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NYC Comptroller Sends Letter to President Berman; Calls on YU to Recognize Pride Alliance

By JONATHAN LEVIN

NYC Comptroller Brad Lander sent a letter to President Ari Berman Monday, informing him that his office has been monitoring YU's stance towards the YU Pride Alliance, and urged the institution to recognize the group.

"Your students are alleging that your current practices are discriminatory and in violation of the New York City's Human Rights Law," stated Lander. "I must urge your institution to change course and offer a secure environment for your LGBTQ+ students and staff to create a supportive space to rightfully express their full selves."

Lander's letter also implied that city funding to the university could be "at risk" due to YU's refusal to recognize the Pride Alliance.

"Our records show that Yeshiva University has received some \$8.8 million in City funding since 2010," Lander stated. "The University's discriminatory actions may put future funding and associated services at risk."

The city's comptroller acts as chief

financial officer for the city and combats corruption, promotes fiscal health and ensures the proper functioning of city agencies.

"Our records show that Yeshiva University has received some \$8.8 million in City funding since 2010. The University's discriminatory actions may put future funding and associated services at risk."

Brad Lander, NYC Comptroller

Lander is not the first elected official to send a letter to President Berman calling on YU to recognize the LGBTQ student group. Last month, three state senators called on Berman to recognize the group and requested that the university submit an accounting of \$230 million of state funding

the institution received.

YU never submitted an accounting of its use of the funding, the office of State Senator Brad Hoylman-Sigal, one of the senators who signed the letter, told The Commentator Tuesday. The senators had requested an accounting by Feb. 10, 30 days from the date of their letter.

Six New York State congressional members sent a similar letter in September.

"We will continue to defend our students against these false allegations," said Yeshiva University spokesperson Hanan Eisenman. "We have already established a path forward which provides loving and supportive spaces for our LGBTQ students. We kindly ask well-meaning politicians to please learn the facts before attacking our students' Jewish education."

The New York City Comptroller's office declined a request for comment.

YU is currently in court with the Pride Alliance, and is appealing an order to recognize the group in the New York Court of Appeals.

YU announced Kol Yisroel Areivim, a university-sanctioned LGBTQ student club, shortly after YU signed a stay with

the alliance, ending YU's club freeze, in October. The Commentator reported that the group existed only as a framework shortly thereafter.

Kol Yisroel Areivim has yet to hold an event, and a planned event for Jan. 23, advertised as sponsored by the Office of Student Life and slated to feature LGBTQ students speaking about their experiences, did not occur.



NYC Comptroller Brad Lander, pictured here at the Capital Process Reform Task Force at Gracie Mansion in October, sent a letter to President Ari Berman Monday

OFFICE OF NEW YORK CITY COMPTROLLER

Bin-Nun Appointed Makor Student Liaison

By ARIEL KAHAN

The Makor College Experience, a three-year, non-degree Yeshiva University program for young men with developmental disabilities, hired its first ever student liaison, who will coordinate and facilitate peer-to-peer, relationship-building experiences between the Makor students and the rest of the undergraduate student body, early this semester.

Zevi Bin-Nun (SSSB '23), a student in Sy Syms School of Business, approached Dr. Stephen Glicksman, founder and director of the Makor College Experience, shortly before winter break, and suggested that the program create this position. Glicksman subsequently reviewed the idea and agreed.

The Makor College Experience, a partnership between Yeshiva University and Makor Care and Services Network, has provided individuals with developmental disabilities the opportunity to have a YU undergraduate experience since 2017.

The program consists of 18 students as well as three full time faculty members, with an additional three dorm counselors at night.

"YU is so much more than just a University," Glicksman explained to The Commentator. "For many, it is a continuation of their Jewish growth and participation in the community. The whole point of the Makor College Experience at YU is inclusion, and on an institutional level we have had great success."

Bin-Nun will connect interested undergraduate students with Makor students based on their schedules and interests.

"We have guys in our program who would love to connect with a peer to work out together in the gym, have a meal, or learn at night seder," explained Glicksman. The whole point of Makor is to give our students a typical YU undergrad experience, so anything people are interested in doing as college students I'm sure we have a Makor student interested in the same thing."

Bin-Nun will remain in his role through the rest of the academic year, until he graduates.

While Makor students have their own Rebbe and teachers and learn in their own classes, they are active in campus life and are frequently seen taking part in campus clubs and events, using the gym and library and learning in the beis medrash.

"Nobody shows security their YU IDs more proudly than the Makor guys," said Glicksman, "but one-on-one relationships with the other students have been more challenging. So, when Zevi approached us with his idea for this position, we jumped at it."

"The overall goal of the program is inclusion," Bin-Nun told The Commentator. "There are some who have an easier time connecting and some who need a little more assistance. We will cater to all! The vision is at all times of the day; lunch, dinner, gym, chavrusas ... We are open to other ideas and God willing the program will evolve."

Undergraduate Torah Studies to Run YUnite in Teaneck This Month

By JONATHAN LEVIN

Yeshiva University Undergraduate Torah Studies (UTS) will run a YUnite program in Teaneck on March 25, Shabbat Parshat Vayikra, with students being hosted by members of Teaneck's Jewish community and programming at a variety of private and public locations, including six shuls.

The second YUnite of the academic year, the program, which will be attended by over two dozen Roshei Yeshiva and YU-affiliated Rebbeim, will aim to give students a good experience, engage alumni and potential students, and showcase YU to Teaneck. Students and alumni interested in hosting students can sign up online, with early bird registration for students effective through March 10.

The idea for the event came from UTS Program Administrator Rabbi Herschel Hartz, who has worked on the project since November together with UTS Dean Rabbi Yosef Kalinsky, the UTS development team, and other YU departments, such as events and marketing.

"Teaneck is our 'Boro Park:' YU is everywhere in Teaneck and every week there is a 'Shabbaton' there," Hartz told The Commentator. "What is new here is that our students can utilize the facilities and relationships we have in Teaneck to re-create the Romimu experience: amazing achdus opportunities, our world-class Rebbeim, and tremendous conversations

that can make us feel part of one Yeshiva.

"It is not so much about Teaneck as it is about what Teaneck can offer us and what we can offer to our alumni: inspiration and a ripe opportunity to unite together as one Yeshiva."

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Rabbi Herschel Hartz, UTS Program Administrator

As of publishing, twenty families in Teaneck have agreed to host students, and over 60 students have registered.

While final programming has yet to be released, students are expected to eat meals at various families — or at home, if they are from Teaneck — followed by a Friday night tisch and learning sessions at Beth Abraham in Bergenfield, a town bordering Teaneck. The tisch will be open

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The Doctor Is In

Yuval Nitzan Breaks All-Time Scoring Record for YU's Women's Basketball Team

By RINA SHAMILOV

Yuval Nitzan (SSSB '23), captain of the YU Maccabees women's basketball team, broke YU's women's basketball scoring record in a game against St. Joseph's Golden Eagles Feb. 15 with a career total of 1,160 points, surpassing former teammate Michal Alge's (SCW '19) previous record of 1,159 points.

Despite Nitzan's performance of 13 points, the game was a 68–58 loss

continued to play the sport while serving in the IDF.

Numerous colleges extended invitations to Nitzan before she selected YU.

"I had offers from colleges in West Virginia, New Jersey and YU," said Nitzan. "I went on a college tour with my father and I decided that YU is the best option for me."

Nitzan could not be more glad with her college decision, because play-

able to do it — only the players who truly love the game."

Nitzan's accomplishments and her new score record drew praise from YU Director of Athletics Greg Fox.

"Yuval has cemented herself as one of the greatest players in YU women's basketball history," Fox told *The Commentator*. "Her overall skillset is phenomenal, and most importantly, she's an outstanding human being; she is the embodiment of what we want in a student athlete at YU. She's a terrific young woman and I'm hopeful we'll have her one more year."

Nitzan hopes to graduate this year with a double-major in finance and business strategy & entrepreneurship and apply for a Masters in cybersecurity from YU's Katz School of Science and Health while continuing to play for the Maccabees. The NCAA extended student-athlete eligibility due to the pandemic, which allows Nitzan, who played in the 2020-'21 season, to play one more year.

"I'm honored and proud to become the YU all-time leading scorer," Nitzan told YU's athletics department. "These four years were and still are the best years of my life. I couldn't be happier to do what I love. I've been playing basketball since I was young and reaching this milestone means a lot to me."

"I'm honored and proud to become the YU all-time leading scorer. These four years were and still are the best years of my life. I couldn't be more happier to do what I love. I've been playing basketball since I was young and reaching this milestone means a lot to me."

Yuval Nitzan (SSSB '23), captain of the YU Maccabees women's basketball team

for YU at Nat Holman Gymnasium. Three days later, the team lost to the College of Mount Saint Vincent, which prevented them from making it into their first-ever Skyline Conference Championships. Nitzan's score total currently stands at 1,174.

The shots that gave Nitzan her high score were two free throws after drawing a foul in the final 12 seconds of the game.

Nitzan, originally from Hod Hasharon, Israel, told *The Commentator* that she has been playing basketball since she was 8 years old. Since then, she's played for multiple teams in Israel, including the women's national team, and

ing for YU helps "[me] represent my country ... [and] I became close to the team. We became a little family," she shared.

Team captain for three years, the 5'6 senior recognizes the importance of working together as a team.

"We know that to win games we have to play together, as a team," Nitzan said. "That's what we did this year. From a team that barely won games last season, we almost made the playoffs ... We lost our last game, but we still grew. And I couldn't be more proud. Or happy."

"We practice every night," Nitzan shared. "And we have school. It's a big commitment, and not everyone will be



Yuval Nitzan broke the YU Maccabees women's basketball record last month

EMUNA SHILLER

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For 88 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.

Read more at yucommentator.org

RIETS, UTS and MTA to Host Second Annual Day of Learning

By SRULI FRIEDMAN

Yeshivas Rabbeinu Yitzchak Elchanan will host their second annual Yom HaKahal/Day of Learning fundraising event at the Hilton Meadowlands in East Rutherford, New Jersey on Sunday, March 12.

The fundraising event will include Yeshiva University High School for Boys (MTA), Yeshiva University Undergraduate Torah Studies (UTS) and Rabbi Isaac Elchanan Theological Seminary (RIETS) and will allow guests to experience Yeshivas Rabbeinu Yitzchak Elchanan's Torah study while supporting it through donations.

Guests will have the ability to choose from nearly 50 shiurim given by prominent Roshei Yeshiva on topics relating to Masechet Gittin, the *masechta* [tractate] that the Yeshiva is

studying this year, including 23 daily shiurim usually given on Sunday, which will be relocated to the Meadowlands for the day. Men's programming will be from 8:30 a.m. through 4:30 p.m. and women's programming from 12 through 4:30 p.m.

"More than an elongated Kollel Yom Rishon program, this special event aims to recreate the feel of our yeshiva," Rabbi Menachem Penner, Max and Marion Grill dean of RIETS, told The Commentator. "Bringing together its current talmidim, its alumni and the communities we all serve. Participation is about much more than a day of study. It is about standing with our Yeshiva and our Roshei Yeshiva in a critical time in its history."

The first annual Yom HaKahal, held last year at the Sheraton New York Times Square Hotel, hosted 450 guests and raised about

\$1.3 million for RIETS, UTS and MTA. This year's event aims to top last year's achievements and hopes to attract nearly 700 attendees and raise \$1.6 million.

The men's program is scheduled to begin

"Yom HaKahal is a once a year experience like no other for our Yeshiva. It's a day to be inspired by our Yeshiva and to connect to something larger than our individual selves. You don't want to miss it!"

—
Rabbi Yosef Kalinsky, director of UTS

with Shacharis and include an address from YU President Ari Berman, a *shiur klali* [general address] by RIETS Rosh Yeshiva Rav Hershel Schachter and a siyum on Masechet Gittin. Special shiurim relating to Gittin will be given by multiple Roshei Yeshiva, including Rabbis Mordechai Willig, Mayer Twerski, Yaakov Neuburger and Eliyahu Baruch Shulman. The day will conclude with a demonstration of Jewish divorce procedure.

The women's program will also have shiurim on various topics from many faculty members of Stern College for Women (SCW), including Professors Nechama Price and Rachel Besser, Dean Shoshana Schechter, Dr. Deena Rabinovich and Rabbis Jacob and Shay Schachter. The program will also include a discussion with Rabbi and Rebbetzin

Neuburger.

Both programs will have the opportunity to view a "never-before-seen shiur" from the late Rosh Yeshiva Rabbi Joseph B. Soloveitchik and will have access to "Yeshiva Village," where guests will have the opportunity to buy seforim and Yeshiva paraphernalia, meet Roshei Yeshiva and get snacks from the "hefker table."

Attendees are required to make a \$100 or \$54 minimum donation to participate in the men's or women's programs, respectively. Those who contribute higher sponsorship levels will receive special sessions and perks at the event. Current students are admitted at no charge but are "strongly encouraged" to sign up as campaign ambassadors to help fundraise.

"Yom HaKahal is a once-a-year experience like no other for our Yeshiva," Rabbi Yosef Kalinsky, director of UTS, told The Commentator. "It's a day to be inspired by our Yeshiva and to connect to something larger than our individual selves. You don't want to miss it! Sign up today!"



Yeshivas Rabbeinu Yitzchak Elchanan will host their second annual Yom HaKahal/Day of Learning this Sunday

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YUNITE IN TEANECK Continued from Front Page

to the public.

Shabbos morning drashos [sermons] from different Roshei Yeshiva are expected to be held the following morning at multiple shuls, followed by shiurim and luncheons with Roshei Yeshiva at different private homes.

Following the luncheons, different shiurim are expected to be held at different homes and shuls throughout the afternoon, which will touch a variety of topics, including Jewish philosophy, Halacha, Ashkenazi and Sephardi minhagim and parenting.

All the shiurim throughout the day will be open to the public.

Towards the end of Shabbat, a Seuda Shlishis featuring President Ari Berman is expected to be held, a Melaveh Malkah with Rabbis Mordechai and Simcha Willig after Shabbat, and a final closing session open to students and Alumni outside of Teaneck.

"Shabbos programming is an essential component of our education and Yeshiva experience," Rabbi Kalinsky told The Commentator. "It is a time to be with and learn from our Rebbeim as well as connect with each other. Taking talmidim off-campus to another location like Teaneck promotes each of those goals and also provides our alumni and potential students a window into our incredible students and Rebbeim."

The shuls that will participate in the program are Bais Medrash of Bergenfield, Beth Abraham, Keter Torah, Ohr HaTorah, Rinat

Yisrael and Shaarei Orah.

Some of the YU Rebbeim who have been confirmed to attend are Rabbis Hayyim Angel, Ely Bacon, Josh Blass, Yosef Blau, Aharon Ciment, Tanchum Cohen, Daniel Feldman, Meir Goldwicht, Yosef Kalinsky, Beni Krohn, Yaakov Neuburger, Menachem Penner, Michael Rosensweig, Baruch Simon, Zvi Sobolofsky, Michael Taubes, Moshe Tzvi Wienberg, Simcha Willig, Mordechai Willig, and Ari Zhatz. Martin Galla, the associate director of YU's counseling center, and Rabbi Avraham Kener, a therapist at the center, will also come, as will Yeshiva University President Ari Berman.

Some of the non-YU rabbis who are confirmed to participate are Rabbis Steven Burg, executive director of Aish Hatorah; Yehuda Chanales, director of educational advancement at the Fuchs Mizrachi school; Chaim Jachter, Rabbi at Shaarei Ohra and dayan at the Beth Din of Elizabeth; Jonathan Knapp, principal at Yavneh Academy; Larry Rothwachs, a rabbi at Beth Ahron and Rabbi Chaim Strauchler, rabbi at Rinat Yisrael.

UTS ran a YUnite at Camp Romimu in Monticello, New York this September, the first YUnite Shabbaton since 2007.



UTS will run YUnite in Teaneck later this month

THE COMMENTATOR

Harim Saviv Lah: Between Jerusalem and Salt Lake City

By JOSHUA SHAPIRO

A little over a month ago, I was leaving my final Heights Lounge *mincha* of the fall semester when I noticed Rabbi Dr. Stuart Halpern, the senior advisor to the provost and deputy director of the Straus Center for Torah and Western Thought, standing right in front of me. Before I could say hello, he abruptly asked me the question I was least expecting at that moment.

“Do you want to go to BYU for a day?”

Rabbi Halpern explained that on Jan. 31, Brigham Young University (BYU) was bringing in President Rabbi Dr. Ari Berman to speak at BYU Forum, their weekly equivalent of a *shiur klali*. Visiting the university—officially identified with The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (also known as Mormonism)—would be a worthwhile educational experience, Rabbi Halpern said. We would speak to professors, students and administrators and witness first-hand how things work at another religious university in the United States. Finally, he mentioned that I would help make a *minyán* in Provo, Utah, so President Berman could say *kaddish* for his late father. I expressed my unequivocal interest, and before I knew it, I was on the way to the airport for the journey to Utah.

My knowledge about the Church of the Latter-day Saints (LDS) was pretty limited before the trip. I remember Mitt Romney convincingly winning my lower school’s mock presidential election in 2012 and BYU’s golden boy, Jimmer Fredette, draining threes in March Madness. However, I was unaware of how the LDS community functions, what the religious rituals are like and how they might be similar to Jews.

A few days before the trip, Rabbi Halpern assigned us some articles to read and hosted a Zoom call where he briefly recounted the history and rituals of the church. On the way to the airport, he added a few other interesting pieces of information.

“In some ways, they are like Chabad,” he said.

As backward as it sounds, there is some truth to it. While high school graduates in the Modern Orthodox community take gap years to learn in Israeli yeshivas and seminaries, LDS church members take a couple of years off to embark on a “mission,” or what some would term *shlichus*. In comparison to the academic programs that the average Jew might partake in, pairs of LDS teenagers travel all around the world—including

Taiwan, Congo, Kentucky and Germany—to missionize the new people they meet in the area. Granted, the *kiruv* done by Chabad is only directed towards unaffiliated Jews, not gentiles; however, the act of traveling to a remote section of the world to bring people closer to God by both groups is similar and admirable.

As we approached the recently renovated Terminal A of Newark airport, Rabbi Halpern also noted that LDS members have a “Temple garment” that they don under their clothes to remind them of their covenant with God, remarkably similar to the Jewish ritual of wearing *tzitzit*.

Most importantly, he mentioned that in line with LDS religious practice, there will be no coffee found on the BYU campus, so when we arrived at the hotel we made sure to get a good night’s sleep before what would be an incredible day.

Upon entering the board room assigned for *shacharit*, it was impossible to miss the sublime mountains protruding in the distance. It wasn’t just at our hotels, though. Throughout all our rides one could not stop marveling at the scenic beauty of the snowy landscape, especially once we got to BYU. As we tried to explain to people there, YU does have the glorious hills of Washington Heights, but they do not come close to the Utah topography.

After arriving at BYU, we were welcomed into a conference room where Rabbi Halpern moderated a fascinating panel discussion with three BYU faculty members—Professors Andrew Reed, Elizabeth Clark and Barbara Morgan Gardner—all of whom have previously interacted with the Jewish community through Jewish-LDS academic dialogue and interfaith conferences.

When asked about the importance of a relationship between the LDS and Jewish communities, one professor said that the partnership allows us to build a stronger front when fighting issues of religious freedom: “When we are united, we are taken more seriously.”

They also mentioned that a bond with Judaism, or any religion, allows the LDS community to have “Holy Envy,” a virtuous “jealousy” of other religions’ righteous practices. Reed expressed his admiration of Judaism’s “wrestling with scripture,” about which Yehuda Goldberg (YC ‘22), the lone *semicha* student on the trip, beautifully explained to the BYU students the nature of the “*chavruta* relationship”—the seemingly vitriolic disagreements of the *beit midrash*

which are nevertheless rooted in a profound search for truth. In a contemporary world that does not favor much discourse, the LDS students were amazed by the notion that such intense disagreements can be had within the walls of a study hall.

Given that Yeshiva University has a plethora of rituals and programs revolving around traditional learning that generate the “Jewish environment” around campus, I asked the panelists how exactly the religiousness of BYU manifests itself on a daily basis. Institutionally, they said, the religious atmosphere is all-encompassing, whether it be through the smaller things—the church

While there is so much to internalize from such an incredible trip, one thing is instantly clear: It is more than mountains that unite Salt Lake City and Jerusalem.

bells at noon or the prayers before every class—or the larger things—religious studies requirements for classes and academic buildings turning into areas of worship on Sundays.

The religious environment at BYU also expresses itself in the individual, they added. Students are expected to abide by the university’s “Honor Code,” which among several things requires them to “Be honest,” dress modestly and abstain from premarital relations and certain substances like coffee, alcohol and tea.

While some of these LDS practices might resemble some Jewish rituals, the community dynamics within the church drastically differ from anything Jews experience today. In comparison to Judaism, where the number of sects is often too many to count, all of BYU and Latter-day Saints around the world are united under the church in Salt Lake City. In the current model, every member of the church annually donates a tithe, and this money is subsequently distributed to community institutions. At BYU, for instance, tuition is only \$3,152 a semester for undergraduate students.

The communal unity is also expressed in BYU’s sheer number of students—more than 34,000. Although Judaism and the LDS church have similar total populations, Yeshiva’s student population in comparison to BYU is much smaller, undoubtedly because Jews divide themselves for better or for worse between different sects and educational institutions.

Such unity is no accident: it is most directly the result of centralized power. While Jews do not currently believe that any leader is receiving *nevuah* or *ruach hakodesh*, LDS church members believe that the incumbent president of the Church receives prophecy from God. The revelations that the president hears from God even dictate recent policies for the entire LDS community. Questions like whether or not to permit medical marijuana and the acceptance of Coca-Cola have all been directly determined by prophecy.

With such an important figure within the LDS community, one might assume that the prophet works as a spiritual leader elsewhere before assuming the position. However, for LDS members, almost none of them are initially clergymen. As one student put it, “Our job is to go to work and be a source of Christ’s light.” This is true until the moment is right, when they believe that God selects those who are working as lawyers, doctors, or businessmen to engage in the holy work.

Following the panel, we spoke to many of the BYU students in attendance. We discussed topics like marrying Christians from other denominations, the differing levels

of religious observance in the church and where they went on their missions. I had over twenty more questions ready to be asked in my notebook before they began escorting us to the BYU basketball stadium, where nearly 10,000 BYU students were already awaiting President Berman’s keynote address.

In a magnificent speech titled “Covenant versus Consumer Education,” President Berman beautifully articulated to the crowd two different approaches one could take in life. A “consumer” mentality, he argued, is self-centered, focused on the needs of the present moment and a materialistic goal. Conversely, a “covenantal” mindset places

one in a community that simultaneously lives in the past, present and future with an end goal of improving ourselves and relationships with those around us.

President Berman also described how these different modes of thinking impact our relationship to our end goals. The consumer, he argued, uses a checklist to acquire a product, which must meet the predetermined criteria or else it is useless. A covenant, though, is encountered completely differently. Surely, we know some things about the people we love, but when we learn new information about them we do not simply throw away our relationships. Rather, we use this new information to strengthen our bond going forward. President Berman summarized a similar sentiment found in CS Lewis’ writings about grieving for his wife after she passed away:

What he misses most about his wife is the way she surprised him. It is not what he knew about her already that excited him—it was the alterity, the mystery, the different and unexpected ways that his wife grew and evolved that pushed him to evolve and grow as well.

In President Berman’s words, consumerism “prioritizes the known and certain.” However, the model of the covenant, he added, “prizes faith, empathy, loyalty, curiosity and discovery.” While there is certainly greater risk and uncertainty found when entering a covenantal relationship, the potential benefits and opportunities for growth are so much more, President Berman explained.

These opposing models manifest themselves within education as well. “For the consumer, education is about utility.” Within the covenant, though, everyone has a place and the educational mission is to help students discover their own personality and “story within a larger one.” As President Berman put it:

We each experience God’s presence in our own unique ways. Our educational goal is to help [you] ... identify and develop what makes you distinct to help you on your journey of becoming the person you were always meant to become.

This focus on individual personality and finding God in whatever we do also echoes the new text surrounding the emblem of Yeshiva University. While the current motto of *Torah UMadda* could be understood as limiting our interactions with God to intellectual realms, the new motto of *hakol lichvodo*, or “In service of a higher calling,” allows for the diverse students of YU to find religious significance in whatever passions



BYU and YU students at BYU

RICHARD GILL

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The Five Torot and the Obligation to Love G-d

By HANNAH POLLAK

I remember feeling somewhat put off the first time I saw the huge colorful banner of the Five Torot hanging in front of Rubin Hall. What is this banner, spanning almost one full face of the building doing here? Since when do we flaunt our values so loudly? I understood why President Berman would want to establish core ideals to guide and permeate the internal dynamics of Yeshiva University. However, I wondered why that had to be exposed to the entire Washington Heights community. I am not embarrassed or apologetic about my Jewish values, but I am also not used to a Jewish institution being so outspoken or articulate about Torah ideals with the broader world.

Historically, we have seen that Jewish leaders, at least since the post-Second Temple era, have stood out for Torah values in front of the broader world as a reactive measure. When the Jewish people or the integrity of Torah was at risk, they would answer defensively. While some public debates between Jews and other religions did historically occur, such as the Disputation

of Barcelona in 1263, they were only at the behest of gentile authorities. It is hard to find examples of cases when Jews proudly carried their values and creed in an expository and voluntary manner. Thus, in the absence of precedent, I found myself somewhat struck by the public and bold display

survival, and are therefore “exempt” from educating those outside of the Jewish family about the existence of G-d and of a moral truth.

Despite my initial sentiment, I later realized that this issue is not black or white. After some thought, I noticed that there is

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of Torah ideals.

In fact, I believe there is room for that feeling. There is a notion of Torah being an intimate endeavor. It is problematic to teach non-Jews Torah, because Torah is our inheritance, it is our betrothed. Why then, would we be interested in sharing that relationship with the outside world? Furthermore, there is a general rule that dictates that your life precedes your friend's life. If we can apply this principle more loosely, perhaps it can be argued that the Jews in exile have been focusing on their own physical and spiritual

indeed significant *halachic* precedence and philosophical significance in Rabbi Berman's campaign of spreading what he considers to be the five core Torah values out into the world, way beyond the *daled amos* [four cubit] of the YU *batei medrash* [Torah study halls] and even beyond the university component of the yeshiva.

The third positive mitzvah in Rambam's Sefer Hamitzvos is the mitzvah of *Ahavat Hashem*. The Rambam writes that this commandment is fulfilled when a person thinks about and meditates over Hashem's mitzvos, words and creations to the point that he or she has the maximum delight in grasping Hashem's existence. Later, the Rambam notes that part of this mitzvah is “that we should draw every human being to serve Him and to believe in Him.” He explains that just as when you love a person you will share with others how great they are and make others love them as well, so too if we truthfully love G-d, then certainly we will actively invite everyone to believe in Him. The Rambam then cites a Sifrei that *darshens* [explains] that the mitzvah of “*Veahavta es Hashem*” is meant to be fulfilled by making Him “lovable” to others, just like Avraham did. Avraham was not content with knowing the truth. His heart was so full of love for G-d that he inevitably brought others with him as well.

In the first chapter of *Hilchos Avodah Zara*, [the laws of idol worship] we are given more detail into Avraham's universal *kiruv* [religious revival] campaign. When Avraham was 40, he recognized his creator and thus began to debate and answer questions to those who asked him about his rejection of polytheism and his belief in one G-d. He would tell them how ridiculous it is to believe in pieces of stone or wood and that

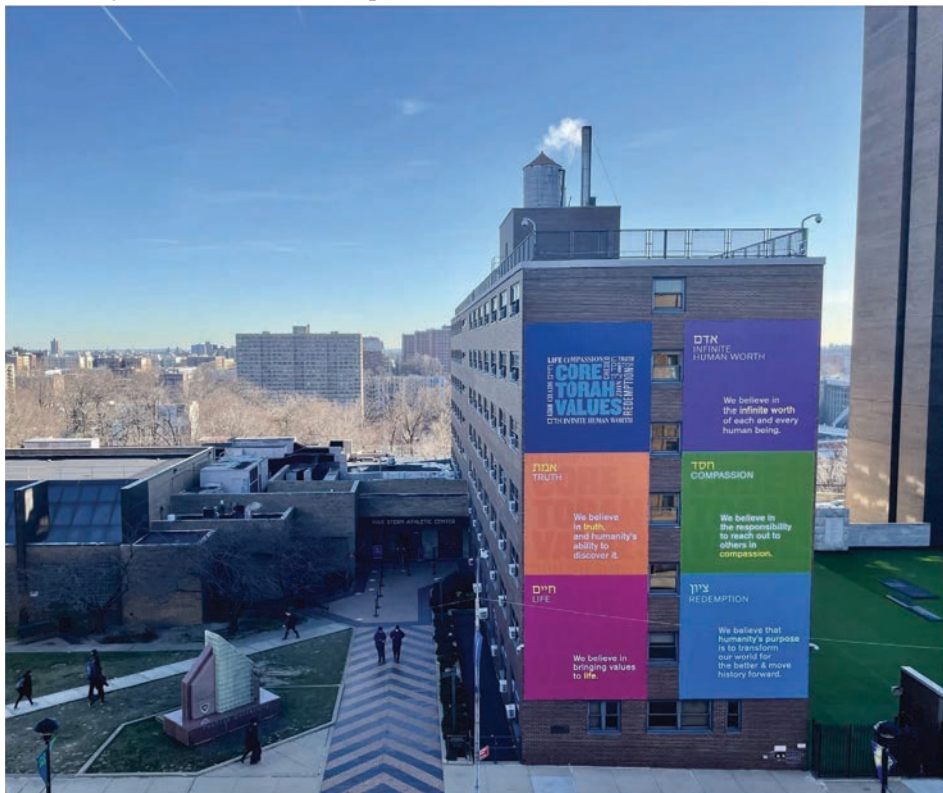
they should break their idols and destroy their altars.

After finally emerging victorious in this moral and religious battle, the king of *Ur Kasdim* wanted to kill Avraham, so he escaped to *Charan*. However, in *Charan*, while perhaps his methods changed, his agenda did not. Presumably, in *Charan*, no one was pressuring him to leave his religion. We could speculate that there, he was allowed to “live and let live.” But nevertheless, even there he would attempt to tell the entire world “that there is only one G-d and that only Him it is fitting to serve.” Furthermore, “he would walk from city to city and from nation to nation” to teach mankind about the truth of G-d. Eventually, he settled in Canaan, where people would congregate around him and ask him questions: “Avraham would tell every one and one, according to their respective intellectual capability, that they should return to the path of truth.”

In the ninth chapter of *Hilchos Teshuva*, the Rambam defines what will be in the next world. He quotes the prophet Yeshayahu who says that in those days “the world will be full of knowledge of G-d.” Every nation of the world will listen to Hashem's word, because “in the end of days, the mountain of G-d's house will be established at the peak of the mountains.” It is perhaps not coincidental that the chapter that follows (which is the last *perek* of *Hilchos Teshuva* and the entire *Sefer Hamada*) speaks about serving Hashem out of love and the individual who loves Him. Perhaps the Rambam wants to connect the two: The vision of days when everyone will recognize G-d becomes the driving force of the servant who serves with love.

This is one simple thought on a potential *kiyum hamitzvah* accomplished by the Five Torot banner hanging outside Rubin Hall. Perhaps publicizing our core values, in this case via the banner, and of course trying to the best of our ability to model them, is what the Rambam referred to when he spoke about the mitzvah of loving G-d by carrying others to Him along the way.

As a postscript, it is important to acknowledge that the complex technical parameters of our moral and educational responsibilities toward non-Jews is a controversy among the greats to debate.



The Five Torot banner outside Rubin Hall

YOSSI FRIEDMAN

HARIM SAVIV LAH

Continued from Page 4

they have. According to President Berman, it does not matter whether you like studying Torah, singing or playing basketball—there is always potential for you to actualize your best self and find God at Yeshiva University.

When President Berman concluded, the stadium rose in a standing ovation and roared in applause, and we immediately went to lunch for our last event at BYU, where we found tasty chicken salads and cookies brought to us by the local Chabad. As we unwrapped the infinite layers of plastic wrap characteristic of all imported kosher food, we spoke with the university president, professors and other leaders of the community about our impressions of BYU and invited them to visit us in Washington Heights as well.

We then headed back to Salt Lake City for one final stop: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints Conference Center. A couple of fellows gave us a tour of the massive room where the bi-annual conventions

are held, which seats 21,000 people—more than the Utah Jazz's stadium. We even saw someone play a resounding organ, which blows sounds through 3,708 pipes and is wired with enough fiber optics cable to encircle the earth twice.

After this, we drove to the airport for our flight home, closing off the trip with President Berman leading *mincha/maariv* and saying *kaddish* one more time. While sitting in the airport about to board our flight, I finally was able to internalize what I witnessed in the last twenty-four hours. I had immersed myself in an unfamiliar religious world that was both significantly different and oddly similar to my own faith. As one student put it, “the discussions about maintaining a tight-knit religious community in a secularizing world are very relevant to our religious lives as well.” Questions like how to engage the younger generation and relate to modern culture deeply resonated with both the BYU and Yeshiva students.

President Berman attributed broader significance to the trip. The trip, in his opinion, allowed the YU “students [to] broaden their

own understanding of Judaism and of the world.” Going forward, he also acknowledged that this trip serves as a foundation “for our leaders of tomorrow to develop a broad network to be developed for the future.”

The trip to BYU certainly allowed us students to create new relationships with a community centered around religious, cultural and political topics, but this is certainly not YU's first encounter with the LDS community. In 2016, Rabbi Dr. Meir Soloveichik went with a Jewish delegation to BYU to commemorate the 1841 proclamation by Orson Hyde, an LDS Church member, in support of forming a Jewish state within the Land of Israel. (In fact, the LDS support of Israel is so strong that there even exists a BYU campus in Jerusalem.)

Rabbi Halpern similarly emphasized that this trip did not create but strengthened a relationship between YU and BYU. In the past decade alone Yeshiva University and BYU have jointly hosted a religious freedom conference and a launch for a Straus Center book, “Proclaim Liberty Throughout

the Land: The Hebrew Bible in the United States,” Rabbi Halpern noted.

Aside from political topics and scholarship, Rabbi Halpern stressed that “BYU faculty and church leadership understand that this is not just an interfaith dialogue but a shared interest about faith in the modern world, education for the next generation, and a recognition of the prime role that the Land of Israel holds for both of our faiths.”

While there is so much to internalize from such an incredible trip, one thing is instantly clear: It is more than mountains that unite Salt Lake City and Jerusalem. The bond between the LDS and Jewish communities provides us with friends who strongly care about the State of Israel, religious freedom in a secular world and faith in the modern age, and continuing to strengthen this relationship going forward can only lead to further growth for both communities.

Bringing Jewish History to Life: The Inspirational Story of Professor Steven Fine

By GAVRIEL FACTOR

Yeshiva University has an outstanding and unique Jewish history department. A distinguished professor in this department is Prof. Steven Fine. Fine is a renowned scholar in his field and seeks to be an inspiration to his students and peers. He is the director of the Yeshiva University Center for Israel Studies and works actively as a historian specializing in the Greco-Roman world. He has written many books, such as “Sacred Realm: The Emergence of the Syn-

Fine embodies the values that define what YU is. He is an inspiration to his students and helps to create a sense of community at YU.

agogue in the Ancient World,” and opened numerous exhibitions with YU such as “The Arch of Titus” and “The Samaritans: A Biblical People.” Fine currently lives in New York with his wife, sons and dog.

Fine has always loved to learn and gain exposure to new subjects. He has a curious mind and is constantly seeking to grow in his knowledge. Growing up in San Diego, Fine was brought up in an extremely small Jewish community, and thus brings a special perspective to the YU community. During his early schooling, Fine always had the urge to learn. “I was the kid who just wanted to know,” he shared. “The whole community took care of me. It was a great place to grow up.”

While in high school, the Jewish Federation of San Diego, a non-profit organization that serves to educate and raise money for the Jewish community there, sent Fine on a transformative trip to Israel. He was able to interact with Israeli speakers and experience Israeli culture at a young age. Another key experience for Fine occurred

during high school when he had to write a long thesis for an art history class. Fine wanted to write about Puritan tombstones in Massachusetts, but his teacher encouraged him to write about something Jewish. “I did something that surprised everyone,” he said. “I took the *pesukim* of the description of the *menorah* and I took art from the beginning till the 20th century. I asked myself, how did all of these artists interpret those *pesukim*? Little did I know that that was a new thing to do. No one had ever thought to do such things. From that moment on, I was extremely visual.”

Just as Fine's high school art history teacher did with him, Fine shares the same encouraging spirit with his students. He wants his students to be enthusiastic about their interests and studies, similar to how he finds meaning in his everyday life and work. Every day wherever he is, he sees and breathes Jewish history. Through his hard work, he is able to create a sense of meaning. For example, when he is hiking he sees not only the hike but the history behind the hike and the significance of where he is. This helps to create a constant environment conducive to learning: “This is how I live. Right? Some people have hobbies; my hobby is Jewish history. My life is Jewish history ... this [outlook on life] became a constant laboratory for learning.”

During college, Fine took a gap year at Hebrew University. He took a course on Jewish folklore (*midrash Aggadah*) and through this Fine was given the opportunity to intern in Jewish art at the Israel Museum. Additionally, during this time, Fine was introduced to topics in Jewish history, such as the history of the Samaritans, which he would later study extensively. After graduating from the University of California, Santa Barbara, with a degree in Jewish studies, Fine returned to Israel to study at the Pardes Institute for Jewish Studies in order to further his Jewish education. Throughout the course of his life, he described, “Everyone was supportive. And I can't tell you how many people just

opened doors that I didn't know existed. People whose names are all over the books, just sort of open doors.”

Fine outlined the importance of hard work and determination: “I don't think I was special at all. I can tell you that I really wanted it.” Studying at the University of Southern California, Fine was working on his master's in museology, (museum studies) in Jewish art. He described that during this time, “I would teach at this temple and I would teach at another conservative synagogue and I would go to classes and get to go to yeshiva. This seemed like the most natural life in the world.” Being exposed to these different places, “I found myself in this wonderful position that I was literally getting two educations at once.”

Fine uses these experiences to guide his teaching at YU. He is easily able to go into a classroom and explain a lecture while doing a fun, interactive experiment. For example, I took his course on classical Jewish history last semester. During the first class, he immediately began with an experiment where he took a vessel and lit a wick in the vessel. We observed the flame burn and the vessel remained intact once the wick went out. Later on in the semester, every student would pick a vessel from the times of the Temple and study it. “What's the point of learning it if you can't explain it to other people?” he said. He wants his students to learn and get the most out of his lectures. He practices teaching “looking easy” so that his students are better able to understand the material.

Fine feels a great sense of pride in being a part of the YU family. He told a story of when he met one of his former students while walking toward Stern. An older man walked by looking “beleaguered.” The student was able to guide the man toward where he needed to go. After this moment, Fine said, “And I thought to myself, this is why I teach these people. This was a YU moment. Teaching you guys is an amazing experience. And why is this? Because there's a level of earnestness and excite-

ment in our students of Ahavat HaTorah which leads to Ahavat HaMadah (love of knowledge).”

Fine explained that he became part of the YU community through his work with his book, “Sacred Realm.” Being in a variety of places for his education, and not growing up in a large Jewish environment, Fine is able to make a change and influence others through his work with YU. He loves his work and what he does. Because of his diverse background, he is able to have more of a positive influence at YU, “And so what I bring to YU is the outsider perspective who is an insider from California and Israel and the education. And I love YU. This is all very important.”

Fine embodies the values that define what YU is. He is an inspiration to his students and helps to create a sense of community at YU.

Being part of the YU community, Fine has the ability to influence and guide the younger generation. “Everything I give will affect who we are as a community,” he concluded. “I am very aware of that. And so for me, that is a driving force.”



Prof. Steven Fine

YUNews

The Radio Hotel Wants to Build a Relationship with YU

By RAFAEL SAPERSTEIN

Seemingly appearing out of thin air, The Radio Hotel came to Washington Heights back in 2020. Although the Radio Hotel is a mystery to most of the student body, who have never interacted with it, the building that sprouted up in the skyline of Washington Heights chose that location for a reason. Located in the middle of multiple important points of the heights, the Radio Hotel services many different communi-



The Radio Hotel on Amsterdam Ave.

THE RADIO HOTEL

ties, Columbia-Presbyterian hospital and YU in particular.

Danielle Dymond, the director of sales and marketing at The Radio Hotel, has met with Dean of Undergraduate Torah Studies Rabbi Yosef Kalinsky multiple times to cement a relationship with YU and to build off of it for the future. One of the results of the cooperation is that the second floor of The Radio Hotel consists entirely of doors with key locks on them in addition to card locks, to accommodate religious Jewish customers on days when they can't use key cards to unlock their hotel room doors. Additionally, The Radio Hotel has a discounted rate for YU students and their families who are visiting YU. With their special rate, a two-person room starts at \$89 a night for YU-affiliated customers.

In addition to hoping to accommodate YU students, The Radio Hotel, which had its ribbon-cutting ceremony back in July of 2022, also wants to impact the general Washington Heights community by having a lounge space open to the public. Speaking with Dymond, she expressed the hope that YU students, in need of an open outdoor space to study, would look to The Radio Hotel patio when the weather gets

nicer. To access the space, a student would just need to walk into the hotel and ask to study on the patio, with no room purchase required. They also have multiple restaurants on the premises, and claim to be able

restaurants who also owns many radio stations in the Dominican Republic, The Radio Hotel has various seasonal specials, where they lower their prices in anticipation or celebration of a holiday. As the spe-

Although the Radio Hotel is a mystery to most of the student body, who have never interacted with it, the building that sprouted up in the skyline of Washington Heights chose that location for a reason.

to cater kosher food for Jewish families and events.

“The special rate for YU families will be very beneficial, especially for out-of-town students who would otherwise not have a reasonably priced place for their families to stay while visiting them,” David Weinberger (YC '25) noted.

Generally, events can be held at their Above the Heights rooftop event hall, which they rent out to various companies. The rooftop hall has a stunning view of New York City and Dymond hopes to host YU club events with large audiences there in the future.

Named for the owner of one of their

cial that they have throughout the year keep going, they will surely grow in their attraction to YU students. The hotel wants to keep its relationship with YU strong, in hopes of potentially hosting some of the teams for the Sarachek basketball tournament, in addition to having a special rate for families who come into town to visit their children who are YU students.

We Asked, Y(O)U Answered: Midtown or the Heights?

By **FLORA SHEMTOB**

When Yeshiva University first opened in 1886, they made a name for themselves in the Lower East Side of Manhattan. Since then, the university has moved to Washington Heights and in 1954, a girls' campus was established in the midtown neighborhood of Murray Hill. Students often debate which campus is better to live on. On the one hand, the apartments in Washington Heights are cheaper and the campus is considered to have better amenities. On the other hand, Midtown is more central and there are more dorming options. The Commentator asked students about the pros and cons of living on their respective

campuses.

Avery Allen (SCW '24)
Biology

"By Spring semester last year, I knew that I didn't want to stay in the dorms. Living in the Heights and commuting means saving thousands of dollars, having my own room and being able to host friends and family for Shabbat without guest/visitor hassle. It was one of the best decisions I have ever made."

Benny Klein (YC '24)
Psychology

"There are a few cons of living in the Heights. There is a lot of crime and it's slightly dirty. It's hard to walk out on the

street and just see garbage everywhere. It's not as aesthetically pleasing as Midtown. Some of the pros is that there is a really nice community in the Heights. The Jewish community is incredible. There are so many shuls on campus and off campus.

Amalya Teitelbaum (SCW '24)
Pre-Law

"There are definitely many benefits of living in Midtown including how accessible everything is. However, with this accessi-

"Some cons of living in Midtown is that there seems to be a lot more antisemitism here than in the Heights"

Eshrat Botach (SCW '26)

The Sherk Shul is awesome for young professionals and it's nice to have this community. The people there are warm and welcoming. It's also really nice to be able to host people for shabbat in our apartment. We can host people from the community, people from the dorms, or visitors."

bility there are higher expenses, especially when it comes to kosher restaurants and potential activities."

Dovid Price (SSSB '24)
Finance

"Some of the pros of living in the Heights is that there is a nice community here. There's Sherk, and just stuff to do on Shabbat which is nice. Rent is also really cheap which is super helpful. It's also really nice that most of our buildings have elevators that work. Some cons are that there is sometimes drug residue just laying out in the street amongst the other trash on the sidewalk, which is less than ideal. There are also no Trader Joe's or other big supermarkets. If I want to buy a new shirt or even get scandinavian swimmers, I can't. You can't really go shopping here, you have to go downtown for everything. It's also a little run down and not as nice as the Midtown campus."

Eshrat Botach (SCW '26)
Early Childhood Education

"Some cons of living in Midtown is that there seems to be a lot more antisemitism here than in the Heights. On the way back from the school buildings to the dorms someone yells something about Jews at me 70% of the time. I find it extremely uncomfortable and it makes it harder to appreciate the environment. In the Heights, that has never happened to me; I've gotten cat-called but that is the extent of it. Everyone there seems so much nicer than in Midtown. Although, in Midtown, I like being close to everything. We have more things to do than the other campus. It's also really nice that this neighborhood is constantly busy making it more exciting than the Heights."



Brookdale Residence Hall

YESHIVA UNIVERSITY

FROM THE COMMIE ARCHIVES

(April 7, 1992; Volume 56, Issue 10) — Purim Chagiga A Smash, Raises Questions of Planning

By **JAMIN KOSLOW**

Editor's Note: In honor of Purim, The Commentator has reprinted the news article about the Purim Chagiga from 1992.

Over 1600 people crowded into the Beit Midrash in Tannenbaum Hall for the annual SOY Purim Chagiga. The festivities followed the Megilla reading on Purim night, beginning at 9:30 pm and continuing past 2:00 in the morning. YC and SCW students sang and danced to the music of the Neshoma Orchestra with continuing vigor throughout the night. The dancing paused only for the presentation of the annual Purim Shpiel at midnight, picking up again around 1:00 am. One of the evening's highlights was the entrance of Rav Meir Goldvicht and Rav Dovid Lifshitz into the Beit Midrash, surrounded by over one hundred students who had followed them from Rav Meir's apartment. The hundreds of students already in the Beit Midrash immediately surrounded Rav Meir and Rav Dovid, singing and dancing with incredible intensity (see picture, p. 1).

The Shpiel drew many laughs from skits which "Lamm"-pooned YU administrators, faculty, rabbis, and students. The skit drawing the biggest laugh was a very "moo"-ving scene in which a YC student discovers that the Stern girl he's been set up with bears a remarkable resemblance

to a cow. Donald Bixon's uncanny imitation of Rabbi Yosef Blau, which even Rabbi Blau admitted was a "good imitation of me," topped the evening's impersonations. The Shpiel also included, for the first time ever, a cameo appearance by a female, when "Rabbi Lamm" (Jonathan Kroll) fielded a question from "Sweetie" SCWSC Vice President, Lisa Mayer.

The Chagiga may have been a victim of its own success, though, as many students complained that the Beit Midrash was overcrowded. Some students felt that the Chagiga should have been moved to the more spacious and better ventilated Weissberg Commons; others, however, felt the Chagiga should stay in the Beit Midrash.

Ari Mosenkis, Chairman of the Purim Chagiga, and Allen Pfeiffer, SOY Treasurer, made the final decision to keep the Chagiga in the Beit Midrash. Mosenkis explained that "there's much more ruach in the Beis Medrash." Additionally, Mosenkis noted that Weissberg Commons has terrible acoustics and columns which would block the view of the Shpiel for the girls. Mosenkis also feared that the Shpiel would turn into a social event if moved to Belfer. A final concern voiced by Mosenkis and Pfeiffer was that Rav Dovid Lifshitz, whose presence added much ruach, might have felt uncomfortable attending the Chagiga had it been held in Belfer.

Shea Farkas, president of SOY, felt that

the Chagiga was "a great success, adding to the ruach and feelings of the day's events." Nevertheless, Farkas, who is also an EMT, expressed concern that the overcrowded Beit Midrash posed a serious safety hazard. Although no one was seriously injured this year, Farkas noted that in the past some people had to be brought to the hospital for injuries sustained due to the overcrowding. Regarding the suggested move to Belfer Commons, Farkas responded that "there's a good case to be made both ways, but for next year I would recommend moving to Belfer because safety has to supersede sentimentality."

The overcrowding was especially severe for the women, who had less space to begin with. Since YU policy is to not let students from Stern into Rubin or Morgenstern Halls on the night of the Chagiga, women who wanted to leave the Beit Midrash had to stay in the equally crowded refreshment and coat rooms or go outside in the ongoing snowstorm. Susan Schlüssel, president of SCWSC, described the crowded Beit Midrash as "inbearable," complaining that "there was no room to dance." Schlüssel hoped that the Chagiga would be moved to Belfer next year.

Faith Chudnoff, President of TAC, disagreed, saying, "I'd rather be a little crowded in the Beit Midrash than move to Belfer; it would take away from the spirit of the Chagiga."

Rabbi Blau, Mashgiach Ruchani, explained that "we have a lot of factors to balance," regarding the debate over whether to relocate the Chagiga to Belfer. "We don't want to lose the atmosphere of the Beis Medrash," said Rabbi Blau, noting that "the Beis Medrash represents the essence of the Yeshiva." On the other hand, he admitted that if it becomes physically impossible to keep the Chagiga in the Beit Midrash a move to Belfer might be necessary. Rabbi Blau stressed that because the Chagiga is an SOY event, students themselves must make the ultimate decision regarding the crowding problem. As an alternative to moving to Belfer, Rabbi Blau offered the possibility that "it may be the time to evaluate if the women should have their own Chagiga at Stern."



The Commentator Archives

THE COMMENTATOR

Confessions of a Naïve Zionist

By YONI MAYER

Aliyah will be difficult. There is no way around that.

Israeli culture is foreign to our American upbringing, and there are differences that become apparent in a move to any foreign nation. The language, mode of speech, manner of interacting, political system, currency, lifestyle and social dynamics are all different. The bureaucracy is not easy to deal with, and many people will be without their family to guide them through the process.

Aliyah will certainly be difficult. But I don't want to live anywhere else.

I think of myself as a naïve Zionist. For those who belong to this group, we cast aside all negative aspersions associated with the Aliyah process to bring our dream

to fruition. The impracticalities of the endeavor might be true, and yet, to a certain extent, we don't acknowledge our doubts. We have to choose to look beyond our neg-

about moving to the Land of Israel in relation to living in American Jewish communities. Surely, there are the Teanecks, New Rochelles, South Floridas and Los

one could say which would sway your desire to move to Israel.

We know all the negatives to be true. We know that as parents in Israel we'll be estranged from the ways kids are raised. We won't understand what it's like to ride the bus as a seven-year-old or sleep on the beach at night with friends. For many of us, we won't know what a late Friday night Bnei Akiva *mifgash* is like, or what it's like to draft in the army. We know that the process of aliyah does not work out for everyone and is sometimes harder than starting a life somewhere else in America.

There are overarching religious concerns as well. Our children may not have the same religious zeal that comes from being a Jew in a non-Jewish country—the feeling of Judaism binding your family together more than anything. Furthermore, the army has often proved to be a less-than-ideal religious environment as well and negatively influences even the most religious personalities. I'm not advocating for a disregard for these concerns; they are legitimate and should be handled delicately.

But in the proper time.

This is the key to the Aliyah process. We must regard everything in its proper time. The present is our perspective. We know we need to be there. We need to suspend our belief about all the difficulties and move because we can't see ourselves anywhere else.

I'm a naïve Zionist. I also think that's the only way you can be. You have to rule out logic and risks and act with a certain amount of naïvete. If you know where you must be, you have to take the leap.

Aliyah will certainly be difficult. But I don't want to live anywhere else.

ative feelings about the process of making Aliyah and ultimately take the leap of faith.

We practice what I would like to call "mitigated realism." Of course we have to know the risks and be prepared for the challenges we will be undertaking. But these pragmatic concerns cannot interfere with our necessity to act. We must actualize our idealism.

There is what I believe to be the idealistic perspective every Naïve Zionist has

Angeleses of the world. However, for the Zionist it doesn't matter what commodities or communities these places have. Ultimately, they are simply not Israel, and that is enough. I understand I might not be proposing a nuanced stance and am instead preaching a slightly dogmatic outlook. However, there are certain ideas we must wrangle before they escape our purview. Naïvete is a philosophy weathered by age and naïve Zionists must actualize the unknown, however dogmatic it may be.

Numerous forces exist for the Zionist that collectively overrule every doubt or hesitation. The religious approach: It's the place where every Jew is supposed to be, and I want to be another link in the chain of Jewish history. The personal: My family always took us during the summers, and I fell in love with Israel, a love that only increased when I spent a year in Yeshiva taking in the sights and smells of the Old City. The practical: I want to raise my family in Israel so that the next generation of Jews doesn't struggle with the question of making aliyah or not. And perhaps most importantly, the ineffable: I feel at home more than anywhere else I ever have when I'm in Israel. I feel like the fullest version of myself and know that I'm exactly where I am supposed to be. When these feelings burn inside your soul, there's nothing any-



The Old City of Jerusalem

FLICKR

A Solution to the *Shidduch* Crisis

By RABBI MATT LEVEE

When I was the rabbi of the Shenk Shul, I always made it my business to have as many guests for Shabbat as possible. I will never forget the time we had a group of women join our table for lunch. One of them, an attractive 28-year-old finishing her medical school at Columbia University, told me she had not been on a date for six months. I told her she was picky. She said, "No, my *shadchan* hasn't offered me a *shidduch* in six months!"

I wish this was just a one-off, anecdotal tale, the exception to the rule, but I have heard this story too many times before. And it is not like there are no single men above the age of 28 either. Being the rabbi of a largely singles shul in Washington Heights gave me my own perspective on what many people call the "*shidduch* crisis"

"Be the change you wish to see," or as New Yorkers say, "see something, say something."

Before solving the long-standing *shidduch* crisis, it is first important to identify exactly what issues we face.

In short, the *shadchan* is often the problem in *shidduchim* (hold on, let me explain). First, they only know who they know. If your *beshtet* is not in their portfolio of resumes there is no hope to find your spouse with them. Secondly, if they are not thinking of you (even if they have your *beshtet* in their portfolio) then you won't be matched. Thirdly, I believe the number one important aspect in a marriage is direct communication. Everyone has their own way of expressing themselves and relating to others, and if you are unable to do

that in a marriage, many other issues arise. With a *shadchan*, though, we are already starting off communicating indirectly.

I want to be very clear, I think *shad-*

after fifteen minutes of the date you know there is no chemistry! If I want to be really frum, that is a lot of *bitul* Torah. If I want to be practical there is a lot of wasted time.

Users would create profiles in a system that could "hold" everyone in mind at all times and relay matches directly to users.

chanim are great. They are a positive force for the Jewish world. So many marriages would never exist without the time, effort and care *shadchanim* give to the Jewish people. In general, *shadchanim* are given a bad rap, and as far as communication, they are often a necessary go between. But we live in a global world. I was born in California and my wife in Brooklyn and we met in Israel. With this being said, we need to rethink how a *shadchan* can be used to attain the best outcome for everyone.

Another problem with the current system is the tendency to put people in a box. With many questionnaires and dating intake forms, people are forced to check off the boxes that neglect much nuance. If you are "Black-hat Yeshivish," then you are not really modern. If you are "Modern-Orthodox Center" then you do not have an appreciation for *chassidish* spirituality. We often constrict ourselves through labels, and it is time we get beyond this.

Finally, the time it takes to go on a date is frustrating. First, simply getting ready, traveling to the date, spending another couple hours on the date itself, and then returning from the date, the whole process becomes a significant time commitment. Perhaps the most ironic thing of all is that

However, I believe that under the right system, these problems can be solved.

First, instead of a single matchmaker, there should be a network of *shadchanim* all tapped into one central system. Users would create profiles in a system that could "hold" everyone in mind at all times and relay matches directly to users. Instead of matchmaking, *Shadchanim* would transition to the role of facilitator, helping the match develop, instead of introducing the match initially.

Second, no one wants to be put into a box as if that completely describes you. A

questionnaire should encourage you to be real and express what is important to you in terms of values and personality. Questions that do not ask about your siblings' jobs and more about your relationship to Judaism.

Third, and this is a no brainer, instead of a two hour date, let's just meet up for a fifteen minute video-chat. Now that we are post Covid and everything is moving towards remote interactions, zoom away. Fifteen minutes is a coffee meeting, more than a speed date without the commitment of a date.

For these reasons, I helped create GamZuli.com. We aim to fix the current lack of control and efficiency and get a real sense of who our users are and what is important to them. We are a platform to empower singles to meet and date. Check it out. We would love to see you there.



Gamzuli.com logo

Love Thy Neighbors, All of Them

By NADAV HELLER

The first person I met when I moved to Washington Heights was not a rebbe, professor, classmate or *chavruta*. It was my neighbor, Valentina. She welcomed me into the building with what felt like genuine excitement and offered to help me carry my belongings up four sweaty flights of stairs. She made sure I knew which apartment was hers, and invited me to knock anytime for any reason. I felt almost uncomfortable receiving so much warmth from a stranger, especially after avoiding eye contact with anyone and everyone else on the way.

I soon came to realize that this warmth is a cultural characteristic of Washington Heights.

The next morning, my first morning as a resident of the Heights, I met Daniel and Venaya, a young couple from the neighborhood. They literally jumped up and down with delight upon seeing my curly *peyot* and peppered me with questions. Daniel showed me pictures of his dreadlocks, which he had shaved two weeks prior. Venaya told me how she planned to use them as the lion's mane in a biblical art piece of *Daniel* in the lion's den, and showed me some of her other artwork. We spoke for 35 minutes on a street corner, and they promised to call me out the next time they saw me in the street. I was delighted, and more than a little surprised.

A few weeks later, I attended *Nosotros@YU*, an event celebrating Judeo-Latin history. They played music, displayed art and served food that fused Latin and Jewish influences. Many of the guest speakers emphasized the importance of integration between these two cultures.

Manhattan Borough President Mark Levine declared that "we have an urgent need to build ties between the Latino and Jewish communities ... this is the place to make that happen." New York Representative Adriano Espaillat stressed that the Hispanic and Jewish communities need to work together to "make this a stronger neighborhood." My optimism soared, buoyed by the warmth of shared idealism.

Inspired, I spent the following weeks speaking with friends and classmates

about my experiences in the Heights, and asking them about their own experiences. Few of them shared my enthusiasm, with reactions ranging from lukewarm to fearful. I was warned more than once to "just be careful" and adjured to stay on campus, "where it's safe."

I was, admittedly, dismayed. My friends

"If a man acts as though he were *terumah* [the portion set aside for priests] by secluding himself in the corner of his home and declaring: 'What concern are the problems of the community to me? What does their judgment mean to me? Why should I listen to them? I will do well (without them),' he helps destroy the

of view of hesed, all racial, cultural, historical and moral differences are null and void.

The conscientious Jew cannot and must not divest himself of the communal ties that ground him in the collective human project. The responsible citizen must toil to form meaningful connections with those who share his land and his society, even (and perhaps especially) if they don't always share his values.

I therefore call upon the YU community to do their part: The YU Community Relations page describes one-on-one tutoring opportunities at local high schools, science instruction at local elementary schools, literacy programs, college guidance initiatives, after-school basketball and track teams, all run by Yeshiva students. There's even a program wherein YU students assist small local businesses with creating websites, developing databases and marketing.

These programs are critical, and I firmly believe that every student could benefit from participating in them, but real change starts in the day to day. Smiling at a stranger and offering to carry their groceries up the subway stairs could possibly be as critical as volunteering in their schools. I hope that through individual investment in the Washington Heights community, students of YU will be able to stifle the protests of, "but I feel like they don't want to hang with me," and establish strong relationships with our neighbors across the street.

As Jews, as students and as humans, we must expose ourselves to loving and vibrant non-Jewish cultures. Otherwise we are doomed to an eternity of distasteful epithets and self-congratulatory echo chambers.

painted a rather bleak portrait, one profoundly out of step with the cordial congeniality I found here. Is there not something to be said for the clusters of children enthusiastically coloring the streets with sidewalk chalk, the crowds of men raucously playing dominoes in the afternoons, the bumping block parties that seem to take place every night?

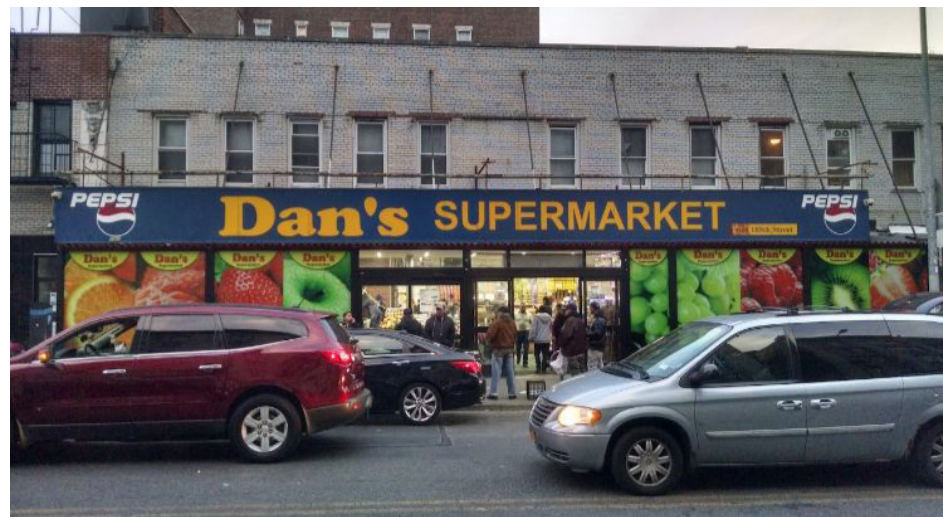
I spoke to some friends native to the heights as well. "If you want, you can come to our basketball games up on 189th. I'm down to hang with y'all, but I feel like y'all don't want to hang with me," said R. Another suggested that Jews are so focused on their own communities that sometimes they don't even look at their neighbors. "It's okay to say hello! You can smile at me! I don't bite!" exclaimed Terrence, waving his cane in the air and rubbing his durag.

When we live in homogenous communities, it's too easy to alienate the other. I've heard kind and compassionate people take on tones of strident particularism when discussing "the *goyim*." I've heard otherwise righteous people compare non-Jews to sheep, and use the royal "them" as a word to spit rather than say. When Jewish pride devolves into astringent particularism, we debase ourselves more than anyone else. As Jews, as students and as humans, we must expose ourselves to loving and vibrant non-Jewish cultures. Otherwise we are doomed to an eternity of distasteful epithets and self-congratulatory echo chambers.

world." -*Midrash Tanchuma, Mishpatim 2:1-2.*

This universal Jewish message is particularly resonant within the walls of YU. Rabbi Soloveichik, the ideological polestar of YU, wrote that:

"Chesed [lovingkindness] is not limited to Jews ... The idea of chesed embraces the entire world and erases borders between nations. We are obligated to love man per se. Even if we have no spiritual closeness to him, even if he lives his life beyond distant horizons and in ways that are foreign to us, even if our thoughts are not his thoughts and our ways not his ways, even if we are separated by differences of culture, religion, language and race ... from the point



Street view of Washington Heights

GOOGLE MAPS



CLASS OF 2023

UNDERGRADUATE COMMENCEMENT CEREMONY CHECKLIST

Graduating This Year? Mazel Tov!

Be sure to complete all the items below to participate in your Commencement Ceremony.

STEP 1

Consult with your academic advisor or program director to be sure that all of your graduation requirements have been met.
Visit yu.edu/academic-advising to schedule.

STEP 2

Degrees are awarded in September, January and May. Contact your campus Registrar to determine if you are eligible to attend Commencement.
Visit yu.edu/registrar/graduation for additional information.

STEP 3

Apply for Graduation by your degree's deadline:
February 28th (May Degrees) **March 1st** (September Degrees)
The Application for Graduation—Undergraduate Degree can be found here: yu.edu/registrar/forms
NOTE: If you miss this deadline your name will not be included in the Commencement Program.
Be sure to RSVP on the application to Commencement and give your accurate height and weight so your gown fits just right!

STEP 4

Pay your graduation/diploma fee of \$150 to the Office of Student Finance.

STEP 5

Cap and Gown Distribution Events will be held on each campus a few weeks before the ceremony.
Come with friends; have your picture taken in the photo booth to be featured at Commencement!
If you cannot pick up your attire at a distribution event you may pick it up from the Office of Student Life starting the day after the event.
No attire will be distributed at Commencement.

STEP 6

Each graduate will receive **6 guest tickets**. If you would like to request additional tickets, a form will be live in the coming weeks.

QUESTIONS?

Visit yu.edu/commencement for updates closer to the ceremony, or email commencement@yu.edu

WE ARE EXCITED TO CELEBRATE WITH YOU!

In Praise of English at YC

By MICAH PAVA

I am a recent graduate of Yeshiva College, where I majored in English and minored in Media Studies. The English department at YU is a small, close-knit community, where I had the opportunity to work extensively with faculty members on a wide range of pursuits.

With Dr. David Lavinsky, I took classes in which we studied texts spanning from the Classical and Medieval periods, including Plato's dialogues and epic Arthurian romances, to the utterly contemporary, like the Netflix series, *Stranger Things*. In his classes, we explored the ways in which humanity continues to contend with timeless issues through methods which are nonetheless historically contingent.

In Dr. Paula Geyh's classes, we studied classics of American literature and visual art in modern America. The semester began with Walt Whitman's expansive vision of lyrical subjectivity and continued to trace the contours of the development of American identity across a diverse spectrum of experience, concluding with an exploration of fractured postmodern self-awareness, as encapsulated by the novels of Thomas Pynchon and Don DeLillo. With Dr. Geyh, I was also initiated into the world of cinema, watching and discussing masterpieces like Stanley Kubrick's *2001: A Space Odyssey*, Alfred Hitchcock's *Vertigo* and Ingmar Bergman's *Persona*. These elliptical films may be returned to over and over, and I am grateful for Dr. Geyh's patient exploration of not only what these movies mean, their content, but how they mean, or the cinematic language of representation. If I hadn't taken *The Art of Film* with Dr. Geyh, I may have never known there is an alternative to the vulgar commercialism that dominates the box office and streaming platforms in our current moment.

I studied with Dr. Elizabeth Stewart for five consecutive semesters and was granted a research position through our university to work more intensely with her this past

summer. Dr. Stewart's expertise in psychoanalytic theory is enlightening and has allowed me to develop a more rigorous and consistent theoretical framework through which to approach texts of all kinds. Al-

of Fine Arts program concentrating in poetry in the coming fall, and Dr. Trimboli spent countless hours with me providing feedback on my writing portfolio and personal statement. It has been an honor and

of the historical conditions which produce a text. As James Baldwin writes in *Notes from a Native Son*, "People are trapped in history and history is trapped in them."

It is through my education at Yeshiva College that I have come to realize that we don't need to blindly "cancel" texts from the past which seemingly promote problematic perspectives. We can appreciate the beauty which inheres in a work of literature while also working to gain a clearer understanding of the ideologies which are reinforced or resisted by a text, whether this text is a "timeless" classic or a work of pop entertainment created in the 21st century. Although some may call for a return to the "canon" in the YC English department, it is my hope to clarify to the student body and administration that the canon is still very much alive here, even while our understanding of this canon is informed by contemporary discourse. This dynamic approach allows all English majors at YU to remain connected to our traditions, both secular and religious, while actively engaging with the world today in pursuit of justice and progress.

Although some may call for a return to the "canon" in the YC English department, it is my hope to clarify to the student body and administration that the canon is still very much alive here, even while our understanding of this canon is informed by contemporary discourse.

though I have spent a semester with Dr. Stewart reading classics of European literature in translation, including novels by Flaubert, Goethe and Dostoevsky, I have also taken a class with her on graphic novels and animated films, which culminated in the production of my own graphic dream-diary, in which I explored images taken from arthouse films interwoven with my own ruminations and surreal associations. Additionally, my research over the summer in critical theory, focusing on the writing of Michel Foucault and Judith Butler, provided an essential foundation for my Senior Thesis, which I completed this past fall.

At the Wilf Campus Writing Center, where I have worked for two years and continue to work after graduation, I am supervised by Dr. Lauren Fitzgerald and Professor David Poretz. Dr. Fitzgerald's careful approach to pedagogy is illuminating, as is Professor Poretz's deep understanding of the creative process, and I hope that my experience as a Writing Center tutor will help me as I move forward to pursue my own career as an educator.

With Dr. Brian Trimboli, I renewed my passion for poetry and he advised me as I drafted my Senior Honors Thesis, a poetry manuscript that I will continue to revise and rewrite as I seek to publish this work. I also hope to gain admission to a Masters

a privilege to work with Brian.

During two consecutive semesters with Dr. Rachel Mesch, my classmates and I read widely on the topics of gender and race throughout history, this year of coursework serving as a senior capstone for the English major. Again, I must emphasize the way in which the curricula in the English department give students an understanding of literature that is rooted in an awareness



Books

MICAH PAVA

YC English Faculty Response

By YC ENGLISH FACULTY

We write in response to the recent essay from Rabbi Yitzchak Blau, "The Ghost of Torah UMadda: English Literature at YU." While we appreciate hearing from a former YC English major who is also a stalwart defender of the Humanities, we are pained that he would base his critique of our department solely on the titles of courses for the current semester. A quick look at previous course schedules (available on the English department page of the YU website) would negate this argument entirely: recent electives include "Milton and Religion"; "Jews in Western Literature"; "The European Novel"; "American Literature and Art"; and "Romantic Revolutions," a course on British Romanticism. Future courses include "Shakespeare and the Bible" (in conjunction with the Straus Center) and "King Arthur and the Idea of England." What's more, a quick perusal of our course descriptions, also easily found online, demonstrate that our current courses include far more than what our deliberately attention-grabbing titles indicate.

Since there seems to be some confusion about the difference between Prof. Lavinsky's popular Core (general education) class "The Monstrous" and Prof. Fitzgerald's "Literary Hauntings," an elective for English majors, allow us to clarify. Prof. Lavinsky's course focuses on the medieval to early modern period, with selections from Herodotus' *Histories*, Pliny the Elder's *Natural History*, Isidore of Seville's *Etymologies*, and *Beowulf*, as well as authors such as Ovid, Marie de France, Michel de Montaigne, and Shakespeare. Fulfilling the 1700-1900 requirement of the English major, Prof. Fitzgerald's course examines the motif of hauntings from Hamlet through Romantic poetry, Victorian short stories (including by Dickens and Wilde), and 19th-century US works by Irving, Poe, Hawthorne, Dickinson, Wharton, and James, among others.

Yeshiva College students thus have ample opportunity to study canonical authors in our regularly offered classes. But Rabbi Blau is not wrong to note that the focus and nature of many of the courses we offer has shifted since the time that he was an undergraduate. Literary studies, like all academic fields,

has developed over the last 35 years, and we would be intellectually remiss if we did not offer our students the tools to engage with those changes. Our syllabi have expanded to include more women and people of color as well as more writing from the past century. English departments across the country now also include more creative writing offerings, which we are able to provide through our well-regarded writing faculty, Professors Brian Trimboli and David Poretz, who was voted Teacher of the Year by last year's graduating class.

What's more, it is no longer only verbal literacy that Humanities and English Departments seek to teach, but media literacy on the whole. The study of various media forms— and especially film— and how those forms shape our thinking, our sense of self, and our relations to our fellow humans play a fundamental role in the study of the Humanities today. Our students express gratitude that we offer critical tools for analyzing the kinds of creative works that they encounter on a regular basis. But these fields of study are not separate. In some of our classes, students study film, television, and even podcasts in their relationship to

traditional literary forms like novels, poetry, and short stories.

We must therefore take issue with the accusation that our current offerings "scare students away from English classes." We have seen no evidence of that. Rather, since 2019, we have dramatically increased the number of students taking our classes; our Core classes routinely fill immediately, often past their waitlists; and our teaching evaluations are among the strongest of the college. When students ask us to write letters of recommendation for law school, medical school, and other graduate programs, they often remark on how much they learned from our classes, and appreciate that we are among the professors who got to know them best.

We are gratified by Rabbi Blau's expression of support for Humanities programming and a thriving English department, at YU and in the country more broadly, but we were disappointed to be subject to this unwarranted critique.

The Yeshiva College English Department Professors Paula Geyh, Lauren Fitzgerald, David Lavinsky, Rachel Mesch, David Poretz,

The Doctor Is In: Amazon Buys 1Life Medical to Enter Primary Care Market

By TANI LEWIS

Amazon (NASDAQ: AMZN) recently made a splash by acquiring 1Life Medical (NASDAQ: ONEM) in an all-cash deal for approximately \$3.9 billion. 1Life Medical is a membership-based primary healthcare service with offices and services in dozens of states. 1Life Medical provides direct in-person, virtual, and over-the-phone doctor-patient care. You can now pay for an annual membership to 1Life Medical on Amazon's website for a discounted rate of \$144.

Neil Lindsay, a senior vice president of Amazon Health Services, told CNN that at Amazon they believe health is high on the list of experiences that need reinvention and they hope to be very involved in improvements made to the healthcare industry in the next several years.

From an industry perspective this move makes sense. The healthcare industry is massive, at an estimated \$4.3 trillion, and has uniquely high profit margins on goods and services. There are no top-of-mind brands for the industry making it ripe for a massive company to step up and dominate market

share. While medical products and services have rapidly improved as technology improves the businesses within healthcare have

vertically integrate it into their already-ro-bust supply chain, increase profit margins on products and drastically increase their

billion. Amazon is no longer taking half measures and is aggressively moving into the healthcare industry.

This acquisition is an easy way to expand into a new industry bringing Amazon one step closer to being your one-stop-shop for all your consumer needs and increase Amazon's revenue and free cash flow.

only relatively recently begun to scale their businesses both domestically and globally. Scaling in the business in the healthcare industry is difficult since the elements that comprise a successful healthcare company, including medical products and human capital, are particularly expensive, to say nothing of the costs of complying with the heavy regulations healthcare companies are subject to.

Amazon is a titan of a company with nearly unlimited resources whose power to penetrate and innovate new industries has been seen already in the grocery industry. Amazon can rapidly scale 1Life Medical's business both domestically and globally and

volume of sales all by utilizing resources most of which they already have. This acquisition is an easy way to expand into a new industry, bringing Amazon one step closer to being your one-stop-shop for all your consumer needs and increasing Amazon's revenue and free cash flow.

This is not the first time Amazon has made an effort to move into the general healthcare industry. In 2018 Amazon bought an online pharmacy PillPack, which ships pills that are available over-the-counter at most pharmacies directly to consumers' homes. Additionally, Amazon paired up with Warren Buffet at Berkshire Hathaway and Jamie Dimon at JP Morgan Chase to disrupt the \$500 billion pharmaceutical industry. They created a company called Haven whose goal was to provide cheaper and higher quality healthcare services to Americans. The company was shut down in 2021 after having made no inroads.

The 1Life Medical acquisition represents the adoption of a more ambitious approach on Amazon's behalf to compete in the healthcare industry. PillPack was merely a pill distributor whereas 1Life Medical provides an array of services, not only pill distribution but also expanding to all other areas of general primary care. From an asset standpoint, 1Life Medical has a lot of tremendously valuable human capital (doctors—shout out to my pre-med peers) whereas 1Life Medical only has pharmacists, and fewer of them. To put Amazon's trajectory in the healthcare industry in perspective, Amazon purchased PillPack for \$753 million and 1Life Medical for more than five times as much for \$3.9

This acquisition also has major significance as it relates to Amazon's corporate philosophy and long-term strategy. Previously, Amazon held the long-term view that robots and AI would replace human labor and invested heavily in automation and tech. 1Life Medical's business model is a human capital-centric model that concentrates on and emphasizes its personal relationships with its customers. Amazon is making a big statement that it believes human capital and labor will be essential in the long term by making this massive purchase of a human capital dependent business.

So ultimately, how does this affect you as the everyday consumer? Initially, consumers should be happy since many consumers use Amazon as their go-to place for online shopping, and now consumers can access more at one convenient destination. As Amazon steps closer to becoming a multi industry monopoly, it has the opportunity for more synergies and ultimately will be able to provide overall consumer experiences.

Now for those of you everyday consumers that are concerned with the country's macroeconomic health there is reason to be concerned here. This massive purchase by Amazon was not even challenged by the FTC, which has become particularly strict and litigious on antitrust-related matters in recent years. As Amazon expands to become a titan in multiple industries and continues to vertically integrate and streamline its goods and services it becomes harder for other companies to compete and grow to rival Amazon. While cheaper and higher quality service may be nicer for consumers, competition is necessary and healthy for our economy. Amazon's aggressive splash into the healthcare business is an indicator of future squandered competing businesses that could have been drivers of massive value creation and improved many lives but will no longer be created since it will be too difficult to compete against Amazon.



Two sets of hands taking the pulse of another set of hands

PIXABAY

Football, Food and Fans

By EMILY SAFIER

On February 12, 2023, football fans worldwide watched the NFC champion Philadelphia Eagles play against the AFC champion Kansas City Chiefs in Arizona's State Farm Stadium for Super Bowl LVII. The Super Bowl is a widely popular sporting event that takes place once a year to

The Super Bowl features intense football, exorbitant ticket prices, an elaborate halftime show, and lucrative commercials

determine the NFL champion. The Super Bowl features intense football, exorbitant ticket prices, an elaborate halftime show and lucrative commercials.

For many viewers, the main highlight of the game is the Halftime Show. This year, best-selling music artist Rihanna performed at the game. Her show featured fireworks, floating stages, background dancers and a pregnancy reveal. The glamorous production cost an estimated \$13 million, making the 13-minute performance cost a hefty \$1

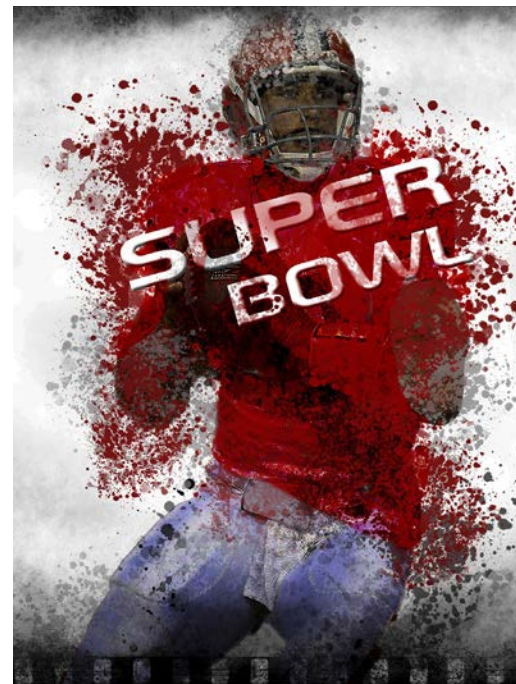
million per minute! While Rihanna will not make much of a profit from the show itself as most of the money will go to expenses, she will benefit significantly from unparalleled exposure for her music, makeup and brand and from exclusive merchandise sales.

Another main attraction to the Super Bowl is the commercials. Super Bowl commercials have become an integral part of the Super Bowl due to the comedic spin, with catchy jingles, dramatic scenes and famous celebrities tend to trend with moments, such as the famous 1984 Macintosh commercial that lived on for years in pop culture. There are between 80 to 100 commercials for 15 to 60 seconds each. The cost of these commercials is eye-popping, however. Companies spend millions of dollars not only on creating, filming and streaming the commercials, but just buying time to air the commercial costs a whopping \$7 million per ad this year, making this commercial season the most expensive one yet. That is a 25% price increase from the last time Fox hosted the game in 2020 and a 20% increase from last year's commercial cost when NBC broadcasted the game. The commercials are an expensive, but successful marketing strategy that fans look forward to watching in between the game.

And what about those who are itching to see the game live? Super Bowl tickets are an expensive purchase, ranging from \$4,972 to \$30,000 each. And this year, over

73,000 football fans attended Super Bowl LVII in Arizona. An estimated 113 million viewers tuned in to watch the game, effectively making this the second-most-watched Super Bowl yet! And with the game being televised, households spent a great deal on watching the game from the comforts of their home. 47% of households purchased food, drinks and merchandise to enhance

their fan experience, and 39% of consumers bought snack and beverage brands they would not have spent money on otherwise. All this added up to a total of \$16.5 billion on game-day at-home purchases. The Super Bowl, with all the snacks, scores and songs, is an exciting, family-friendly experience that football players and sports fans look forward to all year.



Football player

PIXABAY

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