

THOUGH THESE  
BOXES MAY DIE,  
THEY WILL LIVE  
ON IN MY HEART.

# THE COMMENTATOR

The Independent Student Newspaper of Yeshiva University

IT'S BEEN A  
GOOD YEAR,  
FOLKS! ENJOY  
THE SUMMER!

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ISSUE NO. 14

## Drunk Driver Speeds Through 185th St. Pedestrian Plaza, No One Injured



The 185th St. Plaza the night after the incident

THE COMMENTATOR

By BENJAMIN KOSLOWE

A drunk driver broke through security barriers to speed through the 185th St. Pedestrian Plaza on the night of Friday, May 17 shortly after 10:30 p.m. The driver, who was attempting to avoid capture by law enforcement, evaded police for roughly 20 minutes before being apprehended by officers several

blocks from Yeshiva University's Wilf Campus. No one was injured.

The 185th St. Pedestrian Plaza is situated on the Wilf Campus in Washington Heights between Audubon Ave. and Amsterdam Ave. The plaza was inaugurated in Sept. 2017 after years of renovating and building. Bordered on the north and south by YU's Glueck Center and Furst Hall, respectively, the plaza contains benches and tables

on which students and Washington Heights residents regularly relax and fraternize. The entrances on the east and west ends are protected by security barriers, heavy schist boulders and large potted plants. The university maintains responsibility for the plaza's security and maintenance, pursuant to its agreement with the City.

According to several eyewitnesses, the perpetrator, a male

driving a Jeep, entered the plaza after speeding up Audubon Ave. in an attempt to evade police officers. The man knocked over a 10-foot tall "Do Not Enter" sign, which was still lying broken on the plaza floor as of the time of publication. A Maryland license plate was left on the spot as well, although it has since been removed by officials. The man then slammed into a protective boulder and plant

at a high enough speed to crack the plant container and push the boulder several feet, clearing enough space such that he was able to gain entrance onto the plaza.

"I heard a huge crash from about a block away," described CJ Glicksman (YC '20), who was walking to his apartment at the moment of the incident. "I heard

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## Leah Adler, Beloved and Respected Head Librarian, Dies at 72

By BENJAMIN KOSLOWE

Leah Adler, the Head Librarian of Hebraica and Judaica at Yeshiva University's Mendel Gottesman Library for over 33 years, died on Saturday, May 4. Adler, a resident of Lawrence, NY, leaves behind her husband Dr. Mark Adler, her daughter Mali (Adler) Brofsky, four grandchildren and her siblings Aryeh, David and Eliezer Jeselsohn. She was 72 years old.

Adler (nee Jeselsohn) was born in Tel Aviv, where she lived until the summer of 1957 when she moved with her parents to Zurich, Switzerland. She enjoyed Jewish studies in high school and represented Switzerland to compete in the 1965 Chidon Hatanach. She received the equivalent of a master's degree in microbiology from the ETH (Swiss Federal Institute of Technology) in Zurich and studied at

Michlalah (Jerusalem College for Women).

"After decades of service, Leah seems inseparable from the history of Yeshiva University Libraries," expressed Paul Glassman,

*"She respected and treated everyone with true dignity, kindness, respect, consideration and compassion."*

—  
Shuli Berger

the Director of the Yeshiva University Libraries. "In the workplace, Leah was always disarmingly candid and honest; she never hesitated to bring up important issues, regardless of how challenging those issues

were. We all share in mourning her loss."

After marrying Dr. Mark Adler, Leah Adler and her husband settled in New Haven, CT where she worked at Yale University's Sterling Memorial Library as an assistant for Hebraica to the Middle East Bibliographer-Cataloger. In 1981, the couple moved to Lawrence, NY, and Leah Adler began working in the Cataloging Department of YU's Gottesman Library. While completing a master's degree in library science at Queens College, she assisted on a project to catalog the Gottesman Library's pre-1550 rare books. After completing her degree, she became the library's coordinator of Judaica cataloging, and she was elevated to Head Librarian of the Gottesman Library in 1986.

Fluent in Hebrew, German

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## Yeshiva University Opens Brand-New Innovation Lab

By DANIEL LUBOFSKY

Yeshiva University held a ribbon-cutting ceremony on Thursday, May 16 to unveil its brand new Innovation Lab. Located in Furst Hall, the Lab is host to a renovated office space that will serve as a hub for Israeli startups to collaborate with students at YU in a number of different areas of work.

Startups will obtain benefits tailored to their specific needs from students looking to receive hands-on experience, including legal advice in coordination with Cardozo Law School and potential investment opportunities, as well as access to faculty and industry experts.

"Israelis are great with technology, so they have the tech," said Dr. Maria Blekher, the Director of the Innovation Lab. "The parts where they can benefit from our support and where YU can add the value is more the marketing, business culture."

Students who choose to get involved will receive hands-on learning opportunities in fields such as theory and research. All students on campus interested in the Innovation

Lab will have the opportunity to get involved, according to Blekher.

"There will be multiple ways that students can engage with the labs," Blekher said. "You can attend a lab chair. There will be opportunities for internships. Israeli startups that are located in New York love to have interns from Yeshiva University. My goal is to make sure that every student that wants to engage with the lab will have the opportunity."

According to israelimappedinny.com — a website that tracks the number of Israeli startups in NYC — there are roughly 320 Israeli startups located in the greater New York City area.

This past semester already saw YU develop connections with five different startups, four located in Israel and one in New York. The goal is to continue those connections and expand them enough to the point where the innovation lab is a university-wide program.

The Innovation Lab was funded through a \$350,000 grant procured by State Sen. Todd Kaminsky and former State Assemblymember Phil Goldfeder, who previously served as YU's Assistant Vice President for Government Relations.

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Stan Watson Announces Retirement After 33 Years With Yeshiva Athletics

Is the Battle of Our Generation Over?

Conversion Therapy and Our Roshei Yeshiva

Spotify Pushes into Podcasts



# THE COMMENTATOR

2018-2019

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*The Commentator is the student newspaper of Yeshiva University.*

*For 84 years, The Commentator has served students and administrators as a communicative conduit; a kinetic vehicle disseminating undergraduate social, religious and academic beliefs across the student bodies; and a reliable reflection of Yeshiva student life to the broader Jewish and American communities.*

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

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

Visit us online at  
[www.yucommentator.org](http://www.yucommentator.org).

# FROM THE EDITOR'S DESK

## In Retrospect

By **BENJAMIN KOSLOWE**

I find my mind zooming through a hyperloop of memories of late. At moments my consciousness swings back to my first day on campus, unloading furniture from yellow basket trucks and scrolling through my undergraduate emails for the first time. At other instances, I am in the packed library on a dark winter night, hunched over a pile of assignments, all too aware of the unforgiving clock ticking away on the wall. I relive the nerves and wide eyes that accompanied my first investigative journalism assignment in August 2015, as well as my profound sense of pride only two weeks ago as I watched this newspaper's new editor-in-chief address his staff for the first time while I leaned back from the realm of contemporary into the realm of history.

As I reflect in particular on the eighty-fourth volume of *The Commentator*, I am glad to say that I have almost no regrets. Our news coverage was relentless, digging deep into every corner of Yeshiva University, from administrative offices down to student clubs and organizations, to provide the community with an informative, interesting and timely window into the institution. We successfully offered a platform for scores of well-articulated, relevant opinions from the undergraduate student body. My editorials did not praise much, but the critiques were carefully argued and written with a measured tone to

provoke thoughts without causing needless offense. Despite significant pushback, I challenged the miserable state of YU's academic integrity, which I believe contributed to recent heightened efforts to institute sensible anti-cheating policies. I was less successful in convincing the Deans to invest in adequate pre-law advising, or in generating a fully head-covered Wilf Campus, but I believe that simply raising these and other uncomfortable issues was positive for our extended readership's self-awareness. On the whole, our publication has been a strong check on those with power at Yeshiva University, and I believe that the community is a better place because of our hard work.

Three of my professors — Thomas Otway, Sondra Solomon and Sherwood Goffin — have passed away while I was a student here. In reminiscing about these since-deceased professors and the im-

remains of my final editorial to thank several special people without whose presence my academic, social and journalistic successes over the past four years would have been much diminished. I hope that using the editorial platform for this endeavor will serve both as a tribute to specific individuals whom I believe deserve praise, and to arouse expressions of gratitude from other students whose YU experiences I suspect were similarly enhanced by various cohorts of individuals, some of whom may be included in this editorial, but most of whom may not.

### The Commentator

It is almost impossible to quantify just how much I have learned from *The Commentator*. Writing and editing these past four years has taught me edifying lessons in penmanship, leadership, collaboration, deadline management and confidence. Though many editors helped me along the way, I owe particular thanks to Doron Levine and Avi Strauss, my editor-in-chief predecessors who trained me, believed in me and taught me by their impressive examples of unflinching courage, healthy doses of competitiveness, endless wit and indefatigable dedication.

This year, we ran a tight operation that was highly professional and unusually prolific. I was continuously amazed by and proud of the entire editorial board,

*Continued on Page 5*

*On the whole, our publication has been a strong check on those with power at Yeshiva University, and I believe that the community is a better place because of our hard work.*

pacts that they had on me, I think as well about other countless individuals who helped me along the way in my general YU experience and in my specific involvement with the newspaper. I recognize that I owe much gratitude to many different people.

With the permission of *The Commentator*'s new editor-in-chief and layout staff, I intend to dedicate what

situation of Sisyphus, a figure in Greek Mythology, doomed with the eternal task of pushing a stone up a mountain and then watching it roll down again. Through the story of Sisyphus, Camus explores the meaning of life and concludes that accepting and living with the absurdity of life is the only way to find happiness. That's what Sisyphus does, despite his damnation. And he is happy because of it.

In other words, Sisyphus survives because he recognizes his situation for what it is: absurd and meaningless.

Many compare the challenges of

*Continued on Page 3*

## Sisyphus and Graduation (Don't Be Like Sisyphus)

By **SHOSHY CIMENT**

Graduation is looming, which means it's time for seniors to wax philosophical on all subjects pertaining to the college experience.

With one foot out the door and the other stuck inside, we're positioned in this awkward purgatorial zone, the kind that makes us apt for deep thinking. It's something most of us have pushed off until now. Now, with our hindsight slowly shifting into focus, we set out to do the dangerous. We look back, piecing together the disparate elements of our time as a YU student. And perhaps too ambitiously,

we try to make sense of it all.

There's a tendency for students to see college as a place of transition, an in-between. We're not quite adults, but we also aren't kids. "College is just a bunch of 20-year-olds telling other 20-year-olds what to do," a friend of mine observed on a YU *shabbaton* a few years ago. At the time, I laughed and agreed. But I also began to wonder: is college just a necessary preliminary step before the important stages in life? If so, does anything we do here even matter?

It is with this mindset that many students relate their college experience to the Myth of Sisyphus, the philosophical essay by Albert Camus. It deals with the

**7 UP / 7 DOWN**



**1 7 Up/7 Down**  
Had some great callouts and was not afraid to speak its mind. Added a refreshing take to the nonsense that goes on at this school every day.

**2 Key Food Grapes**  
JOKE'S ON YOU! TURNS OUT THE GRAPES ARE NOT FROM KEY FOOD AFTER ALL!!!!!!

**3 Bar/Bat Mitzvah DJs**  
As long as the music is Hebrew, anything goes. #Zionism

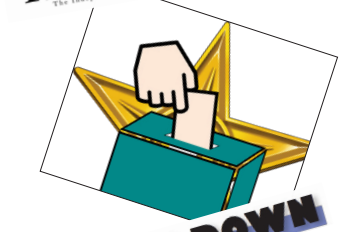
**4 Housing Birthday Card Writer Position**  
A résumé gem if I've ever seen one.

**5 Game of Thrones' Series Finale**  
Calling it before it airs: ALL HAIL QUEEN SANSA OF HOUSE STARK, QUEEN OF THE ANDALS AND THE FIRST MEN, LADY OF THE SEVEN KINGDOMS, AND PROTECTOR OF THE REALM!

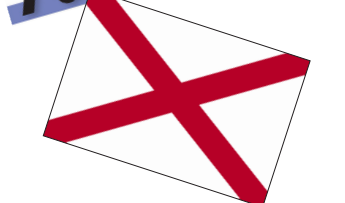
**6 Venmo as Social Media**  
Beats out Facebook as a stalking platform any day. This is the Form 990 of social media! The Muss of shower quality! The Key Food of grapes!

**7 Honorable Mentions**  
Everyone belongs, just not all the time. Sadly, these mentions did not make it this year, but today we honor the fallen. See if you can figure out which are up and which are down: HASC, Bar/Bat Mitzvah Hype Guys/Girls, Catholic Church, Threatening to Resign, "Detective Pikachu," Slack's New Logo, Open Letters to YU Boys, MeToo! Hummus and Nickelback.

**7 UP / 7 DOWN**  
BY SAMUEL GELMAN



**7 UP / 7 DOWN**



**1 Pandas**  
Just overstuffed raccoons that eat bamboo even though it's bad for them and refuse to reproduce in captivity even though they are an endangered species.

**2 Marketing Majors**  
Really just common sense converted into very specific vocabulary terms.

**3 Broken Elevators**  
Some things will never change.

**4 Commentator Yearbook Snub**  
It's fine, the 15 issues we put out this year is enough of an imprint for us.

**5 SCWSC Elections**  
So this is how democracy dies. With technicalities and bad blood.

**6 7 Up/7 Down**  
Really went too far and crossed a bunch of lines. Won't be sad to see the column in new hands.

**7 Alabama**  
Just in time for "The Handmaid's Tale" season 3.

*SISYPHUS AND GRADUATION,  
continued from Page 2*

college life to Sisyphus' punishment. In the moment, the endless cycle of work and projects can feel like our own boulders. And at each semester's end, after hours of work, we reach the top, only to watch our progress roll down again, wherein we muster what remains of our strength and start again.

But to accept our college experience as such would be to denounce any inherent worth in the journey. The elections, the events, the journalism, the data, the art. It would all be absurd — a filler until real life gets here.

Maybe I'm too idealistic. But I've gone through college with the understanding that there has to be a reason for it all. How else can we justify thousands of tuition dollars spent, the hundreds of hours put into essays, projects, tests and events? We have all cared about something during our time at YU. Even in protest, most of us have believed, even once, that there was something worth doing here.

So no, we are not — we cannot be — like Sisyphus. People often ask me why I care about the way things are at YU, why I spend time calling out what I see as wrong, or defending the things I believe in. After all, once I graduate, it won't matter anymore, right?

College, as a whole, screams of the Sisyphian. The headlines I've edited and written these past few years certainly attest to that. Yeshiva University in particular often seems like a land of make-believe, run by overzealous 20-year-olds who care way too much about the turnout of their events.

*But I've gone through college with the understanding that there has to be a reason for it all. How else can we justify thousands of tuition dollars spent, the hundreds of hours put into essays, projects, tests and events?*

Sisyphus didn't find some hidden significance in his task. But that doesn't mean we shouldn't in ours.

College — Yeshiva University — is more than an absurdist landscape. It is more than a burden we must bear to make our parents happy, more than a place to find a spouse or get a job. The things we do here really matter, within campus life and beyond.

I have loved YU because I found the meaning within it. I wasn't tempted by a Sisyphian resignation, the apathy that has characterized certain parts of this campus. Here at The Commentator, I laughed at the absurdity with everyone else, but I never accepted it at face value.

I have never once regretted caring, writing and fighting for what matters, even in a place as ostensibly absurd as YU. Now that I'm leaving, I'll celebrate this accomplishment with the rest of my fellow graduates. But I'll still be sad to let it all go.

Giving into the absurdity of college life is a quick fix. It'll get you through graduation and that's about it. For the Sisyphian student, college is three, maybe four, years of worthless, meaningless toil. At the end, they'll smile at graduation, perhaps ironically don a bedazzled "carpe diem" on their cap, and leave without looking back.

Soon, they'll forget about it all: the politics, the frustrations, the injustices. The intense pride in creating something meaningful on campus. The indignation that comes with believing you can do better. The grievances, the happiness. Everything they never got to experience because to them, it never really mattered anyway.

For future students and ourselves, don't be like Sisyphus. Don't embrace the absurdity, but try to look beyond it. Do something meaningful, something that will make leaving this place harder than you anticipated. You'll be the better for it.

I know I am.

*DRUNK DRIVER,  
continued from Front Page*

some local residents yell ‘Hit and run!’ and then a white SUV zoomed down my block ... My cousin later told me that she had seen a white SUV speeding up 184th St. — a one-way street — the wrong way.”

Once on the plaza, the man drove at full speed towards Amsterdam Ave. and crashed into another boulder on the eastern end of the plaza. The boulder was pushed roughly 5 feet from its original place, and the man’s airbag deployed upon impact. According to

one eyewitness, who was standing feet from the crash, the man backed up and made several attempts to use his car to push the boulder a few feet further to clear a passage for his escape. When his machinations failed, the man turned the car around and sped

back towards the plaza’s western entrance whence he came. The man was apprehended several blocks away by police officers roughly 20 minutes later.

“Honestly, I’m pretty happy that YU Security had the forethought to put those

giant yellow metal structures across the plaza,” figured Glicksman. “If those weren’t there, the car could have easily gotten through and may have really hurt people.”

“The planters at the end of the plaza successfully slowed the vehicle and allowed pedestrians to move out of the way,” wrote Paul Murtha, YU’s Director of Security. “YU Security is working closely with the police and they do not believe that there is any danger to the students, faculty and staff. We will continue to work with the police and will provide updates as needed.”

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*“I heard some local residents yell ‘Hit and run!’ and then a white SUV zoomed down my block.”*

CJ Glicksman

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*LEAH ADLER,  
continued from Front Page*

and English, with a strong command of Latin, Adler was the “go-to person with language questions,” according to Pearl Berger, the retired Dean of Libraries who also described Adler as “brilliant and a perfectionist.” Adler oversaw the digitization of the library, which began when the library implemented an online catalog in 1996. “She was a scholar’s librarian who ushered the library into the digital age and who played a key role in

the comprehensive renovation of the library, never losing sight of the academic, historic, antiquarian, and enduring aspects of librarianship and the world of books,” President Ari Berman described in a New York Times obituary published on May 8.

Dr. Shnayer Leiman, Professor of Jewish History and Literature at Bernard Revel Graduate School of Jewish Studies, figured similarly that Adler “oversaw [the library’s] transformation from an antiquated 20th century one to a model digital age library.” He added, “Her concern was always

to meet the academic needs of faculty and students, while hiring and overseeing an able and devoted library staff. Exceedingly capable, and always pleasant, she will be sorely missed.”

Adler served as an indexer for “Judaica Librarianship,” the peer-reviewed journal of the Association of Jewish Libraries. She presented at conferences of the Association of Jewish Libraries on a broad range of topics related to Hebraica and Judaica librarianship, including “Moving to a Unicode Based Library System: The Yeshiva University Library Experience” and

“Yeshiva University Implements the VTLIS VIRTUA Integrated Library System.”

“The library staff valued her not only as a colleague but as a mentor and friend,” wrote Shuli Berger, the Head of Special Collections and Interim Head of the Gottesman Library. “She respected and treated everyone with true dignity, kindness, respect, consideration and compassion. Leah’s wisdom, knowledge, gentle counsel, generous spirit and devotion to the welfare of the library and her colleagues will be greatly missed.”

*Leah Adler’s funeral took place on Monday, May 6 in Givat Shaul. Shiva was observed at the Brofsky home in Alon Shevut.*

*May Leah Adler’s family be comforted together with the mourners of Zion and Jerusalem.*



Leah Adler



The Governing Board of The Commentator Volume 84

THE COMMENTATOR

*IN RETROSPECT,*  
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but Shoshy Ciment and Sam Gelman merit unique recognition. Both of them served The Commentator for three full years, and both of them, with their organization, responsibility and responsiveness made my job qualitatively easier than it would have been without them. I am especially thankful to Shoshy and Sam for serving as sanity checks at various points, for example, when I was plagued by doubts about whether to expose Rabbi Shulman's pre-Shabbaton announcement, or whether to report on YU's Admissions Office rejecting a Model UN topic paper on sexual minorities, among several other tough decisions that arose this year.

I would also be remiss without thanking Avi Hirsch. Avi proved his keen sense for good journalism many times over. He is capable and resourceful, both of which were clear from the manner in which he carefully laid out 15 print issues. He is dedicated, which was evident to me on the myriad occasions this year when he offered insightful comments to articles, closed the library lights with me after staying up late to finish a rush story or simply participated diligently by showing up to all of our meetings ready to discuss our upcoming issues. Six years ago, when I graduated Torah Academy of Bergen County, I left Avi in charge of our high school's weekly periodical. I am thrilled to pass on a publication to his competent hands once again.

#### Educators

Unrelated to this newspaper's publication, my time at Yeshiva University was largely influenced by the 37 professors and *rebbeim* from whom I learned as an undergraduate. Three people in particular who uniquely and profoundly contributed to my growth were Rabbi Hayyim Angel and Rabbi Jeremy Wieder, who taught me Torah for my full third and fourth years here, respectively, and Professor David Johnson, whose philosophy courses I was fortunate enough to take seven times. All of these men, beyond their brilliant pedagogies, were paragons of *menschlichkeit*, modesty, patience and good discipline. I owe a great deal to these role models, whose examples I anticipate will keep me forever slightly guilty for not entering the world of academia for my own professional career.

#### VP Doron Stern

I have made my feelings about the current YU administration clear on many occasions this year. Aside from ideological concerns that I raised in editorials, my journalistic efforts this year time and again ran into conflict with Vice President of Communications Doron Stern. Mr. Stern knows the field of marketing and is well-suited to run YU's Office of Marketing and Communication. Many of his projects are excellent, and he cares deeply about the success of Yeshiva University.

Nevertheless, Mr. Stern and I had

difficulties. Mr. Stern reacted with thin skin to our legitimately skeptical news coverage of his newspaper and billboard advertising campaigns early last fall, after which he regularly accused me and my editors, following almost every one of our critiques and exposés this year, of harboring "snark" or malicious ill will towards the university, all the while conveniently neglecting to acknowledge our news coverage and many op-eds that cast YU in a favorable light. On several occasions — notably, when we wrote about President Berman's house — Mr. Stern refused to share any information or to meet us halfway on rather benign investigations into the university's decisions. I found Mr. Stern's perspective naïve (I encourage him to read through Commentator volumes that were significantly more critical of YU than we were this year), his attitude frustrating and his policies unproductive.

At the same time, I understand that Mr. Stern is charged with the nearly impossible task of keeping YU's image clean at all costs, and that my articles this year probably caused him to lose many hours of sleep. Despite it all, Mr. Stern always kept his office door open, he never raised his voice at me and he always offered a sincere hello when we crossed paths.

Doron — you hold the distinction of being my first nemesis, which I say with the warmest of intentions. You once offered to treat me to a dinner outing "after it's all over," and I hope that we can make such an occasion work (I believe you have my email address, right?). Until that time, I look forward to hearing you cheer very loudly for me at graduation next week.

#### Other Administrators

One of the most enjoyable parts of running The Commentator has been interacting closely with the many administrators who help run this complex, dialectical place that is Yeshiva University. Several figures were particularly helpful to me this year.

Rabbi Yosef Blau, a YU *rosh yeshiva* and senior *mashgiach ruchani*, offered his listening ears and his sage advice on many occasions. Rabbi Blau brims with wisdom that stems from his long institutional memory and his unique ability to be a peacemaker in many different capacities. I benefited tremendously from having Rabbi Blau as a mentor and confidant.

"I'm sure we'll get to know each other well this year," Senior Director of Communications Mechal Haas told me back in August, and I can say now that her prophecy was half correct — we got to know each other extremely well. On a close to daily basis, my editors and I bugged Mechal for important quotes, contacts and other resources, and she was always responsive. Mechal is a true professional and YU is lucky to have her. I thoroughly enjoyed our biweekly news briefings and her candid insider's perspective, and I hope that our friendship will persist.

Dean Karen Bacon often came across to me as a larger-than-life leader. In a

bureaucracy plagued with inefficiencies and opaqueness, Dean Bacon makes regular efforts to reach out to students and professors, and she knows how to make tough decisions when necessary. I have disagreed with many of her decisions — vehemently, at times — as well as her staunch tendency to see matters only her way. Fundamentally, though, I have great respect for Dean Bacon's sincerity and hard work. Dean Bacon has been a legendary powerhouse at Yeshiva University for over 40 years, and I wish her many more productive years to come.

There are many unsung heroes who are crucial pillars holding up Yeshiva University, and Linda Stone, the Director of Student Events, is one such person. Linda is a classy, unassuming, highly thoughtful individual who manages many different student life responsibilities behind the scenes, and who I'm sure manages yet a dozen more facets of which I'm not even aware. I am especially thankful to Linda for her help this past February when The Commentator faced a certain serious existential threat, and, when my request for help was turned away by several YU administrators, Linda alone offered her assistance.

#### Makers and Shakers

Yeshiva University is a demanding place where efficiency is a necessity for success. Many people contribute to efficiency in many different ways, and I would like to call attention to three such groups that elevated my personal undergraduate experience.

Over the past two years, I have spent hundreds of hours reading through Commentator archives, which are primarily located in the Gottesman Library's reference section. Never once did any of the reference librarians roll their eyes when I came to request old newspaper archives, and they always seemed happy to help. Similarly, YU's archivists and special collections librarians offered many hours of their time retrieving archives and conducting research for me. I will not name any particular librarian, since at least ten come to mind, but I hope that they all realize that they are much appreciated.

If the librarians nourished my intellect, then the Office of Admissions desk nourished my stomach. I don't know how that little desk in Furst Hall is always stacked with snacks, but I can only assume that some serious magical powers are involved. I lost count years ago of how many Laffy Taffy candies, Twizzlers and pretzels I have taken from that desk to power me through long class-filled afternoons.

If the Office of Admissions desk possesses magical powers, then Carlton Cabey must be a wizard. I have been obsessed with Cabey since he first snapped at me to cut to the chase and just tell him which piece of salmon I preferred, and to stop holding up the cafeteria line. Cabey's delicious half chicken pales in warmth only to his big heart. That I wrote a profile of Cabey is a testament to my admiration and thanks for the simple daily greetings that I was lucky to share with this wonderful person.

I would also be remiss to not mention the four (and counting) "Free Pizza" WhatsApp groups, in which hundreds of hungry YU students regularly share postings about where to find delicious leftovers around campus. These groups have been a helpful, ridiculous source of food and nonsense that I have thoroughly enjoyed. Thank you to these groups. They offered great food and hock. I wish them the best.

#### Friends and Family

Academics aside, my favorite feature that Yeshiva University offered has undoubtedly been the community. I have been fortunate to grow close with so many different friends over the past few years, and I hope that they know that much of my happiness as an undergraduate was a result of their mere presence. In the context of Commentator reflections, I feel compelled to offer special thanks to my friends Yair Lichtman and Akiva Schiff. A wise man once said, "It takes a great deal of bravery to stand up to our enemies, but just as much to stand up to our friends." Aside from being excellent roommates and quality friends, Yair and Akiva both read almost every single article that I published over the past four years, and they regularly shared their bluntest, often critical reactions. Their feedback helped me become a better writer and a more aware person. I owe a lot to Yair and Akiva, probably more than they even realize.

Only three other people of whom I am aware consistently read all of my pieces and regularly offered reactions. I am thankful to my father, whose career on The Commentator was an inspiration for me, and whose measured critiques of my articles helped sharpen my writing and my judgment. And I am thankful to my mother, whose near-unequivocal praise of my writing was helpful in other, perhaps equally crucial ways.

Finally, thank you to my great-grandmother, Grandma Marly Koslowe, who has been reading Commentator articles written by Koslowes since the 1940s. Her advice is as wise as it ever was, and I am thankful to have been able to read the newspaper with her this year and hear her perspective on everything. To Grandma, who I know will read her hard copy of this issue very soon — Happy 99th birthday!

#### Last Thoughts

I am truly appreciative to Yeshiva University and all associated individuals for offering me a most amazing, growth-oriented four years. I conclude with two verses, both of which have moved me deeply on many occasions, and both of which seem pertinent at this moment of reflection and passing leadership:

*-She'al avikha veyageidkha, zikeinekha veyomru lakh.*

*-Don't say, we have come now to the end; White shores are calling, you and I will meet again.*

## Hirsch to Edit Newspaper, Zimilover Named Managing Editor

By COMMENTATOR STAFF

*Editor's Note: This article was originally published online on May 8.*

The Governing Board of The Commentator announced Avi Hirsch (YC '20) as the new Editor-in-Chief and Yossi Zimilover (SSSB '20) as the Managing Editor on May 7, replacing Benjamin Koslowe (YC '19) and Shoshy Ciment (SCW '19), respectively, for the 2019-2020 academic year.

Hirsch, a Data Science major, has worked for layout staff for the past two years. He joined The Commentator in Fall 2017 as a layout editor, before rising to Junior Layout Editor in Spring 2018 and to Senior Layout Editor in Fall 2018. As Senior Layout Editor this past year, Hirsch oversaw the publication of 14 print issues plus a print Purim Issue, making Volume 84 the most prolific volume of The Commentator in over a decade. Additionally, Hirsch spearheaded both the 2018 Midterm Election poll and the Commentator Spring 2019 survey, as well as an extensive investigation and exposé on the state of recycling on the Wilf Campus. He is also co-President of the

Poetry Club.

"I am confident that Avi will do an excellent job next year," expressed Zimilover. "He is extremely dedicated to the values of the paper, and I look forward to working with him and growing The Commentator to new heights."

*"I am confident that The Commentator is being passed on to eminently qualified, capable hands."*

Outgoing Editor Koslowe

Zimilover, a Marketing major, joined The Commentator as a staff writer in Fall 2017, moving up to Junior News Editor in Spring 2018 and to Senior News Editor in Fall 2018. This year, Zimilover and his News team successfully published over 100 articles, including breaking several much-discussed stories, updates regarding academic policies and regular, timely news coverage of various events and discoveries throughout the year. He follows in the footsteps of his older brother Adam Zimilover (YC '14), who served as The Commentator's History Editor from 2010-2012 and as News Editor from

2012-2013, before stepping down to serve as the Yeshiva College Student Association (YCSA) President for the 2013-2014 academic year. Zimilover has been a member of the Wilf Student Life Committee for the past two years and is also actively involved in Bnei Akiva of New York & New Jersey.

"Yossi's thoughtfulness and commitment to the paper have made him an invaluable asset to the News section of The Commentator this year," stated Hirsch. "I am incredibly fortunate to have the opportunity to work with him next year."

The outgoing Governing Board expressed strong confidence in the decision. "Avi and Yossi are both supremely talented and dedicated editors," stated outgoing Editor-in-Chief Benjamin Koslowe. "Avi time and again impressed me this year with his competence, organization and general journalistic wisdom, and Yossi did a fantastic job managing

a strong News section. I am confident that The Commentator is being passed on to eminently qualified, capable hands." Outgoing Managing Editor Shoshy Ciment added, "I'm excited to see which direction Avi will take The Commentator next year. Whatever he does, I have full faith that he'll make us all proud."

Members of the 2019-2020 board will also include Yitzchak Carroll (YC '21), Yosef Lemel (YC '21), Jacob Rosenfeld (YC '21), Jacob Stone (YC '20), Chana Weinberg (SCW '20) and Michael Weiner (YC '21) as section editors, as well as Rocky Pincus (SCW '20) as Senior Layout Editor and Elisheva Kohn (SCW '21) as Social Media Manager.

Considering his ambitions for next year, Hirsch said, "I am honored to be taking over as editor of the paper from Benjamin, who has done an outstanding job leading us this year. Our success this past year has largely come as a result of his strong leadership as well as the hard work of our Editorial Board and writing staff. I hope to continue to expand our horizons next year as we face the challenges and opportunities ahead."

## Stan Watson Announces Retirement After 33 Years With Yeshiva Athletics

By A.J. O'HAGAN

For over 30 years, Stan Watson has been a fixture in the Yeshiva University Athletics Department. The proud army veteran has announced that he will retire on Sept. 1.

"I am grateful to the Yeshiva University student body, and I want to thank Joe [Bednarsh] and all the staff members I worked with," Watson said. "Small-town boy makes good. God makes no mistakes, he blesses. He has blessed me more than a small-town guy deserves. I never had a bad day during my time at YU."

*"I am grateful to the Yeshiva University student body, and I want to thank Joe [Bednarsh] and all the staff members I worked with."*

Stan Watson

Watson came to Yeshiva University in 1986. He was the head coach of the men's cross country team for 25 years (1986-2011). Watson was an architect of the women's cross country program and served as the team's first head coach from 2007-2011.

"It was the fall of 1991 when I first started working in the Gottesman Swimming Pool. Soon thereafter I met Stan Watson who was at the time a Physical Education Instructor and in charge of the Max Stern Athletic Center. I was immediately struck by his warm smile and caring personality — little did I know that over the next 28 years we would grow to love and respect each other as brothers," Yeshiva University Director of Athletics, Joe Bednarsh said.

Watson was born in Woodruff, South Carolina and served in the 2nd Battalion, 41st Infantry Regiment of the "Hell on Wheels" 2nd Armored Division (Forward). He served for six months in Wildflecken Germany in 1975. He is also a charter member of the World War II Memorial Association because his father was a member of the 369th

Infantry, the Harlem Hellfighters, in World War II.

During his illustrious career at Yeshiva University, Watson had stints as the head coach of the men's golf team and the assistant coach of the men's soccer team. In his final role at YU, he serves as the Director of Intramurals, a job he has held since 1990. He works men's basketball games as a scoreboard and shot clock operator, as well as a line judge for men's and women's volleyball matches.

Yeshiva University men's basketball alumnus and current head coach Elliot Steinmetz ('02) has known Watson for many

years. "I'm not sure I'll ever get used to walking into the gym at YU and not seeing Stan waiting there with words of encouragement or a quick story from his past," Steinmetz said. "From being a student-athlete, to an alum, to a coach, I have never experienced YU without Stan and there's no doubt it will be a different feel from now on."

Every year at the awards banquet, a student-athlete on the cross country team is presented with the "Stan Watson Award." At this year's dinner, Mr. Bednarsh provided Watson with a plaque. When he received the plaque, all the student-athletes, administrators, staff members and guests gave Watson a long and loud standing ovation.

That wasn't the first time that Watson was saluted by an audience. "In 2005 when I married my wife, it was one of the greatest joys of my life to dance with Stan — alone — in the center of the multiple circles of dancing," Bednarsh explained. "And when I pulled him into the circle the crowd erupted in screams of joy — not for me, but for Stan — and that made it even sweeter."

At YU's commencement ceremony in 2007, Watson received the Presidential Medallion for his dedication, service and general enthusiasm which emanates from him. He received a lengthy ovation.

"I want to take this public opportunity to thank Stan for all he has done and all he has meant to so many of us that had the

miraculous fortune to intertwine our lives with his," Bednarsh said. "I also want to remind Stan that YU will always be his home and I will always be his brother."

Watson will move back to South Carolina to return to the place where his family has lived for generations.



Stan Watson

# What Actually Happened in the Beren Student Elections? The Former Candidates Speak Up

By SHOSHY CIMENT

*Editor's Note: This article was originally published online on May 9.*

The Commentator recently reported that both candidates in the running for Stern College for Women Student Council (SCWSC) President, Shanee Markovitz (SCW '20) and Talya Saban (SCW '20), were disqualified from the election. However, multiple ambiguities regarding the process of the final decision to disqualify both candidates still remain. The Commentator spoke to both candidates in an effort to piece together the events leading up to the final decision.

## Thursday, May 2: The First Election

Saban was notified that she was disqualified after the first round of allegations before the first election. But after explaining her position to the committee, they reconsidered and decided to hold a re-vote.

Saban was accused of violating three campaign rules before the first election. She distributed lollipops at her campaign speech, which broke the rule against giving items away to students. She also violated the rule on the 8 1/2 by 11 inch signs with her over 15 foot sign in the lobby of 245 Lexington reading "Vote Talya 4 Prez." Finally, more than one of Saban's signs were left up past the deadline to have them down, including the large one in the 245 lobby, which was taken down almost 24 hours past the deadline.

"Being that I ran for student council last year, and ran my campaign the exact same way and I was not notified of any rules I

broke, I was confused as to which rules I could have broken."

Saban explained that the lollipops she distributed were for the purposes of being thrown at her during her presentation, which was Bat Mitzvah themed. In regards to the oversized sign, she argued that freestanding letters, of which composed the sign in question, should not have constituted a sign.

The results of initial election were cancelled. The Canvassing Committee cited "a lack of clarity in campaign policy," and candidates were set for a new vote on Monday, May 6. The email announcing the new vote cited multiple allegations of "rule ambiguities and rule breaking" for both candidates.

"The committee then said that we would hold a reelection, and did not give students any specifics as to what happened, making it seem like we broke the same rules," Markovitz stated, who after inquiring, was told by the Canvassing Committee that she violated two rules.

One of her signs was found in a school building on Thursday past the required removal time. She was also penalized for leaving small slips of paper under voters' doors the night before the election, an action that the committee claimed was an "ambiguity in the rule" against having campaign posters up at that time.

"I took down all of 60 posters except for one that was accidentally left," remarked Markovitz, noting that it may have been possible that she forgot other posters after thoroughly checking. "Meanwhile, it appeared that Talya had not taken down a single one, including the ones in elevators, staircases and around the rest of the entire school."

In regards to her leaving up flyers past the deadline to remove them, Saban argued that she was being held to a higher standard than the other competitors.

"The allegations made against me were unjustly accepted at face value, and what further infuriated me was that the same rules were violated by nearly every candidate running in all three councils," Saban stated. "I felt it completely inappropriate that this rule was being enforced just for me."

this time."

Due to prior commitments and jobs, Saban was not on campus to take down her posters before Shabbat. As a result, her campaigning material remained up over the weekend. The committee was aware of this and told her she had until 9:30 a.m. Monday to take it down.

"Talya not only had her materials up throughout May 2 when everyone was voting, but also did not even have to take it down

*The Commentator spoke to both candidates in an effort to piece together the events leading up to the final decision.*

She added that she did not believe that the spirit of the rule was violated.

New rules for the new election were now set in place. Candidates were not allowed to campaign, according to an email sent to students.

The announcement of a new election was met by confusion among the student body. "I would have liked to have been informed about what each candidate did wrong," said Sarah Graff (SCW '19). "I felt like there was no transparency regarding the re-election."

Markovitz requested for the Canvassing Committee to be transparent with students and explain each specific violation. The committee did not comply.

## Friday, May 3

Markovitz was told by a committee member via email on Friday, May 3 that "the committee has decided that no further printed nor media campaigning will be allowed at

before Shabbat when tons of people were in the building and I could not campaign in this time," remarked Markovitz.

## Monday, May 6

The re-election took place on Monday, May 6. "In the morning I went around the buildings to triple check that none of my things were up, and it appeared that Talya had still not taken a single thing down," related Markovitz. Saban awoke early that day to take down multiple posters as well.

A few hours after the ballots were mailed out on Monday morning, Saban was informed that she was disqualified for the second time for leaving up her posters. Two of her roommates then went dorm to dorm finding promotional material from Markovitz, photos of which were then

*Continued on Page 9*

# Senior Class Nominates Professors and Adjuncts of the Year

By BENJAMIN KOSLOWE

Professors Chaviva Levin, Alyssa Schuck and Robert Greenberg were named Professors of the Year for Yeshiva College (YC), Stern College for Women (SCW) and Sy Syms School of Business (SSSB), respectively. Additionally, Professor Maxwell Musser was named YC Adjunct of the Year, and Professor Francine Mellors-Rothenstein was named SSSB Adjunct of the Year.

The Professor of the Year awards, endowed by Dr. William Silber (YC '63) and his wife Lillian Silber, grants three annual gifts of \$1,800 each to three faculty members from Yeshiva University's three undergraduate schools each year. Additionally, as of last year, YC and SSSB both award Adjunct of

the Year awards to part-time professors. All of the awards are decided by undergraduate seniors in yearly online votes that are administered by YU's Office of Institutional Research & Assessment.

Professor Chaviva Levin, who was a Professor of the Year finalist last year, teaches Jewish History at Yeshiva College. This semester, she taught courses titled "Coffee & Creation of Modernity" and "Conversion to & from Judaism." Professor Maxwell Musser, who was named YC Adjunct of the Year in 2018 as well, taught "Probability Theory" this semester after several semesters of teaching "Linear Algebra."

"A well-deserved award for one of our most excellent and dedicated professors," wrote Dr. Fred Sugarman, the Yeshiva College Associate Dean, in his email

announcing Professor Levin's award. "We thank [Professor Musser] for his dedicated and wonderful work on behalf of our students," Dean Sugarman added.

Professor Alyssa Schuck (SCW '99), Clinical Associate Professor of Biology at SCW, has been on the faculty since the fall of 2006. In addition to her faculty position, she serves as the Director of the Jewish Foundation for Education of Women Fellowship Program at SCW. She taught "Microbiology" and "Microbiology lab" this past semester.


Clinical Associate Professor of Business Law, Professor Robert Greenberg (YC '81, Cardozo '84) taught "Ethical & Legal Environment of Business" and "Business Law" this past semester. Professor Francine Mellors-Rothenstein, Adjunct Professor of

Accounting, taught "Principles of Auditing", "Advanced Auditing" and "Business Communication" this past semester.

Previous Professor of the Year award-ees include Professor Ari Mermelstein (2016 and 2018), Professor Daniel Kimmel (2017), Professor Gillian Steinberg (2012 and 2015), Professor Amish Khalfan (2014) and Professor Yair Shahak (2013). Though Mermelstein and Kimmel still teach at YU, Khalfan left YU in 2014 (right after receiving his award) after being denied tenure and Steinberg left to teach at SAR High School in 2015 after teaching at YU for 15 years. Shahak resigned in 2015 due to concerns about the educational state of YU, and its diminished Jewish Studies requirements in particular, as well as due to concerns about YU's health plan for faculty.



From left to right: Professors Chaviva Levin, Alyssa Schuck, Robert Greenberg and Francine Mellors-Rothenstein (Not pictured: Professor Maxwell Musser)



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# SCWSC Presidential Candidates Disqualified Following Special Election, Redo Election to Take Place This Fall

By COMMENTATOR STAFF

*Editor's Note: This article was originally published online on May 6.*

Both candidates for Stern College for Women Student Council (SCWSC) President, Shanee Markovitz and Talya Saban, have been disqualified from the special election. An election to fill the vacant seat will be held at the beginning of the Fall 2019 semester.

Shortly after polls had closed at 5 p.m. on May 6, The Commentator learned that the two candidates were disqualified from the special election. This special election for the position of SCWSC President, held four days after the initial election, was first called "due to a lack of clarity in campaign policy" which resulted in both candidates alleging rules violations against each other's campaigns. In an email to the student body the day before

the special election, the Beren Canvassing Committee said, "The Canvassing Committee has decided to put the power in the hands of the student body and therefore a re-election for this position will be held."

According to the Beren Campus student council 2019-2020 election guidelines distributed by YU's Office of Student Life, in order to be eligible to run, "One may not give any items away to students. This does not include stickers." Similarly, article 10 of the SCWSC Constitution states, "Candidates may not give out any items to students" (6.C), although it does not mention an exception for stickers. Additionally, "No signs may exceed eight and a half by fourteen inches" (6.D), "All signs must be approved by the election coordinator(s)" (6.E) and "Candidates may use their personal social media outlets (such as Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat, Twitter et al) for campaigning purposes" (6.F). As of the time of publication, The Commentator has yet to learn which specific rule or rules

were violated by the presidential hopefuls.

After the redo election was fully conducted, the Canvassing Committee emailed the Beren Campus students at 11 p.m. informing them that both SCWSC presidential candidates had been disqualified and that another redo election will take place next fall. According to the email, the special election had a stipulation "that all posters and campaigning materials must be down by Monday, May 6th at 9:30am, no exceptions," which was violated when "multiple posters and promotional materials were still up in favor of both candidates in the school building and in the dorms" on the morning of the election.

According to the Canvassing Committee, "Both candidates are eligible to run for SCWSC President in the fall."

The email also informed that the Office of Student Life will oversee the fall elections, as the undergraduate members of the Canvassing Committee will all have

graduated by next semester. The email added that "there is a Constitution Committee that has been working diligently to try and update, reform, and refine the Beren Campus Constitution. A vote for enacting this Constitution will take place, most likely, over the next few weeks. We are hopeful that with the enactment of this Constitution, a Student Court will be formed that can oversee the elections and the forming of a Canvassing Committee from start to finish so that this kind of uncertainty can be eradicated in the future."

"Like with all changes and new beginnings, there are growing pains, but we care deeply about having your voices heard," concluded the email from the Canvassing Committee. "We look forward to the footprint you will make at Stern College and Sy Syms School of Business, and we can't wait to hear great things from the three Beren councils over the coming school years."



Beren Campus

SHIRA LEVITT FOR THE COMMENTATOR

*WHAT ACTUALLY HAPPENED,  
continued from Page 7*

emailed to the Canvassing Committee.

"While I do not believe that her overlooking these promotional materials would affect the outcome of the election, I felt that the rule must be applied equally," explained Saban.

She added, "This bloodbath was not something I was proud of, but I also did not want to be taken advantage of."

Both candidates were disqualified shortly after.

When Markovitz asked the Canvassing Committee to explain her violation this time, a member told her over the phone that some of the smaller papers she left under people's

doors in the dorms were found in the hallway of a dorm. This was extended to violate the rule on campaigning past the deadline, the member explained.

Students were notified after the polls had closed that both candidates were disqualified and that a new election would take place in the fall. The committee did not provide specific details of violations to students other than "multiple posters and promotional materials" being up in the school building and the dorms after allowed.

The Canvassing Committee refused to answer any further questions to The Commentator about the process of the decision to disqualify both candidates and regarding details of the specific allegations. They also declined to give further details

on the future of the position of president of SCWSC, which is currently ambiguous.

"Ruining reputations, prolonging this experience and corrupting the system is horrible," Markovitz remarked.

"In the second election, more than the first, I admit I should have been far more careful to take down my campaign material," admitted Saban. But, she argued, "With violations by both parties, I feel as though ignoring the violations on both parts and counting the votes would have been a better decision for the student body as a whole."

In their email to students, the committee cited a "Constitution Committee that has been working diligently to try and update, reform, and refine the Beren Campus Constitution," which will likely delineate a

Student Court to deal with matters like this in the future.

"I am one of the five people to write this very constitution, and have been committed to a fair and open election the entire time," said Markovitz.

The Office of Student Life, which will oversee elections in the fall, did not return a request for comment.

"I believe that the Canvassing Committee was put in a very difficult and frustrating position," said Saban. "They are fellow students and were forced to make a tough call without extensive training or clear delineation of their roles and power. I don't believe that was fair to them, myself or my opponent."

## FROM THE COMMIE ARCHIVES

*Editor's Note: On the occasion of Rabbi Aharon Lichtenstein's fourth yahrzeit (1 Iyar, 5779), The Commentator is reprinting an interview that he conducted with The Commentator thirteen years ago. The interview covered a wide range of topics including Aliyah, Yom Ha'atzmaut, the Israeli disengagement from Gush Katif, the legacy of Rav Soloveitchik and the parameters of synthesizing Torah and secular studies.*

## From the Archives (April 3, 2006; Volume 71 Issue 8) — Religion and the Jewish State: An Interview with Rav Aharon Lichtenstein

By YIGAL GROSS

Rabbi Aharon Lichtenstein is a graduate of the Rabbi Isaac Elchanan Theological Seminary of Yeshiva University in New York, where he went on to become a Rosh Yeshiva and Rosh Kollel. He also studied at Harvard University, where he earned a doctorate in English literature. In 1971, he immigrated to Israel, answering a call by Rabbi Yehuda Amital to join him as joint Rosh Yeshiva of Yeshivat Har Etzion in Alon Shevut.

*Many of the people who were involved in these protests were wonderful people with excellent motives, but distancing themselves from the rest of the country I think is wrong.*

Rabbi Lichtenstein, a disciple of the Rav *zt"l* (Rabbi Joseph B. Soloveitchik), perpetuates the tradition of his mentor in his commitment to intensive and original Torah study, as well as his articulation of a bold Jewish worldview which is unafraid of modernity. He is a paragon and a source of inspiration for a wide circle of Diaspora Jewry, both because of his intellectual leadership and his educational attainments.

Rabbi Lichtenstein has published widely in the areas of Talmudic scholarship, Jewish Philosophy, and contemporary Jewish society. He is the author of *Leaves of Faith, Volume I - The World of Jewish Learning* (Ktav Publishing 2003), *Leaves of Faith, Volume II - The World of Jewish Living* (Ktav Publishing 2004), and *By His Light: Character and Values in the Service of God* (Ktav Publishing 2003).

In recognition of his significant contribution to Jewish religious education in Israel and the Diaspora, the Hebrew University of Jerusalem named Rav Lichtenstein its Samuel Rothberg Prize Laureate for 1994.

He is married to Dr. Tovah nee Soloveitchik and they have six children who are all involved in Jewish Education.

Rabbi Lichtenstein recently sat down with *The Commentator* to discuss issues of *Dat u-Mdinah* - religion and the Jewish state - and other contemporary issues.

*Commentator:* Throughout Jewish history, there have been large Jewish communities within the Diaspora as well as in Israel, and some of these Diaspora communities have made major contributions to the development of Torah thought. In that context, how should a Torah-true American student view the *Aliya* option? Is it fair to say that he must live in Israel? Or is it appropriate for him to plan on living in the United States?

*RAL:* I don't want to speak of 'must' in the normative sense. There were people who lived here, worked here, labored here.

A number of *Gedolei Yisrael* were here. I won't pontificate and say that people must live in *Eretz Yisrael*. At the same time, I very much would encourage people, other things being equal, to be in *Eretz Yisrael*, both for themselves and for the strengthening and deepening of the Jewish presence and character of the state in *Eretz Yisrael*.

There are variables and I'm attuned to them. Some have to do with the needs, interests, and priorities of a particular *Bachur* and some with the needs of the community. I remember that there was someone who worked as a *Mechanekh* in France and came to *Eretz Yisrael* on a pilot trip to look for a job, a *Sfardi*. Rav Ovadia Yosef sent him a message that wherever he would apply for a position, Rav Ovadia would see to it personally that his application would be torpedoed, as he was needed by his community in France. I don't have broad shoulders, but the recognition that if many Jews choose to remain in the Diaspora and that many of them are committed to *Torah u-Mitzvot* and require some guidance and leadership, and that *Bnei Torah* can supply that, that certainly should be taken into consideration.

I would encourage people to do it, first of all, because presence in *Eretz Yisrael* itself is a *Mitzvah* and secondly, quite independent of that *Mitzvah*, there are many *Mitzvot* that one can fulfill in *Eretz Yisrael* that can't be

fulfilled in *Chutz La-Aretz*. Thirdly, to experience in historical and almost meta-historical terms, the presence of *Shekhinah* in *Eretz Yisrael*, which is more uniquely related to it: "*Eretz Asher Hashem Elokekha Doresh Otah Tamid Einei Elokekha Bah MeReishit HaShanah Vi'Ad Acharit Shanah.*"

I have a real problem with the Ramban, who regards the whole regimen of *Torah u-Mitzvot* in *Chutz La-Aretz* as merely a preparation for the return to *Eretz Yisrael*. I have enormous reverence for the Ramban, but with this I find great difficulty. However, in a milder form, I fully subscribe to the idea that, qualitatively speaking, *Kiyum Mitzvot* in *Eretz Yisrael* has a dimension which it doesn't have in *Chutz La-Aretz*. *Mori VeRabbi Rav Hutner Zt"l*, when he arrived in *Eretz Yisrael*, even though he had already put on *Tefillin* on the plane when the time came to Daven, he would say that now he was going to put on *Eretz-Yisrael-dic Tefillin*; before he had put on *Chutz-LaAretz-dic Tefillin*. To that I subscribe.

But I say again that there are all kinds of variables - what a person can contribute, where he can contribute most, what kind of education is available for the children. Therefore, I would not speak in terms of the imperative 'must,' because there are variables that I think fully justify a person remaining here. But, other things being equal, certainly who is a *Ben Torah* should want to live in *Eretz Yisrael*.

*Bottom line: do I, or do I not counsel reading Milton? On that score, the kind of synthesis which I have in mind, maybe it's good in terms of what it can contribute. Whether it's good for someone who doesn't have the tools to integrate it properly within a Torah Hashkafah, maybe it's not good.*

*Commentator:* How is *Yom Ha'atzmaut* celebrated at your Yeshiva? After all, it is both a religious and political/historical event. How should it be celebrated, to your mind, in the Diaspora, where people have chosen not to live in Israel?

*RAL:* At Yeshiva, we've gone through a

number of phases that I'll describe to you.

At night, we have *Tefillah* with certain components, *Prakim* of *Tehillim* - not *Hallel* - we don't say *Hallel* at night, that's only on *Pesach*. We have a semi-*Chagig* Davening with the *Nigunim* of the *Regalim*. In years prior, when we had only two *Roshei Yeshiva* - Rav Amital and myself - one of us would speak in the *Beit Midrash* prior to Davening, the other at a festive *Seudah Chagigit*, and have singing and dancing subsequently.

By day, we have again a *Tfillah Chagigit*, but we don't have the *Kri'at HaTorah* that some people have, as that presumably requires a *Takanat Chachamim*. I always say *Shiur* in the morning, related generally to some aspect of life in *Eretz Yisrael*, whether *Mitsvot HaTeluyot Ba'Aretz*, *Dina DeMalkhuta Dinah*, *Melekh*, social issues, etc.

For many years, people would disperse after that: those that wanted to sit and learn did so, but most regarded it as a sort of vacation day. For the last couple of years what we've done is everything that I've mentioned until now and after the *Shiur* a sort of communal *Tiyul*, in which a very sizeable proportion of the *Yeshiva* participates.

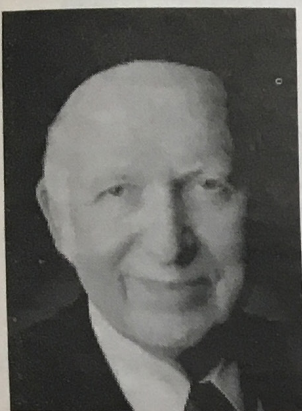
*Tiyulim* in *Eretz Yisrael* are regarded in a way that they are not regarded in the *Diaspora*. A sense of bonding with the land, with the country - the physical land and the land in a social sense - is something of great importance in the educational scene in *Eretz*

*Yisrael* and is regarded within our *Yeshiva* as an infective means and proper milieu for developing and enhancing that sense.

In the *Diaspora*, the kind of bonding that I've spoken about is not quite possible, but

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## Religion and the Jewish State: An Interview with Rav Aharon Lichtenstein



By YIGAL GROSS

time, I very much would encourage people, other things being equal, to be in *Eretz Yisrael*, both for themselves and for the strengthening and deepening of the Jewish presence and character of the state in *Eretz Yisrael*.

There are variables and I'm attuned to them. Some have to do with the needs, interests and priorities of a particular *Bachur* and some with the needs of the community. I remember that there was someone who worked as a *Mechanekh* in France and came to *Eretz Yisrael* on a pilot trip to look for a job, a *Sfardi*. Rav Ovadia Yosef sent him a message that wherever he would

*Tehillim* - not *Hallel* - we don't say *Hallel* at night, that's only on *Pesach*. We have a semi-*Chagig* Davening with the *Nigunim* of the *Regalim*. In years prior, when we had only two *Roshei Yeshiva* - Rav Amital and myself - one of us would speak in the *Beit Midrash* prior to Davening, the other at a festive *Seudah Chagigit*, and have singing and dancing subsequently.

By day, we have again a *Tfillah Chagigit*, but we don't have the *Kri'at HaTorah* that some people have, as that presumably requires a *Takanat Chachamim*. I always say *Shiur* in the morning, related generally to some aspect of life in *Eretz Yisrael*, whether *Mitsvot HaTeluyot*

but certainly impacts upon the personal, individual, familial life of Jews living in the *Diaspora*. And therefore they have every reason in the world to be thankful for the blessings that we received in *Eretz Yisrael*, their blessings nonetheless, and to give *Shevach VeHoda'ah* for them.

*Commentator:* What are your thoughts on the disengagement that took place over the summer? What mistakes, if any, do you believe that the Religious Zionist Community in Israel made in its response to the withdrawal from Gaza, and what lessons do you hope that it has learned from the experience?

*AL:* There are two separate

tions and hopes.

I've said that in some respects you have, among certain people, the odd combination of megalomania with paranoia. Many of the people who were involved in these protests were wonderful people with excellent motives, but distancing themselves from the rest of the country I think is wrong. They were also misguided in the sense that they didn't read the map correctly. They totally underestimated the determination of the government to go through with it, and totally overestimated the resources, the human resources, at their disposal for blocking it.

Additionally, the effort itself didn't take into account certain values which have great significance.

RAV LICHTENSTEIN,  
continued From Page 10

I think that it's a day which, regardless of where one lives, should, first, be taken note of. Second, I think that part of the taking note has to do with Tefillah. We say *Hallel* at the Yeshiva; I think that *Hallel* should be said here too. With a *berakha* or without a *berakha* - I say without a *berakha*, some people at the Yeshiva say with a *berakha* - that's a *Halakhic* issue. Further, I think there should be some Torah expression - a Shiur in *Halakha* or a *Sicha* - which relates to the day in spiritual terms.

The fact that a person lives here and not in *Eretz Yisrael* doesn't mean that he isn't *Mechuyav* in *Shevach VeHoda'ah* for that which happened in *Eretz Yisrael*. We give *Shevach VeHoda'ah* for events which were part of our distant past, and so we should certainly do so for those which are part of our contemporaneous present, and with import for the future. Even more so, what transpires in *Eretz Yisrael* is of benefit not only to people there, but to *Klal Yisrael* conceived as an organic entity, to many individuals who live here and nevertheless learn in *Eretz Yisrael*, whose children learn there, for the sense of pride and viability in national terms that the rise of the *Medinah* gave us.

We pray in *Birkat Kri'at Shema*: "*VeTolikheni Kommemiyut LeArtzenu,*" based on the *Passuk* in *Vayikra*: "*VaOlech Etkhem Komemiyut.*" *Komemiyut* is a value, not of arrogance or chauvinism, but a sense of pride in its best spiritual sense. There is

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*Halakha is to us a polestar in all areas of life. It is not confined to the realm of Bein Adam LaMakom in the narrow sense of the term. It is not confined to the Beis Midrash, the Mikveh and the kitchen. It guides us both in terms of values and in terms of specific normative positions.*

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no question that a Jew could better reach that height in the Diaspora because *Medinat Yisrael* exists and therefore it impacts not only *Knesset Yisrael* conceived in metaphysical terms, but certainly impacts upon the personal, individual, familial life of Jewish living in the Diaspora. And therefore they have every reason in the world to be thankful for the blessings that we received in *Eretz Yisrael*, their blessings nonetheless, and to give *Shevach VeHoda'ah* for them.

*Commentator*: What are your thoughts on the disengagement that took place over the summer? What mistakes, if any, do you believe that the Religious Zionist Community in Israel made in its response to the withdrawal from Gaza, and what lessons do you hope that it has learned from the experience?

*RAL*: There are two separate issues here. One has to do with the withdrawal, the way it was handled, etc., the fundamental advisability of having it; and, to some extent, it has to do - when you ask about the response of the religious community - how it viewed the withdrawal, its advisability and its priorities.

No doubt about it, the disengagement is a sad chapter, and it's sad in three respects. Number one, you're talking about the severing of a limb from the corporate body, so to speak, of *Eretz Yisrael*, and regardless of whether it needed to be done or not - it's said. People who have a medical problem - a gangrened leg - have to undergo an amputation, and do it under medical advice; yet, though they understand that it needs to be done, they're certainly sad that that's the case. Secondly, there were many individual lives that were adversely affected - the lives of wonderful people. What you had in Gush Katif - this was not a parasitic community - these were people with values,

people who worked hard to build communities, out of spirit and a desire to contribute to the *Medina* as a whole. Thirdly, the terrible tension that arose as a result of course is very sad.

Having said that - and this is something that is to be acknowledged as hard fact in all three respects - whether or not it ought to have been done or should have been done - we don't know. We'll know eventually, but even eventually is a subject of debate - not in a month or a year. In several years, it'll become clear whether this was a daring gamble which failed or a brave initiative that succeeded.

In terms of the response of the religious community, there are two factors to be considered. One is the attitude taken to the initiative as such. People were unwilling to give the government the benefit of the doubt in terms of motivation, wisdom, and in terms of the possibilities. Ariel Sharon was not exactly known as being a patsy and if he was in favor of such an initiative. At least he should be given the benefit of the doubt in terms of motivation, perhaps he knew something that we didn't know. But that wasn't done.

The Religious Zionist community was very often vehement, strident, shrill. It mobilized itself in a way that in certain respects was impressive, but at the same time, it divested itself to some extent from its relation and bond to the rest of the country and to the state as a state. In certain circles within the National Religious community today, there is a growing sense of isolationism fueled

by, to some extent, disappointment, and at the same time by unrealistic expectations and hopes.

I've said that in some respects you have, among certain people, the odd combination of megalomania with paranoia. Many of the people who were involved in these protests were wonderful people with excellent motives, but distancing themselves from the rest of the country I think is wrong. They were also misguided in the sense that they didn't read the map correctly. They totally underestimated the determination of the government to go through with it, and totally overestimated the resources, the human resources, at their disposal for blocking it.

Additionally, the effort itself didn't take into account certain values which have great significance. They didn't take into account the fact that, when all is said and done, while it's very impressive to pull together one or two hundred thousand people to a major demonstration, but that's only what - one or two percent of the Israeli population. Is it reasonable or fair for such a small percentage of the population to impose its will upon the government and the country? This has hurt our standing with respect to the general community and has also hurt us internally, because to be severed from the state is just a tragedy.

The government, for its part, made certain mistakes, not the least of which was the failure to prepare properly to cope with the needs of the people who were being uprooted. They set up some kind of mechanism which didn't work properly and there are people who are still suffering. *Ha'aretz*, which is not suspect on being attuned to the needs of the National Religious community

or the people in Gush Katif, is still running a series on families in Gush Katif and how they were affected. It's all terribly sad.

Having said that this is a sad chapter, I do say *Nafal HaPur*, and now we have to hope that it will turn out for the best. Sadly, some of our people hope that it will turn out for the worst just to prove they were right. That I consider unconscionable.

*Commentator*: What can be done to heal the apparent rift that has developed between the religious Zionist community and the state?

*RAL*: It is first and foremost an educational and spiritual task to try as best we can. And there are limits to how much we can, because the prevalent voices in the national religious community today are voices which are doomed to incur some measure of isolationism.

We have to try to educate people and to emphasize that they shouldn't lose hope, that they shouldn't lose touch. To the extent that we can build bridges between the religious community and the general community, it needs to be done, but not as some people have imagined, to conquer the general community. Besides that conquering them is a bit of a pipe dream, the terminology is wrong - you conquer your enemies, not your kin.

The need to maintain contact, to feel both what the Rav used to call *Brit Goral*, the covenant of fate, and the *Brit Ye'ud*, the covenant of destiny, to the extent that we share a common destiny and common vision of the future, that we should try to accentuate, rather than focusing on how terrible things are over there and how wonderful things are over here.

But, as I've said, the prevalent winds are, from my point of view, not favorable and it'll take some time before things will hopefully turn around.

*Commentator*: There is talk now of further withdrawals - from Judea and Samaria - in the not too distant future. How should the religious Zionist community deal with such withdrawals, should they occur? As religious Jews, can we allow ourselves to relinquish biblical homeland?

*RAL*: I don't think that this is an issue which can be posed and dealt with in the abstract.

In the abstract, there is a debate amongst *Gedolei Yisrael* as to the balance of priority between saving lives, if indeed such a withdrawal would save lives, and holding onto the land at human cost, including the loss of life. As a matter of record, this is not something recent, but goes back a generation or two.

If one assumes that no matter how much blood is spilled, you have to hold onto every square meter that you can, it's clear which way you have to go. If you assume that you have to prioritize human and social needs - which include a spiritual component - over territorial integrity, to the extent that these two are incompatible, then you have to make a choice, and the choice will therefore be to come to terms, sad as it may be, with further withdrawals.

As I've said, I don't think that we should just approach this abstractly and say well, if you prioritize the human element then you give away wholesale, while if you prioritize the territorial element you give away nothing. While in theory the polar options make more sense and seem more consistent, *LeMa'aseh*, every government in the world operates under the assumption that you are willing to pay a certain price for a certain gain, in terms of risk-benefit ratio, cruel as it may sound, to quantify to some extent human life.

So I would not make any sweeping generalizations with regard to this. In principle, I come from a tradition, by and large, which is ready to pay a price, a territorial price, for other gains. But the judgment as to what

will or what won't, and how great the cost, and in which direction, the benefits, these need to be made more on a specific basis and requires both a spiritual vision on the one hand, and a measure of expertise on the other.

*Commentator*: If a Torah-true Israeli soldier has a conflict between what his government tells him and what his Rav tells him, such as an order to participate in the removal of Jews from an area of Judea and Samaria - what should he do?

*RAL*: I think it depends on what kinds of issues come up. If the issue is one of Halakhic principle, where *Morei Halakha* consensually assume that a certain course of action is in clear violation of clear Halakhic norms, then we know. We don't need a *Melekh* or *Malkhut* which issues decrees against Halakha.

If however, we aren't dealing with Halakhic principles, but with particular judgments as to the extent to which a particular initiative will or will not have some Halakhic implications, that's another ballgame.

I was involved over the summer in a sort of running discussion and discourse at one level with Rav Avraham Shapira, the Rosh Yeshiva of *Mercav HaRav*, and at another level with his grandson-in-law, who took over for him at some point. Part of the issue was precisely this. The point I made was that if the government were to come and say we're going to take this initiative and give away part of *Eretz Yisrael* so that people should be able to enjoy life - so that each home will have two cars and three DVD's - of course you would tell people not to do it, we have Jewish priorities. But that's not what the government was saying. The government was saying that we are going to cede part of *Eretz Yisrael* in order to attain a goal which has Halakhic value and significance, except that some Halakhic authorities didn't think it would attain it. The judgment as to what will be the result of a certain foreign policy initiative is a judgment that the government needs to make. That's not a question of principle, it's a question of applying principles and the business of government is to govern.

*Commentator*: What do you see as the role of Halakha and Rabbinic *Psak* within politics? In the realm of the Jewish state, where should religious beliefs guide political actions and aspirations and where should they not?

*RAL*: Halakha is to us a polestar in all areas of life. It is not confined to the realm of *Bein Adam LaMakom* in the narrow sense of the term. It is not confined to the *Beis Midrash*, the *Mikveh* and the kitchen. It guides us both in terms of values and in terms of specific normative positions. And indeed, a person who is a *Ba'al Halakha* has a spiritual vision and a spiritual responsibility to try to see to it that political decisions and direction are geared towards the inculcation and enhancement of Torah and spiritual values.

How that plays out in terms of the political arena - should you have religious political parties or not, etc., with regard to that I think that it is legitimate to have different views. Some people think that having political parties undermines religious spirituality. Other people think that without political parties, religious interests and needs will be totally ignored. There is something to be said for both positions - I don't think we should be dogmatic about it. I myself think that it is important to have religious parties, but don't think that someone who disagrees is presenting a fundamentally secular argument. He can speak in the name of Torah and its interests as he understands them and arrive at conclusions that are different from my own.

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But as far as what should be animating us, what should be directing us, prioritization - certainly the world of Torah, the world of Halakha, is the source to which we look for that type of guidance and hope to find it.

*Commentator:* Today, there are many different groups with widely different *Hashkafot Olam* claiming to be the bearers of Rav Soloveitchik's torch. You had a close personal relationship with Rav Soloveitchik, both as his Talmid and son-in-law. How would you hope to see his legacy perpetuated within Yeshiva University as well as within the Jewish community at large?

*RAL:* What characterized the Rav and, to some extent characterized his greatness, was not only his greatness in a particular area, but the complex, the totality of his personality. He had great sweep, great depth - he was the archetype of the fusion of the integration, at times to a degree of internal conflict, tension if you will - which he was aware of and preached - but a conflict which he felt was also very productive and fruitful in terms of trying to build a more total spiritual personality.

He sought a certain harmony - not the total harmony of which Rav Kook referred. And, in addition to his outlook, looked with some measure of favor upon some internal 'Ratzo VaShov,' within the context of dialectical movement, as it were.

He was indeed multifaceted, and at Yeshiva, his accomplishments and exposure unique. No one that I know comes close to carrying his mantle - the range, the depth, the level of greatness which he had.

What's happened is that, given his status as a *Gadol BaTorah* and *Gadol BiChochma*, people naturally like to grab his coattails

and go for a ride. By and large, what has happened is that many people have perceived and experienced one facet of the Rav and remained oblivious to other facets - either out of shortsightedness or because they didn't want to be aware of them. Some people would prefer to know only the Rav of the Beit Medrash, only the Rav who was saying a Shiur - which was unquestionably his central priority, in terms of activity and values - while totally ignoring and sometimes even denying the existence of other aspects of his interests. There are others who do the reverse.

I think that it does harm to the proper appreciation of who the Rav was, and perhaps even worse, I think that it does harm to the Jewish community which could have benefited from a more integrated and organic view of the Rav, rather than the bifurcation and dissension which has been created in certain circles today.

There are people who have agendas and try to enlist the Rav in whatever crusades they want to run - whether in this or that direction. I try to shy away from it, but there may be somebody who sees how I understand the Rav and think that I'm doing the same thing - I think not, I hope not, and I try not.

*Commentator:* A short while ago, an article by Sarah Ridner, a senior at the Stern College for Women, titled "A consideration of Synthesis from a Student Point of View," discussing and critiquing an article that you published, appear in the *Commentator*. What were your thoughts on her piece?

*RAL:* I'll be honest, I don't know here. Someone sent me the critique - I think it was a well written piece. I thought it was sensitive, I thought it was spiritual.

In terms of direction, I appreciate the fact that she wanted to write it, while at the same time I think that she related to some

of her own issues which I presume are real and valid, but tried to generalize from that in a sincere, meaningful way, but in a way which I think one should avoid.

I fully agree with her position that the kind of integration that I was talking about is a difficult undertaking, and when she says that maybe the problem is that people who are exposed to the things that I am in favor of are not sufficiently rooted in the world of the Beit Medrash, that is indeed a problem.

But, I think that she does not sufficiently distinguish between two aspects. In the piece which I wrote in general about culture and Judaism, etc. in the volume which Rabbi J.J. Schacter published, I started by saying that there is an ideological issue and an educational issue. One can be in favor of Torah u-Madda ideologically and think that it is a bad idea educationally, because people can't handle it. One might think it's a terrible idea ideologically, and yet maybe it's necessary for a certain segment of the population which needs it in order to stand firm religiously. I've written on this issue primarily with an eye to the ideological element. Educationally, I obviously can't ignore the problem completely, but, on the educational side, I've related to it and always tried to emphasize the priority and primacy of Talmud Torah as opposed to other areas.

I think that, in a sense, she was challenging my ideological position on educational grounds. Now, maybe what she was saying was that I had no right to differentiate. Bottom line: do I, or do I not counsel reading Milton? On that score, the kind of synthesis which I have in mind, maybe it's good in terms of what it can contribute. Whether it's good for someone who doesn't have the tools to integrate it properly within a Torah *Hashkafah*, maybe it's not good. But those two issues need to be distinguished.

But I want to say again, if I knew her, I

would compliment her on the piece - it was well-written, sensitive, and - *Chas VeShalom* - I have no complaint whatsoever. If I knew her and had a way of getting in touch with her, I would tell that to her.

*Commentator:* You see generations of American youth entering your yeshiva. Do you see trends among them? For example, do you see areas where today's youth is perhaps stronger than in the past? Are there also areas of weakness?

*RAL:* In general, the Torah scene in America has certainly improved since I was a *Talmid* and a Rosh Yeshiva here. The range of high schools which are encouraging people to go to *Eretz Yisrael* to learn has widely increased and, in that respect, I think it has been a more positive development. How that breaks down, who goes to which Yeshiva, is a matter which fluctuates. Obviously, every Yeshiva is interested in getting a certain type of *Bachur* in terms of personality, *Hashkafah*, commitment, *Yir'at Shamayim*, etc., there are variations. As to the overall level, taking the range of sources of which *Bachurim* come, I think it is more positive than it had been.

At the same time, the Orthodox Jewish community has become polarized a bit - maybe more than a bit, here. In certain quarters we hear challenges to the world of Halakha as traditionally perceived, understood and experienced, which thirty years ago were not so prominent. But then that's more an issue with regard to the American Jewish scene. Generally, I don't think I would say that it is a main characteristic of the *Bachurim* who come to our Yeshiva.

*Yigal Gross is the Opinions Editor of the Commentator.*

*Editor's Note: For the final issue of Vol. 84, The Commentator is printing an old retrospective editorial, from the traditional "In Retrospect" column. As is often the case, the sentiments in this archive are still relatable and pertinent today.*

## From the Archives (May 27, 1959; Volume 24 Issue 14) — In Retrospect: Uniqueness of Commie Studied by Old Editor

By YEHUDI FELMAN  
(COMMENTATOR EIC 1958-59)

Ordinarily, the "In Retrospect" column of the outgoing Editor-in-Chief deals with the past year on *The Commentator* and also contains a few of his broad thoughts on the purpose and philosophy of Yeshiva University. This year, however, Jack Nusbacher, the editor-in-chief of *Masmid* has been kind enough to allow me enough space in its section of *The Commentator* to fully summarize our activities for the past year. My ideas on Yeshiva University will also be stated in the 1959 *Masmid* in an article entitled "Synthesis Re-examined."

I am therefore going to devote "In Retrospect" 1959 to a discussion of what I feel to be the purpose and function of *The Commentator*, the sole student newspaper on the Yeshiva campus.

The basic principle of any college newspaper is freedom of the press. In practice, the application of this freedom implies an acceptance by the bodies concerned with the school paper, whether they be its editors, ordinary students, faculty, or administration, of the value of constructive criticism of school policy and expressing the opinions of the student body in print. It involves a realization on the part of the formulators of school policy that they do not necessarily "know best" and that student opinion on matters directly affecting them should

be a determining factor in the shaping of school policy.

At the same time, the college newspaper also serves as a general vehicle for student expression, outside of the realm of personal opinion. It affords him the opportunity of developing his journalistic and writing ability. Finally, it represents, in every word it prints, the student slant on the events occurring in the school.

Yeshiva, it has been said on many occasions, is a unique institution. As befits a unique institution, it is blessed with a unique school newspaper. *The Commentator* has gained a reputation during its 25 years of existence as an organ of student expression strikingly unlike that of any student newspaper in the country.

What makes *Commentator*, *Commentator*? To learn the answer to this question we must first examine in what respects *The Commentator* is similar to other school newspapers, and then see how its dissimilarities, plus those of Yeshiva itself, combine to give *The Commentator* its unique function in a unique institution.

*The Commentator* has this much in common with the rest—we feel that student opinion must be a determining factor in shaping university policy. No matter how sincere an administration may be in desiring to benefit the students, it will never be successful unless it seriously considers the wishes of the students themselves.

### Value Of Criticism

As any newspaper must, we feel the value of constructive criticism in print—the value of bringing a problem out into the open, is much greater than if a problem is buried and its presence hidden from those concerned by merely discussing it continually with the guilt party personally. Of course, we realize that rational discussion should precede editorial comment. But when rational discussion fails to accomplish its purpose, editorial comment is the only means available to those out of power to bring enough outside pressure to bear upon those in power to force them to use their power in a manner endorsed by those whom it vitally affects. In simple language—the power of the press brings an administrator to use his power to shape student policy in order to satisfy the students themselves.

In what lies *Commentator's* uniqueness, then? I believe it consists mainly of two factors—the perspective only its editors can have of Yeshiva University and the duty it has always felt to act as conscience of our school.

### Own Special Interest

What do I mean by perspective? Simply this—Every individual in our institution, be he administrator, faculty member, or student, is preoccupied mainly with what his own special interest in the school happens to be.

Few of the individuals in Yeshiva take the time to discover what others are doing and

to assist them in their tasks. Furthermore, almost everyone estimates the value of the difficult aspects of Yeshiva by how they affect his own special interest.

The only individuals in the school whose special interest is knowing everything that is going on and fitting things in their proper perspective according to their relative importance in the total frame of events in all the divisions of Yeshiva University are the editors of *The Commentator*. Constantly confronted with the decision as to which news or sports story should be played up, or played down, which editorial is essential at this time, how should this issue be treated in the light of student sentiment, which division of Yeshiva is really attempting to make progress and deserves commendation or is stagnating and needs a push, how can student, administrator or faculty interest be aroused in this team — that issue or this course are but a few of the innumerable decisions the editors of *The Commentator* must make in order to focus attention on matters in their proper perspective.

The second great realm of *Commentator* uniqueness is the fact that its columns are often the only place where a complaint against a school policy finds expression. As many others have pointed out in the past, Yeshiva is a young institution which is not sure enough of itself to appreciate the positive value of criticism. Many individuals in

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the university who have taken upon themselves to criticize a policy in the presence of their superiors have found that they have suddenly lost favor around here.

The disdain of criticism has resulted in looking at Yeshiva as if it was a sacrosanct institution, as if the slightest disturbance will cause the edifice of untouchability to crumble. Some faculty members support an administration policy when they know it's wrong; administrators refuse to change long worn-out rules because they fear a loss in prestige; others view with horror, criticism of their division in *The Commentator* as if the students were using this as a whip to get even.

The inevitable result of this situation is that *The Commentator* has become practically the only place where frank and honest criticism of the school is voiced. Accusations that our criticisms are exaggerated and misplaced can be understood in the light of a complete lack of any other standard with which to compare us.

In addition, *The Commentator* represents the student slant on events occurring daily at Y.U., and fulfills ably the function of acting as a vehicle for student expression and achievement in the fields of journalism

and writing. In the school as happens to be, Administrator X makes policy as if Division X was the only division in Yeshiva U; Faculty member Y gives enough homework in course Y to make the students forget they take any other courses; student Z is preoccupied with achieving the grades necessary to gain admittance to graduate school Z, or with giving enough proficiency in a sport to become a varsity member or star, or with getting this course to be given by that faculty member at some specific time, etc., etc.

The point of all this is that few of the

any other person who is out of contact with Yeshiva desires to find out what is really happening here, he turns to only one source—*The Commentator*. Many other publications are issued to report events at Yeshiva, but in the final analysis *The Commentator* is the only one which is universally accepted by all impartial friends of Yeshiva as a reliable index and a true reporter of the situation on our campus. It has not passed through the "diluting filter" of any "special interest" attitude here, and can therefore be relied upon to tell the truth.

*As many others have pointed out in the past, Yeshiva is a young institution which is not sure enough of itself to appreciate the positive value of criticism.*

individuals in Yeshiva take the time to discover what others are doing and to assist own special interest. For example, many a member of a team has wondered what *The Commentator* has against administrator X until X refuses to allow said team to travel because it involves cutting classes.

**Source Of Information**

Finally, the uniqueness of *The Commentator* is seen in one more amazing phenomenon. Whenever an alumnus or

Before I set down my pen and finish my last article as a member of *The Commentator*, I'd like to thank my staff for their excellent work, without which none of the milestones *The Commentator* achieved this year would have been possible.

I owe special thanks to Ray Weinberg, president of Student Council, for his cooperation and willingness to learn; to Normie Bloom and Harvey Lieber for their devotion to *The Commentator*, bringing prestige to a position which badly needed it;

to Artie Eidelman for model job as Sports Editor, unprecedented by a Governing Board member who was also a senior; to Bob Hirt for his continued guidance and advice to me personally and *The Commentator* generally throughout his college career; and to my roommate of old, Jerry Blau, S.C. Representative to *The Commentator*, whose understanding and selfless attitude throughout the many years of our acquaintance enabled me to get through many a critical situation when I needed to very much.

**Maintain Commie Traditions**

I with the Incoming Governing and Associate Boards all the best in continuing to maintain our traditions during the coming year. I hope that Benny Hirsch, the incoming President of S.C., succeeds in bringing Student Council back to the students. Finally, to the new Editor-in-Chief, Larry Halpern, I address this little message, which we have both recently read in a certain play. *G-d grant you the serenity to accept what you cannot change, the courage to change what you can, and the wisdom to always distinguish between them.*

Larry, the phone number of the Albert Einstein College of Medicine is SY 2-2200. Use it. I'll always be available.

**THE COMMENTATOR**

**In Retrospect**

**Uniqueness of Commie Studied by Old Editor**

**by Yehudi Felman**

Ordinarily, the "In Retrospect" column of the outgoing Editor-in-Chief deals with the past year on THE COMMENTATOR and also contains a few of his broad thoughts on the purpose and philosophy of Yeshiva University. This year, however, Jack Nusbacher, the editor-in-chief of *Masmid* has been kind enough to allow me enough space in its section on THE COMMENTATOR to fully summarize our activities for the past year. My ideas on Yeshiva University will also be stated in the 1959 *Masmid* in an article entitled "Synthesis Re-examined"

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## Peanut-Butter-and-Jelly Sandwich Making Methodology

By **DONIEL WEINREICH**

I've recently changed my mind about something. I've had a fundamental shift in perspective, of which I believe the contents are of utmost importance and are indeed relevant to most of our lives. The shift in question was in the way I approach making a peanut-butter-and-jelly sandwich. I used to utilize what I think is the more conventional and traditional method, whereby peanut butter is applied to one slice of bread, and jelly to another. The slices of bread are then put together and perhaps cut in half (in rectangles; cutting a peanut-butter-and-jelly sandwich in triangles is absolutely monstrous. I mean for goodness sake, it's not grilled cheese). This method is problematic for several reasons, all of which will be alleviated by the alternative method.

In my newfound superior

method, the only difference is in the construction: peanut butter is first applied to **both** slices of bread. Jelly is then applied to one of the peanut buttered sides, and the rest proceeds as above. The benefits of this method are threefold, on which I shall elaborate in order of ascending importance.

A) In the event of the sandwich's delayed consumption, the bread will remain pristine, whereas the conventional method would result in the jelly rendering its slice of bread soggy. However, due to the circumstantial nature of this

problem, this benefit is of minimal importance. The other two — which, according to some informal internet browsing, are less popular justifications — are more universal and essential to the nature of the sandwich.

B) The alternative method results in a more optimal peanut butter to jelly ratio. From both a culinary and nutritional perspective, one would want more peanut butter than jelly. It is, of course, possible to achieve the goldilocks ratio using the conventional method; however, it would require careful calibration

and vigilance. With the alternative method, the optimal ratio is achieved naturally and automatically with near effortlessness.

C) Certainly, the most consistent conundrum confronted when it comes to consuming a peanut-butter-and-jelly-sandwich is jelly leakage. Jelly's slimy, globular consistency doesn't afford it the requisite friction and viscosity to remain in place unobstructed. A reasonably filled sandwich made with the traditional method will result in jelly pouring out the sides. The only move that can be made in attempt to prevent this persistent predicament is to use less jelly, instead gracing your sandwich with but a mere schmear. This on its own is outrageous, but furthermore, unless you want to confront a ratio problem, you'll have to use a proportionally smaller amount of peanut butter as well. This would, however, yield an entirely inadequate sandwich barely befitting a

preschooler; it would never suffice for a grown man's luncheon. The only other option is to embrace the mess, absorb the impact, steer into the skid. There is no reasonable solution for the sticky-mess-averse who don't want to risk dripping jelly on their pants or doom themselves to the post-sandwich finger fellating ritual.

But the alternative method contrarily opens itself to a solution quite naturally. All that is required is to leave the very edge bare when spreading the jelly. Now the peanut butter on both sides forms a cohesive seal (which can be enhanced with a slight press), locking that jelly in, away from your fingers and vulnerable surfaces.

On the whole, the alternative method allows for a larger, more optimally filled sandwich with less potential for leakage, whereas the conventional method yields an unsatisfying mess. It is clear which is preferable.

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*In my newfound superior method, the only difference is in the construction: peanut butter is first applied to **both** slices of bread. Jelly is then applied to one of the peanut buttered sides, and the rest proceeds as above.*

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A Peanut Butter and Jelly sandwich constructed with the conventional method.

## Law Review

## The Legality of ‘Caf Daddying’

By YITZCHAK CARROLL and  
YOSEF LEMEL

As the year comes to an end, the time-honored tradition of “Caf Daddying” — the sharing of Caf Card meal plan funds with fellow students — is manifest in the Furman Cafeteria, the Kushner Dining Hall and the various eateries on and in the vicinity of the Beren and Wilf campuses. Altruistic students who wish to share excess meal funds with others attempt to evade university policies, which YU claims are based on state law. But is there any truth to this?

According to rules promulgated by University Dining Services, YU Caf Card funds are non-transferable — even between siblings — and are non-refundable at the end of the academic year. Students upload a fixed amount of money to their accounts at the beginning of the semester and are able to purchase food without incurring tax throughout the semester at on-campus dining facilities, as well as participating off-campus restaurants and establishments. Unused money rolls over from the fall semester to the spring semester, but not to the summer season, nor to the following fall. Additionally, the university limits bulk purchases to \$100 per day and does not allow students to purchase more than six of the same item on one day. Failure to abide by these rules can lead to the confiscation of one’s Caf Card and the remaining balance on the account. The university further justifies this policy by citing analogous rules in place at other universities throughout New York State.

Under New York law, sales tax is required to be charged on purchases made from restaurants, taverns, caterers and vending machines. *See e.g. N.Y. Tax Law § 1105(d)*. However, the statute provides an exemption, inter alia, for purchases of items made at authorized universities — with the exclusion of alcoholic beverages — in instances in which

the transaction is made “under a contractual arrangement whereby the student does not pay cash at the time he is served,” referring to university meal plans. *See N.Y. Tax Law § 1105(d)(ii)(b)*. Meals sold at elementary, middle and high schools are exempt from tax under this statute as well. *Id.*

Indeed, many university-based student meal plans operate on a “swipe system,” under which students purchase a given number of swipes prior to the semester, and do not receive a refund for unused swipes. This policy is codified in New York administrative law. *See 20 NYCRR § 527.8(h)(2)*.

However, even with respect to monetary-based systems — such as the one in place at Yeshiva University, in which students purchase a non-refundable, dollar-based plan

institutions. “Similar to the practices of many colleges and universities in New York State, Yeshiva’s meal plan allows for a carryover of unused meal plan monies only through the end of the spring semester, which corresponds to the end of the contractual meal plan period and academic year,” said Randy Apfelbaum, the University’s Chief Facilities and Administrative Officer. Apfelbaum claimed that due to the non-taxable status of YU’s meal plan, students are afforded “an almost 9 percent discount.”

The legality of the OMNI fund program in place at YU, in which a portion of meal plan funds may be applied towards outside restaurants, is a bit more checkered with respect to tax exemption. The statute specifies that a restaurant must be located “on the

authority or precedent in administrative or case law that allows for such a program.

No basis could be found in the law for YU’s policies limiting daily purchases to a maximum limit of \$100, and further prohibiting students from buying more than six of the same item on a given day. “The limits are in place for inventory control purposes to ensure the availability of products for all students and to avoid unanticipated shortages due to significant one-time purchases,” Apfelbaum said.

State lawmakers contacted by The Commentator in reference to the laws governing university meal plans were largely unaware that current New York law barred refunds to students. Several legislators pledged to look into changing the laws gov-

*State lawmakers contacted by The Commentator in reference to the laws governing university meal plans were largely unaware that current New York law barred refunds to students. Several legislators pledged to look into changing the laws governing student meal plan refunds.*

at the beginning of the academic year — the law appears to bar refunds and transfers. Pursuant to *20 NYCRR § 527.8(h)(3)*, if a university allows for payment via a transferable, non-personal “scrip” — essentially, an electronic card — the meal plan would be subject to tax. However, if such a “scrip”-based system is created with mechanisms to ensure its non-transferability and non-refundability based on the unused balance of a given student’s account, the plan would be exempt from sales tax pursuant to the provisions of *N.Y. Tax Law § 1105(d)(ii)(b)*. *See e.g. In re: Jody Ann Michelman, TSB-A-84(8)S*. Accordingly, “Caf-Daddying” through the sharing and/or refundment of meal plan funds would incur liability to pay tax.

The university justified its meal plan rules, which allow dining funds to be carried over from the fall semester to the spring, but not to the summer semester, by citing protocols in place at other higher education

premises of a college, university or school” to be eligible for inclusion in a tax-exempt student meal plan. *See N.Y. Tax Law § 1105(d)(ii)(b)*. A New York-based university placed students into a nearby hotel for the purpose of overflow housing, and students used their meal cards to swipe into the breakfast bar at the hotel. In an advisory opinion, the New York State Department of Taxation and Finance ruled that tax must be paid on these off-campus meals, which do not fall into the narrow statutory exemptions for student meal purchases. *See NY Adv Op Comm T & F TSB-A-92-(68)I*. The legality of the tax-exempt status of YU’s OMNI plan is questionable.

YU contends that as the university’s campuses “are located in an urban environment without defined campus boundaries,” students are able to use their meal plan funds at participating restaurants in the vicinity of YU campuses and dormitory facilities. A YU spokesperson did not state any statutory

erning student meal plan refunds.

A university spokesperson did not comment as to whether YU and its contracted lobbying firms would oppose legislation mandating students be refunded their unused meal plan money.

“I’m glad that this issue was brought to my attention,” said State Sen. Liz Krueger (D-Manhattan), who chairs the Senate Finance Committee. “We should be doing all we can to help make college more affordable. My office is reviewing current tax law and regulations — hopefully we can develop a solution that will allow both students and colleges to save money.”

State Sen. Toby Ann Stavisky (D-Queens), chair of the Senate Higher Education Committee, will push the State Department of Taxation and Finance to “reconsider” the administrative regulations it has promulgated barring student meal plan refunds, according to her spokesperson, Sabiel Chapnick.



The Furman Cafeteria on the Wilf Campus

## Yeshiva University UNDERGRADUATES can take courses at the Bernard Revel Graduate School of Jewish Studies.

Classes are open to students either within the BA/MA Program or as upper-class undergraduates taking graduate courses with permission.

### CLASS SCHEDULE FOR SUMMER 2019

#### MONDAY, TUESDAY, THURSDAY

9:00 – 10:40 A.M.

**Perelis:** JHI 6407 Marranos and Other Heretics

10:50 AM – 12:30 P.M.

**Angel:** JHI 6233 Dead Sea Scrolls

6:00 – 7:40 P.M.

**Rynhold:** JPH 6862 Nietzsche and Modern Jewish Philosophy

7:50 – 9:30 P.M.

**Yitzhak Berger:** BIB 7325 Book of Judges

### CLASS SCHEDULE FOR FALL 2019

#### MONDAY

2:49 P.M.

**Eichler:** BIB 6605 Biblical Legal Texts: Parshat Mishpatim

**Tsadik:** JHI 5337 Jews in the Lands of Islam III  
[Professor will be teaching remotely]

4:50 P.M.

**Carlebach:** JHI 5400 Jews in Early Modern Europe: 1492–1760

**Rynhold:** JPH 6872 Jewish Existentialism: Buber & Rosenzweig

6:50 P.M.

**Koller:** BIB 5203 Biblical Hebrew

**Rynhold:** JPH 5011 Survey of Medieval Jewish Philosophy

#### TUESDAY

2:49 P.M.

**Dauber:** JPH 6522 Secrecy in Jewish Thought

**Hurvitz:** TAS 5872 Midrashic Literature of the Amoraim

4:50 P.M.

**Cohen:** BIB 6084 The Medieval Peshat Tradition, c. 900–1300

**Gurock:** JHI 5571 American Jewish History: 1654–1881

6:50 P.M.

**Olson:** JHI 6419 Zionist Culture Before the State of Israel

**Hurvitz:** TAS 7809 The Editing of Critical Editions of Rabbinic Literature

#### WEDNESDAY

2:49 P.M.

**David Berger:** JHI 5321 Medieval Jewish History: Christian Europe

**Mermelstien:** JHI 6242 Perspectives on Halakhah in Jewish Antiquity

**Tsadik:** JHI 7600 Reading Modern Arabic Sources on Jews and Judaism  
[Professor will be teaching remotely]

4:50 P.M.

**Eichler:** BIB 5115 Introduction to Biblical Studies II

**Karlip:** JHI 6444 Jewish Modernity in Lithuania: From Talmud & Mussar to Revolution & Zionism

6:50 P.M.

**Leiman:** BIB 6611 Book of Deuteronomy

**Zimmerman:** JHI 6484 Destruction of European Jewry: 1933–1945

#### THURSDAY

2:49 P.M.

**Angel:** JHI 5213 Second Temple Jewish Literature

**Dauber:** JPH 5350 Introduction to Jewish Mysticism

4:50 P.M.

**Kanarfogel:** JHI 6832 Topics in History of Halakhah II

**Hidary:** TAS 5801 Introduction to Tannaitic Literature

6:50 P.M.

**Fine:** JHI 6285 The Synagogue in the Greco-Roman World

**Perelis:** JHI 6386 The Sephardic Atlantic

#### Language

**Tsadik:** SEM 5111 Arabic I  
(Monday and Wednesday, 4:40–5:55 p.m.)  
[Professor will be teaching remotely]



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Bernard Revel Graduate School  
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## Law Review

# Updating the Voting Process

By EZRA BAYNASH

One of the beauties of our current form of democracy is the ability to freely voice our concerns and question the leadership of this great country. This political dialogue comes to its zenith in the single greatest act of democracy, the vote. Voting enables citizens to select which people and policies they would prefer to direct their country.

The current voting system consists of booths scattered throughout a random assortment of government offices, schools, sports halls and churches. In these “polling places,” there are a few methods of casting a ballot which include: paper ballots, punch cards, optically readable paper ballots and electronic voting machines. There is also the option of absentee ballots for those who would like to vote but will not be in their home state at the time of the election.

Our problem lies not in the act of voting, but rather in the process in which it is carried out in the United States. The current system is a mess. Tallying the votes is a nightmare due to the many methods and the need to hand count millions of ballots in some districts. Additionally, it can sometimes be difficult to determine whether the hole on the ballot was completely punched out or not. This creates uncertainty as to which candidate the individual voted for.

In the modern age of cynicism, many question the instrument that defines democracy. They claim that the system is rigged and votes are not correctly tallied. What stops a polling station staff member from disposing of paper ballots supporting the candidate they do not support? If there is no digital recording of a vote we can never be sure it is counted. If every vote is not counted correctly then the U.S. is not a democracy. The U.S. is better than the corrupt governments that fix their elections and our voting system should differentiate ourselves from them.

Thankfully, there is a simple solution to this problem: digitize all forms of voting. At present, nearly all forms of communication

and important documents are digitized; it should be no different for voting. I sympathize with the argument that transferring the voting system to the internet would make it more susceptible to hacking and other illegal voting practices. However, one thing we could do is require all polling stations to use a completely electronic voting machine. This would spare

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*We need to prioritize fixing a system that is clearly broken with a solution that could be seamlessly implemented.*

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us the wasted time in hand counting ballots and improve accuracy in recording the vote towards the correct candidate.

Digitizing the vote can also reduce fraud. The state governments could require every voter to present an ID card which would indicate the state a voter is registered to vote for. This, combined with a personalized voting PIN, would allow votes to be counted towards the correct district no matter the location the vote is cast.

For those who vote via absentee ballots, a proposed solution is for states to set up one booth per polling place dedicated to those from out of state. They could vote in the same location that everyone else is voting and it would count in the state from which they originate. The aforementioned PIN number would allow the government to ensure that each vote is counted in the state of residence of the voter, even when they vote as an absentee. The U.S. could set up a similar system in embassies for citizens who are voting in foreign countries.

Voting is what makes the U.S. a country for the people and by the people. An outdated process skews the results and is inefficient. We need to prioritize fixing a system that is clearly broken with a solution that could be seamlessly implemented.

## Flashbacks



*... end of a busy year*

*“...end of a busy year”*

*May 27, 1959; Volume 24 Issue 14*



# A Settler's Remorse: The Holy Spirit of Israel's Middle Class

By ARYEH SCHONBRUN

When I made *aliyah* two years ago, I did so in the hopes that I would meet my Jewish country-folk, integrate into Israeli society and identify with the political reality that made my overseas migration possible. However, I made many mistakes in my wanderings and until quite recently felt frustrated in my attempts to become part of Israeli society. I felt alienated, foreign, uninvolved and disconnected, unmoored and anti-social. My friends shared my enthusiasm and ideology but I remained aloof, slowly losing my idealism and my dreams.

I write to you now in the hope that I might help those considering *aliyah* with their daunting task. I myself lacked the necessary guidance in my experience. My mentors lacked the fundamental perspective that would have helped me understand my experience and my position in Israeli society. I deemed them too American, too Israeli, too idealistic, too pragmatic, and lacking the essential well-roundedness to guide me on my voyage of discovery. I failed to appreciate some quality advice at the time, and I suffered as a consequence, but I also do not regret the ambition of the adventurous, brave young man who set out to figuratively conquer Israel. I wanted to know my new country, to experience its society, and the knowledge that I have accumulated may one day make the pain I suffered worthwhile. Until then, I wish to convey to you, my friends, my findings as regards the Israeli nation.

Israel is a young nation. We recently celebrated 71 years since its birth, but Israeli society has existed for much longer than that. The people of Israel were not born alongside the state, they existed millennia as Jews, Muslims, Christians, etc. Accordingly, in order to understand Israeli society, one must disregard the post-modern, superficial designation of "Israeli." We are more than a neat, unified definition.

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*"Tel Aviv has no spirit!", spout the settler leaders who have identified God's commandments with their American-style homes in the lush hills of the Judea and Samaria. "The settlers live on stolen land!", retort the leftist-elite, as they pursue their interests in Israel's speculative stock/housing bubble."*

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Israel is an old and weary nation. She has suffered much in her 71 years of life, and the Jews suffered much more. My rabbi likes to comment that while we commemorate the 23,741 brave men and women who died *al kiddush Hashem* every *Yom HaZikaron*, many, many more died in the anonymous pogroms that swept through Eastern Europe in the years that preceded the Holocaust.

Israel is a scarred society, we still remember the suicide bombs and the wars. We feel the wrath of Gaza's eye of Sauron, forever gazing on our border communities and making life uncomfortable, traumatic and absurd. Around six months ago, I spent a few days visiting friends along the Gaza border, and, inauspiciously, my poorly timed visit resulted in my sleeping a few nights in their *yeshiva's* bomb shelter, a precaution we took on account of deadly barrages that bombarded our homes and psyches.

Don't you dare think that we have given up hope for peace; we don't have any feud with the Gazan public. Just understand that peace remains a far-off dream when western-backed dictatorships like Hamas destroy our

peace of mind and our daily routines. We live in constant fear, mongered by corrupt politicians and western influence, but we insist on living our lives proudly as Jewish Israelis.

But Israeli society is not uniform. We are not all equals. Western influence has corrupted the fabric of our society, creating the pseudo-identity of a united Israeli public that lacks the bare essentials of national cohesion. Middle Israel has its issues. Ashkenazim and Sephardim have their differences. We fight amongst ourselves over the most minute and stupid thing: money. We don't have enough money, yet we can't have enough of it. Money pervades our societal interactions, spoils our societal interactions and uproots the commonality that could one day unite us together. Money and status become the gods of Israel, money and the hedonistic pursuit of raw, unrefined happiness scourges our countryside, destroying our morale and debilitating our national resolve.

Israel is a divided country. Jewish Israel exists as a thin slither of a densely-packed population and as a dispersed periphery, sandwiched between dueling elites and neglected by all. Tel Aviv, along with its elitist satellite communities continuously confirms its identity as a non-Jewish agglomeration of suntanned, white colonialists, uninterested in their surroundings, indifferent to the struggle of their less-fortunate brethren. To the Tel-Aviv elitist, weed and a vegan diet matter more than the impoverished situation of fellow Jews. To the bourgeois, apathetic elitist politician, the interests of marginal groups such as settlers, LGBTQ, migrant workers and Haredi draft-objectors matter more than the struggle for survival that more and more middle-class Israelis must experience. Israel's southern border got ransacked and pillaged and there's a housing bubble, but the show must go on. Joy to Israel, Eurovision is come.

The settler elite has also forsaken the plight of the Jewish nation. In redefining Israel's Jewishness around geographic artificiality, they have distanced themselves

from us, from Torah and from God. They have turned holy land into political bargaining chips, indifferently exploiting Middle-Israel's youth to guard their elite, bourgeois communities from the expropriated peasants they have unjustly impoverished, while manipulatively guiding oversized budgets to their elitist communities, schools and public infrastructure. Seconds after hearing of any terror incident involving settlers, municipal leaders instinctively force upon the terrified, stunned public the issue of settlement expansion, defacing the memory of the dead and deifying the Stalinist-style monstrosities they call housing that defile the land and cause havoc for its inhabitants.

Monotonous rows of identical, adjoined houses have become vogue in many places of Israel, exposing the true nature of the Israeli bourgeois. Though these elites insist on facading their houses with Jerusalem stone, thereby raping the land as a result (through aggressive, inefficient quarrying done by the impoverished Palestinians under the auspices of settler businessmen), they fill their identical concrete homes with



Israel's Dueling Elites

WIKIMEDIA COMMONS

vacuous sentiment, neo-religious dogma and systemic corruption.

And they fight. "Tel Aviv has no spirit!", spout the settler leaders who have identified God's commandments with their American-style homes in the lush hills of the Judea and Samaria. "The settlers live on stolen land!", retort the leftist-elite, as they pursue their interests in Israel's speculative stock/housing bubble.

And we watch them. In the news, in the streets, demonstrating and yelling. We read about them, we vote for them and we almost always lose.

We feel unnerved by the infighting, but, as I have come to understand, we don't do the fighting. We watch as Israeli society falls apart, torn asunder by the warring, dueling, tag-teaming elites.

When you come to Israel, don't visit Tel-Aviv and don't spend time in the fenced-in, gated communities of the bourgeois settlements. Don't make the mistake that I made when I threw my lot in with the country's elites; when I sought out false consciousness among my elitist, obnoxious settler friends and snobby socialist "allies." I made friends and did not waste my time isolated from my environment. But I painfully understood that friends who cannot identify with your struggle for existence, friends who have experienced lives of luxury (both social and material) and have been taught to condescend from a young age, who have been forcibly extricated from the natural rhythm of life by over-exacting expectations, ideological turmoil, speculative philosophic babble and alienation from society, cannot help me in my goal to find the Jewish people. They, like me, struggled with egotistic nonconformity. They, like me, were corrupted by Western imperialism.

I grew up in a small, outlying community of Jewish New York, close enough to taste the joys of the opulent Jewish establishment, far enough away to see my non-Jewish neighbors and envy their natural lives. I attended an upper-class Jewish elementary school, so I "naturally" interacted only with upper-class, Jewish children. We could not afford to live in the luxurious suburban paradises alongside most of my classmates, and so I would find myself alone during vacations, nights and weekends, alienated from my elitist peers. I longed for normal friends, but my Jewish identity stood in the way. I was different, taught to separate myself from the gentile population, and thus endured a long, lonely childhood.

In high school, I connected with some down-to-earth peers from the more traditional, grounded communities associated with YU, but, even then, the geographical and cultural differences kept me apart. I could not assimilate into the superficial artifice of Teaneck society, with its specific

code of conduct and social norms. I grew up with an independence that superseded my allegiance to what seemed to me as a foreign, external hierarchical structure. Hearing the names of rabbis and successful families had some effect on me, though I failed to integrate myself into the system. I could not find my footing in the homogeneity of Modern-Orthodox society. It lacked the authenticity, intimacy and sincerity of my small-town community.

When I meet and connect with normal, average, middle-class Israelis, I feel as if I am returning to my childhood self — to the young, alienated boy in need of friends. I complete the long, drawn-out search for belonging that began all those years back, when I suffered from the class-dynamics of suburban, post-war American sprawl. My battered soul finds respite in the middle-class Israeli identity, which still has room for me and will hopefully adopt me as one of its own. Only with my enslaved brethren will I find solace; only alongside my distressed brothers do I feel a sense of identity and dignity.

I made the mistake of following my gut and accepting warmth and support without a second thought. I was young, afraid and lonely, and the siren-song of the elitist settler communities, strong and idealistic, appealed to my senses as authentic, true Judaism. I was entranced by the familiarity of American, Ashkenazi elitism. Hearing my mother tongue spoken unabashedly in public, knowing that others had made the same daring journey that I had and "succeeded" desensitized my defenses and diminished my intuitive resistance to an exploitative, bourgeois, irresponsible and inept society. I desperately needed the love that I received from my friends and mentors at *yeshiva*, I was lonely, though I now know that their hugs belied their true feelings, and that I was never to be part of their own. Sadly, I was betrayed by the gross nature of such superficial attributes. Upon the sorrows of many innocents they built their beacon to the nations, upon stolen land and political machinations they continue to consolidate their political prowess.

I strongly urge anyone who desires to make *aliyah* to heed my warning. Do not affect yourself to the elitist circles of Israeli society. They harbor no spiritual advantage, nor do they offer a safe solace from Israeli society. I pity those fools who continue to pursue such illusory societies. They will surely fail in their ultimate goal and they will be corrupted by the forces that be. I pity those idealists who see Israel as their savior, who think that the land radiates magical qualities that minimize the suffering of the

Continued on Page 20

## From the YCSA Vice President's Desk

## Shut Down the Volozhin Yeshiva

By AKIVA FRISHMAN

While this column reflects the views of a single, outgoing vice president, it should also serve as the “official” position of the Yeshiva College Student Association (YCSA) regarding the “Volozhin Yeshiva” controversy.

The recent revision of the Jewish Studies Core coupled with a disproportionate number of entries on Volozhin Yeshiva’s spreadsheet that disparage certain Bible and Jewish History courses encouraged me to exclusively address the group’s relevance to the Jewish Studies Department, ignoring the broader conversation surrounding what is/isn’t appropriate in the Humanities. Though surely well-intentioned, the Volozhin Yeshiva’s leaders are responsible for a forum that unduly ignores the value of this college’s Jewish Studies curriculum, while simultaneously providing a platform for outright *chutzpah*.

The respondents on the Volozhin Yeshiva’s survey who warn of troubling passages in the Dead Sea Scrolls and the inclusion of “a critical understanding of the Rambam’s 13 Principles” either misunderstand or simply disregard the value of an academic approach to Jewish Studies. As a whole, the methods that instructors use in this field are entirely correct. It is irrational to deny the fact that a familiarity with the ancient Egyptian language pro-

valuable courses.

It’s also important to recognize the unique position that this university occupies within the study of *Tanakh* and Jewish Studies. In almost all other institutions across the world, the concept of the Torah having divine origins is largely ignored, if not ridiculed. The Orthodox student’s reverence for the Torah, *Chazal* and *mesorah* are virtues that provide an otherwise nonexistent vantage point in Jewish Studies; his research papers and course discussions elevate the collective academic discourse by contributing a valuable perspective.

I will admit that engaging in certain sources can be difficult, perhaps causing students to question, debate and doubt certain long-held assumptions. But is that really a bad thing? Yeshiva College, as a liberal arts institution, intends to provoke a thoughtful, intellectually rigorous discussion. If a student graduates without ever challenging a single belief from his adolescence, how valuable is his diploma? Is it not concerning that a person might uproot mountains in the *beit midrash* but refuse to grapple with the theological significance of an ancient Assyrian treaty?

Luckily, this college recognizes the inherent risk in freely exposing students to contradictory ideas and, therefore, creates a structure to mitigate potential harm. A crucial component of the Bible course “Text,

is proof that this university values an intellectually sophisticated discussion about *Tanakh* and Jewish History. If it didn’t, I’m sure it could have done away with such a curriculum long ago, instead providing each student with an Artscroll Feldheim subscription. Just as Calculus requires familiarity with derivatives and Biology an awareness

the not-so-subtle implication of the entire spreadsheet, as well as the call-to-action email, is that these professors are engaging in destructive, sinful behavior. Again, a hefty attack to launch upon respected educators. Second, while some students might have carefully arrived at the conclusion that academic Jewish Studies is not for them,



The Glueck Beit Midrash

YU NEWS

*Though surely well-intentioned, the Volozhin Yeshiva’s leaders are responsible for a forum that unduly ignores the value of this college’s Jewish Studies curriculum, simultaneously providing a platform for outright chutzpah.*

vides a useful tool to better understand *Sefer Shemot*. Similarly, engaging with passages in Matthew or reading the writings of the Church fathers help illuminate the nature of our Jewish ancestors’ communities and provide insights into their theological values and beliefs. If one is serious about understanding his traditions, if he desires a more authentic perspective on Jewish Studies, it is only logical that he take full advantage of the tools in this college’s classrooms.

Yes, I am aware that certain rabbinic figures dismiss and/or flat out prohibit certain aspects of academic Jewish Studies. I am certainly on no footing to disagree with their conclusions nor present an opposing *halakhic* rationale. My intention is to encourage students to carefully evaluate the breadth of perspectives on this important issue and weigh the consequences of refusing to engage with such studies. Many articles exist from faculty members like Professors Carmy and Eichler that present well-reasoned arguments in favor of a curriculum that includes academic perspectives. Students submitting responses would be wise to spend their time reading some of these essays rather than present overly simplistic dismissals of

Context, and Tradition,” until recently a prerequisite for other Judaic courses, is to slowly accustom students to a more academic approach to *Tanakh*, sensitively addressing theological concerns and creating a safe space from which to contend with difficult questions. Further, this course, specifically, is often taught by Rabbi Jeremy Wieder, a RIETS *rosh yeshiva* and preeminent scholar in Jewish Studies who certainly has the wherewithal to help students navigate this complex field. In addition, a host of rabbis in the Isaac Breuer College, including Rabbi Hayyim Angel, offer courses that are steeped in traditional interpretation but still introduce other, secular explanations to religious dilemmas, cultivating a healthy, religiously inspiring environment.

The sad reality is that the majority of Jewish elementary and high schools do not prepare their students to think critically about *Tanakh*. They, instead, establish an extraordinarily flimsy foundation for productive discussions later in life. This is not Yeshiva University’s fault nor is it productive to build upon these past failures by avoiding important discussions in Jewish Studies.

The existence of the Jewish Core, not to mention the Bernard Revel Graduate School,

of human anatomy, a genuine, authentic discussion of *Tanakh* and Jewish History often demands an examination of ancient Semitic languages, Rashi’s historical context and yes, sometimes Christian Gospels. For students to warn of such topics — or worse, for the university to encourage censorship — is a disservice that hampers intellectual honesty.

But what is perhaps more disturbing about the Volozhin Yeshiva forum is its total lack of respect for Yeshiva College’s educators. Though their complete anonymity precludes verification, I am certain that they, like myself, were disappointed in The Commentator’s initial failure to address certain *Rabbeim* with their correct title earlier this semester. *Kal V’Chomer*, it should be troubling that the value of these scholars is relegated to one sentence anecdotes like “he quoted a passage in Paul,” ignoring their immense contributions to the field of Jewish Studies.

If the Volozhin Yeshiva group is correct in their contention that the threats that foreign ideas pose to our Jewish tradition are so intense, should we not stand in awe of the faculty that engages to the fullest extent with these topics and yet still dawn kippot? Does one not owe sincere *kavod* to those who have surmounted such obstacles? Professors Rynhold, Mermelstein and Koller — among the many other instructors not listed on the group’s Excel sheet — play vital, unique roles within academia, offering rare insights that draw upon both Jewish tradition and secular knowledge. Students should not only take their courses but derive religious inspiration from them as well.

Supporters of the forum might argue that it’s a harmless way of supplying students with a resource to make a more informed decision about their courses. However,

it is likely that far too many will take the comments out of context and arrive at a premature decision.

The issue of censorship and exactly how much “heretical” material to include in a Jewish institution is certainly recurring and complex, but the Volozhin Yeshiva’s strategy is not helpful. If they truly wanted to assist fellow students, they could organize a panel with *roshei yeshiva* and Bible professors and engage in legitimate discussion. A “Down with Bible Club” or plastering signs and pamphlets with rabbinic sources in opposition to an academic Jewish Studies curriculum would even show more sophistication and perhaps deserve credit. An anonymous, unendorsed, disrespectful email campaign is simply unbecoming of a university student.

As I reflect on my years in YU, I am struck by the impact that the Jewish Studies curriculum had on both my religious and academic growth. A course in Deuteronomy forced me to grapple with conflicting viewpoints, but simultaneously provided me with a stronger appreciation for our Torah and bolstered my theological convictions. True, Classical and Medieval Jewish History included Christian sources and troubling Rabbinic texts, but they also engendered intellectual honesty and a framework to better understand our Jewish community’s relationship with contemporary society. I will graduate immeasurably grateful to this department and its faculty.

There are many aspects of this college that are admirable, but its Jewish Studies curriculum makes it truly unique amongst institutions of higher education. Let’s embrace the opportunities that this department affords and reject short-sighted attempts to discredit it.

(and meet Sephardim) and forego any idealistic condescension (no one cares that you made *aliyah*). Americans have accustomed ourselves to a luxurious lifestyle. Proximity to the political establishment has wetted our appetites for power, comfort and stability. *Real* Israeli society provides none of the above. It diminishes the individuality of its citizens, it prefers practicality over comfort and it offers little stability for the middle-class worker. Such a challenge poses much

difficulty for older *olim* and it requires great sacrifice for even young dreamers, but it remains a necessary path to citizenship for any prospective immigrant. If you cannot conform, if you cannot accept the mundane, unenlightened Israeli society, you are not welcome here. If you can maintain your integrity and Jewish spirit, we shall embrace you as one of our own.

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I have been informed that this piece

technically concludes my writing tenure (20+ pieces!) here at The Commentator. I very much enjoyed the opportunity this paper granted me to write home once-in-a-while and apprise my friends and family of my thoughts, opinions and activities. I hope that I provided an enlightening perspective for the paper’s readers. I wish the next generation of students much success.

*Leshanah Haba’a Beyerushalayim Habenuyah.*

ALIYAH,  
continued from Page 19

soul. It is not so. That is a speculative lie.

If you wish to join the Jewish people of Israel, you must make sacrifices. You must enslave yourself to the economic corruption of neo-liberal policies, consign yourself to the diabolical characteristics of anonymous, post-modern society. You must learn Hebrew well, acquaint yourself with Jewish history

## Is the Battle of Our Generation Over?

By **SAMUEL GELMAN (HOUSTON, TX)**

Yeshiva University has many mysterious clubs: the Rowing Club — where exactly do they row? — the Yiddish Club — have you ever heard anyone speaking Yiddish on campus? — and the Civil Air Patrol club — is that why there are so many helicopters around campus? However, perhaps no club has spawned more informal conversation than the Kedushas Yisroel *chabura*.

Formerly known as the Kedushas Habris *chabura*, the Kedushas Yisroel *chabura* has been active on the Wilf Campus for around two years, with its purpose being to discuss the Jewish prohibition of male masturbation. However, the *chabura* did not start at YU. Its origins can be traced back to Yeshivat Sha'arei Mevaseret Zion (Mevaseret). In the 2012-2013 *yeshiva* cycle, word spread that a student in Mevaseret had been abstinent from masturbation for a few years. Students became curious as to how he accomplished this, so he started a semi-formal *chabura* where he discussed his mindset and approach to the issue. The following year, a different *shana bet* student decided to take over, giving the *chabura* a more formal style with different speakers — usually rabbis from Mevaseret but some other *yeshivot* as well — every week, and it has continued this way ever since. Eventually, another Mevaseret alum, Eli Friedman, brought the *chabura* to the Wilf Campus.

The YU edition of the *chabura* for the Fall 2018 semester usually ran roughly once a week, for around 30 minutes per each *chabura* between 5:45 p.m. and 6:45 p.m., in the Rubin Shul or the Sephardic Beit Midrash in Morgenstern Hall. Of the seven sessions I attended this past fall, the *chabura* averaged around 22 people per week, with a maximum of 34 attendees and a minimum of 17. While no doubt some people attended the *chabura* for the free pizza — which was served every

week and advertised on every flier and ystud (YU's male undergraduate listserv) related to the club — most people stayed in the room for the entire session, with a maximum of four people leaving one particular *chabura* early. The meetings attracted students from all five corners of the Wilf Campus, with students from YP, BMP, IBC, JSS and Makor — a program for young men with intellectual disabilities — all represented among the attendees. Not everyone came to every meeting; new faces appeared every week, while others disappeared for a few meetings before coming back for another.

While many students have heard of the *chabura* and are aware that it deals with male masturbation, very few seem to know what actually happens when the group meets. Ask any student on the Wilf Campus about the *chabura* and they will most likely claim that it is either a masturbation support group modeled after Alcoholics Anonymous or an intense *mussar* session where a rabbi

chaburot and, when they did, it was always a clarification for a source or statement. No personal stories, experiences or ideas were shared from students.

That is not to say that the topic of masturbation never came up. When he first introduced the purpose of the *chabura*, Eli Friedman explained that his goal was to bring the topic and struggle of masturbation “out into an open dialogue” and remove the sense of “taboo” from the topic.

Friedman stressed in the second session of semester that many people deal with this issue and that it is a “normal” struggle. He explained that every second is a “battlefield” and that even stopping for 30 seconds before committing the act to think about it is a victory.

During his session, one rabbi said that students should focus less on the *Zohar* that discusses the lack of repentance for male masturbation and turn their attention to the idea from the *Gemara* in *Kiddushin* that

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*Rather than focusing on masturbation and pornography itself, the speakers gave light mussar about general spiritual improvement.*

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yells at you for 30 minutes about how you are murdering future members of *am Yisroel*. However, this is far from the truth.

Speakers at each meeting varied, from Eli Friedman to YU *roshei yeshiva* such as Rabbi Yitzchok Cohen and Rabbi Hershel Reichman. However, the topic was almost always the same. Rather than focusing on masturbation and pornography itself, the speakers gave light *mussar* about general spiritual improvement. Ideas and anecdotes regarding overcoming obstacles and setting realistic goals came up frequently, and the speakers encouraged students to get back up when they spiritually fell and to understand that they are not defined only by their actions. Students rarely spoke at these

even a *rasha* (wicked person) can become a *tzaddik* (righteous person) with thoughts of repentance. He emphasized the importance of not punishing oneself excessively and to be at peace with the fact that no one is perfect.

Of all the speakers, only Rabbi Cohen focused on outside factors, asking multiple times, “where is the respect?” when addressing the issue of women’s dress and how it influences a man’s desires. This stood in contrast to the rest of speakers, who spoke mostly about the internal battle without placing blame on any one reason in particular. Another speaker that differed in his approach to the issue was Rabbi Reichman, who gave practical advice and solutions for how students can avoid the temptation for

sin, including creating a “safe environment” by searching for a partner through Yachad and HASC rather than online, using online filters, using a buddy system — where two people check and help each other with the struggle — and using the internet only for essential items such as email and Torah learning.

The speakers did not offer any scientific perspective that claimed masturbation is natural and healthy, nor did they go into the history of the prohibition and how it came to be. However, the first session, led by Friedman, focused on statistics that showed that 40-50% of divorces come from pornography and presented other sociological studies.

While the *chabura* is often associated with the book “The Battle of Our Generation” and uses the same color scheme and photo for its fliers, it actually has nothing to do with the book. The book was never quoted, distributed or even mentioned in any of the sessions. The anonymous author of the book did come to speak at the final *chabura* of the 2017-2018 academic year, but The Commentator did not attend that session and cannot provide details on what was discussed there.

Despite the sense of urgency that went along with the marketing of the *chabura*, it is no longer functioning on campus. Friedman departed YU at the end of the Fall 2018 semester and no one has taken over since then. It remains unclear if the *chabura* will resume next year.

Despite the efforts of the *chabura*, it seems that the taboo of the topic has not yet disappeared, as dozens of students who were asked to comment on the article refused to do so. However, the *chabura* has spread to other *yeshivot* such as Yeshivat Har Etzion, and it has sparked a somewhat muted conversation on the Wilf Campus. So, while this semester’s battle may have been lost, the war rages on.

# KEDUSHAS YISROEL CHABURA

THE BATTLE FOR PERSONAL KEDUSHA

**SPEAKER: ELI FRIEDMAN**

**WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 19**

**RUBIN SHUL**

**6:00 – 6:30**

**FREE PIZZA**



# Chiefs, NFL Take Giant Leap Backward on Domestic Violence

By **ELLIOT HELLER**

In February of 2014, Baltimore Ravens Pro-Bowl running back Ray Rice was investigated for assaulting his then-fiancee in an elevator in Atlantic City. The league initially suspended Rice for two games. This decision was very controversial; critics questioned why it was only half the length of the mandated suspension for players who violate the league's performance-enhancing drugs policy and argued that this penalty sent the message that the league does not view domestic violence in a serious enough light.

A few months later, TMZ obtained and released a video of the incident. Rice, who had been fully honest with the Ravens and the league in explaining what had transpired that night, now faced mass outrage from media and fans, many of whom called for his suspension to be increased and for him to be released by the team. They got their wish on both counts. Rice was released from the Ravens and his suspension was changed to "indefinite." Rice sued the league for increasing his punishment merely in response to the video (the contents of which he had already admitted to), and won his case. The NFL clearly botched this, a fact Commissioner Roger Goodell admitted. The initial suspension should have been longer, and the attempt at redemption upon the video's release was too late and ineffective. One would hope that the league learned a lesson or two from this incident.

Rice, for his part, began to make public appearances speaking out against domestic violence, speaking primarily to audiences of young men. He also agreed to be the subject of an hour-long NFL-sponsored video highlighting the topic. (Whether this was a sincere expression of remorse or merely an attempt to revive his NFL career is unclear, but I applaud Rice for doing this regardless, and I think he deserves the benefit of the doubt.) While this may have at least somewhat mended Rice's public image, the damage to his NFL career had been done. The former all-pro and Super Bowl champion never played another down in the league.

Fast forward to the spring of 2016. Wide receiver Tyreek Hill of West Alabama has impressed scouts with his blazing speed. However, his draft stock is lower than it would have been, due to his criminal record. In 2014, Hill was sentenced to three years of probation for choking and punching Crystal Espinal, his pregnant girlfriend. This led to his dismissal from his Oklahoma State University's football team and subsequent transfer to West Alabama. Maybe I should say that again. Hill pled guilty to *choking* and *punching his pregnant girlfriend*. While I am a believer in second chances, I think and hope we can all agree that there are some actions that do not merit one. But sadly, the Kansas City Chiefs disagreed, and they selected Hill in the fifth round of the 2016 draft.

After a promising rookie year, Hill absolutely burst onto the scene in 2017. He averaged over 80 receptions and 1,200 receiving yards in 2017 and 2018, defying defenders with his blazing speed, and burning them on several big plays. Hill earned Pro Bowl appearances in each of his first three seasons and was a key part of the Chiefs' run to the AFC Championship game in January. After three years and no off-the-field, the Chiefs' gamble that Hill — who had taken a 52-week batterer intervention course as part of his plea deal — would stay out of trouble was seemingly paying off.

Then came March 2019. Police were called to Hill's home on two separate occasions, once for a report of an "alleged battery

involving a juvenile," which resulted in Hill's and Espinal's (now his fiance) three-year-old son breaking his arm, and the second in response to a report of "child abuse or neglect." The Chiefs and the NFL chose to let the legal process play itself out rather than take action — a common course of action during the offseason, and one which is understandable.

*The message is clear: if you are a good enough player, your behavior is irreproachable.*

Hill was not charged in either case, and on April 24, the local prosecutor announced that due to a lack of evidence no charges would be brought. The next day, a local news station played a recording Espinal had se-

man from ever stepping foot on an NFL field again. Now add in the child abuse accusation, which he did not deny on the tape. (Isn't that the first thing you would do if someone accused you of hitting your child with a belt?) Is there really even a question?

There is one conclusion which has been made utterly evident and which will not change no matter how many records he may break: Tyreek Hill is a thug. He is a repeat and dangerous offender who has no place in the NFL, a league which claims to have moral standards and aims to have its players serve as role models to society. Sadly and inexplicably, the Chiefs have not released Hill, nor has the league issued even an indefinite suspension. The Chiefs have banned him from participating in offseason team activities, but this is wholly insufficient. While it is understandable that they are afraid of Hill being signed by another team (like what happened with star running back Kareem Hunt, whom

offenders, should get the help he needs. His colleagues and coaches on the Chiefs should reach out to him if they feel they can help. But it is in no way necessary for Hill to keep his job for that to happen. I'm no legal expert, but it seems to me that Hill has a pretty decent chance of being charged and convicted of abuse. Hopefully, his fiance will seek a restraining order against him due to the threat he made against her. But the bottom line is that the NFL and the Chiefs need to think past Hill to the next potential offender in their ranks.

Many thought that the 8-game suspension given to Hunt for his domestic violence charge was too short. Hunt can sit out the first half of the season, be well-rested, and help a playoff contender to a potential Super Bowl run, before becoming a free agent and cashing in big. While his suspension is the longest the league has given to any domestic violence offender, other players have



Tyreek Hill

ASSOCIATED PRESS

cretly made of a conversation between her and Hill. The eleven-minute conversation, which purportedly took place in a Dubai airport, records Hill and Espinal accusing each other of abusing the child.

"And they [investigators] said time and time again that [child's name] kept saying, 'Daddy punches me.' Which you do when he starts crying," Espinal said. "What do you do? You make him open his arms and you punch him in the chest. And then if he gets in trouble you get the belt out."

Hill did not deny the allegations but countered by accusing Espinal of hitting the child with a belt as well. She admitted hitting him but not with a belt. Later in the recording, Espinal told Hill that their son was terrified of him. His response was one of the scariest real-life things I have ever heard. "You need to be terrified of me, too, b\*\*\*\*."

So let's review. We have a 25-year-old superstar just entering his prime. This same man has admitted to choking and punching his pregnant girlfriend in the stomach, and despite a year of court-mandated intervention, he has made a threat of violence against the mother of his child. If it were me, that alone would be enough for me to bar this

they released last season after a domestic violence incident and who subsequently signed with the Cleveland Browns after receiving a half-season suspension), they simply must consider the message they are sending by not cutting ties with Hill immediately. The message is clear: If you are a good enough

*The NFL and the Chiefs need to think past Hill to the next potential offender in their ranks.*

player, your behavior is irreproachable. No crime is too egregious. Any and all excuses will be made for you, and nothing short of a prison cell can jeopardize your career.

Some have made the argument that releasing or suspending Hill would result in his becoming angrier and more dangerous, further endangering his fiance (the child has been placed in the custody of a foster family and is reportedly doing well). This argument misses the boat. Hill, like all violent

received suspensions of equal length for things like insider trading and second-time violations of the performance-enhancing drug policy. When things like Hill's recording come out and the response is to push off doing the obviously necessary thing for as long as is feasibly possible, something is seriously wrong.

The criminal justice system is meant to protect society, (hopefully) rehabilitate offenders and act as a deterrent against future offenders. The latter goal is also accomplished by the threat of losing one's job after getting into legal trouble or committing unacceptable acts. What is to stop the next star player with a propensity for violence from not thinking twice before acting on his angry impulses towards his romantic partner or child?

Tyreek Hill's son is terrified of him. His fiance may be as well. But what is he terrified of? And what will future offenders be terrified of? Thanks to the NFL and the Chiefs, the answer may simply be a decline in play causing them to no longer be a good enough player to qualify for a free pass. And that should terrify us all.

# YU's Event Planning Process is Outrageous

By DONIEL WEINREICH

Not everyone is familiar with the event planning process at YU. That unique privilege belongs to student leaders and those heavily involved in student clubs. Unfortunately, the covert nature of the system allows it to go unchecked by the masses. The system is extensive, bureaucratic, obstructive, outrageous and riddled with incompetence. But the frustration of dealing with it rests with a handful of club leaders, dejected from dedicating their time and energy to enhancing student life only to fail at the hands of the Office of Student Life (OSL).

Let's say you run a club and would like to have an event with a speaker. What must you do? There's an Event & Fund Request Form on the OSL webpage, but don't think about filling that out just yet. First, you need to fill out a Speaker and Film Request Form. That's right, despite the current national culture wars over freedom of speech on campus and the lip-service paid to it in our community, there is not even a presumption of free speech at YU. All student-run events with speakers (or films) must go through a two-step approval process. The form also asks "that you do not invite or confirm any speakers prior to receiving a speaker approval confirmation code from the Office of Student Life." Despite not being able to invite the speaker until they are approved, you are expected to know the topic of the event, the title and which campus it will be on. Discrepancies on those points between the original speaker request and the final planned event can be (and have been) used as grounds to cancel or significantly curtail an event.

How long does this all take? When must you submit your Speaker Request Form? The

weeks in advance. Forget about having an event during the first month of the year or getting one in after *Chanukah* or *Pesach*.

To review, you must submit a speaker request four to five weeks before your event, before inviting the speaker, but you must know the title, topic and campus for the event. Only after you receive a confirmation for your speaker can you submit the Event Request Form, which you must submit at least three weeks prior to the event.

*All decisions are made on an ad-hoc basis, and nobody knows where the buck stops.*

But this obscene timeline is of course only the case if OSL actually meets its own deadlines and processes requests within the frame it says it will. In my experience, this is almost never the case. In fact, without follow-up, OSL usually doesn't respond to any request at all. For most speakers I've requested I've had to follow up by email and in person at least two or three times before actually receiving confirmation, even when requesting YU professors. If my club didn't follow up, we would usually receive no response ever. Approval within the one-week timeframe is exceedingly rare. On one occasion, it took my club nearly two months to get approval for a speaker, despite persistent reminders to OSL. At this moment, we have several speaker requests from last semester to which we never received a response of any sort.

Response to event requests is even worse. As with speaker requests, OSL only ever responds if you pester them repeatedly. The week or two before the event you must stop by the office constantly to make sure the

process are frankly incompetent at their job.

In addition to the process being extensive and typically hindered by bureaucratic incompetence, there's also zero transparency, nor are there clear policies. Consequently, no one knows what happens behind the scenes of the approval process or who makes the decisions, and there's no accountability for the frequent abuses that the system allows to flourish. What happens during the four to five weeks it takes to approve a speaker and an event? We know that OSL needs to approve them, and the sponsoring Student Council(s) need to approve funding the event. But is there anybody else involved? Who does OSL consult if they think there might be an issue? How much jurisdiction does "The Yeshiva" have over student events and activities? All decisions are made on an ad-hoc basis, and nobody knows where the buck stops.

One time, while being subject to many delays with event approval, I asked the Director of OSL what was taking so long. He responded that he wanted to do his "due diligence to make sure everyone is on the same page." Upon inquiry, he refused to elaborate as to who "everyone" was. Another time I was told two days before a requested *shiur* we had been attempting to plan with OSL for months that they "feel that the proposed topic (*tza'ar ba'alei hayyim* and factory farming) is not a good fit." In this case too, the Director of OSL refused to elaborate on what the specific issue with the topic was or who precisely took issue with it.

Several people in OSL, as well as the Dean of Students, have indicated to me that there's a lot of coordination behind the scenes, especially for religious events. But no one knows what this entails, and it is therefore impossible for the students to have a voice in the process or be a check on the administration.

run through an alternative channel.

Both this year and last, *shiurim* with Rabbi Aryeh Klapper were met with resistance and obstruction. His *shiur* last year, after already being forcibly postponed, required me visiting OSL nine times during the week prior to its anticipated Monday date. Despite constantly being assured the process was moving along, upon visiting OSL on Thursday, the event was marked canceled in OSL's system. OSL only approved the event on Thursday at around 3:30, after which I still had to wait for the YU Office of Events to process it and add it to the calendar before I could publicize it. On Friday morning, I personally called the YU Office of Events (undergraduates are not supposed to do this), who informed me that they request two days from OSL to process requests, and could therefore only guarantee me that it would be added to the university events calendar at some point on Monday, which would give me only a few hours to publicize it.

These happenings aren't limited to Kol Hamevaser events either. Other clubs I'm less involved in have faced similar obstruction. Events about LGBTQ issues are frequently hindered. On multiple occasions in my time at YU, such events were only allowed on the downtown campus or had their titles coercively altered to obscure their nature. Last year, a film request by The Poetry Club for "Dead Poets Society" was rejected.

These are only a subset of the OSL abuses I happen to know about. There are presumably more with clubs I'm not as involved in. It's very hard to imagine this sort of obstruction at other college campuses, where students often protest over far lesser censorship. The problem is that people don't know about it here. OSL thrives on the obscurity of their process. And due to the ad-hoc nature of event approval, a handful of individuals in OSL have too much power. Many student leaders I've spoken to are frustrated with OSL, but they are afraid to speak out against them for fear of retaliation. This shouldn't be how our institution treats its most active and engaged students.

It's generally understood that undermining student expression and autonomy is an affront to the values of a university. Yeshiva University's Undergraduate Students Bill of Rights states that students have the rights to citizenship, expression and association, as long as they don't interfere with the mission of the university. Are the above events inconsistent with YU's mission? If so, they should say so publicly, and be held accountable by the community that supports them.

Encouragingly, when there is coverage of YU engaging in censorship or undermining student autonomy, there is generally widespread condemnation from the YU community and Modern Orthodoxy at large.

Event planning as it exists now needs major reform. The process needs to be expedited and actually adhered to diligently. Events already require approval, there's no reason to require another drawn-out layer for speakers — this just allows for more censorship and incompetence. And most of all, the system needs transparency. Institutions require accountability. Event requests and their responses ought to be public. The people who attend and support YU have a right to know what it deems inconsistent with its mission and whether they are serving their students properly. Without transparency, incompetence and abuse go unchecked.

Until this happens though, students are the only source of accountability. Instead of resigning ourselves to OSL's tyranny and incompetence or frustratedly disassociating from student activities, we must speak out. It's the only way the system will ever change.

## Event & Fund Request Form

As a general policy, we request all students to submit potential events at least three weeks prior to the proposed date of the event. If your potential event features a speaker, please submit the speaker request at least four weeks prior to the proposed date of your event.

Please use this form for all funding requests from student council. The contents of this request will be reviewed by representatives of your clubs council. Should your request be approved, these representatives will decide, together, an appropriate allotment of funds for your request, and be in touch with you.

Notice: If your event features a speaker, please fill out a Speaker Request Form prior to filling out this form. The Speaker Request Form can be found at:

<https://goo.gl/forms/2lATu2sSBI5jGali1>

Upon approval, you will receive a speaker confirmation code, to be used in the form below.

The Office of Student Life  
646-592-4129

### The OSL Event Request Form

YU NEWS

Event Request Form that you must eventually submit asks for submission at least three weeks prior to the date of the event. The Event Form currently even mandates that you check a box confirming it is being submitted at least three weeks in advance. How long before that, though, must you submit the Speaker Request Form? The instructions on the Event Request Form say to submit a Speaker Request Form at least four weeks prior to the event date, while the Speaker Request Form says to allow two weeks to process. In any case, this means you must submit a Speaker Request Form four to five

process is moving along (not that their guarantee is terribly meaningful). Sometimes event requests aren't responded to before the proposed date three weeks later, and sometimes it's approved only a day or two in advance, giving you little time to advertise (advertising an event is forbidden until it is officially approved and added to the university events calendar). Conversations I've had indicate that this experience isn't unique; many clubs have issues getting confirmation from OSL in time. Not only is the process an affront to student autonomy and unnecessarily bureaucratic, but the facilitators of the

The abuses aren't rare. Nearly every event I've been involved in planning this year for Kol Hamevaser has received pushback of some kind. An event with Chochmat Nashim on the erasure of women in Orthodox media and a *shiur* with Yeshivat Siach Yitzchak about the thought of Rav Shagar both received further inquiry. Rabbi Dr. Shai Held was only allowed to speak about Rabbi Abraham Joshua Heschel if it was in conversation with a YU faculty member, and the title of the event was closely scrutinized and limited. The aforementioned *shiur* on *tza'ar ba'alei hayyim* had to eventually be

## A Reason to Remember

By JOSEPH MILLER

Last year marked the 25th anniversary of the *yahrzeit* of Rabbi Joseph Soloveitchik, arguably the most famous of YU *roshei yeshiva*. To commemorate the *yahrzeit* there were lectures given about his character as well as *shiurim* about his Torah. Last summer also marked the 25th anniversary of Rabbi Dovid Lifshitz, another former *rosh yeshiva* of Yeshivas Rabbeinu Yitzchak

history of Yeshiva University. Through the doors of YU have walked numerous rabbis who learned with Rabbi Chaim Soloveitchik, Rabbi Israel Meir Kagan (“The Chofetz Chaim”), Rabbi Baruch Ber Lebowitz and Rav Itzele Peterburger.

These *roshei yeshiva* had come from a wide variety of the largest and most successful *yeshivot* of Europe. Many of them were very influential in the foundation of religious Judaism in America. Many of them

*yeshiva*. Many of the major Orthodox Jewish communities in New York and New Jersey only exist because of the actions of these *roshei yeshiva*. They are all great geniuses who have writings of Torah and *hashkafah* of their own and helped continue the traditions of the many great *rebbeim* from past generations.

Besides the individual greatness of these *rabbanim*, many of them have incredible stories of escaping the war. Several of the *roshei yeshiva* escaped through Japan with the Mir Yeshiva. Others received papers from YU to help them escape Europe. Rabbi Fulda used to give a speech every year about his experience in Europe, but he is no longer with us to continue telling his story. It is our job to make sure the stories of the survival stay alive.

Unfortunately, many of these stories have been all but forgotten. Upon further

research, I have found only a handful of obscure books that mention some of these revered *roshei yeshiva*. We really do not realize how influential these people were in many of the things we take for granted today, such as the communities we live in, the schools we go to and the shuls we pray at. There needs to be some type of written work or class that can preserve their history to ensure that their legacies will be remembered by future generations. Also, their *sefarim* should be made more easily available so that we can learn the Torah of the people who have indirectly influenced where we are today. Yeshiva University has wonderful traditions from these incredible rabbis and there needs to be a greater effort to spread the Torah, stories and character of these great people so we can keep their tradition and the tradition of YU alive.

*It is our job to make sure the stories of the survival stay alive.*

Elchanan. During one of the speeches commemorating Rabbi Soloveitchik’s *yahrzeit*, one of the *roshei yeshiva* mentioned that “Rabbi Soloveitchik was such a powerful figure that other greats of the generation were overshadowed and had Rabbi Lifshitz been anywhere other than YU at the time he would have been a superstar.”

Rabbi Lifshitz was appointed as a *rosh yeshiva* in 1944 and served in that position until he passed away in 1993. He was a leader in Agudath Israel and headed the Ezras Torah. Rabbi Lifshitz lived in Washington Heights and was noted to be in YU seven days a week. Even today, many students have no idea who Rabbi Lifshitz was. Every few weeks RIETS posts a different historic *rosh yeshiva* on a bulletin board, with a small biography of the *rosh yeshiva* attached. This is only the first step in sharing the history of Yeshiva University.

Recently, Rabbi Shlomo Drillman was featured on the RIETS board, and the accompanying biography mentioned that someone published a book of his weekly *divrei Torah*. After looking through the library and finding the book, I found his works were both thoughtful and brilliant. The *divrei Torah* included stories of the many great rabbis of Europe he knew before the war. RIETS also has a website with all the previously featured rabbis, sometimes with links to *hespeidim*, yet many people still do not realize the rich

were founders or heavily involved with institutions like the OU, Mizrachi, Ezras Torah and Agudat Israel. Schools like Ramaz, Yeshivat Chafetz Chaim, Maimonides and Brisk Yeshiva were founded by YU *roshei*



These *roshei yeshiva* had come from a wide variety of the largest and most successful *yeshivot* of Europe.

WIKIMEDIA COMMONS

## Collaborative or Collateral? A Review of Original Sound

By ELLIE PARKER

In an effort to enhance my New York City experience as much as possible, I am always on the lookout for new and exciting plays. For this reason, “Original Sound,” playing

at the Cherry Lane Theater through June 8, served as the perfect night out for my friend and me.

“Original Sound” centers around Danny, an aspiring musician, who recently discovered that mega pop-star Ryan Reed stole one

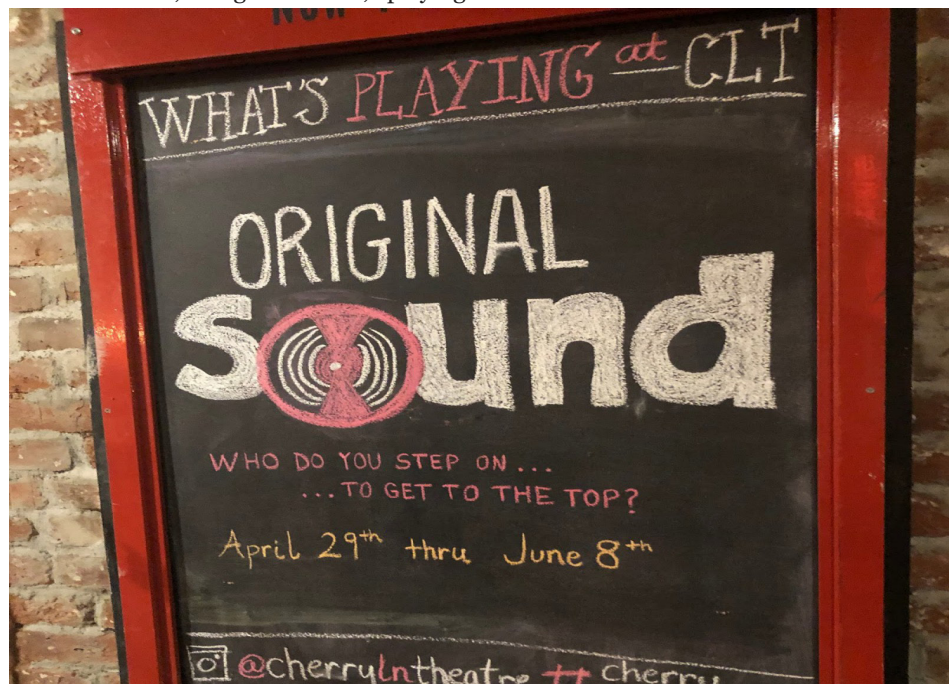
of his songs. Danny is initially elated — he believes that this act of fraud could lead to his big break. Along with his best friend and groupie, Kari, Danny attempts to make a name for himself through Reed’s dishonesty.

Following a meeting with Reed’s manager, things start looking up for Danny. He is promised four collaborative sessions with Reed along with royalties from the co-written hit “Stay,” appearing on Reed’s upcoming album. While Danny leaps at the opportunity

the stage is encircled by the audience. The intimate feeling of being steps away from the action enhances the collaborative nature of the story and enables the crowd to take part in the give-and-take of the plot.

The crux of the story boils down to a line shared between Reed and Danny. Upon confronting her about her deceit, Reed responds: “What does being original even mean?” In an industry like theirs, the answer is “not much.” But the lessons learned blur the

*The play attempts to analyze the difference between real and fake and, in doing so, shows that both are inherently complex.*



“Original Sound” plays at the Cherry Lane Theater through June 8th.

ELLIE PARKER

to learn from Reed, she is less than enthusiastic. Once a blunt and unapologetic rock musician, making it in the music industry has stripped Reed of what once made her different. Her hesitation to work with Danny can be interpreted as Reed’s recognition and jealousy of Danny’s passion — a passion she once shared. But as the two work together, Danny’s love for his work begins to rub off on Reed, who starts to once again take pride in her work.

Walking into the Cherry Lane Theater adds another dimension to the performance. Set in a room with no more than 50 seats,

lines between black and white. Though the observer initially views Danny as right and Reed as wrong, one quickly comes to realize that things are not so clear cut. “Original Sound” is a real and inspiring portrayal of what it means to follow your dream and pursue your passions,” as summarized by my friend and fellow play enthusiast. The play attempts to analyze the difference between real and fake and, in doing so, shows that both are inherently complex. “Original Sound” is a take on what it means to “make it” and the moral constraints that accompany a rise to the top.



## A Tribute to Dr. J. Mitchell Orlian

By **RABBI SHALOM CARMY**

On Wednesday, May 8, Professor J. Mitchell Orlian's colleagues and well-wishers gathered to honor him after 60 years of teaching Bible and Hebrew language at Yeshiva University. As I listened to the warm tributes from family and close friends, I thought about what Dr. Orlian's students learned from him that cannot easily be found elsewhere. Two words came to mind. Aptly perhaps, in writing about a passionate advocate of the Hebrew language, these are words that do not easily translate.

The Hebrew word *miktso'ut* can be taken as the translation of "professionalism." But the Hebrew, I think, merely describes a high level of competence; the English conveys more. When I think of Rabbi Orlian as a consummate professional, I mean that he taught successfully and dependably at a variety of levels and that he was always diligent, deliberate and interested in the task at hand. It didn't seem to matter if he was offering *Tanakh* in Yeshiva College or IBC, with his trademark focus on *parshanut* and language, or whether he was teaching Hebrew grammar and literature. In every academic context, his *miktso'ut*

shone through.

He also brought this same attention and considerateness to his work outside YU, for many years running the North American

*Hidon HaTanakh* competition for young people and teaching elementary Hebrew to adult education students.

Dr. Orlian concentrated on his

teaching — for much of his career his course load was more than that of a full-time professor. His primary intellectual creativity was devoted to polishing his courses

— in Bible, he taught an 8-semester cycle, more than anyone else — and making useful comments on the work of his colleagues, of whom I was an appreciative recipient. At the same time, he continued to work on his major scholarly project, the critical edition of the medieval Ashkenazic *Sefer ha-Gan* which I heartily recommend to anyone interested in medieval Jewish biblical interpretation.

If professionalism is the word I feel best captures Dr. Orlian's intellectual contribution, *yosher* is the word for his personal example, and I am sorry that English equivalents like righteousness, honesty and the like are inadequate by comparison. In the 46 years we have been colleagues and almost 40 years that we have been in the same shul, I have never heard Rabbi Orlian make light of a human being. I cannot think of anyone who knew him and failed to respect his integrity, scholarship, humility and his willingness to help anyone who asked. I hope that we — family, colleagues and students — will be able to gain from Rabbi Orlian and look up to him for many years to come. His example is one we need.

*When I think of Rabbi Orlian as a consummate professional, I mean that he taught successfully and dependably at a variety of levels and that he was always diligent, deliberate and interested in the task at hand.*



Dr. J. Mitchell Orlian at a recent event honoring his 60 years of service.

YU NEWS

## Reflections on My Time in an Ultra-Orthodox Yeshiva

By **YONI MOISE**

We live in a bubble. Here at YU, we are surrounded by Modern (or Centrist) Orthodox Jews of many different colors and stripes. For all our knowledge of other Jewish denominations and their theologies, however, we are ignorant to the nuances and details of the different communities we encounter. Instead of getting to know them directly, we mostly just generalize and stereotype, and that is very dangerous.

I grew up in a small town with a small Modern Orthodox community. And yet, I spent my entire life in and around our Jewish community, surrounded by Jews of many types who lived in their own bubbles and did not adequately communicate with one another. Thus, I stuck to my Modern Orthodox bubble.

For various reasons, I was unable to go to *yeshiva* in Israel after high-school. Instead, I attended a *yeshiva* in my hometown. Before starting, I was very worried that I would not enjoy it, and that I would struggle to fit in. It was a *Yeshivish/Chareidi yeshiva*, and as such, I negatively judged it by the simplistic, stereotypical model I had of that community. My parents, however, were wiser than I, and knew that communities are not (usually) monolithic — this one being no exception.

I began my year at the *yeshiva* and discovered that — surprise

— the *Chareidi* community is NOT monolithic, and it is NOT accurately represented by the stereotypes that I — and, I suspect, many of us — unthinkingly believe about it. I discovered that many of the students, and even rabbis, were more liberal than I could've imagined. As an example, I vividly recall the *mashgiach* telling us that saying "Hallel on the fifth of Iyyar (*Yom Ha'Atzmaut*) isn't such a stretch." In addition, students enjoyed history, movies, smartphones (which were technically "illegal" under *yeshiva rules*, though most students had one at some point) and more. There was a lot of individuality, healthy diversity, relative liberalism, moderation, nuance, etc. etc.

Unfortunately, I also saw ugly things during my time in the moderate *Chareidi* world. Misogyny, violence, pseudo-intellectualism, naivety, racism and superstition were some of the major issues with which I was confronted — and, sadly, I must admit, there was not much I could do.

However, I was pleasantly surprised by the experience overall, and, coupled with my enjoyment of the Torah studies curriculum, I decided to stay for a second year. I saw a lot of beauty, authenticity and warmth in the *Chareidi* community. Truth be told, I was even attracted to the idea of learning for a third year at this *yeshiva*. But I must admit that for all the good that was there, it was not good to

stay in such a toxic environment.

I have now been at YU for two weeks, and it has been an amazing experience. Thank G-d, here I can continue my Torah studies on a much higher level than I could at my former *yeshiva*, while advancing my secular education as well. One of the highlights occurred last week as we celebrated *Yom Ha'atzmaut*. I celebrated as a

*I saw a lot of beauty, authenticity and warmth in the Chareidi community.*

new member of the YU community. Coming from a very small Religious Zionist community, it exceeded expectations beyond any of my wildest dreams. I feel blessed to be in this bubble, where I saw only the recognition of the miracle and gift that G-d has given us in the State of Israel.

Reflecting on the celebration, I was sobered by recalling a story that one of my fellow students from my former *yeshiva* told me, or rather, bragged to me. I do not know if the story is even true, but it highlighted to me that we face anti-Zionism not only from extremists and bigots, but even from our fellow Orthodox Jews of the moderate *Chareidi* world. I now share with

you this (perhaps true, perhaps fictitious) story:

Earlier this year, there was a Modern Orthodox synagogue in Brooklyn that hosted a prominent Jewish singer for Shabbat. Due to his prominence, he drew fans from the *Chareidi* community in the area. At an *oneg* at which he performed, he was accompanied by other singers, and *Chareidi yeshiva bochurim* showed up to hear him. They sang many "yeshivish" songs together, after which — as my source said — the lead singer "had to sing some songs to please" the community that had hired him. He sang *Hatikvah*.

After he finished, the *yeshiva bochurim* (but not the lead singer) hummed the song "*Be'Shilton Ha'Kofrim*" ("In the Sovereignty of the Heretics") together. This is an anti-Zionist song, and serves as the anthem of the *Neturei Karta* sect. The *yeshiva bochurim* had no fear of humming this song in front of their hosts because they knew that (almost) no Modern Orthodox Jew would recognize it. My source enjoyed telling me this story — thinking it rather amusing. At the time, I had no clue what this song was, but I was curious and I did some research.

The full English translation reads as follows:

*Hashem is our King, and we are His slaves.  
The Torah is our Faith, and in it we believe.*

*We do not believe in the sovereignty of the heretics, and we do not recognize their laws. We will walk in the ways of the Torah, through fire and water... in order to sanctify the name of Heaven.*

As soon as I realized the content of the song, I was appalled. Is this really how they view and treat us? Have they rejected all *Derech Eretz*? Have they no respect for a plurality of *hashkafot*, or at the very least, for their hosts? Whether or not this story was true, think of the *bochur* who gleefully boasted this story to me...

I remind myself that stereotypes are harmful, though they tend to have some basis. We need to approach everyone with an open mind and open arms, and hopefully, we will be pleasantly and joyfully surprised with what we find — as I often am. But we must be careful not to leave ourselves vulnerable to the facade of a class act, behind which hides derision and hatred. We need to choose our bubble carefully and value its protection, while not letting it isolate us; we need to choose our home, while fearlessly venturing out into the great diverse universe.



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BUILDING TOMORROW, **TODAY**

## The State of the Wilf Laundry

By **BENJI SNOW**

The other day, I unexpectedly got called into the housing office. I was told that two pairs of pants were taken from the Morgenstern (Morg) laundry room the week prior. This information was no surprise to me since I'm well aware that things go missing in laundry rooms all the time, especially in a shared facility. The next part of the conversation took a turn that really shocked me. I was asked if I was the one who took the pants from the Morg laundry room. Astounded by this question, I said "no". Immediately following my response, I was shown security camera footage of me walking in and out of the laundry room carrying a bag. This checks out, as I did, in fact, do my laundry the previous Thursday night. I assured them that I was not the individual who took the pants, but this incident got me thinking: What is the state of the laundry on the Wilf Campus?

As I'm currently in my third year, I've done my laundry at both the Rubin Hall and Morg laundry facilities. Albeit not top of the line machines or the most luxurious rooms, these machines do the trick. Using them couldn't be easier. The process is extremely simple and almost hassle-free. Although we're given such an easy system for us to

use, the current state of laundry on Wilf is messy. Let me explain.

As you walk into any laundry room, you're greeted with piles of clothes stacked up on the machines, socks everywhere, empty Tide Pod bags and the occasional Smart Card. Misshapen laundry baskets line the machines and there's one guy loading his clothes into the dryer. A laundry room should be kept clean by everyone who uses it. The current state of the laundry at Wilf does not channel the same energy.

Over the countless times I've done my laundry on the Wilf Campus, I have had quite a few articles of clothing gone missing. Now you could, of course, argue that as the natural cycle of life (and clothes), things go missing from time to time. A sock here, a sock there, maybe a T-Shirt, nothing too exceptional. After sharing my experience with some friends, I was told that larger more considerable clothes have been taken from the facilities. This news came as a shock to me, so I reached out to Jonathan Schwab, Director of Housing and Residence Life on the Wilf Campus, to see what he says about these incidents. "It is upsetting that personal belongings seem to have been taken from a public space. I urge all students to be careful with their belongings and immediately report any incidents like this to Security," he said.

I knew going in that the YU student body fosters a great amount of respect towards everyone on campus. When I got here, the sentiment stood. The same respect should apply not only to the individual but to their personal belongings as well. The current state of the laundry at Wilf does not adopt this ideology.

someone else's stuff from the machines. Having a systematic approach to our laundry routine will lower congestion and have both facilities running at optimal efficiency.

Next, if we as a whole cleaned up after ourselves, we'd have a clean facility for everyone to use and enjoy. Instead of leaving empty detergent bottles on top of the ma-

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*As you walk into any laundry room, you're greeted with piles of clothes stacked up on the machines, socks everywhere, empty Tide Pod bags and the occasional Smart Card.*

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Knowing that we are a community of leaders, we should all be on the same page when it comes to laundry, something we all encounter on a monthly basis. In order to get us to the ideal state of laundry at Wilf, I'd like to offer some tips for when laundry day comes.

Set a timer when you hit start. This allows you to do other things around campus and only come back when it's done, leaving the machine available for use immediately after you're done with it. We all know the frustration of going to the laundry room only to find all the machines in use or just sitting after it finishes a cycle and this would be a way to avoid that in addition to having to remove

chines, turn around and toss it in the trash. Be mindful of what you bring in and ensure that you take all your belongings when you leave. Lastly, clean the lint trap. I know it may be gross, but it's necessary. When they're left full, the next person's drying times will be longer. The hot air has to go through this area to cool down the machine and when it struggles to do this from all the buildup, it can even create a fire hazard.

If we all work together, we can create a laundry environment in which everyone can feel comfortable. We, the students who use the facilities, can change the current state of laundry on Wilf.



The laundry room in Morgenstern Hall

## Conversion Therapy and Our *Roshei Yeshiva*

By JACOB STONE

“Hear the word of God, O chiefs of Sodom; give ear to the teaching of our God, O people of Gomorrah,” wrote the prophet Isaiah to the people of Jerusalem. “Why do I need your numerous sacrifices?” says God” (Isaiah 1:10-11). In these lines, Isaiah was critiquing the Jews who brought lavish and extensive offerings in the Temple, only to ignore the disadvantaged of society. The sacrifices mean nothing, claimed Isaiah, provided they are not coupled with kindness in the ways we act. Isaiah understood and responded to a fundamental flaw in religious human nature — a tendency to focus on minutiae of piety and devotion while ignoring the physical and emotional needs of others.

In 2010, four YU *roshei yeshiva*, including Rabbi Hershel Schachter, Rabbi Moshe Dovid Tendler, Rabbi Yitzchok Cohen and Rabbi Eliyahu Ben-Haim, were listed as signatories to the Torah Declaration. The Declaration proclaims that for homosexual people, “The only viable course of action that is consistent with the Torah is therapy and *teshuvah*. The therapy consists of ... helping him or her understand and repair the emotional wounds that led to its disorientation and weakening, thus enabling the resumption and completion of the individual’s emotional development.” In effect, it mandates conversion therapy as the method of dealing with homosexuality. “There is no other practical, Torah-sanctioned solution for this issue,” states the Declaration.

There are other online resources in which YU *roshei yeshiva* discuss the proper *halakhic* approach to homosexuality, including a 2010 *dvar torah* from Rabbi Schachter, Rabbi Mayer Twersky, Rabbi Michael Rosensweig and Rabbi Mordechai Willig. It claims that people who “feel same sex attraction (ssa) ... should be encouraged to seek professional guidance.” It can only be

assumed that the professional guidance in question is reparative therapy.

These sexual orientation change efforts (SOCE) are not well scientifically understood and endanger individuals who undergo them. In 2009, the American Psychological Association published a report which analyzed studies on SOCEs to date. The report concluded, “The results of scientifically valid research indicate that it is unlikely that individuals will be able to reduce same-sex sexual attractions or increase other sex attractions through SOCE.” Additionally, the report warned that SOCEs “can produce

harm for some of its participants.” All other major scientific organizations that conducted reviews of the studies surrounding SOCEs have come to similar conclusions.

When our *roshei yeshiva* recommend conversion therapy, they are advocating for a dangerous, scientifically unsound practice. Religious LGBT individuals frequently experience stress because of communal and religious resistance to their orientation. Encouraging these individuals to seek therapy that focuses not on their well-being but on their orientation reiterates the flaw in religious ideology that Isaiah fought

millennia ago.

Conversion therapy is not the only *halakhic* approach. Other YU faculty, including YU *rosh yeshiva* Rabbi Ezra Schwartz, have signed the Statement of Principles, which affirms “the religious right of those with a homosexual orientation to reject therapeutic approaches they reasonably see as useless or dangerous.” The attitudes of the Statement are, I believe, the attitudes of the majority of the YU community.

But these *roshei yeshiva*’s attitudes towards this practice normalize institutional acceptance of it. In April this year, the Marsha Stern Talmudic Academy (MTA) hosted a mandatory event at which Dr. Gavriel Fagin, a conversion therapist, spoke to parents. The Forward reported at the time that Fagin’s website advertised services for issues related to same-sex attraction, although the advertisements for those services have since been removed in compliance with the ban on conversion therapy that New York passed at the beginning of this year. The YU community should reject the attitudes of the *roshei yeshiva* if they advocate for illegal practices, and we must work to create a culture in which Orthodox Jewish children do not feel stigmatized to change their sexual orientation.

It has been many years since the Torah Declaration was issued, and I do not mean to ascribe attitudes to the *roshei yeshiva* in question that they no longer hold. Still, if that is the case, they should remove the *divrei torah* that are posted online in their name that advocate for the encouragement of conversion therapy for LGBT individuals. “Learn to do good, seek justice, vindicate the victim, render justice to the orphan, take up the grievance of the widow,” wrote Isaiah. “Come now, let us reason together.”

*When our roshei yeshiva recommend conversion therapy, they are advocating for a dangerous, scientifically unsound practice.*



A man protesting gay reparative therapy

## How to Improve the Dating Process at YU

By MAX GRUBER

The dating process, which can be exciting and fun, has unfortunately turned into an anxiety-producing nightmare for many. I set out to write this piece in order to help those who are participating in the YU dating scene and have thus far been unsuccessful in finding their match. Based on conversations with friends, alumni and my own life experiences, I suggest the following advice, which will hopefully ameliorate our anxieties on dating in general, and particularly at YU.

For starters, joining YUConnects, which “offers unique social events, targeted match-making and educational programs to foster healthy relationships toward marriage” can be very helpful. Despite the advantages of signing up, some people refrain from doing so because of the negative stigmas that surround dating services. Let me be clear: It is not a sign of weakness to join, nor does it mean that you do not have enough friends to set you up on your own. It is a supplement to your personal search, connecting you with people who you might never have otherwise met. YUConnects adds you to an entire network of like-minded, wonderful YU (and non-YU) students and alumni who are waiting to meet people like you. The cost for signing up ranges from \$12.95-\$18.95 a month, but for YU undergraduates, “we have a special rate ... close to 50% off the regular price.” YUConnects is also more than just an

online dating service: “[they have] a friendly office in Furst Hall 419 where guys and girls are constantly coming through the doors for advice.” “It is such a great resource,” said Margie Glatt, special projects coordinator. “YUConnects has proven to be successful, facilitating 359 engagements and counting. Sign up and maybe you’ll be number #360!”

Next, consider attending co-ed events. Instead of going on a potentially awkward first date, skip that step by meeting someone organically, in an environment where you have a reason to be there, outside of just meeting someone else. Students feel less pressure at these events than on first dates, since your peers are near and you can leave whenever you want without being rude. There is a misconception that attending YU co-ed events is inherently not “frum.” I challenge this notion with the following example.

This year, there was a co-ed event called “Do It Yourself Chassidic Pop-Art,” in which students, led by a respected artist, painted abstract Chassidic portraits. The activity was centered around the expression of one’s soul in the form of art. The vibes were laid-back, and most certainly *tzanua* (modest). It was an ideal, kosher environment for religious singles to meet. However, some did not attend because they figured that since it was co-ed, it could not have been “frum” enough. Oy (on the topic of Chassidus I must use at least one Yiddish idiom) — perhaps this misjudgment caused two compatible souls to not cross paths! To clarify, I completely

understand why those of you who are not currently dating would not want to attend co-ed events. However, for those of you who are, I would caution against automatically not attending because you assume that the events and the people there are not “frum” enough. I am also not implying that the primary purpose of co-ed events is to find a partner, however, it can be a bonus for those who are interested in dating.

Many students feel lost in the current YU dating scene because few people are even attempting to set them up from the opposite campus. “It doesn’t feel like anyone cares about helping me with dating. Setting people up on dates is holy too, not just learning. I wish they knew how much it hurts my friends and I [sic],” said a female YU student who prefers to remain anonymous.

Mothers have angrily complained to my peers and me that the weak efforts of the students, particularly on the Wilf Campus, to set up their children is pathetic. Ask your fellow NCSY or Yachad advisors if they are dating and if they say yes, try to set them up with your friends. For those of you who went to co-ed high schools, think of people you were friendly with, and ask them if they need help with dating (or ask them on a date?). On a daily basis, we are surrounded by hundreds of quality students; it’s not that hard to think of someone for your peer. Making a *shidduch* (match) ensures the continuation of the Jewish people and is one of the most praiseworthy things you can do.

I’ll be the first to admit that being single sometimes feels lonely, especially when your friends are in relationships. Who can blame us? The Torah states: “It is not good for man to be alone” (Bereishit 2:18). However, we can use the psychological technique of reframing to improve our perspective. Linda Bloom and Charlie Bloom, authors of “Secrets of Great Marriages: Real Truths from Real Couples About Lasting Love,” write: “Reframing requires seeing something in a new way, in a context that allows us to recognize and appreciate positive aspects of our situation”. One advantage of being single is that you have more time to pursue interests and focus on personal growth. Being in a relationship is heavily time-consuming; you will never again be as free as you are now. Ask yourself: what productive things can I do now that I will not be able to do when I am committed to my partner? Is there any specific character trait, like anger, that I can improve on before I find my match? Additionally, I question the usage of the word “single” in the context of dating. We live in N.Y.C, which has a population of 8.6 million people. You are surrounded by people who love you: friends, mentors and family. Just because you have not found your match yet does not mean you are “single” and alone. You are important and loved, regardless of your marital status.

P.S. Know that your partner is waiting for you just as you are waiting for him/her.

## Where is Our Mission? Where is Our *Raison d'Être*?

By MOSHE J. BERNSTEIN

My colleague, chairman and scholarly collaborator, Professor Aaron Koller, presented his view of the revision of the Jewish Studies in an article in *The Commentator*, April 15, 2019, pp. 21-22. Under the headline, “An Improved Judaic Studies Education,” he presents an ambivalent perspective (“I say this with sadness ... and also write *bedema'* [in tears]” vs. “I am excited about the real educational benefits”) on the new curriculum, with a stress on what he sees as the exciting elements. I share his sadness, but cannot agree at all with his excitement.

When the Beren Department of Jewish Studies at Yeshiva College revised its general education requirements during the 2012-13 and again in the 2014-15 academic years, in response to intense and incessant administrative pressure, we spent a great deal of time considering the rationale for the requirements and their relationship to the mission of Yeshiva College. Both of those factors were critical in the vigorous discussions that preceded the adjustments in the

requirements (such as Jewish Studies and the Core) are the solution to reversing the dropping enrollment at the College. And, once again, it is clear to many of us that pressure from the upper administration played a significant role in the decision of the faculty. The administration believes that if the Jewish Studies requirements were mitigated, more students would apply for admission

manifestation of a watering-down of the Yeshiva College liberal arts education. Giving students “optionality” very often will lead to their adopting a path of least resistance in areas of their education which they do not perceive as primary to their career goals. The very way that the new requirements are structured creates a weaker set of courses than the old ones. One of the options that

History (which I teach as well). They cannot be considered merely interchangeable parts of a total number of credits that need to be taken by every YC student. As academic disciplines, there are perhaps no hierarchical distinctions among fields, but from the perspective of *talmud Torah* it should be clear which is primary.

And let us not forget that the reason for the Jewish Studies requirement in the College is to provide our students with a broader and more rounded Jewish education than their many hours in the *bet midrash* can furnish. The study of Bible in the original Hebrew must be a cornerstone of that education (and we indeed need to do more, not less, to develop greater Hebrew competence in students who enter YC ill-prepared). But to suggest that since we cannot cover more, we should not require our students to cover as much as we do currently, strikes me as analogous to suggesting that since our students can't cover most of *Shas* while here at Yeshiva, we should exempt them from learning all but one *masechta*.

This is not to suggest that curricula are carved in stone and immutable, but major changes in curriculum such as the one that led to the creation of the YC Core several years ago, deserve more forethought than this one got. It is possible that had we taken our time with the revision, we would have realized that the administrative pressure needed to be resisted strongly, as it was four years ago. Perhaps we might have decided to demand the return of the two-credit course that was snatched away then, in order to assign it to a requirement in Jewish Thought which we have not had in the past. Our department and its requirements need to be acknowledged to be a mainstay component of what Yeshiva College is, and not something that we continue only for historical reasons. Weakening the requirements will not accomplish that.

Yeshiva College is a remarkably unique institution; it is neither a classic *yeshiva*, nor a classic secular liberal arts college, but rather an amalgam of the two. This unusual status is what demands a serious Jewish Studies component in the College, and in many ways, Jewish Studies in the College is the bridge between the two disparate sections, a bridge, as I like to call it, between the *bet midrash* and the library. Our faculty, too, must participate in this duality; they are perforce Jewish educators (*mehannekchim*), in addition to being professors in the finest academic department in Yeshiva College.

The component of the liberal arts education that is offered by the Beren Department of Jewish Studies must prepare *rabbonim* and *ballebatim*, clergy and laity, of the next generation of Orthodox Judaism. It needs to be the strongest one possible, not an attenuated one. And the University administration needs to recognize that in order to be worthy of the name Yeshiva University, and in order to attract students of the quality that we want, we have to demonstrate to the American Orthodox community that we have something unique to offer their children, something that neither Touro College nor any Ivy League university can offer. When we stop doing that we will have lost our *raison d'être*. And for anyone who needs a reminder of what we shall look like then, please read Binyamin Koslowe's editorial, “A View From the World of Tomorrow,” in the last issue of *The Commentator* (May 5, 2019).

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*Giving students “optionality” very often will lead to their adopting a path of least resistance in areas of their education which they do not perceive as primary to their career goals.*

to YC. I really wonder whether this is truly the case, and, if it is, whether those students are the ones for whom Yeshiva College was founded. (If these changes bring students banging down our doors, I will ungraciously admit to having been wrong.) At some point we will lose our essential identity as Yeshiva College, and no longer merit the name.

From an historical perspective, Yeshiva University never had a grand synthesis

students now have in Jewish History is two-credit courses, which can be fitted in to what used to be called the “Bible slot” in the schedule. The goal is to enable students to take all their Jewish Studies requirements before 3 p.m. That convenience for students was clearly not weighed against the very clear academic inferiority of two-credit courses to three-credit ones. The majority of YC students can actually be better served by



Our education needs to stand for something, not turn into a cheapened piece of merchandise that will attract more buyers.

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required curriculum (which eventually included, under that administrative pressure, a reduction in the number of credits from 14 to 12 [not including Hebrew]).

The structure of the requirements remained the same: six credits of Bible (down from eight, but still including what I believe to be the fundamental course, “Introduction to Bible,” now retitled “Text, Context and Tradition”), with a large and varied number of “text” courses that could be employed to fulfill the requirements; six credits of Jewish History with the ways in which they could be fulfilled being expanded, with only one “survey” course in JHI being required, while the other semester could be chosen from a variety of courses which did not have to be broad surveys. The current revision (2018-19) would have benefited from the sort of reflection in which we engaged then.

The current adjustment in the requirements can be succinctly said to be based on one word, “optionality,” and was driven by the self-delusive administrative misconception that changes in a variety of areas of YC

called “Modern Orthodoxy,” as Professor Koller claims; it might have been an ideal, but there was always a dynamic tension between Yeshiva and College/University. It was not always comfortable, and was regularly under stress from one segment of our institution or another, but it is what has distinguished us, and should continue to distinguish us, from all other American institutions of higher education. If Yeshiva University is, as it has always prided itself to be, the academic flagship institution and bastion of Modern or Centrist Orthodoxy, it is our institutional responsibility to lead our community, and the students who come from it, in the direction that they ought to go, rather than allowing them to dictate academic policy and yielding to the desires of students who would like to complete a four-year college education in three years. Our education needs to stand for something, not turn into a cheapened piece of merchandise that will attract more buyers.

The new and virtually unstructured requirements, in my opinion, are but one more

survey courses which they will avoid for convenience's sake.

In a two-credit course, there is no opportunity for studying the sweep of history which is an explicit goal of our curricular rationale; there is no time for enough reading; and serious writing cannot be assigned. The amount of subject matter which can be mastered is critically reduced. The bits and pieces of several two-credit courses may not add up to an integrated and holistic perspective on any era of Jewish history. And finally, two-credit Jewish History courses cannot play the robust role in the YC Humanities curriculum that three-credit courses played in the past.

The other feature of the new packaging is the reduction in the number of required credits in Bible. This is particularly painful to me, not merely because it is the area in which I do most of my teaching, but because I believe that in the hierarchy of importance in Jewish Studies, the study of Bible, *Torah shebikhtav*, must take priority over that of as significant a subject area as Jewish

## Uber and Lyft Not Reaching Analysts Expected Destination

By EITAN LAVIAN

The many successful IPOs in 2018 brought greater attention to the ones in 2019, especially within the technology industry. For starters, an initial public offering (IPO) is when a private company goes public, gets sold to outside investors and then gets traded on the stock market. One reason a company does so is to raise money, but added prestige is another incentive for making such a decision. Headlining this list of popular 2019 IPOs are Lyft and Uber, with Robinhood, Airbnb and Slack joining them soon. Despite their popularity, however, the two ride-sharing companies' public debuts are not panning out as well as analysts expected.

Days before Lyft went public in March, they increased their debut share price by \$10, from an initial range of \$62 to \$68. Nevertheless, the share price popped 20%

at the beginning of trading, rising to \$87.24 per share. Later that day, though, the shares decreased to \$81, and has been trading below the IPO price ever since. While successful in raising capital — they made \$2.7 billion — Lyft's market capitalization — the price of one share multiplied by the number of

*Headlining this list of popular 2019 IPOs are Lyft and Uber, with Robinhood, Airbnb and Slack joining them soon.*

shares outstanding — has shrunk by more than \$10 billion since it reached \$25 billion at the end of their first day of trading. At market close on Friday, May 17, Lyft shares were trading at \$53.79.

After years as a private company, Uber

went public on Friday, May 10, 2019. Before their offering, many believed the company would reach a \$100 billion valuation. The company priced shares at \$45, but by the end of the first day, the stock closed 7.6% lower than its initial share price, at \$41.57. Uber ended with a market capitalization of \$76.5 billion dollars on its first day. The company was able to raise \$8.1 billion of capital, but, as of market close on Friday, May 17, it was trading at \$41.80, valuing it at a mere \$70.1 billion, far short of analysts \$100 billion expectations.

Although it seems as though these IPOs were complete flops, there is a silver lining: Uber and Lyft control nearly the entire ride-share service market in the U.S., and are continuing to render the traditional taxi business obsolete. The Seattle Times reported that each day in Seattle Uber and Lyft are used about 90,000 times — far more than the usage rate of the city's light rail system. Based on these findings, the University of Chicago

Booth School of Business estimated that while they promised to decrease the number of drivers, they have actually *increased* the number of people on the road.

But this isn't the reason Uber and Lyft's stock prices are floundering. One possible reason is that the market is extremely competitive, and investors don't have much patience for public companies who are losing money every quarter. Uber CEO Dara Khosrowshahi reiterated this when he told his staff that he expects to see "some tough public market times over the coming months." Share price aside, however, if fellow technology companies such as Alphabet, Facebook and Amazon are any indication, Uber and Lyft's continued innovation may lead to their rise to prominence as public companies.



Despite their commercial success, Uber and Lyft have both struggled tremendously since going public.



Listening on Spotify now refers to much more than simply music.

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## Spotify Pushes Into Podcasts

By SARAH TORQUEMAN

With more than 200 million users, including 100 million of whom pay for premium access, Swedish music streaming platform Spotify Technology SA (NYSE: SPOT) recently released plans to focus more on podcasts. The company plans to join other platforms by expanding its product line beyond music in order to gain a larger share of the podcast market, one which Spotify was a latecomer to.

According to Fast Company, Spotify was reported to have entered the podcast scene in 2015, whereas Apple Inc. took podcasts mainstream a decade earlier when it offered a podcast selection on its iPod in 2005. Before podcasts became such a popular leisure, Apple's former CEO Steve Jobs announced at its podcast launch, "Podcasting is the next generation of radio, and users can now subscribe to over 3,000 free podcasts and have each new episode automatically delivered over the internet to their computer and iPod." It is over a decade later, and this trend has certainly experienced incredible growth since.

In a featured interview published last Tuesday in the Wall Street Journal, Spotify's CFO Barry McCarthy said, "The long-term trend here is that everything on-demand wins," referring to the consumer preference of on-demand products and services, which has generated a substantial profit margin for Spotify and other tech giants in recent years. McCarthy was also behind Spotify's unconventional decision to go public with a direct listing on the New York Stock Exchange last April.

This year, Spotify planned to invest as much as \$500 million to prompt further expansion into the podcasting space, an effort nearly met with the company's acquisition of three podcasting companies for roughly

\$400 million. Spotify's recent acquisition of Gimlet and Anchor in February and Parcast in April provided the company access to even more content as well as the tools to publish podcast content more efficiently.

According to a study conducted by Edison Research in 2018, 26% of Americans over the age of 12 listen to a podcast at least once a month. As demand for podcasts increases

subscription payments as well as advertising revenue. Spotify admitted that it initially loses money when a subscriber joins the platform, but that typically changes when subscribers become profitable users at a ratio of 3 to 1 in terms of customer lifetime value and subscriber acquisition cost. It's about long-term growth for Spotify rather than short-term profit generation.

and is now following in Netflix's footsteps as it experiments with prices and pushes to include original and exclusive podcast content with hopes to gain a larger share of the podcast pie.

In addition to subscription and advertising revenue, Spotify also plans to charge artists for insights about user engagement in music on its platform. This includes information about content users listen to, like what competing artists they listen to and where users are located when listening. Translating this data from millions of users into actionable insights is valuable to record labels and their artists when deciding new songs to release and concert tour locations to visit, for example. With recent investments in podcasts and having exclusive content on its platform, Spotify may plan to charge podcast content creators for insights on users' listening habits, as well. Extracting data off of its platform has a relatively low cost, which may provide a substantial margin on top of Spotify's primary revenue sources.

While the company commits to investing in the podcasting space and driving alternative revenue sources, music streaming remains the central focus of its platform, known for revolutionizing the music industry. Interestingly, McCarthy noted in the interview featured in the Wall Street Journal that users who listen to more podcasts generally spend more time on the platform and also consume more music as a result. Through investing in podcasts, Spotify is focused on increasing platform engagement overall as its team works diligently to grow user engagement with its podcast content. The company hopes that this will then lead to growth in its market share as well as substantial monetization. Spotify's new podcast project may even prompt a slogan update well beyond "music for everyone."

*The company's conscious expansion into podcasts is its way of maximizing the growth of profitable users and its overall profit margin as a result.*

so does their supply. Apple reported that there are currently more than 700,000 active podcasts and over 29 million episodes with content in more than 100 languages. Strikingly, these figures have grown from about 550,000 active podcasts and about 18.5 million episodes in 2018. Further data about podcast demographics shows that 30% of listeners are between the ages of 12 and 24, while almost half of podcast listeners earn more than \$75,000 in annual income, according to Nielson. More important for advertisers, 80% of listeners listen to "an entire podcast episode or most of it."

Advertising revenue makes podcasts a clear growth opportunity for Spotify, prompting company plans to make them at least 20% of content streamed on the platform, as McCarthy told the Wall Street Journal. While most consumers are reported to be using Apple's platform to listen to podcasts, Apple doesn't have an advertising-driven model, which is precisely where Spotify plans to monetize.

The company's conscious expansion into podcasts is its way of maximizing the growth of profitable users and its overall profit margin as a result. It does this through monthly

The primary difference between podcasts and music is that while any platform can own podcast content exclusively, music is less protected. Spotify is looking to monetize on the opportunity to own podcast content, as well. The company is using a music editing software company it owns called Soundtrap to launch a new product called "Soundtrap for Storytellers." Specifically designed for recording and editing podcasts, the product is positioned as a tool for podcast production. Soundtrap's CEO Per Emanuelsson compares it to using Google Docs, where it is easy to use and collaborative by nature, enabling many people to edit a project at once. Owning exclusive content is something that can't be done in the music industry, and is part of Spotify's plan to produce and invest in podcast content.

Spotify's McCarthy, who was previously CFO at Netflix Inc., mentioned that the company is pursuing a similar strategy to the on-demand video streaming service. Before its recent price changes and advancements in original content, Netflix's primary strategy was to grow market share and accelerate growth by favoring lower prices at the expense of margin. Spotify has done the same,



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