



THE VIEW FROM YU

Rabbi Dr. Ari Berman, President of Yeshiva University, honors Israeli singer-songwriter **Ishay Ribo** with the Or I'Yisrael (Light of Israel) award for his support of soldiers and other Israeli communities in need of comfort and inspiration.

DEC 2023





(l-r): Aviv Ezra, Israeli Consul General, at this year's Hanukkah Dinner with Ira Mitzner, Chairman of YU's Board of Trustees; U.S. Sen. Joseph Lieberman, namesake of the newly announced Senator Joseph Lieberman Center for Public Service and Advocacy (made possible by a generous gift from the Ira Mitzner and Riva Collins Mitzner Families); and Rabbi Dr. Ari Berman, President of Yeshiva University

Message From The President

Dear Friends, Students and Colleagues,

As the year draws to a close, our hearts are filled with gratitude for the many heroes who have emerged from the tragedy of Oct. 7 and its aftermath: the brave IDF soldiers in Israel, our brothers and sisters in Israel and to all those across the globe who have tirelessly contributed time, prayers and steadfast support of Israel.

On Dec. 3, during our 99th Annual Hanukkah Dinner, over 500 esteemed friends and supporters of YU came together to celebrate these heroes. The evening, filled with music and unity, paid tribute to the unwavering courage displayed by those who defend our people. Renowned Israeli singer-songwriter, Ishay Ribo, not only graced us with his performance but was also honored with the University's Or l'Yisrael (Light of Israel) award for his exceptional contributions to our community. This year's Hanukkah Dinner not only showcased our values as the flagship Jewish University but, at this critical moment in history, underscored our profound mission—to educate and develop the next generation of leaders and advocates for Israel.

In this edition of the *View from YU*, you will read concrete examples of this mission in action—from YU's powerful presence at the March for Israel in Washington, D.C., where over 2,500 students, among the largest contingents at the rally, expressed their solidarity with the Jewish state, to Operation Torah Shield III, which sent 36 undergraduates on a week-long chesed mission to Israel, offering solace to grieving families and wounded soldiers. A collaboration between YU's Undergraduate Torah Studies program and the Counseling Center brought Yossi Landau, a volunteer with Zaka, to the Wilf Campus for a moving talk on the valiant actions of first responders in the wake of Oct. 7. More than 150 members of YU's Political Action Club traveled to our nation's capital to lobby elected officials on support for Israel and the need to combat antisemitism on college campuses. Meanwhile, our Alumni Affairs Office organized a highly successful webinar with more than 220 participants, addressing ways to confront antisemitism and anti-Zionism in the workplace.

As you will read in the pages that follow, YU is steadfast in its mission to enable the Jewish leaders of today to educate our leaders of tomorrow—instilling in them the values and skills necessary to lead purposeful lives dedicated to the greater good of the Jewish people and our broader society.

My warmest regards,

Rabbi Dr. Ari Berman
President, Yeshiva University

YU Stands with Israel

99th Annual Hanukkah Dinner

Yeshiva University's 99th Annual Hanukkah Dinner, themed "Together with Israel," took place on Dec. 3 at the Ziegfeld Ballroom in Manhattan. In an inspiring blend of music and unity, the evening featured YU students and faculty who are IDF veterans, along with performances by Israeli superstar **Ishay Ribo**.

Expressing gratitude to the more than 500 guests in attendance, **Rabbi Dr. Ari Berman, President of Yeshiva University**, announced the establishment of the Senator

Joseph Lieberman Center for Public Service and Advocacy. The Center, founded by the Ira Mitzner and Riva Collins Mitzner Families with a generous gift of \$10 million, will advance YU's mission to cultivate the next generation of government leaders and advocates.

During the announcement, President Berman stressed the critical role the University has in the current global landscape, declaring, "The truth is that the world needs Yeshiva University now more than ever as the flagship Jewish University." [READ MORE](#)



Ishay Ribo, internationally renowned Israeli singer-songwriter, takes the stage at YU's 99th Annual Hanukkah Dinner.

A First Responder Bears Witness

On Nov. 21, **Yossi Landau**, head of operations for the Southern Command of Zaka, Israel's emergency response unit focused on rescue and recovery, shared a personal account of his experiences as a first responder to the Oct. 7 terrorist attacks. More than 100 YU students attended the discussion, where Landau, who has worked for 30 years with Zaka on both domestic and international rescue missions, shared his profound insights about the tragedy. **Dr. Yedidya Levy**, an IDF combat veteran and assistant director of the Counseling Center, served as moderator.

YUPAC Goes to Washington

Over 150 members of the Yeshiva University Political Action Club (YUPAC) met separately with 30 members of Congress for a highly productive day of lobbying on three key issues: strengthening support for Israel, releasing the Oct. 7 hostages and combating antisemitism. Originally scheduled for March 2024, the Nov. 29 lobbying trip was "a highly successful effort on our students' part to marshal their forces and compress many months of work into just a few weeks," noted **Jon Greenfield**, YUPAC's faculty adviser and YU's assistant vice president of government relations. "The response they received was tremendous."



Operation Torah Shield III

From Nov. 18–26, a group of 36 Yeshiva University students, rabbis and faculty undertook an independent solidarity mission to Israel as part of Operation Torah Shield III. Guided by **Rabbi Reuven Brand** from the YU Torah Mitzion Kollel of Chicago and **Rachel Besser**, professor of Judaic Studies at Stern College, the students volunteered on farms, provided solace to grieving families and offered emotional support to wounded soldiers.



March for Israel

On Nov. 14, YU sent 44 buses with over 2,500 college and high school students, faculty and staff to the history-making March for Israel rally in Washington D.C. Close to 300,000 supporters of Israel participated, with YU being one of the largest contingents. “We are proud to take a leadership role in paving the way for yeshivot, day schools, synagogues and communities to join this effort and stand with Israel. This is our responsibility as the flagship Jewish university,” said **President Berman**. [READ MORE](#)

New and Notable

Dynamic New Leadership Initiative

The Yeshiva University Women’s Initiative for Leadership and Learning (YUWILL) held its launch event on Nov. 1. YUWILL is



dedicated to educating, empowering and inspiring the next generation of Jewish women. Among its offerings is the Golda Meir Fellowship, a unique mentorship program for women undergraduates. The initiative was founded by **Dr. Sharon Poczter**, chair of the strategy and entrepreneurship department at the Sy Syms School of Business, in partnership with Batsheva, a renowned Jewish women’s leadership organization. [VIEW EVENT](#)

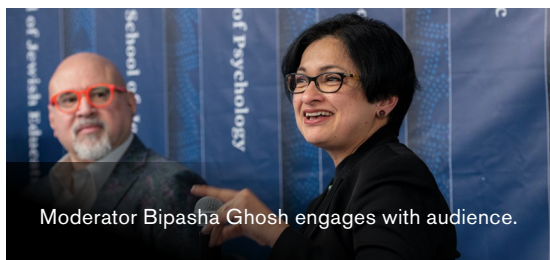
Confronting Antisemitism

More than 220 YU alumni, spanning a wide range of ages and industries, engaged in the Dec. 6 webinar, “Combatting Antisemitism in the Workplace.” Drawing from their extensive professional experience in law, finance and the media, the online panelists

—**Joel Strauss ’86YC**, partner at Kaplan Fox & Kilsheimer; **Lawrence Askowitz ’87YC**, managing director of the Bank Street Group; and **Ariella Noveck ’11SB**, a media communications professional—addressed audience concerns on confronting the surge of antisemitism. The event was organized by YU’s Office of Alumni Affairs.

AI’s Impact on Marketing

What challenges do marketers face in the age of AI? Are they ready for them? These were top-of-mind questions for participants at November’s “Navigating Marketing in the Age of AI.” Presented by Sy Syms and the YU Innovation Lab and moderated by Sy Syms adjunct professor and Dali Spaces CMO **Bipasha Ghosh**, the fast-paced program brought together four industry experts for an informative discussion on what matters most for marketers in this new, rapidly evolving era of AI. [READ MORE](#)



Moderator Bipasha Ghosh engages with audience.

Students & Faculty

Katz Student Presents Research at Prestigious Forum

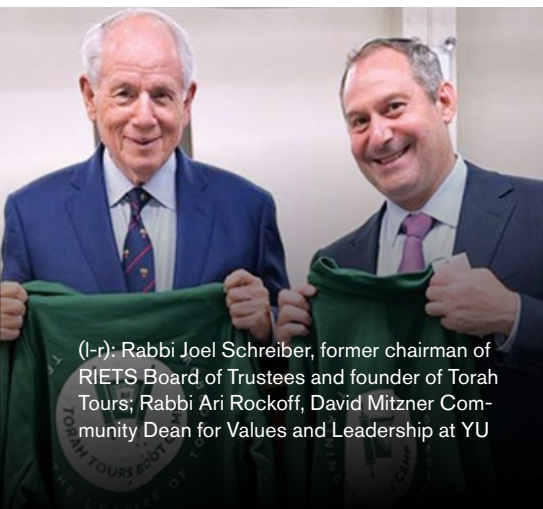


Samuel Akingbade, a Ph.D. candidate in the mathematics program at the Katz School of Science and Health, was part of an exclusive cohort of young researchers presenting their

work at the Heidelberg Laureate Forum. Initiated by physicist and co-founder of SAP, Klaus Tschira, the conference gathers 200 outstanding young researchers in mathematics and computer science to interact with recipients of the most prestigious prizes in these fields. [READ MORE](#)

Torah Tours: Leadership Lessons

Over 70 YU students participated in this year's Torah Tours, continuing a tradition that has energized Jewish communities across North America since the program's inception in 1971. During the Simchat Torah holiday, these participants infused youthful energy and a love for Torah into select communities, just like the thousands before them. However, the 2023 program proved markedly different. This year's student volunteers were confronted with the tragic events of Oct. 7 in Israel, an experience bringing them face-to-face with the realities of Jewish leadership and offering life lessons on community resilience. [READ MORE](#)



(l-r): Rabbi Joel Schreiber, former chairman of RIETS Board of Trustees and founder of Torah Tours; Rabbi Ari Rockoff, David Mitzner Community Dean for Values and Leadership at YU

Dr. Tamar Avnet Takes the Helm at Sy Syms MBA Program



Dr. Tamar Avnet has been named the new director of the online MBA program at the Sy Syms School of Business. She will continue as chair of the school's marketing department where she also serves as a full

professor. Dr. Avnet's academic journey includes teaching at such renowned MBA programs as Rotman Business School in Toronto and Columbia University Business School. Armed with a bachelor's degree in economics and a Master of Science from the Technion in Israel, she earned her Ph.D. in marketing from Columbia. With a wealth of experience, including a visiting professorship at New York University, Dr. Avnet joined YU in 2007, ascending to the role of marketing department chair in 2011.



SCDS Ends the Year with Courtroom Drama

In a three-performance run in December, the Stern College Dramatics Society (SCDS) captivated sold-out audiences with their stellar production of *The Anastasia Trials in The Court of Women*, an immersive courtroom drama, engaging the audience as both judges and jurors. Directing the production was **Leah Gottfried '14S**, a SCDS alumna and the creative force behind the comedic web series "Soon by You."



Upcoming Events

Visit yu.edu/events/all to learn more about the programs listed here.

Maimonides: Now and Then (Public Conference)

Sunday, Dec. 17 | 2–5 p.m.
YU Museum, 15 West 16th St.

Rabbi Sacks Book Prize Event

Sunday, Dec. 17 | 7–9:30 p.m.
Young Israel of Lawrence
Cedarhurst 8 Spruce St.,
Cedarhurst, Long Island

From a Ukrainian-Romanian Refugee Camp to YU Campus

Monday, Dec. 18 | 8:45–10 p.m.
Glueck Center, 307
Wilf Campus

Military and Strategic Aspects of the Conflict in Gaza

Tuesday, Dec. 19 | 7–8:30 p.m.
Provost's Office, Online event

Values in Conflict Negotiating the Impossible: The Israeli Hostage Crisis

Tuesday, Dec. 19 | 6:45–7:45 p.m.
Discussion with Dr. Daniel Gordis,
Rabbi Sacks 2023 Book
Prize Winner
Weissberg Commons
Wilf Campus



Together with Israel

For the latest news and information on University initiatives, resources and events in support of Israel, please visit YU's webpage yu.edu/togetherwithisrael.

Hanukkah Shines Brightly at YU

As the Festival of Lights unfolded, YU students were immersed in the Hanukkah spirit, from lively menorah lightings and donut decorating to heartwarming gratitude events and lively Chagigot. On Dec. 12, holiday festivities were in full swing as 1,000 students, staff and faculty joined YU's Hanukkah Takeover at the American Dream Mall in East Rutherford, New Jersey. Ice skating, amusement park rides and an abundance of delectable holiday treats made for an enjoyable evening.

A notable addition to this year's event was the inclusion of over 25 families affected by the war in Israel. These families, including displaced individuals, parents and siblings of Lone Soldiers, as well as those who lost loved ones during the Oct. 7 attack, shared their experiences with the attending students in a communal candle-lighting ceremony.



Yeshiva University

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