rubin. It's so worthwhile to make the trip when you have opportunities to engage in any of these options, plus it's the same building that also has the cafeteria!

**Club opportunities:** The rule in student council is that no club or society may bar entry to any of their events. As such, we have many exciting speakers and events coming up that are worth attending. Ben

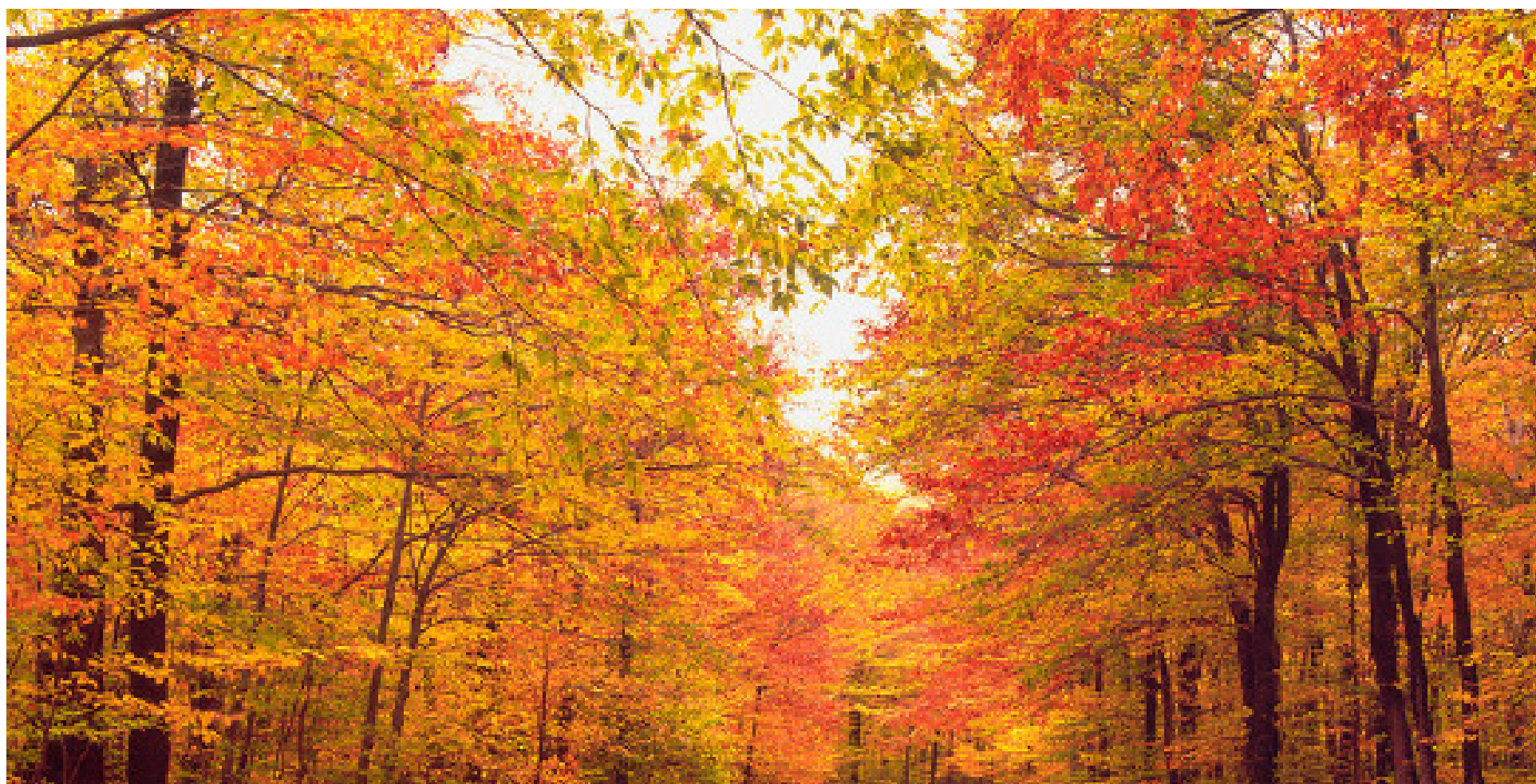
Shapiro, a famous Jewish journalist who was recently rated one of America's most influential Jews, will be speaking here soon. That is an event not to miss. And there are many other excellent opportunities across campus that will fit into different interests. Keep your eyes peeled for flyers around campus as well as promotional emails through the “ystud” system.

Given the expectation that the Fed will raise interest rates this year, and given the surprise outcome of the presidential election, the markets may become more dynamic than ever. This is an exciting time to study markets with friends and classmates. Joining one of our many business-related clubs and getting to know other classmates in a more relaxed setting can help you better understand the behavior of the markets.

**Hiking:** We are near the end of autumn, and now is the time to get in a little hiking where you will be able to enjoy the foliage in all its refulgent splendor. Breakneck Ridge, the tri-state area's best easy hike, is a simple drive or train ride away, up in the Hudson Valley in Cold Spring. A Sunday morning hike with some classmates will treat you to captivating views of the Hudson River from 800 feet above, as well as a view all the way to West Point. If you do not have the time to get up to Breakneck Ridge, Ft. Tryon Park or even Central Park offer some superb foliage opportunities as well.

**Shabbat on Campus:** For many years, our campus emptied out for the weekend, with most unmarried students running home or to the homes of friends. Now, however, the weekends are a bit more of a happening scene. Many of us stay in the Heights, eating in each other's apartments or on campus. Kiddush clubs (generally post-*shacharit* social gatherings with drinks and nice shabbat food spreads) around the YU community have never been so superb. Remaining on campus for Shabbat eliminates the rush and the pressure that many of us feel at the end or the beginning of the week and is a great way to meet new people and relax with others.

I hope to see you out enjoying an activity or two that you have chosen to try for the first time. You will be happier for it, and we as a community will have more chances to make more friends. Remember, as Warren Miller always said about skiing, “If you don't do it this year, you will be one year older when you do.”





## An Interview with Judah Diament

By Dovid Simpser

After graduating Yeshiva University in 1996, Professor Judah Diament simultaneously attended graduate school at NYU's Courant Institute of Mathematical Science and learned in the semikha program at RIETS. He then went to work at Hitachi Data Systems followed by Bell Atlantic for a year. Diament then spent thirteen years at IBM Research, eventually finding his way to Goldman Sachs. Finally, this past summer Diament became the co-chair of the Computer Science department with Dr. Kelly and the Program Director of the new Undergraduate Data Science program.

**Dovid: Why did you want to leave industry and come back to Yeshiva?**

Judah: The ultimate objective of everything that happens in a publicly traded corporation is pushing up the company's stock price. Of course earning a living is an important religious obligation and as such can be imbued with meaning and value regardless of what job one finds oneself in, but it is still not the same as doing something that is inherently meaningful. As a teacher, by contrast, your primary job is chessed, i.e. helping students learn a field and get their career started the right way.

As such, being a teacher has more inherent value and is therefore very attractive. There are side benefits to teaching in Y.U. as well. First, I get to be in the environment of Yeshiva and daven and learn in the *beis medrash*. Second, from a scientific perspective, in most corporations a computer scientist will largely deal with problems that have been solved previously and re-solve them with a practical twist that is required to meet the demands of the business. By doing so you can impact the business significantly, but it's not as interesting as trying to solve unsolved problems, which is really what doing research is about. As a professor, there is time over the course of the year to do research.

**D: What is the new Data Science program going to be? Is this department/specialization going to be part of the computer science major, or will it incorporate other departments and majors?**

J: First let's talk about how data science is used in industry, since the program is being designed to position different students to succeed in different ways. There are three different types of roles one can play in applying data science to industry. At one extreme are businesspeople who want to gain insight from their data to solve their business problems; at the other extreme are mathematicians who create models that can extract useful information from data; in between the two extremes are computer scientists who know how to take the models that the mathematicians created and make them work consistently and at a very large scale in a way that meets the needs of a business. For example, a mathematician will be able to create a new pricing model for a financial firm, but if you need to run it 50,000 times a second and differ its behavior based on which user is invoking it, then you will need a computer scientist to build a scalable and reliable system around the model. In order for the computer scientist to build such a system he must understand the mathematics well enough to know what the challenges are to make it scalable and reliable, and as such his education and training must include enough of the relevant areas of math.

Let's return to the ultimate consumer of all this math and technology, the business user, who wants to leverage it all quickly and easily to discover useful information to propel his business forward. Perhaps the most common approaches to giving a businessperson access to such things is to create a dashboard, which is a web app that allows a user to configure certain parameters of a computation and

then displays a graph or table that describes the results. And, very often, the user can export the results in a form that would allow him to manipulate it in Excel. This approach is extremely limiting, however, both because the businessperson has to go back to the IT department every time he needs something new or different, and also because there is a limit to what you can do well in Excel. There is a need, therefore, to teach future business users enough programming and statistics to allow them to be more proactive and independent consumers of mathematical models and data. These users will not create fundamentally new models that no one ever thought of before, nor will they be able to build a large scale system. However, they should not be dependent on the IT department to make controlled modifications to how data is sampled or consumed in order to glean new business insights.

Now we can understand why this program is not a new major but instead has to span three majors, BIMA, Computer Science, and Math. Dean Avi Giloni has already been building this up on the business side in the BIMA major, and a lot of the courses are already in place that teach them the skills they will need, such as programming in R and how to correctly sample data. On the computer science side, we are adding two specialization tracks to the traditional core C.S. classes that we (and all C.S. departments across the country) have always taught: Distributed Systems and Data Science. In the Distributed Systems track, students will learn the parts of C.S. that make cloud computing, large scale data science, and mobile apps and games that communicate with a server all possible. This is the technology/science that all of the newer tech companies – Google, Amazon, Facebook, Netflix, LinkedIn, etc. – depend on, both for their clouds as well as for doing data science at a large scale. In the Data Science track, students will learn enough about distributed systems to understand how they work and also enough additional math to understand how things like machine learning or statistical models written in R work. These will be the students who know how to take the mathematical models and make them run correctly on large distributed systems. In terms of new C.S. courses in these tracks, Professor Kelly will be teaching Data Visualization this spring semester and I'll be teaching a two part Distributed System course next year. We are also in the process of searching for an additional full-time C.S. professor to teach machine learning, and the math department is looking for an additional full-time professor to teach statistics and probability, i.e. the mathematical side of data science. The program will not be all built overnight, but over the next year and a half we hope to finalize the curriculum and roll out the various pieces.

**D: Will BIMA students be able to take the new C.S. classes?**

J: To take any of the new C.S. classes you would have to take Data Structures, Calculus, and Intro to Computer Science, at a minimum, and some will require Algorithms as well. Any BIMA student who takes those background C.S. courses could take these new C.S. courses as well. The first semester of the Distributed Systems course would be very productive for a BIMA major because it will be about the different types of distributed systems, the challenges they each address, and how you use them. This knowledge would be very useful for a BIMA major, but in order to understand the course, one will need a background in the basics of computer science.

**D: For those who aren't familiar with the history, when did computer science go from being the basic fundamentals that you mentioned are taught all over the country to now being a more complex, specialized field?**

J: Although there have been subspecialties in computer science research going back at least to the 1970s, as recently as the mid-1990s one could learn the core of computer science in college and then go out and have a very successful career. By the early part of this century, though, companies became savvier in how they used technology and more ambitious regarding what they wanted to get out of their investment in IT. To meet those ambitions, they needed to hire people with deeper expertise in various subspecialties of C.S., and thus the specialization that almost always existed in the research lab extended out into industry.

**D: Does everyone in the computer science major need to choose one of these tracks, or can they do the old core classes and not add this specialization on top of it?**

J: We are not sure yet. We are still fleshing out what the tracks will actually look like and then have to decide if we will allow a student to not specialize.

**D: In order to have these tracks in computer science, will students need to take a whole set of extra classes in addition to those currently required by the computer science major?**

J: It will be roughly the same core classes, and the additional classes for these tracks will mostly replace other computer science electives. Nothing is written in stone yet, though, and it certainly could still be that the total number of required classes will increase.

**D: What has been your role on the administrative side?**

J: In building the program I have to look at the courses that will be in each track, what other top universities' programs look like, what the market needs, etc. To help the program succeed, I put together an industry advisory board. This board includes, amongst others, an executive from IBM, the chief IT architect from Mayo Clinic, a manager of a data science team from Facebook, a research scientist from Amazon, a vice president from Goldman Sachs, the manager of a large distributed systems team at Google, and C-level executives from a number of startups. We are getting input from them as to what this program should be in order for our students to get the best jobs. I've had one-on-one conversations with many of them, and hopefully next semester we will sit down as a group to review and discuss all the details.

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**“THE ABILITY TO DO CHESSED,  
DO RESEARCH, AND TO BE BACK  
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RETURN.”**

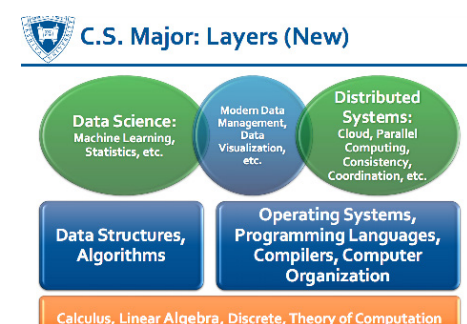
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**D: People have not been pleased with the Computer Science department in recent years. Do you think this program will make the Computer Science department more attractive and help bring up its standard?**

J: When I was here in college the computer science major was fantastic, and I just got here so I have no first-hand knowledge of what has been in recent years. But I can tell you that Dr. Kelly is great, we are looking to hire another person as well, and this is a very ambitious program that we are developing. The students will work hard and get top jobs. Before I gave a talk at the open house last week, I asked our career office where Y.C. computer science students are getting jobs, and I received a list of many top companies that have hired our computer science students from 2013 until now. The bottom line is that graduates have been getting great jobs. In addition, over the summer I received an email from a recent graduate saying that now that he is at Google, he realizes he learned a lot more computer science here than he thought he did. One thing that needs to be understood is that computer science, and having a successful career in computer science, is not about learning specific technologies (like the latest JavaScript framework or iOS or Android development) that will be out of style and in decline by the time a student graduates. You don't need to go to college to learn such simple things; you can learn them online via Kahn Academy, Code Academy, etc. Computer science is about learning the scientific fundamentals that will serve you well for decades, even while technology keeps changing every few years.

**D: So when is the official start date of the program?**

J: The official start date is Fall 2017, but this Spring Dr. Kelly will already be teaching Data Visualization, a new course which will be part of the data science track.



## Racism in the Orthodox Community

By Rabbi Jeremy Wieder

*The following is an edited transcription of a siach delivered by Rabbi Wieder to his shiur on November 17th, 2016. The presentation has been edited with minor revisions, but still maintains much of the oral character of the original presentation. A special thanks to Rabbi Wieder's students Sam Berkovitz, Judah Kerbel, and Daniel Shlian for their work on the transcript.*

I wanted to address one issue that was brought to my attention that I found to be very disturbing. And it's an issue that I have probably addressed in the past but apparently it needs to be re-addressed. It has come to my attention that there were multiple behaviors during an Election Night party that could be understood, with very good reason, as racist.

I don't really care for the purposes of this conversation who you voted for. I don't care who you think is better for the country, who is worse for the country. I don't care about those issues. I am, however, deeply disturbed—deeply disturbed—that any students here should express such an attitude.

Unfortunately, racism runs deep in the Orthodox community. I can't tell you numbers, but I can tell you that it is a very, very real issue. But this is something that brings it very much to the surface.

Racism itself is deeply, deeply immoral. I don't think I need to elaborate on that. And if I need to, I suspect the person on the other end is not going to be really engaged in a conversation with me anyway. However, I think that as Jews, it is particularly troubling to find those who express racism. There might not be another group—maybe African-Americans in this country could give us a run for our money—but there probably hasn't been another group in the last two thousand years who have suffered more because of what we would term racist behavior—we might call it anti-Semitic, but that's what it is, it's racism—racist behavior of others. Probably not a single group. We have done much better in this country than the African-Americans, relatively, but for 1600, 1700 years before, our existence was miserable, both under Christianity and Islam, because we were singled out, because we were discriminated against, because we were oppressed because of our religion. The idea that Jews should be, at their core, racist, is repugnant. Some of this is a product of people who spend time in *Eretz Yisrael*, where it is easier to understand why people de-

velop racist leanings against Arabs. It's unacceptable, by the way. It's unacceptable in the context of Arabs as well. Make no mistake about that. This is not about your position on the peace process - no matter your view, racism is intolerable. You have enemies; that's not an excuse for racism.

Many years ago, and I think I've told this story, I was in Yeshiva for Shabbos. And I spoke about the question of the conflict, or seeming conflict, at least, between what we perceive as moral and what the Torah sometimes mandates. And in the context of that discussion at a tish, I pointed out that *Avraham Avinu* challenges the *Ribbono Shel Olam* on this question. In other words, he says "*Halilah lakh haShofeit kol ha-aretz lo ya'aseh mishpat*," "far be it from you: shall the Judge of the earth not do justice?" (Bereishit 18:25) I remember in the course of that discussion, talking about the Arab-Israeli conflict, specifically about the view that has been espoused by some in that context, although maybe more broadly applicable, that there is no "*lo sirtzach*," (Shemot 20:12) prohibition of murder, by a non-Jew. And I said I found that view particularly disturbing, for a very simple reason: if you say that there's no "*lo sirtzach*" by a non-Jew, or by some groups of non-Jews, what you're basically saying is that there are humans and sub-humans. You don't get much more racist than that. And then, a student at the tish said, that maybe that's what we're supposed to believe. So I said to him: Imagine that you go up to heaven—or not heaven, probably the opposite place—and you meet Hitler, *yemach shemo*. And he approaches you and he has a very simple discussion with you. He says, you know what, you and I both agree that there are humans and there are sub-humans. And the only thing we're arguing about is who are the humans and who are the sub-humans? It's a *machlokes* in *metzius* (dispute about realia)?! Is your response to him that the only reason why he's wrong is because we're right and God told us so?! You mean, if in fact you didn't accept the premise of our argument that we believe in the Torah and God chose us and so on—if not for accepting that, you mean that what the Nazis did was okay? That treating Jews as sub-humans—that treating any group as sub-humans—was okay? Our only response would be because we're right? Really? To me, it was just *staggering*.

We, of all people, of every nation on the face of the earth, should understand the poison of racism. So I don't care who you voted for, I don't care who you think will make the better president for the country

or the less bad president for the country. But the idea that you should behave in a racist fashion? Let me make this very clear: the President-Elect of this country has made many racist statements. There's no question about that. It's not *umdena* (an educated guess), it's not *shemu'ah* (hearsay), you only need to listen to what he said. The nature of his racism, the extent of his racism, you can have a discussion if you like. But bottom line is that he has made racist statements. I assume that no person, no decent human being who voted for him, voted for him because of his racist statements. They voted for him—and I think this is true for most of the country who voted for the President-Elect—voted in spite of them. They're so upset at everything else that they think that the other things are bigger problems. You can agree or disagree, but I think that most of the people who voted for him are decent people and who are not racist. Sure, there are racist people on the right, racist people on the left, of all different kinds. But to have voted for him *davka* because you are sympathetic to the racism? That is despicable. There's nothing more deplorable than that.

And so for students here to behave in a racist manner? I know—I know that there are students in this institution, people in our community, people in every community—that there are plenty of people who are racist. But most of them, at least, have the sense to not display it publicly. But the idea that in this place, in this yeshiva, people should openly express racist attitudes? To me, it's absolutely astounding. It's absolutely astounding. This country needs a lot of healing. There are major fractures. There's no place in it for any kind of racist behavior. And again: we, as a people who have suffered so much should understand how bad it is. If the basic principle of the Torah is, as Hillel taught the *ger*—it's better formulated in the negative: "*De'Alach seni la-havertakh lo ta'avid*", that which is repugnant to you, don't do to somebody else. (B. Shabbat 31a) So I think it's important that people raise their voice in a *maha'ah* (protest). I think that everybody needs to understand that this type of behavior is not okay. This behavior is simply not acceptable. If we stand by and say nothing, they say, "*ho'il va-havo yasvei rabbanan ve-lo mahu beih, shema minah ka niha lehu*", "Since the rabbis were sitting there and did not object to it, it can be inferred that they agreed" (B. Gittin 56a). It's not *niha li*, and it shouldn't be *niha* to any of you. Good Shabbos.

### ALABAMA, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 3

say that I am a ba'al teshuva — although we are all on our path to higher levels. I was coming back from Israel on a spiritual high, and this is creating a conflict within myself. You have these spiritual leaders preaching tolerance, and yet they tell me that I am a white supremacist. There are people saying, kick him out of YU. These are

**" I THINK THAT THERE ARE PEOPLE IN THE ORTHODOX COMMUNITY WHO ARE RACIST, AND THAT NEEDS TO BE ADDRESSED. BUT I AM NOT ONE OF THOSE PEOPLE."  
-NATE TRUDEAU**

some of the comments on Facebook." After experiencing YU's virulent backlash, Trudeau felt that the institution betrayed its promise to be open to students of all types. "YU preaches that it's open to everyone, it doesn't matter if you're black, white, straight, gay, whatever. But people weren't okay with me....Again, I think that there are people in the Orthodox community who are racist, and that needs to be addressed. But I am not one of those people. I have had a long time to think about this, and I've ana-

lyzed myself, and I know that there is not a single racist bone in my body."

Recent controversy across the South attests to the fact that Southerners are questioning whether it's possible to maintain the Confederate flag as a regional symbol without giving racism implicit sanction. When asked how he personally resolved the fact that his communal symbol is also used by white supremacist hate groups, Trudeau said that the flag was a symbol of Southern pride long before it was co-opted as the banner of white nationalists. He compared the flag to the Buddhist swastika, a symbol used by the Nazis for a meaning beyond its original significance. Historically, the "Dixie" flag was the battle flag of Northern Virginia. It was never used as the national flag of the Confederate States, despite the fact that it widely serves today as a symbol of the regional South. I pressed Nate, pointing out that the Civil War was, after all, a war by slave owners to preserve their right to own human property. "I don't even know how to answer that question. I wasn't around during the Civil War. I was just brought up in an environment where this flag represented something totally different to a new generation of people."



## The Confederate Flag You Never Knew

By Uri Segelman

As most things are in life, the meaning of the Confederate flag (CF) is much more nuanced than modern society will have you believe. In short, it is not the racist, treasonous symbol mainstream America makes it out to be. Rather, it is a symbol that celebrates Southern heritage and, specifically, the uniquely Southern sacrifice for this country, the United States.

What we call today the CF is really the Second Confederate Navy Jack (1863-1865). In square form, the flag was the battle flag of the Army of Northern Virginia. The design, the blue St. Andrew's Cross on a red field, became the most recognizable symbol associated with the Confederacy. This piece will not address the legitimacy of the Confederate States of America (CSA), nor will it assess the merits of several states' secession from the US. This debate exceeds the confines of this piece, not only due to its lengthiness but also due to its minimal bearing on the meaning of the CF today, as I will elaborate.

The CF's usage outside of war begins after General Robert E. Lee's surrender at Appomattox. For a good 75 years after the Civil War, the CF was a symbol used to both memorialize and valorize not just the soldiers of the Confederacy, but the Southern soldier in general. History had closed its books on slavery and any possibility of a Confederate nation. The Confederate veterans parades that ensued in the Postbellum South were rather held to honor the hundreds of thousands of Americans who had died. These celebrations and parades were not racial or even political; the parades honored black Confederates as well, who were and would be buried with the same honors as their white brothers.

The flag was not just about the soldiers of the Confederacy. The CF's popularity found its way into Europe and elsewhere abroad. Many Southern soldiers flew the CF upon their deployment to Europe and the Pacific theater during WWI and WWII, as well as in Korea and Vietnam. To this day, Southern soldiers have brought the CF to Iraq and Afghanistan. I find it hard to believe that the CF in these contexts was a symbol of hate and racism. To the contrary: they were clearly flown to celebrate the American-ness of the Southern soldier. The flag's purpose had nothing to do with rebellion, treason, or racism. In fact, interestingly enough, if one looks back at pictures from rallies and demonstrations held by the second Ku Klux Klan (the biggest ever, which peaked around 1919), one will not find a single CF present; he will only find American flags. I am sure most may be surprised to hear that. But given the true narrative, that the flag's meaning had nothing to do with hate, segregation, or Jim Crow but rather with Southern pride and patriotism, there was no reason for the Klan to adopt it as a symbol.

Two major events occurred during the late 1950s that spilled into the 1960s, the first of which I am sure many are familiar with, and the second of which I am sure very few are. The first event was the push for integration, precipitated by the Brown decision and the ensuing Civil Rights movement. The other was the Civil War centennial and the formation of the Southern states' Confederate War Centennial Commissions, which were assigned to do something significant in celebration of the 100th year anniversary of the Civil War. (South Carolina, for example, in honor of the centennial, placed the CF atop the State House in Columbia).

The flag's popularity exploded during this period, and the question is why. Even if the centennial was the primary reason for the normalization of the flag in everyday life, the energetic frenzy with which it was received can surely be ascribed to the South digging in its heels in opposition to the Federal Government and Civil Rights. It was likely due to the flag's newfound popularity that it was adopted as a symbol for the third Ku Klux Klan, which was actively engaging in terrorism against blacks. At that point, the CF was clearly a symbol associated with the Klan and much of the rest of the South's nefarious beliefs and activities.

Several decades following the unrest, the CF continues to be a prominent symbol in Southern life, despite the fact that the fight over Civil Rights is basi-

cally over. The Supreme Court struck down public discrimination, the Civil Rights Act of 1964 struck down private discrimination, the Voting Rights Act of 1965 instituted protections of minority voters in the South, lynching and burnings are essentially over, and the Klan has been reduced to an utterly insignificant (and now non-violent) group of a couple of thousand. So why does the CF still fly?

Southerners are not prepared to surrender a flag that had a tightly controlled meaning for several decades to permanent defilement, just because of the 1960s. The many Southerners who take pride in that flag are fine, decent people. They do not advocate for violence or racism. They are simply proud of their ancestors who died fighting for this nation, and the unique patriotic and communal identity that was formed as a result of their wartime experience.

It is easy for Northeastern Jews to discount an identity that may seem foreign. But that unique identity has been integral to the greater American culture. In the most direct sense, and perhaps most importantly, Southerners represent, to this day, a disproportion-

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ate number of military recruits. Even during the Civil War, as he camped in Mississippi in September 1863, Union General William T. Sherman observed in a letter about the "young bloods of the South" that "[W]ar suits them, and the rascals are brave, fine riders, bold to rashness...." There is a unique military culture of the South, where soldiers are venerated. Many of the men who have died for this nation learned to love this country through their Southern identity.

But I think there is more to the veneration of the Southern soldier, and it demands a brief word about the Civil War itself. Many will disregard everything I have said thus far by simply doubling down and arguing that the South rebelled and fought for slavery, and that even though the flag may now be patriotic, its origin is marred in sin. As I wrote at the beginning of the piece, the CF today is not the flag of the govern-

ment of the Confederate States. It never was. It is not the flag of secession. It did not fly on slave ships. It is a battle flag, the flag of the Southern soldier.

It is important to understand that at the height of slavery in America, only six percent of white Southerners owned slaves, and only a fraction of that group actually fought in the war. Southern soldiers were not fighting for slavery. They were not fighting for white supremacy; virtually everyone in the country, including President Lincoln, believed in white supremacy. (Lincoln said, in one of his 1858 debates with Stephen Douglas, that "while they [the white and black races] do remain together, there must be the position of superior and inferior, and I, as much as any other man, am in favor of having the superior position assigned to the white race.") They were fighting as loyal citizens of their states. General Lee stated numerous times that he believed slavery was wrong and ought to be abolished, but that he owed a greater duty to his home, to Virginia. This was the common mentality. Everyday Southerners—small farmers, doctors, lawyers, business owners—went to war to fight for their states, which in their minds were their chief sovereigns and housed the highest governments to which they owed their loyalties. In a recording from 1944, one of the last surviving Confederate veterans, Julius Howell, spoke to Congress and stated that "[W]e didn't fight for the preservation or extension of slavery... It was a great curse on this country that we had slavery... We fought for states' rights, for states' rights." I will concede that the aristocrats and politicians who pushed for secession and war cared mightily about slavery. But the soldier on the battlefield, to whom the CF belongs, did not.

A symbol is only as good as the people who use it. It should not surprise anyone that many Southerners, including active service members overseas and many decent Americans who have no hate in their hearts, fly the CF. They do so out of a genuine expression of Southern identity, which in my opinion is an expression of patriotism on the battlefield. This identity is not rebellious—it is fundamentally American and reflects a culture of sacrifice and patriotism.

The time has come to think deeply about the real meaning of flying the CF today. I do not intend or expect this piece to change minds. I am merely trying to introduce some perspective that is completely absent from the public discourse. The simplicity with which this issue is discussed is a travesty, and it was a true shame to see such simplicity and close-mindedness displayed by YU's administration. I pray that YU students can begin to understand the Southern admiration for the CF, and see that those who fly it today reflect the decades of benign and honorable associations the CF has carried.



## Shortchanging History and Marginalizing Students

By Yossi Hoffman

*"In case anybody wonders... whether or not this is racist... it's not hard to understand what the Confederacy fought for. I know, states rights, very nice. But everybody understands what the symbolism of that flag is... The flag is a statement of racism... and in this context there's nothing else it can be interpreted as." – Rabbi Jeremy Wieder*

*"We believe he is mistaken that the Confederate flag can be divorced from the hateful ideology and racism of its past, but we also believe that... [his] personal background, atypical of our institution, caused him to make this error." – Rabbi Kenneth Brander*

On Tuesday May 3rd, 1859, a brave young man stepped off the USS Portland to begin a new life. The 23 year-old journeyed across the ocean in the ship's

**"I DON'T EXPECT OTHERS TO UNDERSTAND BECAUSE IT'S NOT YOUR WAY OF LIFE, BUT SHOUTING AND THREATENING AN IGNORANT INDIVIDUAL IS IMMORAL AND WRONG.... BE OPEN, UNDERSTANDING, AND TOLERANT OF PEOPLE'S IDEAS AND CULTURES RATHER THAN QUICK TO CRITICIZE THEM."**

grimy steerage quarters from Havre, Germany to America in search of new opportunities and freedom. He presumably fled his hometown of Hessen because of persecution, religious restrictions, and economic hardships. Solomon Kahn, a Jewish cabinet maker and my great-great-great-grandfather, emigrated as part of the Ashkenazi wave of German immigrants in the mid to late 19th Century.

After disembarking, Kahn, like many in the sizable Jewish immigrant community, looked towards the Midwest, West, and South and, shortly after, settled in Montgomery, Alabama. Kahn had very few possessions although his trade was undoubtedly valuable (later he would own a mine) and, like the great majority of Southerners, owned no slaves.

Less than two years after Kahn arrived in America, Fort Sumter was fired upon and the country drawn into conflict. The new immigrant who left his family and everything behind in Germany had little choice but to join the ranks (with more than 130 members of his Jewish community). Kahn enlisted in the 3rd Alabama Infantry in defense of the Confederate States of America. As described in "The Best Southern Patriots" by Patricia Hoskins, over the next four years, Kahn and his fellow soldiers in the regiment participated in many of the bloodiest battles of the war, suffered devastating losses at Gettysburg, and eventually were held prisoners of war by the North until the surrender of General Robert E. Lee at Appomattox. After the War, Kahn eventually settled in Dallas, Texas, where he and his wife had two sons, including my great-great-grandfather, Eugene.

My family's history might be rare for the YU community at large but thousands of Jews fought for the South: Judah P. Benjamin of Louisiana served as Jefferson Davis's secretary of war and then as secretary of the treasury and Rabbi M.J. Michelbacher authored one of the most widely circulated War sermons, titled "A Prayer for the Confederacy." In fact, the North's General Ulysses S. Grant conducted one of the most notorious anti-Semitic acts in American history during the 19th century: General Orders No. 11 expelled "Jews as a class" from Kentucky, Tennessee, and Mississippi on suspicion of illegal barter run "mostly by Jews and other unprincipled traders." The antebellum South had thriving Jewish communities, but is often overlooked. Cities had multiple

shuls, mikvahs, butchers, and cemeteries and, like all Southerners, these Jews were proud of their culture.

Many forget the past and others obscure it. My ancestor was called to arms by his countrymen and brothers. It is oversimplifying to assume that individual reasons men fight are the same as the reasons governments wage war. Kahn's home and culture were under attack, a culture that admittedly and shamefully prospered under slavery. But, that didn't mean he fought for slavery (perhaps patriotism, propaganda, or fear). The South was beleaguered by the North's criticism, abolitionist societies were formed, Northern publications declared their dichotomous half as deplorables, and politicians belittled their counterparts, condemning them to the fullest- and many times rightly so. Of course, I am not proud that Kahn fought for the side of slavery, but nonetheless I cherish my heritage.

Over the past few centuries, the South has developed its own culture, a "Southern way of life." We have certain ideals and values that were--and still are--different than our counterparts. People practically worship college football, fry everything, and say y'all at every opportunity. We wear cowboy boots, love pie, and don't honk the second a streetlight turns green. We generally talk and move slowly, which isn't necessarily a bad thing, drive pickup trucks, and hospitality runs in our blood. High schools go on field trips to the rodeo and Texas History is mandatory for all 5th graders in the state. Visitors profess our differences and, living in New York for the past three years, I can confidently say that Southern culture and values are not the same.

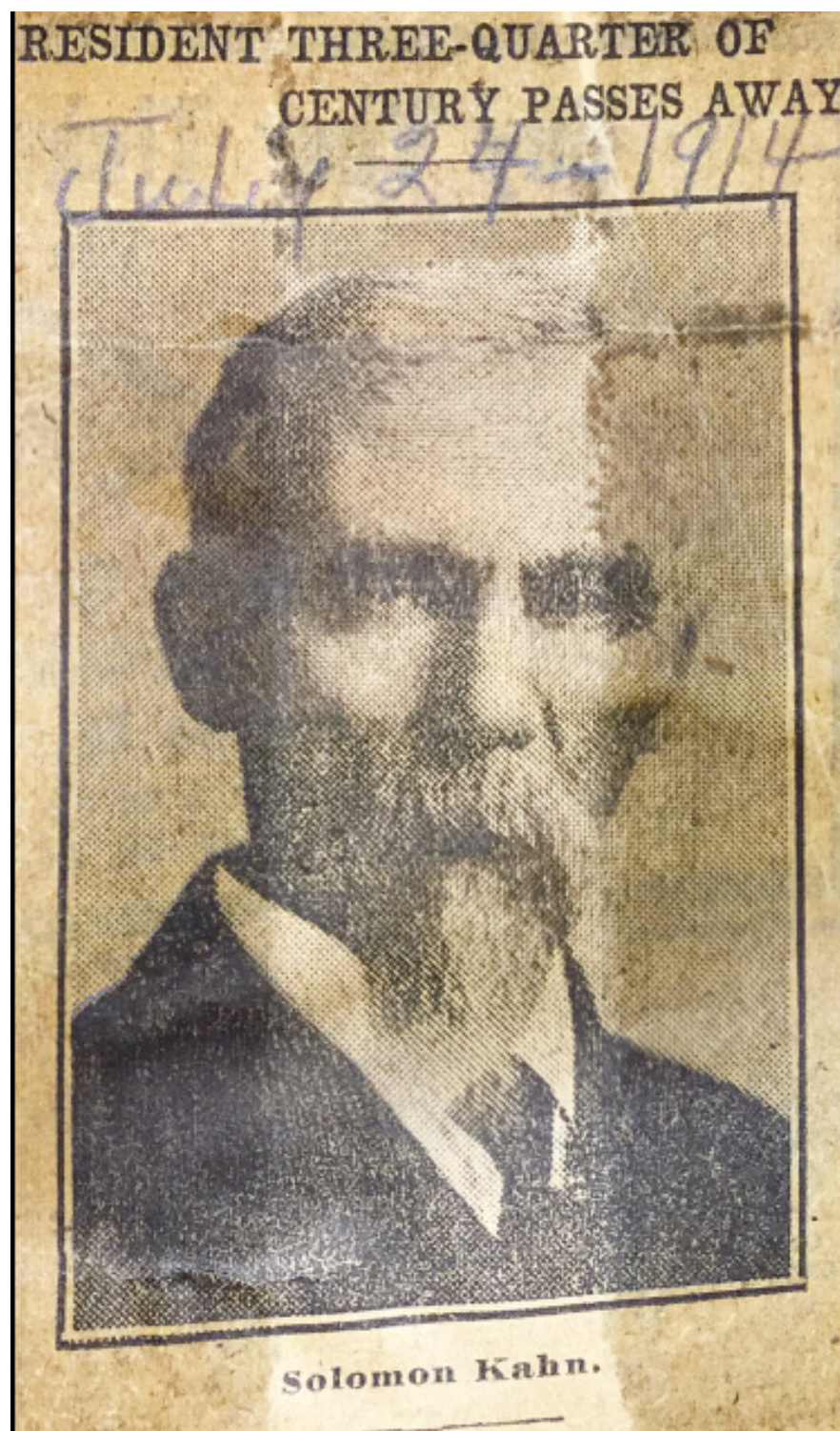
Ask yourself, why isn't the cross (the crucifix) a symbol of hatred and intolerance? After all, during the Crusades hundreds of thousands of innocent people were murdered. Christian zealots ransacked Jewish communities throughout Europe and our people were burned at the stake, burned alive pegged to a cross. The very simple answer is that the cross is no longer a symbol of hate or religious superiority. Representation is unique to each culture and varies by society and era.

The Confederate flag, likewise, has different meanings to different people. Growing up and still when I go home, I occasionally see Confederate flags flying on neighborhood homes, Confederate flag bumper stickers on trucks along the highway, and Confederate flag t-shirts on adults and children. Each time I see these, I don't do a double take. The flag doesn't represent implicit slavery or racism where I come from; it represents Southern pride and a part of our past. I was at the election watch party and when I saw the YU student don the flag, racism and slavery did not cross my mind once, not once.

I don't expect others to understand because it's not your way of life, but shouting and threatening an ignorant individual is immoral and wrong. Much of the YU student body was raised in the New York area and I accept that I go to a commuters' school. Wearing the Confederate flag at a YU event was wrong and I would never have made that mistake. The oblivious student should have known that it would offend many because, just as the flag has meaning to us, it has meaning to y'all and that meaning evokes racism and hate. But be open, understanding, and tolerant of people's ideas and cultures rather than quick to criticize them.

Rabbi Brander, as a student of the university you represent and as a proud Southerner, I felt that your e-mail to the entire student body seemed inappropriate, misguided, and uncalled for. Whether you asked the student's permission or not, whether you were under pressure because of negative media publicity, or whether you were just succumbing to the will of the loud and choleric few, your email publicly shamed a YU student. He will, for the rest of his time at your university, be bullied and threatened. You legitimized the calls for his expulsion and drew remarkably untrue historical comparisons and halachic equivalents. The personally opinionated mes-

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Solomon Kahn, German-Jewish Immigrant to Alabama in 1859

## Scars and Bars: A Confederate Flag on Campus

By Molly Meisels

Yeshiva University stands on a moral high ground. As a Jewish institution, YU has an obligation to be forward-thinking when others are not and to avoid silence in situations of injustice. This is not only due to the moral implications of apathy, but also because, as Jews, we know what it feels like to be victimized and demeaned. From the beginning of our history, Jewish people have been murdered and persecuted for the God we believe in and the messiah we do not. Six million members of our nation died a mere seven decades ago, because no one spoke up to their slaughterers.

YU's responsibility toward justice is a major reason why I decided to come here: I envisioned an institution composed of people inclined towards equality and righteousness. And so, I was completely disgusted when a student on the Wilf campus donned a Confederate Flag at the election party held in the Morg Lounge. The student walked into the lounge wearing the Confederate flag, when they announced the results for his home state of Alabama. I was completely dumbfounded at the utter audacity he had to bring a blatant symbol of racism and slavery to a YU event. Although I should have approached him, I regret to say that I did not. I was too shaken to even utter words of reproach. It was obvious that many in the room were offended by his actions – Republicans and Democrats alike. I noticed a few students approaching the flag-wearer, and I assume it was to ask him to ditch the flag or ditch the party.

It is no surprise that many Yeshiva University students were deeply hurt by this student's racist gesture. The Confederate flag isn't just a Civil War battle flag, or a vital component of Southern culture. The flag, known as "the stars and bars", is a blatant symbol of racism, slavery and white supremacy. It belongs to the same camp as the Ku Klux Klan and their white hoods, as the Nazi Party and their swastikas.

The Confederate flag has been a symbol of hatred and suppression for over a century and half. There is a reason that white supremacist groups (largely the KKK) still see the Confederate flag as the banner of their beliefs. It isn't only because the red on the flag symbolizes the blood that they've spilled since they were founded, but because the flag was sewn with slavery in mind, and slavery alone. Before Dylann Roof murdered 9 black church-goers in Charleston, South Carolina in 2015, he posted a photo of himself clutching two weapons of destruction – a pistol and the Confederate flag. With one of these he took 9 lives; with the other he explained why. The flag was no play-thing to white supremacist, Dylann Roof. It held tremendous value and tremendous symbolism. It symbolized how superior he believed himself to be to the African-Americans he killed; it signified the hatred he felt in

his heart towards African-Americans in general. The history of the Confederate flag is a compilation of all that detestation.

Some might say that these incidents - the use of the flag by the KKK and white supremacists - prove nothing about the flag's true nature. To refute this, we must look to why the Civil War was fought in the first place. The Civil War was a war of pro-slavery versus anti-slavery. Slavery was the reason that the South seceded to begin with. The pro-slavery views of the South led to one of the most brutal wars fought on American soil – a war fought to continue the enslavement of human beings. The Confederate flag was the Southern flag, created to represent the South at the time of the war,

apologetic, we must look at the facts. Rabbi Brander condemned the Confederate flag throughout the email, but did not condemn the student as much as he should have. He spent a good portion of the email explaining that the student meant no harm by displaying a blatantly racist and offensive symbol, and that "anyone who has spent time with him knows him to be a sensitive young person." However, I do not need to know him to know that anyone, especially someone from Alabama, knows what the Confederate flag symbolizes, and knows that it will offend and harm those who do not see it as simply a symbol of Southern pride. The flag-wearer did not intend to communicate peace, equality, and happiness by donning a flag that represents the opposite of those values.

It is my opinion that the student shouldn't have been let off as easily as he was. Rabbi Brander's statement regarding equality and justice was heartwarming, but how can he allow the student to receive no repercussions for his actions? Does this not open the doors for more students to voice racist and offensive opinions, since they can safely assume

**"IT IS NO SURPRISE THAT MANY YESHIVA UNIVERSITY STUDENTS WERE DEEPLY HURT BY THIS STUDENT'S RACIST GESTURE. THE CONFEDERATE FLAG ISN'T JUST A CIVIL WAR BATTLE FLAG, OR A VITAL COMPONENT OF SOUTHERN CULTURE...[IT] IS A BLATANT SYMBOL OF RACISM, SLAVERY AND WHITE SUPREMACY. IT BELONGS TO THE SAME CAMP AS THE KU KLUX KLAN AND THEIR WHITE HOODS, AS THE NAZI PARTY AND THEIR SWASTIKAS."**

and therefore, the South's pro-slavery stance. There is no way around that.

When I see people in the South flaunting the flag, I am angered, but I brush it off. Because it occurs miles and miles from my home, it seems like it transpires on a distant planet. But when I saw a student wear the Confederate flag on my own college campus, I wasn't only infuriated, I was terrified. While I respect this student's right to freedom of expression and the college's allowance for him to express his views, I expect more out of the members of this university.

A few weeks after the incident, Rabbi Kenneth Brander released a statement via email concerning the student who wore the flag. Although it came a bit late, the statement was much appreciated by those who were offended by the flag's display. The email stated that the "student was apologetic and explained that he was not appealing to racism or bigotry, but rather trying to celebrate his family's roots in the South." It quoted the student as saying, "I am 100% accepting of all people, and it so pains me to see all these people being offended by something I meant as no harm."

While this all seems gracious and

that they will not be punished for doing so?



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sage failed in its job to foster a welcoming student body by igniting tensions and naively shunning all of us out-of-towners who, as you so pointedly put it, are "atypical to our institution" and have different "personal backgrounds."

Rabbi Wieder, truly with all due respect, releasing a shiur to the world, personally (but perhaps indirectly) attacking a student without ever meeting or speaking to him, is not right. You presume to know his intentions and even introduce your plea against racism by stating that you don't care about the details. It is understandable that you thought someone

did "proudly bear a symbol which is nothing but the embodiment of racism" having lived your whole life in New York. But I think differently and jumping to the conclusion about others, using your rhetoric, that "to me, is absolutely astounding."

We learn in Bava Metzia 58b that he who embarrasses his fellow is as if he killed him (and further in Pirkei Avot 3:11). Just because a mistake was made, albeit a gross lapse of judgment, as a community, we should not forget who we are and that, while we may disagree, public shaming, embarrassment, and wearing a scarlet letter is never the best solution.

We learn in Pirkei Avot 1:6 not to jump to conclusions about others; judge everyone as meritorious. I

hope that when passing judgment on students without evidence or a desire to understand our faculty and administrators take this teaching to heart.

We are the future, and how we learn from each other will help ensure a brighter tomorrow. I hope that this holiday season all of us strive to celebrate what makes us different and our "atypical" personal backgrounds because none of us are the same.

As Martin Luther King Jr. once said: "Rarely do we find men who willingly engage in hard, solid thinking. There is an almost universal quest for easy answers and half-baked solutions. Nothing pains some people more than having to think."

## Don't Become Headline Blind: Hearsay, Headlines, and Fake News

By Judah Steifel

Politics is in the air, and possibly in the water as well. I think it's fair to say that this past season has been a bit more acidic than the usual. I've found it increasingly difficult to have quality political discussions over the past few months and weeks. That fault is mine and possibly yours.

While it's true that the two candidates this past election season have been the most polarizing in recent history, this is not the main reason the quality of my political discussion has gone downhill. Few of the main issues that we may have pondered throughout our lives have changed. How do we deal with government, the economy, the middle east, and social issues? If the issues have not changed, then what has?

The first issue is fake news. As the New York Times editorial board put it, "The adage that falsehood flies and the truth comes limping after it doesn't begin to describe the problem." They go on to point out that this falsehood assumes that the truth eventually catches up. Throughout the election season, Facebook and Google have been accused of becoming platforms for fake news websites aiming to profit off of flashy headlines and drastic accusations. Yet another Times article was published pointing out that even the Times itself has run advertisements for sources that are less than legitimate.

This spreads lies which detract from legitimate discussion, while also diluting the selection of news

sources that we have to choose from. The production of fake news may be difficult to fix on our end, but what we can do is ensure that we only get our news from legitimate sources. Comedian John Oliver suggested on his show that we should all go out and buy subscriptions to legitimate news sources such as, "the New York Times, The Washington Post, local newspapers, or donating to groups like Pro-Publica which is a non-profit which does great investigative journalism." This not only keeps you well informed but also supports legitimate news sources as they struggle.

The next step to improving the quality of political

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### "THE ISSUES THAT OUR COUNTRY FACES HAVEN'T CHANGED, ONLY THE POLITICAL ATMOSPHERE HAS."

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discussion and savvy is avoiding the headline headlines. It's very easy to become headline blind especially in the rush of today's society. It's way too easy to find yourself skimming headlines and using them to stay politically "informed." I often find myself doing the same. The problem is that a headline is just meant to catch your attention and inform you on

what the article touches upon. It provides absolutely no substance. The article may just be an opinion with no real evidence, or the evidence it provides may be inconclusive or illegitimate. It's very important to take time and read through full articles.

If you're up to the challenge, go one step further. Look up the primary sources that your article is based on. Read statements from public officials, check voting records, and look into other platforms for raw facts.

One last suggestion would be to avoid hearsay. A lot of people have a lot of opinions and state a lot of supposed facts, but it's important to fact check. Make sure to know which facts are legitimate and which are things someone may have heard or read from something less than factual. Furthermore, have facts to back up your opinions. Along these lines, it's important to see articles from both sides of an issue, and it's for your own benefit to understand the approach from the other side as well.

The issues that our country faces haven't changed, but the political atmosphere has. Substance still exists though it may be harder to find. It's our absolute responsibility as students entering the world to stay informed and to understand, to the greatest of our abilities, the topics and nuances that we face each day. Take the extra time to stay politically informed. It's important now more than ever.

## Nation of Immigrants

By Molly Meisels and Board of the College Democrats

America is a nation of immigrants. Every person reading this article is the child, grandchild or great-grandchild of an immigrant (unless you are of Native American descent). Our ancestors traveled to America's shores seeking equality and safety from oppression. The gold-paved streets of our cities attracted people from all over the world who wished to leave nations of hopelessness and enter a nation of happiness. Our 'nation of immigrants' sets us apart from most other countries in the world. Our melting-pot of cultures, languages, foods and histories allows for a rainbow of diversity to flourish.

Although there have been times throughout our history when nativists attempted to block the influx of immigrants seeking a home, America has changed for the better and learned from its mistakes. No longer do we turn back those escaping countries of embittered battles or famine. We embrace others, as others have embraced us, and we are not selfish enough to prohibit others from partaking in the freedoms that we are so grateful for. Until now.

Recently, there's been a rise in xenophobia and Islamophobia across the country. This xenophobia and Islamophobia has been festering for some time now, but it all rose to the surface when Donald Trump began his political campaign. When president-elect Trump first began campaigning for the presidency, he said things like: "when Mexico sends its people, they're not sending their best. They're sending people that have lots of problems, and they're bringing those problems to us. They're bringing drugs. They're bringing crime. They're rapists." He's insinuated that illegal immigrants take jobs from American citizens and that a database needs to be kept of Muslim refugees. His campaign promises included building a wall on the border of the United States and Mexico and deporting close to 11 million undocumented immigrants (he has said it'll be 2-3 million out, right when he takes office.)

Due to Trump's anti-immigrant campaign and nativist undertones, many Americans who have harbored xenophobic feelings for some time have begun voicing their opinions. Right after Trump won

the presidency, middle-school children in Michigan chanted "build that wall" at their Hispanic classmates; the car of a Puerto Rican family was graffitied with the words "Trump" and "Go Home"; and a Muslim Uber driver was verbally harassed by a white motorist, who shouted, "Trump is president a\*\*\*\*\*, so you can kiss your visa goodbye....They'll deport you soon, don't worry, you terrorist." These incidents are highly disturbing, no matter what your political ideology. This goes beyond party lines; it's bigger than merely Republican or Democrat.

Although Donald Trump has told his supporters to "stop it", it's too late. Trump has pushed the ball of racism, xenophobia and Islamophobia, and now it will not stop rolling. Children of undocumented immigrants are afraid of their parents being deported. Hispanic children across the country have been afraid to go to school. And Muslim women are fearful of walking the gold-paved streets of this country in

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### "WE IN PARTICULAR MUST REMEMBER THAT IN THE AFTERMATH OF DESTRUCTION, OUR PEOPLE WAS GIVEN THE OPPORTUNITY TO REBUILD. WHEN THEIR HOMELANDS GAVE THEM NOTHING, AMERICAN GRANTED OUR GRANDPARENTS THE CHANCE TO MAKE SOMETHING OF THEMSELVES."

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hijabs.

Not only has Trump been critical of undocumented immigrants - he's directed his ire at refugees as well. Trump has said: "We have to stop the tremendous flow of Syrian refugees into the United States. We don't know who they are. They have no documentation and we don't know what they're planning." This policy, and the countless others Trump has proposed under the rubric of his "Muslim ban", is incredibly saddening. Since the war in Syria began in 2011, millions of Syrians have been displaced. Multiple Western countries have taken in thousands and thousands of refugees. President Obama has only proposed accepting 10,000: a modest figure according to the U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees. Yet, Trump has said that the plan should be suspended because

refugees from nations like Syria are threats to national security -- even though refugees are vetted and undergo thorough background checks. Apparently, homeless women, children, and families are a threat to Trump's national security. When in office, Trump will have the power to reduce the number of accepted refugees from 10,000 to zero.

Trump's claims and the response that they have evoked from his supporters are alarming. Now that he will be taking office in January with an alt-right chief strategist, they are even more so. His claims threaten to push America back by decades; they threaten to take a nativism that we have buried, and resurrect it. Trump's campaign was run on the backs of undocumented immigrants and Syrian refugees. He harnessed power by fanning the fears of the people, and the people went along with it.

Americans are afraid of undocumented immigrants and refugees. They want them gone. But if Trump wishes to be a fair and just president, he must abandon his nativist ideal to "Make America Great Again". He must abandon his ideals of building a wall, deporting undocumented immigrants and not allowing terrified and abandoned Syrians into our free nation. Trump must grind all his campaign promises to dust and be a president for all Americans. He must be the president of the immigrants. He should remember that he himself stems from immigrants, that almost all of the men and women of this country stem from immigrants.

We in particular must remember that in the aftermath of destruction, our people were given the opportunity to rebuild. When their homelands gave them nothing, America granted our grandparents the chance to make something of themselves. Each of us was born from struggle, from the trials and tribulations of immigration and refugee status. We are all immigrants. We need to give those who have not been lucky enough thus far a chance, just as we were given a chance.

America does not need to be made great again. America is already great. She is great because of her diversity. And she will be even greater when all of us accept that.

## Stronger Together

By Dan Luxenberg

I stumbled upon CNN the other night and noticed the rallies that were happening all across the country and joked about attending; I checked twitter and Facebook and joked, again, about attending.

It was when Don Lemon denounced an instance of violence of one protester's acknowledgment that casualties were imminent on both sides, when historians began writing a new chapter for our children's history textbooks.

My Facebook newsfeed is inundated with #NotMyPresident posts followed by comments reading, "get over it." President-elect Trump's divisive rhetoric is legitimately scaring many minorities, and we as Jews should be especially empathetic; a significant part of our history consists of leaders campaigning on ridding their countries of Jews. Trump called for a ban on Muslims, spoke down to a gold star family, mocked a disabled reporter, empowered white nationalists (note: KKK endorsement), and when nobody was listening, bragged about sexual assault.

Trump *did* those things. "But I still believe in America and I always will," Secretary Clinton said, and "we must accept this result and then look to the future. Donald Trump is going to be our president. We owe him an open mind and the chance to lead."

I texted a few friends to join, but they were too tired and justifiably sick of this election, or as John Oliver put it, "The electoral equivalent of seeing someone puking so you start puking and then someone else is puking and pretty soon everyone is puking, 2016." But I had to attend. Now hear me out (or read me out): I did not join the protesters in their protest, I observed. President Obama stood in the Rose Garden on November 9th and told us not to give up; that our fight is not over. But, he noted, Donald Trump won fair and square, and we should re-

spect him as our President-elect. It does not mean I agree with President-elect Trump or that I will go gently into that good night, but I sure as hell am rooting for him.

"Our darkest days have always—always—been followed by our finest hours," wrote Aaron Sorkin in a letter



to his daughter. "If [Trump] does manage to be a [expletive] without breaking the law for four years, we'll make it through those four years. And three years from now we'll fight like hell for our candidate and we'll win and they'll lose...The battle isn't over, it's just begun."

Peacefully protest, sign petitions on change.org, send a message to the KKK that their endorsement of Donald Trump for President is a *bad* thing and let's make sure that regardless of race or religion, people around the world know that America is still everyone's home! but the

longer we protest the legitimacy of this election and prolong the peaceful transition of power that the world looks to us for, the less we'll recognize the country President Obama worked too damn hard to push forward.

There are elections more often than every four years, and if you're curious as to when or who's running: google it. "Don't boo, vote!"

Dave Chappelle noted during his monologue on *Saturday Night Live*, that the country has elected an "internet troll." But he continued "wishing Donald Trump luck," and offering him a chance; Chappelle also noted that he, as "the historically disenfranchised, demand that he give us one, too." President-elect Trump owes it to the American people to rid himself of the hateful rhetoric, and similarly, we owe it to him, and our country, to give him a chance.

Protester: "What's the solution?!"

Protesters: "A revolution!"

Protester: "What's the problem?!"

Protesters: "The whole damn system!"

In 2008, 2012, and campaigning for Hillary Clinton in 2016, President Obama would shout: "Fired up!" And the crowd would repeat. President Obama would then shout: "Ready to go!" And the crowd would again repeat. President Obama tells the origin story of this chant: he showed up in Middle-of-nowhere town, Virginia to a room of twenty people. An elderly woman behind him on stage began pumping up the small crowd by yelling, "Fired up! Ready to go!" He took that phrase on to win two national elections and inspire the nation yet again, four years later. "One voice can change a room. And if a voice can change a room, it can change a city. And if it can change a city, it can change a state. And if it can change a state, it can change a nation. And if it can change a nation, it can change the world!"

I'm fired up! You ready to go?

## Breaking Rules and a Successful Brand: How Trump won the Presidency

By Elliot Fuchs

I must admit, being a political science major in the midst of this election cycle was tons of fun. As I am sure anyone else who is pursuing the major would agree, the endless class discussions on the state of the election were far more entertaining than reading a textbook passage about trickle down economic theories for the hundredth time.

But as election day drew nearer, we campus conservatives were looking at the prospect of losing a third straight election. Times got tougher. But to our surprise, Donald Trump pulled off the miracle, the biggest upset since "Rocky" beat "The Taxi Driver" for an academy award, and won the presidency.

Happy days were here again, we laughed and liberals everywhere cried and protested the basic fundamentals of a constitutional republic. What could be better?

But then just a few days later my happiness left me almost as quickly as it came. I was not upset because Trump wasn't the ideal candidate who represented the constitutional conservative principles that I believe in. No, I had come to terms with that the moment I saw that he was facing off against Hillary Clinton. The reason I was upset was because every political rule that I had spent the last two years studying were broken during that election.

Let me explain. I was honored to be one of the students to participate in an honors level course taught by former senator and former Democratic VP candidate Joseph Lieberman. The course was appropriately named "Presi-

dential Elections" and we discussed the senators in depth experience on the campaign trail with the help of the textbook written by renowned political scientist Nelson Polsby. As I sat down to read the textbook in preparation for class, I couldn't help but notice that Trump did not abide by one rule within it. It was all obsolete nonsense that no longer had any bearing on the modern presidential elec-



tion (only a few days earlier I thought it was the holy grail of all things campaign related.) He turned blue states red, he almost lost historically red states, he won Utah by a wide margin despite the fact that Evan McMullin polled in at 21%. He did it all with a very limited organization on the ground, especially in contrast to Secretary Clinton, and none of it made any sense. Like I said, the rules of

presidential politics were broken.

So how did he do it? This is the main question I would like to address in this article. As someone who has read copious books and articles on the political and entertainment industries (both of which Trump is a member of) and as someone who is studying both of them in school as well, I would like to tell you how Donald J. Trump became the most unlikely victor of the presidency of all time.

Like him or hate him, about 16 years ago Bill O'Reilly published a nearly prophetic book called — you guessed it, *The O'Reilly Factor*. In the book he discusses at length a number of encounters he had with Donald Trump. One of which provided great insight as to who Trump is as an individual. The two were attending an entertainment event and as friends they sat in the same luxury box. At a certain point Trump decided that he no longer wanted to sit in the comfort of the private suite, but rather he was interested in going to sit amongst the crowd. O'Reilly couldn't believe what he was hearing. Why would a famous reality TV star want to be swarmed by the audience as opposed to staying put and enjoying the event as they had been up until that point? It was based on his knowledge of Trump and their many public appearances together that Bill claimed that Trump was addicted to the spotlight, obsessed with his own fame, and unable to tame his desire for more of it.

It was clear to me after reading that story why Trump ran for president. He had the fame, he had the money, it

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## The Zeroth Commandment

### Tiqun Olam: The World's Stake in Israel's Future

By Aryeh Schonbrun

Over the course of Jewish nationhood, the powers that be have tried time and again to distance the Jewish people from their rightful inheritance. Through the great tides of history and the mightiest of empires, we survived and continue to gaze in earnest anticipation toward the holy city and the site of the holy of holies. The remarkable tenacity with which we hold onto the idea of the 'return to Zion' distinguishes ourselves from every other nation that has ever existed. The story goes that Napoleon, upon witnessing the devout mourn the temples on the 9th of Av, remarked that he had no doubt in his mind that one day we would indeed return. The prophets concur.

Two months ago, strange tidings befell the Jewish people. We were informed by UNESCO, the UN branch charged with the administering of ancient heritage sites, that the Temple Mount did not bear any relationship to the Jewish people, but rather was to be referred to solely as "Al Aqsa." This resolution, of course, reeks of illegitimacy and is blatantly absurd. It is dishonest, without basis, without logic, and stands null and void to all who do not profess themselves to be staunch antisemites. We do not lack for any evidence of our people's long, storied history in *Eretz Yisrael* (Land of Israel), or, for that matter, on the Temple Mount itself! In fact, the Waqf (the Jordanian administrators of the Temple Mount) inadvertently delivered to us years ago the exact proof we were looking for. Sifting through the rubble left behind after enormous illegal renovations were performed on the Temple Mount in the late 1990s (when the area called Solomon's Stables was demolished without permits, the resulting debris was unceremoniously dumped in the nearby wadi and was subsequently recovered by archeologists) has yielded mosaics, coins bearing Hebrew script, bones of sacrificial animals, arrowheads from the sieges and much more. Throughout Israel, archeologists have discovered vast piles of evidence that point to historical Israelite/Hebrew civilizations (e.g. the Dead Sea scrolls, ancient synagogues) and continue to reveal new finds that provide us with hard proof of our narrative. Laudably, Bibi lashed out at UNESCO and countered that we absolutely have a connection to the holiest place in Judaism! Even most western nations

abstained or voted against the resolution, leaving only the third world to their misguided reverie. While the resolution surely did not cause any of us to question our link to the Temple Mount, it rattled us. I ask: How could such a spurious act of a hopelessly biased organization have had such an effect on us? Simply, we feel that any attack on the merits of our continued existence in historical Israel is an existential threat. This derives from a basic lack of confidence in the ethics of our right to exist and a misunderstanding of our

connection to Israel, would there still exist a Jewish people? We have defined ourselves for millennia by our yearning for Zion, and it seems that without it we would be nothing. It is our bond to Zion that dictates our presence in the land, and that defines our identity as a nation.

In reality, though, this justification faces severe contention when applied to politics. When the Jews happened to wake up and stream into Israel in the late 19th century, the local inhabitants feared for their territorial rights, and they claimed a narrative of their own. For centuries, Israel had been administered by different Muslim governors, and a small, but significant, Arab population called it home. When the British took over in 1920, Palestine had a large population of Jews, but great numbers of non-Jews shared the land, however violently (e.g. pogroms of 1929 which occurred in Hebron and other cities). Bowing to intense Arab pressures, the British eventually restricted Jewish immigration (the White Papers), and remained steadfast through WWII, even denying asylum

to refugees fleeing the Nazis. In response to the efforts of Jewish underground fighters (e.g. Lehi, Etzel, Hahagana), the British decided to forfeit their mandate in 1947. On November 29, 1947, the UN resolved to divide the territory between Arab and Jewish citizens (UN Resolution 181(II)), but the Arabs refused to accept the terms as approved by the UN, and instead declared war on Israel. Thankfully, we survived that war, and then, in 1967, Israel conquered the West Bank, Sinai, Gaza, and the Golan Heights. Today she retains control over both the Golan, Jerusalem and (to varying degrees) the West Bank. The conflict produced by these competing claims on the land has been brutal and bloody, and, sadly, we all know family and friends directly affected by the ongoing violence.

The current conflict originates in the Arabs' claim that Israel is illegitimate. According to B'Tselem, one of the leading human rights organizations in Israel, the reason why the UN does not recognize Israel's sovereignty over the West Bank and Gaza (and hence the illegality of the settlements) stems from a reading of Article 49 (6) of the Fourth Geneva Accord.

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**"THOUGH I BELIEVE IN OUR HOLY INALIENABLE RIGHT TO THE LAND OF OUR FOREFATHERS, I FEEL THAT IT DOES NOT ADD TO THE DISCOURSE TO ONLY PRESENT SUCH AN ARGUMENT, AS MANY WILL REJECT IT OUTRIGHT AS BARBAROUS, OR FANATICAL."**

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nation's destiny.

In the Israeli Declaration of Independence, the founders of Israel wrote of our ancestral right to Israel: "From this historical and traditional connection [to the land], the Jews in every generation struggled to return and settle [land] in their ancient homeland."

As clearly understood from this text, we justified our growing presence in Israel during the era of the *Halutzim* (early Jewish pioneers) by hearkening back to our ancestral tradition. It was not a random coincidence that we chose Israel as our national homeland, but rather out of respect for history and the longing for our ancient homeland, a place where we could exist as a nation once more. This logic remains Israel's sole *raison d'être*, her only clear justification for her right to exist. While some may claim that Israel serves as protector of world Jewry, and must exist for purely security reasons, the argument is lacking. Why do we need Israel in the current era of western tolerant enlightenment? If we do actually need it, why there? Why start a fight with the Arabs when the whole world was up for grabs (the Russians had even granted us an entire autonomous oblast, larger than Israel itself, in 1934!)? Additionally, if the Jews were to forego their

TRUMP, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 23

was now time to get the power too. Parenthetically, I take comfort in this. Since I am fairly certain that Trump cares about nothing else other than padding his name in the history books, I can only assume he will work with the GOP Congress to pass as much reform as he possibly can, just so history will refer to him as an active and easy to work with president.

O'Reilly then posed a further question where he asked why people were so infatuated with this billionaire who seemingly had zero connection to them and their lifestyle. He provides a fascinating observation that suggests that people are enamored with him specifically because they admire the life he lived. People are impressed with the concept of getting away with trading in his wife for a newer and younger one every few years. People also wish to have their name in golden letters on a building. They see Trump as a man living the ideal life and therefore love him for it. And he loves more than anyone else the fact that people love him for it. Sixteen years in the future this remains an insightful literary piece illuminating why Donald ran for the presidency in the first place and how Trump garnered the support he did despite not running a traditional presidential campaign. People were marvelling at him and his lifestyle before any official campaign announcements.

When I was reading that passage by O'Reilly, I couldn't help but feel as though the phenomenon he was describ-

ing was one probably rooted in psychological thinking. So I delved into the world of psychology to see what I would find.

In Daniel Kahneman book titled *Thinking, Fast and Slow*, he does an incredibly meticulous job of breaking down the human mind and analyzing how it works (I highly recommend this read). Over the course of this book he discusses a bunch of psychological fallacies that many of us act upon on a regular basis. One in particular that

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**"PEOPLE ALSO WISH TO HAVE THEIR NAME IN GOLDEN LETTERS ON A BUILDING. THEY SEE TRUMP AS A MAN LIVING THE IDEAL LIFE AND LOVE HIM FOR IT... PEOPLE WERE MARVELLING AT HIM AND HIS LIFESTYLE BEFORE ANY OFFICIAL CAMPAIGN ANNOUNCEMENTS."**

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caught my eye was what he labeled "The Halo Effect." This fallacy is the human tendency to view someone's brand and equate its success (or lack thereof) with the person themselves and all of their personal character traits. Uh... Hello! Donald Trump epitomizes what it means to be a brand. The big gold letters that say TRUMP are all that people needed to see in order to automatically equate him with positive traits. And, in the case of his candidacy, po-

litical traits.

This is a man who was in everyone's living room once a week "creating jobs" for 12 apprentice contestants or raising hundreds of thousands of dollars for charity. According to Kahneman's work, people took Trump's past, and automatically came to the conclusion that he is a capable politician (which those of us who actually study politics would claim is not true).

Not only did Trump maximize his pre-existing brand by putting his name in big letters on his podium instead of a boring campaign slogan. He also created a new brand at the beginning of the campaign one that even his haters have grown to love. "Make America Great Again" was a genius marketing move, and, therefore, a genius political one. His confidence when exuding that message resonated with voters because they didn't make a distinction between making a country great and making a business great.

I submit that based on both these texts, one personal and one scientific, that many people had decided to vote for Trump before he even opened his mouth (as a matter of fact, there is a good chance that opening his mouth only lost him voters.) And the reason that the experts, news stations, polling statistics, and even my handy textbook didn't see it coming is because none of those outlets had the ability to analyze people's perception of Trump on both a psychological and personal level.



## Investing in Night Seder: YU's Focus on the "Yeshiva Elite"

By Binny Shapiro

For many of us, the choice to acquire our college degrees at Yeshiva University, rather than at another college, was determined by YU's notable opportunities for Torah learning and a Jewish environment. Aside from its esteemed Morning Seder program, YU's Night Seder program offers its students a unique opportunity to engage in a two-hour communal gathering of Torah learning after the conclusion of daily college classes. YU is constantly developing new strategies to help students improve their efficiency during the Night Seder program, most recently by providing positive incentives (such as YU Seforim Sale gift cards for passing *bekius* tests) and adding new staff members to aid students in their learning. While YU's focus on helping students maximize the number of *dapim* they cover in *bekius* is a worthwhile venture, I can't help but think that this project misses focusing on the true issue of the Night Seder program—attendance. While Night Seder is not mandatory, it provides students with invaluable preparation for how to incorporate Torah learning into their daily schedules once they begin their careers. The September 19, 2016 issue of *The Commentator* reported that around two-hundred students participate in the Night Seder program. Considering the invaluable benefits that its Night Seder program offers, I find this number to be well below what YU should be aiming for.

I want to first clarify that I am in no way blaming those who have failed to participate. After all, the non-participants to whom I'm referring include students who have never consistently attended a Night Seder program prior to YU, generally due to a weak yeshiva background, and students who, despite a strong yeshiva background and familiarity with Night Seder programs, struggle to participate due to the academic pressures of college. While attending Night Seder (even for a brief period) is admirable, YU's rigorous morning and afternoon schedules exhaust even the best of us. I won't pretend that I've never missed Night Seder to meet a deadline for a paper or study for midterms. I have -- more times than I care to admit. I believe it is safe to assume that students facing these challenges will not be swayed to attend Night Seder by YU Seforim Sale gift cards. Students with a weak yeshiva background still have that weak background. Not to mention those four unread textbook chapters and that essay due tomorrow that's still three pages too short.

Nevertheless, YU's focus on improving the Night Seder program seems to only concentrate on how to help the "yeshiva elite" (your classic Gush, Shaalavim, HaKotel, and KBY alumni) finish the *mesechta* (my deepest apologies to any yeshivas I failed to include). But where are the attempts at resolving the fundamental problem of Night Seder participation?

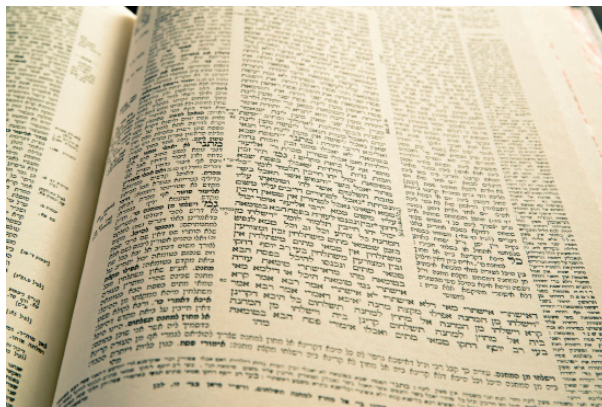
Perhaps I am being a bit harsh on YU. After all, this problem has no easy fix. If there was, I'm sure it would have been done already. Therefore, I will shift my critique to instead question YU's noticeable lack of attempts in receiving student input on how to improve

**"PARTICULARLY IN REGARDS TO THOSE STUDENTS WITH A STRONG YESHIVA BACKGROUND, YET WHO ARE CONTINUOUSLY OVERWHELMED WITH SCHOOL WORK, I BELIEVE THAT THE SOLUTION FOR THE ATTENDANCE ISSUE RESTS IN REMOVING THE "ALL-OR-NOTHING MENTALITY.""**

student participation. After all, isn't the first step in helping others with their problems to ask those people how you might be of assistance?

Regardless of whether YU deserves criticism for its lack of effort in improving Night Seder participation, I wish to move on to a more productive conversation: how can we resolve this problem? While I have only just begun my academic career in YU and by no means am an expert in the fields of sociology or pedagogy, I believe, as a student who is no stranger to the issues discussed in this article, that I have some input to offer.

Particularly in regards to those students with a strong yeshiva background, yet who are continuously overwhelmed with school work, I believe that the solution for the attendance issue rests in removing the "all-or-nothing" mentality. I refer to the attitude of



many YC students that if they cannot participate in a full Night Seder, like they did while attending yeshiva, they might as well give up on the entire program. Most often this attitude does not stem from the student's lack of awareness of the benefits that can be gained from even an abbreviated seder, but rather emerges as a rationalization when the student has other priorities. I need to finish an essay, which results in my missing the first hour of Night Seder; at that point, I may as well continue working on homework (or possibly engage in more relaxing activities). For all of its

shortcomings in increasing Night Seder attendance among the non-"yeshiva elite", YU has at least recognized this "all-or-nothing" mentality, going as far as to warn its students to avoid this trap in the beginning of the year. Yet actual methods to avoid this problem have rarely been suggested.

While I'm sure there are many ways to help students avoid this mentality, I believe that it is first important to remove the impression that Night Seder must be spent focusing on *bekius*. *Bekius* is oriented around a person's progress in the *mesechta*. As such, for those who can only commit themselves to a half-hour night seder (or perhaps can't commit to a daily schedule at all), Night Seder would be very discouraging, as these people will likely achieve very little progress in the *mesechta*. Therefore, if they wish to see improvement in attendance, YU must not only encourage students to learn materials other than Talmud (such as *mussar*, *machshava*, or Halacha), but actively provide students with access to learning these alternate Judaic subjects. An effective way of accomplishing this would be to provide nightly mini-*shiurim* (perhaps fifteen minutes to half an hour). These mini-*shiurim* should discuss new topics each day, so that every student will have a *shiur* to attend regardless of whether they missed a previous *shiur*. However, it would also be beneficial to provide *shiurim* which constantly build on previous *shiurim*, to encourage continued participation. Additionally, it could be helpful to provide online streaming of these *shiurim*, allowing students to participate in Night Seder from the comfort of their dorm rooms. Personally, if I had an official, organized *shiur* to attend on a nightly basis, I would be much more inclined to attend Night Seder for those *shiurim* even on nights where I'm bombarded with schoolwork. While these alterations in the Night Seder program will likely show greatest results among students with a strong Yeshiva background, hopefully they can benefit those without such a background as well.

YU might also want to consider enhancing the quality of its positive incentives. Rather than just a Seforim Sale gift card for doing well on a test, perhaps a more frequent gift card to Golan would encourage more students to participate, especially in conjunction with the suggestions above. Maybe the rabbis present at Night Seder could take turns inviting regular Night Seder participants to their houses for shabbos, a *mela-va malka*, or some other extracurricular activity.

I realize that these suggestions ask a lot from the YU *hanhala*. However, if Night Seder is truly something that YU wishes to make accessible to all its students, it will require some heavy investments.

## The Need for Varying Perspectives--Why We Would Benefit From Co-Ed Classes

By Akiva Schick

College English departments could justifiably be renamed "departments of discourse." In all classes - literature, poetry, film studies, creative writing and more - the dance of ideas drives our studies. The English department has no lecture classes, no courses of professors standing before students, and no professor talks straight for seventy-five minutes. That is anathema to our work.

Instead, we discuss. We argue, and we disagree. At the best of times, we become heated in the midst of debate; opposing viewpoints clash over a single text, the hunt for truth is played out in a classroom drama.

At the worst of times, there is the fatal murmur of assent. The classmates all roughly agree on the broad-

er and finer points of note, and debate is nowhere to be seen, cutting off our lines of learning. This fatal assent is all too common. We do not argue enough, because our viewpoints are too similar. We are in dire need of conflict.

It is my belief that having coed classes in Yeshiva University would greatly improve the level of our education. I am an English major, and will therefore focus upon English courses, where I have witnessed this problem firsthand. On the Wilf campus, the absence of women in our English classes is keenly felt. I have not spoken to all Yeshiva College (YC) English majors and minors, but those I have spoken to all expressed a similar sentiment. As one student put it, "sometimes if there are only men in the classroom, they feel they can talk a certain way about women which can be one

dimensional."

This is not to accuse YC students of sexism. Rather, it is to highlight a gap in our dialogues. We discuss a broad range of topics in various classes, and the role and history of women in the humanities is often key to understanding texts. Of course, we YC English students are all terribly enlightened, and can comfortably compliment ourselves on how egalitarian we are. "Why, that text is sexist! This one is feminist!" we might declare. We, of course, know the true value of women. Never mind the fact that we, inevitably, turn women into just another object. In this incarnation she is the object of our dialogues, with each student in turn jumping to show just how super-not-sexist he

SEE CO-ED, CONTINUED ON PAGE 26

## What Really Goes on Between Israel and Palestine

By Joey Chesir

For citizens of both Israel and America, the ongoing discord between Israel and Palestine is one of the most heavily scrutinized issues of foreign affairs. American politicians and members of the media have offered a wide range of opinions on the strife between the two sides and have asserted various methods to be used to solve the issue. Some believe that Israel should abandon all of its settlements in disputed territories and that doing so will convince the Palestinians to seek peace. Others opine that numerous Palestinian terror attacks, despite only being actively performed by a minority of the citizens of Palestine, are evidence that Palestinians do not ultimately seek to coexist peacefully with Israel, and that Israel should perform any possible measure to prevent further attacks.

However, one of the biggest misconceptions about the situation between Israel and Palestine, which often leads to distorted understandings of the nature of the situation, is that Israel and Palestine are locked in a long-term, military "conflict". When the hostility between Israel and Palestine is analyzed, many seemingly view the two sides as essentially being in a constant state of war with one another, which ultimately results in casualties to both sides and an outcome that benefits neither. In reality, this situation is very far from being a military conflict, because military conflicts involve the mobilization of one side's military against the other. The Israeli army is not currently fighting the Palestinian army (which may or may not exist), and the action of the IDF is not for the sake of conquering land or advancing the agenda of Israel's leader. It is rather for the sake of protecting Israel's citizens.

Very often, American news outlets will report on events in Israel or Palestine and will paint a specific picture of what defines the conflict. For example, over the summer, the head of the Otniel Yeshiva, Rabbi Michael Mark, was shot and killed by a terrorist while driving on a highway with members of his family, all of whom were injured in the attack. No doubt, there were media stations that portrayed this killing as an act of political protest. At the time of his death, however, Rabbi Mark had absolutely no political or military affiliations with the state of Israel

(other than being a citizen), and his murder can only be defined as a killing at random. Regardless of the perpetrator's personal feelings about Israel's policies, including Jewish settlements in the West Bank, it would be an understatement to say that the killing of a rabbi driving with his family is a distortion of the concept of political protest. Even if every single complaint ever made about the State of Israel's policies was justified (not exactly), it would be impossible to think that somehow justifies the random murder of its citizens. Therefore, the perpetrator of the at-

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tack on Rabbi Mark is neither a victim of Israel, nor a military actor. Terrorists who kill civilians are not soldiers, and cannot be compared to Israeli soldiers who fight to protect their country.

Additionally, when Israel launches military campaigns into Palestinian territory, it only does so for the sake of ending a terror threat. Israeli soldiers are not fighting battles against Palestinian soldiers, who simply want to protect their home country in a way analogous to the Israeli military. The actions performed by Palestinian terrorists do not have a single element of self-defense, or even of the promotion of their own interests. Terrorists are not helping Palestinian citizens or defending their homes when they attack Israelis; if anything, they are sabotaging their own interests by worsening an already hostile situation. The nature of the actions performed by Israeli soldiers and Palestinians are thus incomparable. In fact, the actions performed by Palestinian terrorists are the polar opposite of those performed by IDF soldiers, because Israeli soldiers seek to achieve an outcome of protecting their home country and making their fellow citizens safer, and Palestinian terrorists only want to bring more violence, death, and destruc-

tion into the world. It is not a question of how far the Israeli government has "pushed" the Palestinian people into committing acts of violence, because no matter how much abuse the Palestinians may or may not have theoretically suffered, it is inexcusable to kill other people at random for the sake of expressing displeasure at their country's policies.

Because of all of these factors, it is incorrect to label the Israel-Palestine situation as a "conflict", because the word "conflict" implies that two sides are meeting in some kind of battleground, in order to fight for a prize that each side wants for themselves. For example, the American Revolution was fought over whether Great Britain would retain control of the Thirteen Colonies or if the colonies would acquire that control for themselves. Both sides participated in many battles in order to achieve control of the Thirteen Colonies, and in the end, one side, the Continental Army, prevailed. That situation is absolutely not what is happening in Israel and Palestine right now. Terror attacks are not acts of political rebellion, because they are not generally concentrated on bettering Palestine's political situation. Even if Israel was as morally reprehensible as some claim (it's not), Palestine doesn't control any commodity that Israel would be willing to wage an offensive war in order to obtain, except its own citizens' safety. It would be impossible to claim that there is some kind of alternative reasoning for Israel's military campaigns into Palestinian territory, other than Israel's self-defense, simply because there is nothing within Palestine that appeals to Israeli interests so much that they'd fight a war for the sake of acquiring it.

Israel and Palestine's current situation is certainly unfortunate, but to label it a "conflict" is an inaccurate portrayal of the events taking place in either country. The motivations of the actions performed by Israel's military are in total contrast to those of terrorists, who have no objective other than violence. In order to fix this situation in the future, it is important to understand precisely what is transpiring and what motivates the actions of both sides involved.

### CO-ED, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 25

truly is. The "one dimensional" discussions do not come from a place of misogyny, but rather from an inability to have proper conversations from alternate perspectives.

I do not mean to criticize my fellow English majors (and not just because the department is small enough for a vendetta to be easily carried out against me). We are all aware of the problem and we sense the irony in a roomful of men sitting around and talking about how past roomfuls of men generated sexism, and gendered exclusion.

There is a sense, quite rightly, that we simply do not have the ability to discuss certain issues. The experiences of men and women are drastically different, and in YC, we can discuss only the theory of women, for when any topic is talked about, and not engaged with, it becomes merely a theory. In a class on Chaucer, we discussed the sexism found in *The Miller's Tale*. It was an important discussion, and the professor gave it the care it needs (indeed, much of Chaucer's work sparks questions regarding sexism). Yet it was an academic discussion of sexism, so palpably different from the personal discussion we had about anti-semitism in Chaucer. I do not believe any professors are at fault. The faculty members of the English department are immensely popular amongst their students--and deservedly so. They open the eyes of the students a little wider each time we meet. However, they ask us to blend the practical and the theoretical, and we simply cannot do that as much as is needed.

I have so far focused on how women are able to discuss women in critical ways that men cannot. Yet what about everything else there is to know? What does the Stern student think about Hamlet's insanity? How does she read the traumas found in *Watchmen*? Which themes from *Gulliver's Travels* interest her the most? What short stories and plays and memoirs has she written, and what experiences brought her to those words?

The Stern student and I have walked such different

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**"WE SENSE THE IRONY IN A ROOMFUL OF MEN SITTING AROUND AND TALKING ABOUT HOW PAST ROOMFULS OF MEN GENERATED SEXISM, AND GENDERED EXCLUSION."**

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paths in life, separated for so many years by an educational and societal system that treats boys and girls differently. We have been educated, even within coed elementary and high schools, with different focuses, and have experienced life in a thousand different ways. Men and women are held to different standards for societal participation, both in Judaism, and the world at large; from accepted dress codes, to expected speech patterns, we inhabit alternate arenas of society. These differences cannot help but craft varying

perspectives on the world.

While writing this piece, I showed a draft to a friend, who suggested I add in more specific examples of different life and educational experiences men and women have. I agreed the article could use more specifics. However, the very reason I'm writing this article is because I cannot comment on specifics. I cannot - and will not - try to speak for, and explain the experiences of, women. We struggle enough to do that in the all-male classroom.

Both Stern, and YC students in the English departments, whom I have spoken have eagerly supported the idea of coed classes. The popular refrain is, as one Stern student put it, "It's always beneficial and fascinating to see different perspectives, and often different genders, religions, or races will approach a piece of literature with a different perspective."

It may seem I've driven this point into the ground so deeply that it's cliché by now, but I repeat it because every student I've spoken with has said it.

Differing opinions are critical, and the Stern student must have different opinions than me because she has been raised differently from me, in a room across the hall. The Stern student has this room of her own, to do with as she pleases. She reads and writes and learns in her room, and I in mine. But how much brighter would things be if we read and wrote and learned together?

*ISRAEL, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 24*

The accord deals with the issues of wartime occupation among other situations, and according to most, though not all (Meir Shamgar, ex Attorney General of Israel, dissents, claiming that the Jordanian occupation of 1948-67 was itself illegitimate), the current Israeli presence in the West Bank constitutes a military occupation as described by the convention. The article in question speaks of population exchanges regarding the occupied territory: "Individual or mass forcible transfers, as well as deportations of protected persons from occupied territory to the territory of the Occupying Power or to that of any other country, occupied or not, are prohibited, regardless of their motive...The Occupying Power shall not *deport or transfer parts of its own civilian population into the territory it occupies.*"

Though the convention does not explicitly prohibit the voluntary resettling ('transfer'?) of civilians into occupied territory, the consensus of world leaders considers the Israeli settlement enterprise illegal on the basis of this passage. This compact additionally serves as the basis for numerous UN resolutions (notably 242 and 338). The Israelis have tried many times to invalidate such an approach, but all to little avail. This understanding continues to serve as the basic belief of most world leaders (including President Obama) who would love to see Israel disengage from most of the West Bank and come to an agreement with the Arabs over a two state solution.

However, two obstacles inhibit the speedy resolution of the conflict and the creation of a new Arab state. Ideologically, the act of rending the Jewish people from their ancient fatherland would inflict tremendous harm on the Jewish nation. As mentioned previously, Judaism manifests itself as a relationship of our people to the land. While we've managed many years in the past without controlling the West Bank, I fear that we may have come too far this time to resign ourselves to yet another exile. A defeat this late in the game could cause irreparable harm to the already-weakened national soul of Jewry. Practically speaking, I must also note that the conflict does not concentrate solely on the West Bank. Rather, as the PLO and Hamas have made abundantly clear in the past, the Arabs claim the *entirety* of what was once mandatory Palestine. and it seems incredibly unlikely that any partition will assuage the Arabs' desire to realize their vision of a much larger Arab state which would encompass pre-1967 Israeli territory as well. Under great duress, Israel has painfully attempted many times to make peace with the Arabs, but they have failed us every time, and nothing they currently say or do encourages us to try again. In the face of this moral stalemate and political impasse, analyzing the situation from a higher moral frame of reference may help us come to a better understanding of what to do.

I mean to say that when making decisions of such a magnitude, it falls on the responsible parties to have in mind all the consequences that may follow. In short, when acting morally, the ends do, in fact, matter. I would never propose such a troublesome, nebulous, solution in normal moral discourse, but very seldom do we encounter such an ambiguous situation. Surely, when an act is deemed objectively immoral (e.g. by a categorical imperative), then nothing short of a divine decree can justify it. While some may argue that the divine can help us even today to determine which direction to pursue in our present conflict, I advise against pursuing this path. Though I believe in our holy inalienable right to the land of our forefathers, I feel that it does not add to the discourse to only present such an argument, as many will reject it outright as either barbarous, or fanatical.

Alternatively, I suggest a more nuanced approach. Clearly, we can claim a narrative that, if not more credible than that of the Arabs', surely does not lack in relative strength. As mentioned above, evidence abounds that proves our connection to Israel, and our spiritual bond to the holy land is beyond a legitimate doubt. In the worst case scenario, we and the Arabs have two equally powerful claims, equally strong narratives that justify our dual presences on the land. Unable to determine the relative morality of either

side, and incapable of resolving the conflict using conventional political methods, we must take a more holistic approach.

That approach should take into account our common destiny and purpose in this world. According to Rabbi Moshe Haim Luzzatto in his work "The Way of the Lord" (2:4), Israel represents one of the many branches of humanity. While all nations started off the same, Israel was chosen to be the bearer of the covenant of G-d. Israel was saved by G-d's outstretched arm, taken out of bondage, and given a mission to sanctify G-d's name among the nations, as Isaiah (42:6) put it: "I the LORD have called unto you in righteousness, and have taken hold of your hand, and submitted you as the people's covenant, as a *light unto the nations.*" Throughout our history, we've tried to keep that mission alive, and, in so doing, we've contributed to the surrounding cultures and societies. It should not surprise you, then, that more than half of the world's people today trace their religion back to Judaic philosophy and tradition. Today, Jews are present in so many important fields of the arts and sciences. Jews received a whopping 21% of all Nobel prizes, one hundred times what our small population size would have predicted. But our mission is not yet complete.

Today's world is in need of inspiration. The world cries out for order and for love, but we are stuck, mired in the darkness of greed, lust, hate and violence. The impoverished, the oppressed, the infirm and downtrodden call out in unison, begging for pity, desperate for deliverance. The earth is robbed daily of her sustenance, of her beauty, of her life, and chaos reigns.

How might we contribute to the solution? The ever important ideals of *Tiqun Olam* (Repairing the World) and *Or Lagoyim* (Light unto the Nations) should guide the way. Ze'ev Jabotinsky sees Israel as the conduit through which to revive the human spirit. He said in a speech that "the ultimate, true goal of Zionism...creating a national society that will nurture the entire world from its glory. 'For from Zion cometh forth the Torah'".

Similarly, Rav Kook (Orot 6:6) writes that "the final purpose [of Judaism] is not merely that of national unity, but rather the aspiration to unite all upon the earth in one family, so that all shall call out in the name of the Lord."

Applied to our current predicament, the point is clear. We are unique among nations. We possess an ancient hallowed tradition, the very best spiritual guides, prowess in the arts, an incalculable potential for scientific and technological progress, and the overwhelming will to do good. Were we to lose our uniqueness, or if we were to compromise on certain matters that might hinder the prospects of our further development as a nation, all nations would suffer as a result.

I do want to make myself clear: As we all do, I try to find a balance between religious fervor and humane ethics. It is not an easy task, and many have failed before us. I am not proposing a specific course of action, but I sincerely pray that the Lord grant those in power the knowledge and strength to make the correct, moral decisions—for humanity's sake.



*A reconstructed tile from the floor of the Temple Mount (JPost 9/6/16)*

## Executive Column: An Interview with Alumnus of YU's Einstein College of Medicine Tony Fiorino

By Michael Shavolian and The Entrepreneurship & Biotechnology Club

Tony Fiorino, M.D., Ph.D. has been President and CEO of Triumvira Immunologics, a cancer immunotherapy company, since December 2015. Prior to this, he was CEO at BrainStorm Cell Therapeutics from 2014-2015. Dr. Fiorino was also Founder and CEO of EnzymeRx, where he led the acquisition of a late-stage pre-clinical biologic and the development of the compound through phase 1/2 clinical trials and its subsequent sale to 3SBio. Before founding EnzymeRx, Dr. Fiorino worked as a biotechnology and pharmaceuticals analyst and portfolio manager at firms including Greywall Asset Management, Pequot Capital, Citigroup and JP Morgan. Dr. Fiorino earned an M.D. and a Ph.D. from Yeshiva University's Albert Einstein College of Medicine where he studied the differentiation of liver progenitor cells. He completed his undergraduate degree at Massachusetts Institute of Technology.

**What was the hardest transition in your career?**

The biggest transition for me, by far, was choosing to leave medicine and enter the world of finance. I don't know if it was the hardest decision or not, because I was unhappy in medicine and I was much happier in finance, so from that perspective it wasn't hard, but it was definitely a huge transition.

When I was in my residency in the late 1990s, I was unhappy, and I looked around and saw that many of the attending physicians around me were unhappy. The departments were counting on the doctors to see ever-increasing numbers of patients to generate more revenue, and were not really providing the kind of support that would make seeing patients at night and on weekends a little more tolerable.

I always wanted to be in academic medicine, to do research, have a lab, and see patients, and I realized that the model was just broken—and if it wasn't broken, it was just really painful. So, I had to really think about what I was going to do. I loved science and medicine, and there was really no way I was going to be a clinician, so I contemplated a few different options, including trying to get a job at a consulting firm, or on Wall Street, and opted to try and find something on Wall Street.



**How did you make the decision?**

I'm not the only physician who's gone through this kind of "cheshbon hanefesh." For me, I had to make the decision not to look at the nine years invested in becoming an academic physician as a reason to stay doing something that I was unhappy doing. That was hard. I know other people in that position weren't able to make that kind of decision. But, you can't always look at sunk costs in life. Sunk costs are what they are. The nine years were what they were. I figured that I shouldn't be unhappy after spending nine years training to become a clinician just because when I got there I discovered that it wasn't really for me. It

was probably made easier because I didn't have loans because I was in an MD/PhD program. I think it's hard for people; they wanted to be a doctor for a long time, their parents wanted them to be a doctor, their grandparents wanted them to be a doctor, and they went to med school—it's an investment of time and money, and to say "I'm totally changing directions"—If you focus on the sunk costs, you'll never make that decision.

**"I SPENT ABOUT TEN YEARS AS A BIOTECH INVESTOR. I SAW A LOT OF COMPANIES MAKE A LOT OF MISTAKES. FROM THE OUTSIDE LOOKING IN, I THOUGHT I COULD DO BETTER A LOT OF THE TIME."**

**Why did you choose to go into finance as opposed to something like consulting?**

I felt like my training and skillset was very applicable to the world of finance—being a research analyst and performing due diligence on biotech companies, on products in development. I had both scientific training and medical training; I knew how drugs were used in the clinic, and it seemed like a fairly good fit. What I knew about consulting was that I wouldn't necessarily be in a position to leverage that knowledge and experience. I knew putting in a couple of years doing that would certainly be a nice element for my resume or would help me move in whatever directions I wanted to move into after that. But, I loved medicine and science, so I figured why should I give up that piece of it if I don't have to?

I didn't really look at working in the pharma industry. I looked a little bit, but the kinds of positions I looked at, running clinical trials, didn't seem so appealing to me. But I do that stuff now, so I've learned that it's really interesting. But at the time I didn't think that it was for me, but things shifted.

**If you could freeze your career at one point in time, when would it be?**

Probably the first biotech company that I joined. I was at a fund, Pequot Capital, and we financed a startup company. Basically, we bought a drug that was on the shelf at another biotech company, and put it in a new company. After we put together the financing for it, I left the fund to run the company. Over the course of a couple of years, we built up an amazing team. We had about 6-7 employees and a handful of other consultants....great people who really clicked. We worked very well together and it was fantastic.

We accomplished a tremendous amount over three years, and took the product to phase 2 trials, but then the asset got bought from the company. We wrapped things up and everyone went on in their own directions. I guess you can call that a happy ending.

**Was it the process that made you enjoy it, or the success of that particular company?**

It was totally the process. Working with a team that was both committed and hard-working, as well as just friendly, nice people to be around. I spend a lot of time at work, and if the people who are there with you are miserable or unhappy, it can create a climate that is toxic. And if you are running a team and there's that kind of negativity on the team, it's challenging to manage.

There was a feeling every day going to work, that we have this great asset that's firing on all cylinders, there's clinical trials going on, we're filing patents, we're doing everything we're supposed to be doing, and it was enjoyable. What was really great was the

day to day interaction of this team that I was working with.

**Can you tell me a little bit about Triumvira's structure?**

Triumvira is not quite a startup. It's a little bit more mature than a startup, though it's closer to a startup than to anything else. It is very virtual. In biotech, virtual means not a lot of infrastructure, not a lot of employees. The work is either outsourced to other companies, other vendors, or, as in our case, we have a relationship with McMaster University in Hamilton, Ontario, so all of our research is done in a lab at McMaster. Until we really get financed—like complete our Series A financing, hopefully next year—this kind of structure will remain. Until we have some real funds in our pockets, we won't build our own lab space.

**What is a typical day like? What do you do on an average day?**

My daily activities generally fall into a small handful of buckets. One huge bucket is working on financing. We're a young biotech company and we will need tens of millions of dollars to test our products in humans. Clinical trials are really expensive. So whether it's talking with venture capitalists, talking with other pharmaceutical or other biotech companies who might be interested in a partnership, we're constantly tweaking our presentations and budgets, and constantly adjusting our data room. Investing in biotech, especially private biotech, is a very research intensive process for the venture capital firms, so they come in, see our data room, and take a really good look under the hood. Doing calls with investors or potential partners, reviewing and sorting out the appropriate data for the data room and keeping it updated, takes up a chunk of my time.

Another bucket is project management: looking at our data and figuring out our next steps...what are the pieces that need to be ready on time to apply to the FDA. A third bucket is looking at academic institutions or other companies who are developing drugs that we might be interested in combining with our treatment or with whom we might be interested in partnering. The last piece I spend a lot of time on is looking at the big picture and formulating a narrative and plan for the company.

Practically, that means that I'm on the phone a ton. I also have a ton of small, productive internal meetings and calls with investors. I try to not have more than half my day scheduled with conference calls. I do a lot of writing for regulatory purposes and for due diligence requested by venture capital funds or potential partners.

**You have raised a lot of money. You raised \$25MM at Brainstorm Cell Therapeutics. What accounts for that success?**

You need a story and you need to be able to show investors where the valuation inflection is going to come from. So, if you are raising \$10 MM, it should get you somewhere. When we go out to raise our series A, we won't ask investors to give us enough money to get halfway to results. We want enough money to get to clinical data because that is a huge valuation inflection point—the point where the next piece of capital that needs to be raised is going to be at higher valuation or will possibly allow some sort of liquidity transaction, a partnership, a take-out, an IPO.

In the public sector, investors are not necessarily tied to a big event because they have more liquidity options. The downside of being a public company is that investors are much less patient. VC's and private companies, on the other hand, know they aren't investing in something they can sell out from in three months...they are in it for the long run.

SEE FIORINO, CONTINUED ON PAGE 30

## Trumped Up Markets: The Market Reaction To The Election

By Evan Axelrod

America is now a couple of weeks past the election and many people are just starting to believe that the stunning upset election of Donald J. Trump happened. Regardless of one's political standing, some have dubbed the outcome of the 2016 presidential election the most shocking electoral result of their lifetime. Polls that were accurate during the last two election cycles were proven wrong by a "black swan" result. This phrase, made famous by author and statistician Nassim Nicholas Taleb in his writings and book *The Black Swan*, means an event with a totally unforeseen outcome. However, as pundits look back in hindsight, many view it as predictable. By now, several election followers and experts all have a justification for the Trump victory. The markets, as well, have presented their own version of an acceptance of this revolutionary outcome. The victory of a political outsider has shockingly led markets to reach record highs. However, it did not always appear that would be the result. In fact, for a while, it seemed like chaos had struck the markets.

As election coverage on various media outlets announced each state's outcome during election night and the unthinkable began to become reality, headlines flashed across screens announcing the major decline of futures markets. The price for Dow Jones Industrial Average (the Dow) futures notably declined 800 points at one point during the night. This was the expected reaction of global markets that were pricing in a Hillary victory. A Trump win was totally unexpected and markets don't handle the unexpected well. Predictable outcomes that match Wall Street's expectations are the ideal. However, in reality, predictability is scarce.

Humans have a tendency to be overconfident in their predictions. Whether in sports, politics, or investing, the overconfidence effect takes over, leading to the belief that future expectations are foregone conclusions. A similar phenomenon happened with Brexit, the English vote to secede from the European Union, an outcome most investors didn't see

coming. Market volatility, or the variation of prices, increased tremendously due to the unforeseen circumstances regarding the vote. History is full of examples where markets reacted to the extreme after a significant event. Whether these reactions are rational or irrational depends on each occurrence. But for a long-term investor, when the market moves south, fast opportunities for bargains only increase. In the face of unexpected outcomes, the constancy of human nature will prevail. Since markets are made up of millions of human participants, the irrationality of human biases will be evident again and again.

At 9:30 AM EST on November 9th, the day after the election, U.S. markets opened. Surprisingly,

there was no hundred-point decline in the Dow, or 5 percent declines in the NASDAQ or S&P 500. While there was disbelief in the results of the night before, markets seemed to increase as the day went on. Why was there a sudden shift from doom to triumph? Initially, the markets judged a Trump victory by his character, but shifted in the morning to a positive judgement based on his policies. With a Republican majority in both the House and Senate, coupled with a Republican in the White House, investors seemed to ignore the uncertainty of whether Trump's campaign policies would come to fruition. Instead, Trump's agenda was seen at face-value as pro-business, intended to stimulate domestic growth, bring jobs back to America, and commit to infrastructure investments. His agenda was additionally seen as being intended to decrease the U.S. economy's reliance on global trade deals. Ray Dalio, founder of Bridgewater Associates, a hedge fund managing about \$150 billion, believes this presidency might bring about a reversal of our economic standing. For example, in the 1970s, stagnation, or economic standstill, transitioned into a decade of high growth and productivity in the 1980s.

It remains to be seen whether Trump will indeed implement many of his economic policies proposed during his campaign. The markets are extrapolating two agendas as the drivers for stocks: lower regulation and lower corporate taxes. If companies don't have to pay as much taxes to Uncle Sam nor have to deal with as much government regulation, their profits will only improve. Many domestic companies are being looked at as more attractive investments in order to avoid the risks of trade deals being scrapped, which would affect multinational companies.

Sectors, such as healthcare and financials, have already seen their stock prices rise. Banks, such as Bank of America (Ticker: BAC) and Goldman Sachs (Ticker: GS), have seen their stock prices rise at least 15% in the last 2 weeks. Much of this plays off the aforementioned

*SEE TRUMP, CONTINUED ON PAGE 29*



**"A TRUMP WIN WAS TOTALLY UNEXPECTED AND MARKETS DON'T HANDLE THE UNEXPECTED WELL. PREDICTABLE OUTCOMES THAT MATCH WALL STREET'S EXPECTATIONS ARE THE IDEAL. HOWEVER, IN REALITY, PREDICTABILITY IS SCARCE."**

*FIORINO, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 28*

### Are you concerned about Congress cracking down on drug-pricing?

Price-controls have always been something that have scared investors in the pharma and biotech industry. I think the problem with them is that healthcare is such a dysfunctional economic system. The people who pay for drugs aren't the people who use drugs. And the people who use drugs aren't the people who control access to drugs.

In any case, given that Clinton did not win the presidency and considering the fact that we will have a Republican Senate and House, I don't think drug pricing is going to be on anyone's agenda. Since the election, the fact that pharma and biotech indices have been ripping suggests that investors are feeling the same way.

Top-down price controls imposed on the industry by the government might be harmful. At the end of the day, all these companies are driven by developing innovative products. They have to do R&D. A better way to influence pricing is for large payers to organize themselves—for example, the use of tiered drug plans where some drugs have a \$5 copay but others have a \$50 copay. That could be a good way to impact pricing and usage from the market perspective. I think top-down price controls are usually one size fits all and may lead to unforeseen negative consequences.

### What do you look for in a new hire?

Technical skills are a necessity in the biotech industry. There is a certain skillset you need to be "in the parashah." I am always looking for people who want to learn

and who bring energy to the table. A sense of arrogance or overconfidence is a turn-off. It may be a great attribute in a sales job. But, research and drug development is a thoughtful process—you need to be able to take in information from different sources, evaluate and make thoughtful decisions.

I always talk to references but I think they are nearly worthless. I've had people with unbelievable references do a horrible job. I guess it's a high negative predictive value metric—if you find someone with terrible references, you can stop there. It's just not necessarily indicative of actual job performance.

### What was the last book you read?

The Upright Thinkers by Leonard Mlodinow.

### Why did you decide to transition away from finance?

I spent about ten years as a biotech investor. I saw a lot of companies make a lot of mistakes. From the outside looking in, I thought I could do better a lot of the time. A classic example: a company develops a drug and their study fails. But, they found that in a subset of patients—right-handed, blue-eyed patients—it looked like it worked. So, they are going to run another study with right-handed, blue-eyed patients. It's a data mining exercise. It's also bound to fail. I understand it's not so easy for people to just close up shop after a failed study because there is a strong incentive to salvage an otherwise irredeemable drug development program, and so they end up finding spurious associations post hoc. You can always bet against that when you are a biotech short sell-

er. So, when I had the opportunity to try my hand at drug development in 2008 when my fund financed a start-up company, I jumped at it.

### You've spent a lot of time at different companies. Can you talk about that?

In finance, more so than biotech, there's not a lot of firm loyalty. If you're a sell-side analyst and you want to be on the buy-side and there's an opportunity to work at a mutual fund, then you go there. If a hedge fund opportunity arises, then you take it because it has more earning potential. Then you think, gee, I can run my own fund. It's an industry where moving forward involves moving to other firms.

In biotech, it's not totally different. Small biotech companies have volatility associated with them but companies have only one chief medical officer. Outside of the company, there are five hundred or a thousand CMOs. Inside the company, your boss is going to have to move on somehow if you want to become the CMO. This might be less true in big biotech and big pharma. Though, you do see a lot of big pharma VPs and directors move to smaller biotech companies with an incremental title gain.

Big companies have bureaucracies that are painful to deal with. At smaller companies, you are able to wear more than one hat. At a big company, people's tasks are very specialized. You may be responsible for one or two programs. You are the guy who does phase 1/2 studies for inflammation programs, for instance. You are not involved in any of the animal studies or manufacturing process. But in smaller companies, it's an all hands on deck effort. I love that, but some people don't.

## When The Big Five Accounting Firms Became The Big Four

By Etan (Alex) Neiman

The Big Five accounting firms are Deloitte, EY, KPMG, PwC, and of course Arthur Andersen. Each year, hopeful accounting students across Yeshiva University submit their applications and eagerly anticipate an offer from one of these five goliaths of the accounting industry. Students sleep easy knowing all it takes is for one out of these five big name firms to connect with their candidacy in order to start their career in the glorious Big Five.

This would have been a great opening paragraph to an article a short fifteen years ago. However, much has happened between now and then. Almost fifteen years ago to this month, scandal and disgrace shook the accounting industry to its core. Once on the 'large firm' level with the likes of Deloitte, EY, KPMG and PwC, the great Arthur Andersen crumbled before the eyes of a stunned nation, unable to withstand the tailwind from the financial reporting crimes of mega-client Enron. Here is a look back at arguably the greatest accounting scandal ever perpetrated and how it forever changed the accounting profession.

**Dec. 31, 2000:** Enron closes out the year trading at an extraordinary \$83.13 a share with a market capitalization exceeding \$60 billion. The energy giant is in the top ten of the Fortune 500.

**Aug. 15, 2001:** Sherron Watkins, an Enron vice president, writes to Enron Chairman and CEO Kenneth Lay expressing concerns about Enron's accounting practices.

**Sept. 26:** At an employee meeting, Lay tells employees that Enron stock is an "incredible bargain" and the third quarter is "looking great."

**Oct. 16:** Enron reports a stunning \$618 million third-quarter loss.

**Oct. 17:** The SEC begins an informal probe of Enron. (This would later be upgraded to a formal investigation and amended to include their auditing, Arthur Andersen.)

**Oct. 23:** Arthur Andersen destroys an estimated one ton of Enron documents.

**Nov. 8:** Enron files documents with the SEC revising its financial statements for the previous five years to account for \$586 million in previously undisclosed losses.

**Nov. 9:** Enron and Dynege announce a \$7.8 billion merger agreement, forming Dynege Corp, in which Dynege would own 64% and Enron 36%.

**Nov. 28:** Enron stock plunges below \$1. Dynege Inc.

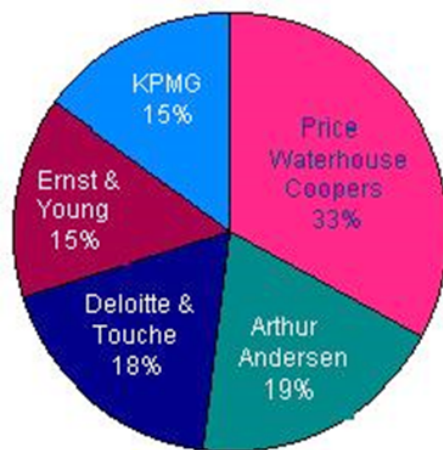
aborts its plan to buy its former rival amidst concerns Enron will go bankrupt.

**Dec. 2:** Enron declares bankruptcy, at the time the largest bankruptcy in U.S. history.

**"ONCE ON THE "LARGE FIRM" LEVEL WITH THE LIKES OF DELOITTE, EY, KPMG AND PWC, THE GREAT ARTHUR ANDERSEN CRUMBLER BEFORE THE EYES OF A STUNNED NATION."**

**Audit Share of Fortune 100 Firms for "Big Five" Accounting Firms, 1998**

Source: Arthur Anderson 1999 Annual Report



**Jan. 17, 2002:** Enron terminates its partnership with Arthur Andersen.

**Jan. 23:** Lay resigns as Enron Chairman and CEO.

**June 15:** Arthur Andersen is convicted of obstruction of justice for shredding documents related to the audits of Enron. (The conviction would later be overturned by the Supreme Court.) While Arthur Andersen is not implicated in directly assisting Enron in falsifying its books, the firm is found to have been woefully negligent in its role of overseeing and auditing Enron's financial statements.

**Aug. 31:** Arthur Andersen surrenders its license to

practice accounting in the U.S. \$9 billion in annual earnings disappears along with 85,000 jobs.

**Oct. 16:** Arthur Andersen is sentenced to probation and a \$500,000 fine; the firm is already banned from auditing public companies and is left with only a few hundred employees on the payroll following its obstruction of justice conviction.

**May 31, 2005:** The U.S. Supreme Court overturns the conviction of Arthur Andersen. However, the firm is already decimated and well beyond recovery.

**May 25, 2006:** Lay is found guilty of six counts of conspiracy and fraud, his principle transgressions presenting false financial statements and making misleading statements at employee meetings.

When all of the carnage had been sorted through, what was left was a large void by Arthur Andersen in the accounting practice and more importantly industry altering rule changes. On July 30, 2002, the Sarbanes-Oxley Act of 2002 (SOX) was enacted, chiefly designed to protect investors from the possibility of fraudulent accounting activities by corporations. Among the primary reasons for the creation of this legislation was to address the Enron scandal as well as other accounting fraud debacles which followed, such as the Tyco and the WorldCom scandals.

SOX features two key provisions. The first is Section 302, which mandates that company senior management certify the accuracy of reported financial statements. This was deemed critically important, as many top managers of these fraud-embroiled companies claimed they had been unaware of the accounting discrepancies. The second is Section 404, which requires that company management and auditors establish internal controls in order to prevent fraud. Additionally, reporting methods must be put in place to assess the adequacy of these controls. SOX also established strict standards to avoid conflicts of interest, prohibiting auditing firms from providing not-audit services, such as tax or advisory work, to companies which they audit.

In spite of regulations such as SOX, the legacy of the Enron scandal and ensuing fall of Arthur Andersen lives on. Though lawmakers will continue to keep a close eye on public companies, investor confidence in the financial statement auditing process may never fully recover following the public disgrace of what was thought to be the sterling reputation of Arthur Andersen. As investing is severely impeded without complete confidence in the information the potential investment is based on, the ramifications on the stock market could be forever lasting. The question is seemingly not if but when the next accounting scandal will shock the business world.

### TRUMP, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 28

tioned policies of lower regulation, as banks have had to deal with overwhelming regulatory policies following the financial crisis. Additionally, banks stand to benefit from a rise in interest rates, which is more likely under Trump. Without getting too complicated, interest rates represent the cost of borrowing. If interest rates rise, it costs more for a small business owner to borrow from a bank to finance his or her business. The bank, therefore, receives a higher return on each loan it lends out at the higher interest rate. With Trump's future pro-growth spending policies, many people believe the Federal Reserve will allow an increase in interest rates to accompany a higher growth environment. If rates increase, banks will be more likely to loan, thereby producing higher loan revenue for the banks. This paints a rosy picture, as this thesis implies Trump's policies will spur GDP (Global Domestic Product) growth and spending, leading to higher corporate profits. If the profits

don't follow, however, higher interest rates will lead to inflation and markets will probably decline.

As was stated before, predictability is scarce. Just as before the election, when many people were certain Hillary would win, it seems now that many people, including markets, are certain Trump will be the catalyst allowing the U.S. economy to significantly grow again. Though the chances are high for tax and regulation reforms with a Republican controlled congress, whether this will translate into meaningful GDP growth is the big question. Rationality should always be taken into consideration when investing. Much of the recent market moves are based off of expectation and not reality. Howard Marks, founder and chairman of Oaktree Capital Management, noted this idea in a recent memo. He wrote, "I felt during the campaign, that as opposed to Hillary Clinton, the range of possible actions and outcomes in a Trump administration were far too broad to be predicted. I'm still convinced that's the only thing we know for

certain."

A terrific analogy for the psychology of markets comes from another Howard Marks memo. It may help to understand why markets move to the extremes every so often at such a quick pace: "The mood swings of the securities markets resemble the movement of a pendulum. Although the midpoint of its arc best describes the location of the pendulum 'on average,' it actually spends very little of its time there. Instead, it is almost always swinging toward or away from the extremes of its arc. But whenever the pendulum is near either extreme, it is inevitable that it will move back toward the midpoint sooner or later. In fact, it is the movement toward the extreme itself that supplies the energy for the swing back."

Let's hope for a prosperous future with smart investing through the various extreme market pendulum movements which we will inevitably encounter during our lifetime.

## The Google of the Ocean

By Binyamin Zirman

While ships have been sailing the oceans for millennia, until very recently it was literally impossible to know a vessel's location once it sailed past the range of the radar screen, about 30 miles off shores. The \$1 trillion global business of shipping raw materials and finished goods by rail, ship, or plane has lagged most of the modern economy in both transparency and speed, largely skipping the digital overhaul most other industries have undergone. The last "wild west" frontier, one that holds over 90 percent of world trade, has this huge problem. Once cargo is on a ship, it enters a zone with little information about the path ships are taking or the stops they are making. Only in recent years have the largest ships begun regularly transmitting location data, and even now, a ship may stop its transmission and "go dark" at any time.

The combination of ship transmissions via Automatic Identification System (AIS) and other data sources has created a new information era in maritime data. This massive data has had two very significant unintended consequences: First, the amount of data collected on ships each day, hundreds of millions of data points, amount to maritime's version of "big data," a common catch-phrase in the business world today. But second, it has become a corrupted picture with the data becoming increasingly unreliable and intentionally manipulated. Then Windward came along in 2010 with the premise that "Your decisions are only as good as the data you rely on." Windward was founded by Ami Daniel and Matan Peled in 2010, and are headquartered in Tel Aviv. They've

raised a total of \$15.8M in two rounds of funding, with their most recent round consisting of \$10.8M in April 2015. According to a Wall Street Journal profile, they are valued at over \$100 million.

Windward brings data sciences, powered by a deep understanding of the shipping domain, to the oceans. Windward built the world's first maritime data platform, the Windward Mind, making the data accessible and actionable across verticals. They aggregate and analyze all maritime data and provide an accurate and actionable picture of what's happening at sea. The Windward Mind takes the data and creates a unique Vessel Story on each ship worldwide, a complete history of each ship's activities over time. This allows them to provide customers with unprecedented visibility into what's at stake for them at sea, whether they are tracking single ships or global commodity, trade or shipping patterns. This empowers them with data and insights to solve problems, make decisions, and monetize their interest at sea. There is an ocean of maritime data, and Windward is making sense of that ocean.

The Windward Mind is a powerful marriage of two very different but highly complementary perspectives: On one side their Big Data uses cutting edge analytical algorithms that fuse, analyze, and integrate the data, cyber validate the information, and correct any hacking and manipulation. These data analytics have been combined with deep shipping expertise which is an old-school discipline that gives the company key insights into powering their algorithms including shipping behavior and regional and global shipping patterns.

To make sense of hundreds of millions of fragmented and unstructured data points coming in from each ship, Windward's computer scientists have built artificial-intelligence systems relying on natural language processing and other techniques to identify curious or important patterns of behavior. The result is maps which might show ships meeting mid-ocean to transfer cargo, or crossing in and out of a country's territorial waters in patterns that can be associated with illegal fishing or other behavior.

The more obvious uses of Windward include surveillance of pirated or terrorist ships, tracking their movement and cargo as they travel. However, the uses of Windward can also include things such as analyzing international trade to create investment ideas. Whereas today financial analysts might rely on a country's self-reported—and possibly fraudulent—financial data to forecast their investments, with Windward, they can see actual movement of goods from country to country and can adjust their forecasts accordingly. Windward's technology has excited not only the traditional venture capital firms Horizon Ventures and Aleph who have participated in Windward's funding, but also General David Petraeus (Retired) of the U.S. Army, Lt. General Gabi Ashkenazi (Retired) of the IDF, and the author of the well-known book Startup Nation, Dan Senor; unique individuals who have all invested in the company because they see Windward's potential usage in the aforementioned diverse areas.



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