Ben Katz Gives Visibility to Religious LGBTQ Community

By Shayna Herszage

Yeshiva University and the College Democrats welcomed Ben Katz, a YU alumnus (YC '11) and LGBTQ activist, to the Beren Campus on Nov. 13 to speak about the dialogue in Israel regarding LGBTQ rights and inclusion within the religious community.

Every desk in Room 208 of 215 Lexington was filled, with students sitting on desks and on the floor, as well as standing in the back. Over 65 attendees showed up to hear Katz speak. Katz explained much of what Shoval, the organization he works for, does throughout Israel. Shoval, as Katz explained, is an organization that aims to educate religious communities about LGBTQ people. This primarily comes through three forms: hosting meetings and events to offer queer religious Jews a sense of community, traveling throughout the country to start a dialogue in the religious communities and educating school teachers and administrators about how to give support to LGBTQ students.

Katz, who studied psychology at Yeshiva University before moving to Israel, emphasized the effect of a low-voice murmuring,” and one student reported to him the back of the room close to the window sides, such as colleges for decades.

academic integrity that has plagued YU’s undergraduate heels of efforts in recent semesters to curb a culture of lax Computer Systems course. These incidents follow on the heels of incidents of suspected plagiarism in an advanced English course and a College (SCW) Deans this semester identified incidents of YU’s undergraduate colleges for decades.

The General Chemistry midterm was administered to the course’s 38 students in Belfer 807 without any proctors besides for Prof. Jianfeng, Jiang, who teaches the course. According to Jiang, he “noticed suspicious activities in the back of the room close to the window sides, such as low-voice murmuring,” and one student reported to him that “a few students dropped and picked up papers on the floor to exchange info” during the exam. There were also no additional proctors accompanying Prof. Srikar Gopal Vinjamuri in the Money and Banking midterm. Both were Yeshiva College (YC) courses, with the latter course also cross-listed as a Sy Syms School of Business (SSSB) course. In addition, Stern College (SCW) Deans this semester identified incidents of suspected plagiarism in an advanced English course and a Computer Systems course. These incidents follow on the heels of efforts in recent semesters to curb a culture of lax academic integrity that has plagued YU’s undergraduate colleges for decades.

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Wood-Hill sent an email with the subject “cheating is rampant once again” to YU’s pre-health listserv. In the email, Wood-Hill expressed her disappointment in the “rampant” cheating, stating, “Ethics—truth, honesty, hard-work—are not just lofty ideals. Cheating compromises these values and one risks becoming morally bankrupt when the stakes become even higher as a clinician.”

These incidents follow on the heels of efforts in recent semesters to curb a culture of lax academic integrity that has plagued YU’s undergraduate colleges for decades.

Wood-Hill also emphasized in her email that “those who are not brave enough to turn in the cheaters are almost as bad.” She cited philosopher Edmund Burke’s aphorism “Evil prevails when good men do nothing,” and warned students that if they “are not willing to expose the cheaters then please don’t come to us with a complaint. We cannot fix an issue that you are unwilling to help us resolve.” Wood-Hill’s email concluded with an offer for “honest students” to anonymously report cheaters who “cut into the curve and affect YOU!”

As of the publication of this article, no students in either General Chemistry or Money and Banking have been prosecuted for breaches of academic integrity.

“When I graded the exams,” explained Jiang, “correct
YU's Academic Integrity: A Ship in Rough Waters

By Benjamin Koslowe

“If we can’t come away with some ethical behavior from man to man, all has been wasted. And if we can’t transfer that knowledge to business, then I’d be terribly disappointed.”

These were the words of Dr. Michael Schiff, the founding dean of Yeshiva University’s By Yoms School of Business (SSSB). One can easily reflect upon these words in light of recent cheating incidents, some of which have been exposed, and others which any YU student knows about either firsthand or anecdotally. Hard data on cheating is hard to come by, but it is clear that significant numbers of YU students cheat on exams. Though cheating occurs at all universities, it is especially tragic at a religious institution like this one. By his own reasoning, Dr. Schiff would likely be logically compelled to conclude that all, in fact, has been wasted.

Recent newspaper coverage indicates that the cheating incidents of late are but the most recent flare-up of a decades-old problem. Apparently, recently heightened efforts to crack down on cheating have been but flimsy plugs in the porous ship that carries YU’s academic integrity through the raging waters of a 4.0-minded atmosphere in America — the flood of cheating might be temporarily halted from time to time, but it will inevitably infiltrate the institution again by some other avenue.

There are two means by which YU administrators and professors in positions of power might eradicate the cheating problem. For good. To row onwards with the ship metaphor: They either can get serious about patching up the ship, or they can invest in a new vessel.

The first means, in practice, would entail implementing the same tried efforts to curb cheating, but enforcing the rules smartly, strongly and comprehensively. For example, rather than simply recommending proctors for midterms, the University can require that all large classes administer exams in spacious classrooms and with proctors. Student leaders and teachers have also suggested installing video cameras in every single testing room as a potential disincentive.

Of course, cheating disincentives work only when they are supported by an administration with a reputation for responding seriously to cheating incidents. In a cost-benefit analysis of an ethically lax student in YU’s current climate, even if cheating were to be made difficult, the chances of there being an actual punishment are so slim that the most rational action may still be to peek at a neighbor’s answers or to whisper when the professor turns his back.

This cost-benefit analysis would change if the University took actions that would change its reputation vis-à-vis cheating. Picture the following theoretical email sent to the entire student body: “Last week, a student in General Chemistry was caught stealing answers during an exam. Following a prompt investigation, the Deans have found this student guilty. He has been placed on academic probation and assigned an ‘F’ in the course. Academic integrity is of the utmost importance to Yeshiva University, and breaches of this integrity will not be taken lightly.” Certainly, such a notice would seriously disincentivize cheating.

But perhaps patching up the ship is unrealistic. Maybe finances don’t permit ideal testing conditions, or maybe the logistics of YU’s bureaucracy of Deans, professors, academic standards committees, classrooms and proctors are such that serious preventative measures are too difficult to enforce.

What, then, of the second means? Is there an alternative vessel that can adequately replace the flailing ship?

One solution, which has been suggested several times over the years, would be an honor code. Indeed, this would take away responsibility from the Deans, who often insist that the cheating problem stems from culturally permitted behaviors such as general reluctance of students to report their peers by name.

Honor codes are systems by which universities formalize trust of trusting students to behave with honor. Though honor codes are rarities among American liberal arts universities, several prestigious universities use them, including Johns Hopkins University, University of Maryland, Williams College and Princeton University.

At Princeton, “all in-class examinations, including finals, midterms, and quizzes, are administered under the Honor Code. Students pledge their honor that they have not attempted to give or receive an unfair advantage during examinations. In exchange, faculty proctors are not present in examination rooms. Additionally, students pledge a responsibility to report all suspected violations of the Code to the Committee.” According to the University, “The duality of obligations emphasizes the importance of student to student accountability, a foundational value of the Honor system.”

This system is not just naive wishful thinking. Princeton has operated with its honor code since 1893. Though hardly a scientific sample, several current Princeton students reported to this editor that their exam conditions are perfectly upstanding. Articles as well indicate that cheating incidents during classroom exams at Princeton are few and far between.

Might an honor code be the deus ex machina that Yeshiva University needs?

At first glance, the answer would seem to be yes. The argument proceeds roughly as follows. Yeshiva students are at least as ethically upstanding as their secular college counterparts. And for any system of ethical enforcement, if the system works with a certain population, then the same system would work with another population that is at least as ethical on the aggregate. So, since honor codes effectively maintain academic integrity at several other colleges, an honor code would effectively maintain academic integrity at Yeshiva University.

Upon closer inspection, though, the argument fails. Specifically, the universal conditional does not hold up, and for one simple reason — Yeshiva University’s brotherhood. YU’s students are almost all Orthodox. Almost all YU students are graduates of Orthodox Jewish high schools, proud alumni of Israeli yeshivot and seminaries. Whereas the student bodies of typical American universities are melting pots of strangers from across social strata and around the globe, Yeshiva University undergrads by comparison all know each other.

In a community where social circles stretch wide and where friendships run deep, it is a tall order to expect peers to report on their fellows. Inversely, in such an environment, a sudden paradigm shift of removing all proctors would likely result in a rather messy fallout, not unlike that of an abandoned candy shop after being ravaged by unaccompanied minors.

And so, here ends another Commentator editorial about cheating, bemoaning into the void of time about the seemingly unsolvable state of affairs. One wonders what some future editor will think when he dusts off folded yellowing pages and reads Commentator coverage from Fall 2018. Will that editor marvel at how far YU has progressed? Or will he relate to the familiar porous ship, still beating on, holding academic integrity aloft perilously as it always has and always will?

Though cheating occurs at all universities, it is especially tragic at a religious institution like this one.
Letter to the Editor: Yonatan Abrams

To the Editor:

I want to publicize an aspect of the Resident Advisors’ responsibilities to the student body, because I think that, in general, students are not aware of the duties of Wilf Campus RAs.

I fractured my back at the beginning of the spring semester in 2018, and I was generously escorted to the hospital by Jacob Ovadia on that fateful motzav Shabbos. But that is not the extent of what the RAs did for me.

My parents live 275 miles away in Silver Spring, MD, and they could not be with me until arranging for the care of my younger brother and driving up four and half hours to NewYork-Presbyterian Hospital. The RAs were charged with spending time with me while I lay in bed, physically defenseless, loopy from painkillers and lonely.

The RAs each did two-hour shifts with me, and I got to spend time with a total of 14 RAs before my parents could arrive. Some even spent more than two hours with me because they were so concerned. I remember that Yisroel Schatz did not want to leave me while I waited for a critical MRI which had been delayed half an hour from 12:30 a.m. to 1 a.m.

I was blown away by the dedication of the RAs and their leader, Jonathan Schwab, Director of University Housing and Residence Life.

Yonatan Abrams, Yeshiva College ’20

Letter to the Editor: Pre-Professional Advising

To the Editor:

In this past issue, The Commentator’s editor-in-chief published an editorial entitled “A Pre-Law Advisor Isn’t a Luxury. It’s a Necessity,” which argued and advocated for the urgent need for a new pre-law advisor. The author ends his article with the following statement:

“The abysmal state of pre-law advising at YU must be addressed. The students deserve a qualified individual with legal experience who can advise accurately and professionally” (emphasis added).

In this statement, the author assumes that pre-professional advising — specifically pre-law — is an undergraduates’ prerogative. While the first question interests me and intuitively makes sense, the second question.

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Yonatan Abrams, Yeshiva College ’20
Wurzweiler Postpones Event With Transgender Activist Hannah Fons

By Benjamin Koslowe

YU’s Wurzweiler School of Social Work is set to host an event titled “Neither He, Nor She, But Me: A Personal Story of Gender Variation.” Though the Wurzweiler event was originally set for Dec. 10 at the Riverside Memorial Chapel on the Upper West Side, it has since been postponed.

The event, which will be hosted by Wurzweiler’s Care Café, will feature speaker Hannah Fons, a transsexual individual who works as a Strength & Conditioning Coach at Five Points Academy, a Senior Editor at Yale Robbins Publications and an educator about issues related to the LGBTQ+ community. According to the promotions for the event, the speech will be “a personal story of gender variation.”

Wurzweiler’s Care Café, which was launched in Jan. 2018, is a grant-funded program that hosts events about topics such as addiction, mental illness, suicide prevention and relationship issues. According to Wurzweiler, “audience size for most Care Cafés will not exceed 50.” Three weeks ago, over 65 students packed into a crowded classroom at the Beren Campus for a YU-sponsored speech, hosted by the College Democrats, by LGBTQ activist Ben Katz.

According to YU’s Office of Communications and Public Affairs, “the December 10 Care Café with Hannah Fons at Riverside Memorial Chapel has been canceled as we are looking for a different venue for this educational event. We will update you about future events.” Though YU did not share further details about rescheduling, Fons posted on her Facebook page this past Thursday that it will take place in either January or early February.

“I had a conference call with the Care Café organizers [on Thursday],” Fons explained to The Commentator, “and they expressed two issues: the first being that after actually viewing my TEDx Talk, they felt that Riverside Chapel wasn’t the right venue for the event, and the second being that they wanted to promote the event more widely to students, and felt that postponing would ultimately get more people to attend.”

Some students were confused this past Thursday when the official Facebook posting for the Dec. 10 event was abruptly taken down without explanation. Only a few hours later, The Observer, one of YU’s independent student newspapers, published an article titled “Wurzweiler Event on Gender Issues Disappears From the Internet.” According to the article, Wurzweiler’s stated motivation of canceling the original event due to venue issues has been “debunked” for several reasons. These reasons included the testimony of certain staff workers from Riverside Memorial Chapel, as well as the “surprising” notion that “the event would be cancelled at the last minute by the venue.”

As of the publication of this article, The Commentator was unable to confirm any of The Observer’s speculations or its alleged debunking of the University’s stated motivation for postponing the event.

“I don’t have a strong opinion one way or another about where I speak,” said Fons, “or when — I’m ready to rock whenever the organizers are — but I am a bit salty that my mom bought a plane ticket to be here in NYC to see me speak on the 10th, and now has to somehow wrangle that back from the airline, or just eat the cost.”

Wurzweiler's Care Café is a free offering from the Wurzweiler School of Social Work. Care Café is possible thanks to the sponsorship of New York City Councilmembers Ydanis Rodriguez and Chaim Deutsch.
answers without work leading to these answers were not deemed ‘correct.’ In the Money and Banking course, Vijnarumipathirana added, ‘We would do an original exam counting for one-third of the midterm grade and the restest counting for two-thirds of the midterm grade. The restest was originally scheduled for Wednesday, Nov. 21, but was moved to Friday. “Many students expressed that having an exam on the eve of Thanksgiving would interfere with their travel plans. Both Jiang and Vijnarumipathirana stated that future exams would be more seriously proctored and administered.”

Breaches of academic integrity are not a new phenomenon at Yeshiva University. Archives from The Commentator indicate that the University has struggled with plagiarism, assignment of papers, and cheating. A February 1987 article in The Commentator reported on two cheating incidents, offered a broad survey of cheating in YU at the time and an attempt at explaining why cheating was taking place.

In Fall 2002, Rabbi Jeremy Wieder, a YU rosh yeshiva, delivered a widely-discussed sichat mussar in which he addressed rampant cheating. Among several critiques, Wieder urged that when students are “called in to the academic standards committee for cheating, please walk in there without your yarmulkah, so no one should think that it’s the yarmulkah, chas veshalom the yarmulkah, that gave you the reshus [permission to cheat].”

Later that same semester, a Commentator investigation, much like the 1987 investigation, looked into those factors that were enabling cheating. The article pointed to several possible solutions, including an Honor Code which would “obligate students to report violations of academic integrity thereby plac[ing] responsibility with the students, sometimes through un-proctored examinations.” The article also suggested that all professors should be required to make their old exams publicly available to all students.

These Commentator articles are but select instances of reports about cheating in Yeshiva University’s antiquity. Commentator articles from dozens of different semesters point to a continual cycle of cheating, reports of cheating and attempts by administrators, faculty and students to curb the cheating.

More recently, Deans of YC and SSSB, in response to reports of cheating in Fall 2016, called for meetings where Deans and students came together about academic integrity, and for the creation of a student-run academic integrity committee. In Fall 2017, Yeshiva College Dean Philip English stated that midterms would take place in a proctor-less environment and that large rooms were being vacated so that students could be spaced far apart from each other and that signs with the Hebrew verse “da lifyni mi atah omeid” (“know before whom you stand”) and the English phrase “Demand this of yourself, expect it of others.”

SSSB that Fall 2017 semester, in response to cheating incidents, followed suit, instructing faculty to not reuse old finals, to not assign take-home exams, and to not use “test-banks,” which are documents provided to professors from textbook authors that contain thousands of potential questions that can be used to create tests.

The aforementioned academic integrity reforms did not eradicate cheating in YU. In Fall 2017, a Judaic Studies course in SCW cancelled its midterm following revelations that a student stole a copy of the exam from the professor’s office, and a Mathematics course in YC administered a retest after reports of suspicious behavior during a midterm exam. On a different plane, several posts from the past few semesters on Stern College: In the Know, a private Facebook group with over 5,700 members, indicate SCW and SSSB students offering money to their peers in exchange for full-paper writing services.

“My intention was not to place this burden on the shoulders of students only,” explained Wood-Hill, Commentator when asked about her recent listserve email, “but to remind my future doctors that shining a light on wrongdoing is ESSENTIAL to their future work as physicians and leaders in their communities.” Professor Jiang, on the other hand, expressed regret at his “omission not to seek additional proctors for a classroom too spacious to handle.”

Jiang added, “I was in fact very disappointed that I trusted my students and hoped that they would do their best job in a clean test... Cheating is the worst thing that happens on campus. It diminishes the value of learning and makes the efforts of hard-working students meaningless. We will work very hard to crack it down.”

Prof. Jianfeng Jiang, a YC alumnus, emailed to his students, similarly expressed that “academic integrity is the cornerstone of Yeshiva University... any behavior that goes against the spirit of academic honesty will not be tolerated.” He also explained his belief that “it is in the best interest of all of us to take this remedial course of action [of taking a retest] to ensure that the highest standards of academic integrity are maintained.”

A student in the affected General Chemistry class from this fall semester remarked that he found it “very upsetting as a Yeshiva University student that people cheated and the Deans did nothing about it.” A pre-med student on the pre-health listserve similarly expressed frustration that Wood-Hill’s email “suggests that students are responsible for police cheating in their classes.” He felt that “the administration, not the students, has the responsibility to provide their students with a fair and comprehensive education” and that the administration has “taken too few concrete steps to limit cheating and to punish cheating students. Change needs to start with them.”

Other cheating incidents have taken place this semester as well. One student reported to The Commentator that a classmate of his, who was discovered to have plagiarized an assignment and admitted to his professor what he did, was “not disciplined by the University” and besides for a mark of zero on that individual assignment.

“The culture of leniency in dealing with student cheating encourages the student body to continue cheating,” complained the student who learned about his classmate’s punishment. “In many instances, students feel no moral impediment to cheating, a clear result of the chronic atmosphere of cheating at YU. Moreover, the leniency of punishment calls into question the priorities of the institution; by failing to adequately punish cheaters, the administration encourages the student body to continue cheating and makes it easier for students to rationalize cheating.”

According to SCW Associate Dean Ehiel Orlian, in addition to the reported instances of plagiarism regarding an advanced English paper and Computer Systems assignment, at least two additional academic integrity breaches at SCW have been reported to her this semester. Dean Orlian cited the incorporation of “discussions of cheating into recent Orientation programs in the hope of creating awareness early on,” and discussions of plagiarism in first-year English Composition classes as developed efforts to prevent such instances.

As for formal policies regarding academic integrity, YU’s colleges currently have several means by which that handle cheating incidents. Academic Policies for Wilf and Beren indicate that proctoring procedures for YC, SCW and SSSB are roughly the same.

According to Dean Strauss, the Dean’s Office of SSSB regularly informs all faculty and advocates to follow certain testing procedures. These procedures include such recommendations as not reusing old exams, not using test-banks, not offering take-home exams, requiring students to leave their cell phones on the front desk during testing and for professors of larger classes to request proctors to help ensure that students do not cheat or communicate with each other during exams. Students who assign papers should utilize Turnitin, a plagiarism detection website.

Several YC professors and Dean Orlian of SCW confirmed that through previous incidents, students and professors have been reminded that “papers are their own” and that they should not be shared. Final Exams for YC and SSSS are administered at YU, while final exams at SCW are administered by a Director of Examinations who ensures that a minimum of two proctors supervise each final exam and that final exams are assigned to take finals together in one larger room. However, multiple SCW students have confirmed being administered their final exams in smaller classrooms with one proctor as recently as Fall 2017.

Finals for all undergraduate colleges are administered under strict conditions, usually with proctors. For over ten years, through the end of the Fall 2017 semester, Elizabeth OuYang served as the Final Exam Director for Yeshiva College, a role which entailed interviewing and assigning proctors, handling examination deferrals, time conflicts and special accommodations. In 2015, OuYang was appointed to the same position for SSSB on the Wilf Campus. Last year, OuYang explained to The Commentator that, as a Yeshiva University outsider, her role “brings more objectivity and credibility to the process.”

In the Spring 2018 semester, Dean Fred Sugarman serves as the Final Exam Director for YC while OuYang continues to hold the position at SSSB alone. The Commentator was unable to confirm the University’s most recent nomination for the position.

According to Dean Shalom Holtz, the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs at Yeshiva College, “all faculty receive several e-mail messages prior to midterm and final exam periods alerting them to the possibility of employing proctors to support exam integrity.” Dean Karen Bacon, the Dean of Undergraduate Faculty of Arts and Sciences, as well as other YC professors confirmed that despite the availability of proctors, many professors do not take up the offer.

In order to form preventative measures, YC currently has an Academic Standards Committee that meets periodically to discuss the state of academic integrity at the University. According to Prof. William Stenhouse, the Chair of YC’s History department and the head of the Academic Standards Committee, the committee of two undergraduate students and five professors meets with the Deans two or three times each semester to discuss old strategies and to brainstorm new strategies for preventing and dealing with cheating.

When a cheating incident does take place, students and faculty from all undergraduate colleges are instructed to report details to the Dean’s Office to the relevant Academic Policies. Accused students who initially admit to the allegations will receive an “F” in the course in question.

When an accused student denies any wrongdoing, an adversarial process begins. That process involves three of three faculty members is gathered to conduct a hearing, evaluate the case and recommend to the relevant Dean what punishments, if any, should be administered and whether or not the student should be dismissed from the University. Finally, the Dean decides to either accept, reject or modify the Committee’s recommendation. Written copies of the final decision are sent to the Deans of the undergraduate schools and to the Office of the Registrar.

Prof. William Lee, who has taught English at YC since 1983, remarked that “the atmosphere of an institution or a community can encourage or discourage cheating. In YU, there aren’t truly any official deterring mechanisms for cheating.”

Lee cited the “halakhic position of R. Moshe Feinstein” which “couldn’t be clearer: cheating and plagiarism are theft of mind and therefore prohibited. So cheating should always be rare at YU. But it’s not; we have cycles where it’s rarer and cycles where it’s all too common.”

Though Prof. Lee expressed that cheating is inevitable, Prof. Marlin Young, Chair of Art History at SCW, said that they “don’t really understand the circumstances at YU. It’s simply shameful that it does.” Young advised for greater faculty attentiveness to potential cheaters, stricter administrative enforcement of punishments and the adoption of student-enforced solutions to combat cheating. “In the end,” he said, “cheating only hurts the student.”

Any university should remain attentive and vigilant, never assuming that cheating has gone away,” said Prof. Lee. “It will never go away.”

**CHEATING, continued from Front Page**
To Deal With Expectations: Men’s Basketball Season Preview

By CHANA WEINBERG

Editor’s Note: The following article was originally published online on Tues., Nov. 20.

Following a championship season, the YU men’s basketball team has set out to prove that last year’s success was more than an aberration. Tonight, the men’s basketball team will host their home opener against Skyline Conference rival, the Sarah Lawrence Roadrunners, but the game was close nonetheless. With its first game against Sarah Lawrence, Steinmetz is preaching patience.

“We’ve been starting a couple of freshmen and playing more of them off the bench,” Steinmetz said in response to his team’s close loss.

After the metaphorical confetti clears, the 2018-19 Maccabees will turn back to the hardwood for a season of basketball where the road to repeated success remains far from guaranteed.

The 2018-19 season has yet to see a men’s basketball victory, with the team losing its first two games by a combined margin of 48 points.

But turnovers aside, YU men’s basketball has shown few visible signs of the growing pains to which Steinmetz refers.

Another potential cause of this 0-2 slide is the absence of Skyline Conference Championship Most Outstanding Player junior Simcha Halpert. Halpert, who was recently named co-captain along with seniors Daniel Katz and Tal Gweta, is sidelined due to injury. Steinmetz is looking forward to Halpert’s return to action, when he will be able to help the team with his two years of experience and his award-winning shooting abilities. Assuming all goes well, Halpert will join Turell, teammate Gabe Leifer and the rest of the sharpshooting Macs who are known for their ability to rally around clutch three-pointers.

That being said, Steinmetz can still point to aspects of the game that need improvement. “I think something we need to improve on from last season is ball control,” said Steinmetz. “Limiting turnovers. We need to take better care of [the ball]. We shot such a high percentage it’s a shame to ever give up possessions without a shot at the basket.”

Last season, the team shot a combined 47 percent from the field while also inducing 44 turnovers, which, on average, is one more per game than their opponents combined.

But turnovers aside, YU men’s basketball team enters the season with “a target on their backs,” said Steinmetz.

This target can also be called expectations. For the first time in program history, the Maccabees received a top 25 vote from D3hoops.com’s Division III ranking.

D3hoops.com poll is voted on by a panel of 25 coaches, sports information directors and media members from across the country, and is published weekly — Yeshiva men’s basketball now has national recognition from DIII basketball experts. In addition to the D3hoops recognition, the Macs also received six first place votes on the way to a first place projection from the Skyline Conference preseason projections. All eleven Skyline head coaches vote on these rankings.

The Macs are no longer sneaking up on teams like they did during last season’s 8-0 run to the Skyline Conference playoffs, but expectations are not something the team is worried about.

“Our guys know how hard they had to work to win each and every game last year,” said Steinmetz. “We know how good our league and opponents are and we know we have to work harder than ever.”
FINANCIAL UPDATE, continued from Front Page

Purchasing homes for university presidents is common practice for American public and private universities. According to The Chronicle of Higher Education, "Many presidents of large universities are given houses in which to live and to play host to fund raisers and other events." The Chronicle’s annual national survey of presidential pay and residences at 118 public universities found that amongst houses provided to their presidents, over 36 are valued at $500,000 or more and 20 are valued at over $1 million.

For most university presidents, according to the Wall Street Journal, the value of “free accommodations is not taxed as income.” As a private university, YU reports the “estimated annual value of this benefit” to the Internal Revenue Service annually in its Form 990 to ensure its compliance with federal limits on not-for-profit employee compensation, according to The Chronicle.

The June 2017 purchase of President Berman’s house followed YU’s April 2017 refinancing of five campus properties in Manhattan using a $140 million mortgage from two debt fund management companies. The sale and leaseback transaction placed Washington Heights’ Wilf Campus buildings of Belfer Hall and Pollack and Gottesman Library, and Murray Hill’s Beren Campus buildings of 215, 245 and 253 Lexington Ave, into a wholly University owned limited liability company called Y Properties Holdings LLC through which YU continues to lease back the five properties. The $140 million mortgage was used to redeem $175 million in taxable bonds held by UMB Bank issued in 2014, whose remaining $140 million mortgage was used to redeem $175 in taxable bonds issued in 2009 and 2011, and affirmed the B3 status which the bonds have maintained since 2014. According to Moody’s, a B3 rating indicates that the long-term bonds are non-investment grade and “speculative and subject to high credit risk.”

While the transaction placed Washington Heights’ Wilf Campus buildings into a wholly University owned limited liability company called Y Properties Holdings LLC through which YU continues to lease back the five properties, the sale and leaseback transaction placed Washington Heights’ Wilf Campus buildings of Belfer Hall and Pollack and Gottesman Library, and Murray Hill’s Beren Campus buildings of 215, 245 and 253 Lexington Ave, into a wholly University owned limited liability company called Y Properties Holdings LLC through which YU continues to lease back the five properties. The $140 million mortgage was used to redeem $175 million in taxable bonds held by UMB Bank issued in 2014, whose remaining $140 million mortgage was used to redeem $175 in taxable bonds issued in 2009 and 2011, and affirmed the B3 status which the bonds have maintained since 2014. According to Moody’s, a B3 rating indicates that the long-term bonds are non-investment grade and “speculative and subject to high credit risk.”

The Office of Communications and Public Affairs told The Commentator that “Yeshiva University offers housing to live and to play host to fund raisers and other events.”

The realtor involved in the transaction for President Berman’s home, Nina Eizikovitz of Links Residential, explained that the discrepancy between the house’s sale price and average block listing prices is indeed “normal” for an area in which “there are many houses which property owners custom built for themselves.” Because the heighted values of custom built homes are not reflected in the property records from which average property listing values are calculated, these averages do not offer a comprehensive picture of nearby property values, nor a reliable assessment of the presidential house’s market value. Eizikovitz also said that there are many homes in the area valued on par with the President’s house.

In light of the University’s ongoing operating deficits, the source of the liquidity with which the University paid upfront remains speculative. The Commentator could not determine whether the President’s contract provides that he reimburse the University for the property taxes filed by YU’s Tax Compliance Department in the University’s name. It is also not clear what role the Board of Trustees, which presided over the President’s contract, played in securing upfront funding for the property.

YU’s fiscal 2017 statements of Joel’s final and fourteenth year as president acknowledge that YU has sustained significant and recurring operating losses in recent years, meaning that each year it is spending more on operational costs than its cash and cash equivalents can cover. The financial statements acknowledge that these incurred deficits could be relieved by YU’s increased use of liquid assets to “provide additional operating support.” The University grew its unrestricted liquidity as “a stabilizing factor during a highly transitional period.” Though the rating action impacts $159 million of outstanding rated debt, the positive rating outlook of YU from stable to positive for the first time since the bonds’ 2009 and 2011 issuances, and affirmed the B3 status which the bonds have maintained since 2014. According to Moody’s, a B3 rating indicates that the long-term bonds are non-investment grade and “speculative and subject to high credit risk.”

The Moody’s report cited “improved operating performance,” projected “continued moderation of operating losses” and “strengthened financial management and a new president focused on enhancing the university’s external profile and reputation” as factors that could amp up prospects of “renewed donor confidence and gifts” and improved financial stability. The report cited YU’s 2017 monetization of numerous assets and the resultant growth of its unrestricted liquidity as “a stabilizing factor during a highly transitional period.” Though the rating action impacts $159 million of outstanding rated debt, the positive rating outlook predicts that YU’s new senior leadership will succeed in executing “important structural changes that will create a stable operating profile over the long term.”

The Office of Communications and Public Affairs told The Commentator that “Yeshiva University offers housing to live and to play host to fund raisers and other events.”

Continued on page 8

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Narratives from the Sephardic Atlantic

Thursday, December 13
7 – 8 p.m.
MENDEL GOTTESMAN LIBRARY
ROOM 507
By Zachary Greenberg

The Career Center has added a variety of new additions to benefit the students on both the Wilf and Beren Campuses. Previously, the two campuses each had their own respective staffs, but now the two departments are much more fluid by having the staff rotate between the two campuses.

Additionally, this semester, the Career Center introduced numerous new programs for students. One initiative is called “Work Stream Project,” which is an assemblance of alumni within ten different fields who serve as mentors for students by helping review the student’s resume or having an informational phone call. Another program called “TechUcation” is geared for students interested in careers within computer science and technology. The program kicked off with an event with a prominent keynote speaker, followed by two educational panels intended to provide information on how to best prepare for the competitive recruiting process within this sector of the industry.

Large-scale events, such as TechUcation, are intended to help prepare students who are new on campus to better compete for job positioning within a variety of industries. “The event gave students an insider’s look into how the computer science interview process works,” Elisha Rosenzweig (YC ’21) said. “They told us ways to distinguish ourselves by focusing on leadership qualities and that things like GPA are not necessarily the most important feature that a company is looking for.” The initiation for the event came from student feedback after last year’s seminar “What is Wall Street... Other Than Investment Banking,” which asked for more large-scale events for other industries as well. There are now post-event surveys for all students and professionals attending to discuss their opinions about the event in order to help advance and create future programs.

“Collectively, the Center now has the ability to serve all students effectively and not just undergraduate students.”

Career Center Executive Director Susan Bauer

FINANCIAL UPDATE, continued from page 7

for our president, as many universities do. We do not comment on specific employment matters.”

The presidential home has long served as both a private and communal space for presidential use. In a January 2008 interview with the Riverdale Press, Joel identified his “Arlington Avenue backyard” as “his source of tranquility.” He conveyed that “the restlessness of the public eye can be overbearing,” and that at times he and his wife need the seclusion “to be able to be non-overbearing,” and that at times he and his wife need the seclusion “to be able to be non-people.” More publicly, Joel’s house served all students effectively and not just undergraduate students. The new office is much more spacious to something new and renovated, aligning with our new philosophies and initiatives, and I seized it,” Bauer said. “Our new space is welcoming and visibly appealing to both students and the alumni and employers we engage with.”

Several new staff members were also hired this academic year, including Assistant Directors Matthew García and Daniel Coleman, as well as new Associate Director of Employer Relations and Alumni Programs Marina Mazina and Employer Relations Specialist Hannah Zacker. Director of Employer and Alumni Relations Todd Lotzpeich was also hired. The Career Center is also seeking a Director of Career Coaching and Technology to move the group into a new and innovative direction.

“IT’S A Career Center and alumni network have been invaluable. They helped me secure my Goldman Sachs internship which led to a full time offer,” said Isaac Shulman (YC ’17).

Towards the end of the Spring 2018 semester, YU launched a new charity program called YU Cares. The fundamentals of the program were simple — students were able to donate up to $50 of leftover funds from their meal plans to an account which would allocate the funds to students in need of money for meals.

According to Dean of Students Chaim Nissel, who oversees the program, funds were collected from over 100 students and were distributed to 26 students “who were in need.” Dean Nissel added, “Based on the feedback from the program, YU Cares will continue this semester as well.

Under YU policy, meal plans are non-transferable, non-refundable and there is a daily limit of $100 per student account and a maximum purchase of six of the same item. The Dining Services website states, “Recent interpretations of NY State Tax law do not permit the use of tax exempt meal plan funds for [large] purchases.” The Dining Services website further enumerates that refunding leftover funds would void the sales tax exemption. Dean Nissel did not offer comment regarding the legality of the program with respect to New York law.

Other universities which provide meals on a swipe-based system participate in a program called “Share Meals,” which allows students to meet up to share extra swipes.

The combination of these policies often leaves students with excess money on their Caf Card which will expire at the end of the year. To help use up these funds, the YU Cares program was introduced, which allowed the funds to be donated to needy students.

“It sounded like a good initiative and I hope they continue it for the end of this semester,” remarked Philip Nagler (YC ’20).

Large-scale events, such as both a private and communal space for students, are intended to help prepare students who are new on campus to better compete for job positioning within a variety of industries. “The event gave students an insider’s look into how the computer science interview process works,” Elisha Rosenzweig (YC ’21) said. “They told us ways to distinguish ourselves by focusing on leadership qualities and that things like GPA are not necessarily the most important feature that a company is looking for.”

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Large-scale events, such as
Just Give Up! Why American Democracy Is an Illusion

By Aryeh Schoenrun

Like many of my idealistic friends, I too voted in this year’s election. I didn’t plan on it — it didn’t strike me as something too important — but, finding myself near my polling station I walked in, took an envelope and voted. I voted in Israel, having made this country my home for the last few years. I did not vote in the U.S. elections and never did it cross my mind to obtain an absentee ballot. I just don’t think that my vote counts, and not because I’m only one individual. My problem with system lies deeper: I know that it’s all a lie.

I did not pay so much attention to the results either. I hate the GOP, but I don’t especially like the Democrats. I feel appalled by President Trump and his minions’ crude behavior and vicious policies. But don’t harbor fond sentiments for the ultra-liberal insanity that many of the Democratic lawmakers promote. To me, both parties form an unholy coalition, a single party of corrupt opportunists with wallets and ears open to the suggestions of corporate power and ruthless strongmen. This one-party-state that you live in appears to some as a thriving democracy, but don’t be fooled: democracy in America is dead on arrival.

Nearly any attempt at sane politics in the U.S. faces the unrelenting obstacles and restrictions of an invasive, global bureaucratic order intent on stifling revolution and squelching protest of any of its broad policies that threaten human liberty. Together with the corporate world, the corporate media and manipulative social-network platforms, the ruling class has made it nigh impossible to even investigate and report to the public on anything. The calls of “Lapu Lapu” (“Fake news”), which hearken back to the dark days of modern man’s oppression, reinforce in the general public’s consciousness the subjectivity of truth and honesty and further strengthen our ruler’s (owners of the “official outlets”) ability to rewrite our histories and values, and control our lives.

Some outliers do manage to break through the hermetically-sealed fountain of information that we semi-willingly imbibe on a daily basis, and sometimes idealistic figures surprise us at their relative successes. Ms. Ocasio-Cortez, imbibe on a daily basis, and sometimes idealistic figures

Rabbi Eli Seden receiving the Israeli Prize for his work on reviving middle-class participation in the IDF (Mechinot)/IDF Soldiers

By neglecting its civic duty to serve in the army, the American middle class has lost its influence and power in the military. The monopoly of force now firmly rests in the hands of private interests, who will not necessarily support the democratic will of the middle-class. Even if we could convince masses of the American electorate that voting for either the Democrats or the Republicans runs counter to their interests, even if we could introduce into such a corrupt system a new brand of politics, authentically motivated and sufficiently sophisticated to re-educate America and make her great again, I am convinced that the forces that be will not allow such a democracy to persist.

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By Cole Aronson

Towards the end of my sophomore year at Yale, I decided that Judaism should mean everything to me. Our Hillel’s JJC rabbi—a talmid of this yeshiva, and to this day my close teacher and friend—encouraged me to go to Morasha Kollel that summer to get acquainted with the Gemara and those who take it seriously. Those six weeks were like an intense dream, and at resolved that they shouldn’t stop just because the academic calendar said so. That fall and spring, and into my senior year, I took the Metro North every week I could from New Haven to New York, then the subway through Harlem to Yeshiva University’s Wilf Campus. I came to love YU as much as I feel a right to love any school that is not my own, and I’d like to tell you why. In part because I think giving thanks is the proper response to feeling thankful. Also, I have a vainglorious hope that YU may take encouragement from the gratitude of someone who had no claim on the school’s resources, but who gained and still gains from their gracious provision.

Yeshiva University takes a refreshingly unified view of study and culture, which is that both are conducted under the Yoke of Heaven.

To my way of thinking, an institution’s central virtue is the character of its leaders, so I’ll begin with the Roshei Yeshiva. I never thought there could be so many people whose sagacity equals their integrity, whose productive and disinterested, and the best partners are the worthiest opponents.

Keeping Shabbos at Yale is counter-cultural, but how much more wonderful for a whole school to keep it together? Redoubtable members of the Kollel Elyon welcomed me into their homes and showed me proper, frum parenting and loving marriages—how to build faithful, peaceful houses in Israel. The rebbeim who live in the Heights did the same, answering questions I asked and ones I lacked the courage to voice. These bnei Torah, young and old, became my guides and comrades in a nascent life of Orthodoxy. My experience of YU is exalted, I have never visited the Beren campus, and I’ve only met about twenty students of Stern College. Still, I found them to be as serious, refreshing and original. How to put the line were five ropes with which the rider could be set up like this: there was a circular lake with a rotating line overhead. Attached to the line were five ropes with which the rider would grab on. The line would then pull the rider around the lake. As we watched from the shore, we reasoned that the feat looked easy enough. When it was my turn, I sat on the edge of the lake and waited for the pull of the rope. Within seconds I was at a height on my face. What we hadn’t accounted for was the speed of the line and the core strength necessary to leverage the weight of the rope with the weight of your body. I wasn’t fazed by my wipe out; I had come for adventure.

A few hours later, soaking wet and very bruised, I got the hang of it. Our time was running out, but I implored my friends to wait around for a little while I struggled to get to the last turn. I was flat on my face. What we hadn’t accounted for was the speed of the line and the core strength necessary to leverage the weight of the rope with the weight of your body. I wasn’t fazed by my wipe out; I had come for adventure.

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Hearing Lost and Found

The second I hit the water I knew that something was wrong. In an effort to protect my face from the impact, I had subconsciously tilted my head to the right. As I waded to the surface, I felt a shooting pain across the side of my head. And then, all at once, I realized that I couldn’t hear out of my right ear. I strained to hear the voices calling to me from the shore, but I heard nothing. For those seconds in the water, I understood that I would give absolutely anything to get my hearing back. It was something I never thought about, but suddenly it was the only thing that mattered.

As I made my way to the edge of the lake, I thought about the steep price I would have to pay for my recklessness. I called my mom and, having gotten similar phone calls in the past, she realized herself for yet another ER visit. I couldn’t quiet my mind on the ride to the hospital. My brain jumped from bad to worse scenarios as I considered living my life half-dead. Though I had since regained some hearing in my ear, sounds were muffled and intermixed with an incessant ringing. When I arrived at the hospital, the PA regretted to inform me that ENT (Ear Nose and Throat) injuries were not her specialty. She recommended we make an appointment with an ENT specialist as soon as possible. That night was restless. I was riddled with regret. I played the scene over again and again in my mind wondering what had compelled me.

I had never questioned my need to live on the edge until this past summer, when my thrill-seeking almost cost me my hearing.

A friend of mine had been raving about this new wakeboard park that had just opened on the outskirts of Georgia. I had always wanted to try how to wakeboard and decided that now was just as good a time as any. I enlisted some friends to join me on my adventure, and we headed out to Emerson.

Hearing is a gift that so many of us take for granted.
Editor’s Note: Over three decades ago, Yeshiva University was plagued by rampant cheating and futile efforts to curb the problem. It is quite astonishing to read the following article, which was one of many articles about cheating printed in an issue of The Commentator from February 1987, and to see how little has changed. The specifics aside, this article could almost pass as a news piece today.

From the Archives (February 18, 1987; Volume 52 Issue 5) — Poll Shows Widespread Cheating: Senate Acts to Rectify Situation

By Freddy Schwartz

The cheating at Yeshiva College has reached such a proportion that it is now perhaps the most serious problem this institution must confront. While the majority of the student body has never cheated, the overall atmosphere is frighteningly conducive to student chicanery. Although exact statistics are unavailable, results from the recent Commentator survey reveal a major problem. Of the 104 students who responded to the poll, 36% admitted that they have cheated at least once in college. In addition, an overwhelming 88% of students claimed to have witnessed others cheating, with more than half of the respondents reporting to have seen such a spectacle on at least four separate occasions. While less shocking, perhaps the most significant statistic to emerge from the survey was that 81% of those polled would refrain from reporting visible cheating to the instructor. Apparently, although most students do not cheat themselves, they do tolerate cheating from others.

This general atmosphere of tolerance not only fosters cheating, but also allows cheaters to boast openly and freely about their immoral conduct instead of feeling shameful and culpable. Many cheating instances become common knowledge on campus. In the case of the accounting student who last year was requested to take his final exam earlier than scheduled. The teacher acquiesced on condition that the student take the test in the teacher’s office. The student complied, but when not being observed, proceeded to make several photocopies of the exam for his friends. He distributed them later on, and neither he nor his friends were ever penalized.

Another instance of group cheating occurred last semester, who also allows cheaters to boast openly and freely about their immoral conduct instead of feeling shameful and culpable. Many cheating instances become common knowledge on campus. In the case of the accounting student who last year was requested to take his final exam earlier than scheduled. The teacher acquiesced on condition that the student take the test in the teacher’s office. The student complied, but when not being observed, proceeded to make several photocopies of the exam for his friends. He distributed them later on, and neither he nor his friends were ever penalized.

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One possible solution the Senate has not yet considered is a stiffening of the punishments for proven cheaters. Dean Rosenfeld concurs but feels that the current system must be done.

If for no reason other than this, something must be done. There are others who are equally sad to see the school’s reputation that YU currently enjoys in the eyes of schools nationwide.

There are certain students who are quite successful and can afford to cheat because they are in demand. However, I have not heard of any student who is so successful that he or she could have just as easily crashed. In those rare cases of cheating, the cheater is not just punishing himself, but also the entire student body as I breathed a sigh of relief. True, I had dodged a bullet, but the prognosis ease was not as bad as I had feared. I had made it through this fiasco relatively unscathed, the next time I may not be as lucky. I may never curb my desire for adventure, and I don’t necessarily think I should. But, with only one life to live, it is important to find a way to maximize every experience in the safest way possible. My brush with catastrophe was a wakeup call for me. My next foray has elicited some exciting adventures, but as inertia would have it, I could have just as easily crashed. In those hours of hearing loss, I found a new appreciation for the day to day trivialities that are so easily taken for granted.
Bioethics in Practice

The Baby Wears Prada: Bioethics of Designer Babies

By Rachel Ritter

Imagine a world where a baby’s genetic composition is no longer a product of chance; where parents can select or even alter embryos to fit their preferred specifications. With the advent of technology like in-vitro fertilization (IVF), preimplantation genetic screening (PGS) and powerful and precise gene editing tools like CRISPR, this world, once found only in science fiction novels, looms exciting and unnerving just over the medical horizon.

Should parents be allowed to bestow on their children whatever qualities they consider meritorious, if there is no objective way to evaluate these qualities?

Colloquially referred to as “designer babies,” this concept admittedly evokes the unsettling image of vapid parents sitting in a cusdy doctor’s office with indulgent requests like “make sure she has blue eyes like her mother.” However, despite its shallow connotations, the medical technology behind designer babies has the potential to revolutionize healthcare. Scientists believe that it may allow doctors to prevent and even eradicate certain incurable diseases, instead of just treating their symptoms.

This possibility is not as removed from our reality as we may think. PGS, which involves screening embryos for genetic diseases before implanting them via IVF, is already legal and has been used successfully in the United States and many European countries. And though germline genetic modification, which involves direct gene editing in developing embryos, is completely illegal in the United States and over 40 other countries, clinical trials involving the practice have been conducted in China since 2015, sparking international outrage and debate. In November 2018, MIT Technology Review reported findings of Chinese documents describing a clinical trial intending to genetically modify embryos and implant them via IVF. According to the Review, “[These scientists] planned to eliminate a gene called CCR5 in hopes of rendering the offspring resistant to HIV, smallpox and cholera.”

As with all advances in biotechnology, it is important to weigh the pros and cons, and explore the ethical implications of both sides. To evaluate this complex issue, this article will examine the parties involved.

The embryo: At the crux of this issue lies, of course, the embryo, and the person that that embryo could become. One obvious benefit for the embryo would be health-related. Invasive and low-risk, it involves screening embryos to make sure that they are genetically healthy before implanting them via IVF. This is especially important for children born to parents who are at a high risk for passing down genetic disorders, like many individuals within the Jewish population.

Germline genetic modification, which involves altering the embryo’s genetic code, also has tremendous potential to prevent disease. However, the procedure would be much more invasive and complex, and poses an important question: can we reach a high enough level of confidence in the safety of these procedures that we can feel comfortable trying them on actual humans? Gene mapping provides some insight into the traits associated with certain genes, but is still a developing field. Genes are highly complex, interacting in ways that are difficult to predict; at least for now, we cannot account for every consequence that would result from editing an area of genetic code. Even a single unforeseen consequence could be debilitating to the child, and, if heritable, to the child’s descendants.

Another factor to consider on the embryo’s behalf is the possibility of selecting or altering embryos in favor of certain desirable qualities unrelated to health. As gene mapping becomes more nuanced, scientists have attempted to pinpoint genes that influence intelligence, athletic ability and physical characteristics like height and weight.

A number of issues could arise from parents choosing to improve their child in this way. One potential issue lies in the subjectivity of the word “improve.” What determines whether a quality is considered positive and constitutes an improvement? In a recent case, a deaf lesbian couple elected to use a deaf sperm donor to have a child, intentionally maximizing the chances that their child would be deaf. The couple said that they were part of a deaf community and culture, and did not want their child to feel isolated and cut off from that. Their baby was not technically a designer baby, but what if it was? Should parents be allowed to bestow on their children whatever qualities they consider meritorious, if there is no objective way to evaluate these qualities? This brings us to... the parents:

The parents: Every parent wants to do what they deem best for their child. In the U.S., medically speaking, this is largely within a parent’s right. American law does not consider a child competent to make medical decisions and considers the parent responsible for the child’s health and wellbeing. For this reason, a parent is allowed to vaccinate his or her child against dangerous diseases, have their broken leg set in a cast and have their inflamed appendix removed, even if the child protests. One might apply this logic to the issue of designer babies, and say that it does not matter that an embryo obviously cannot consent to genetic modification; a parent has the right to make a decision that will save their child from a dangerous disease.

However, this logic does not apply for elective medical procedures. A parent cannot force a child to get a cosmetic surgery, even if they think it is in the child’s best interest. Therefore, one could argue that...
Thank you!

To the hundreds of Yeshiva University students who form the core of our amazing staff this, and every summer. Yasher Koach on your dedication, commitment and leadership!

Thank you to the prominent leaders of the YU Community who visited us and addressed our staff & campers this summer - Your presence added so much to our program.

We are proud to be your partner and are honored to work together with Yeshiva University in serving our community.

Rav Moshe Weinberger  Rav Menachem Penner  Rav Yaakov Glasser  Rav Aharon Kahn  Rav Mordechai Willig
Rav Baruch Simon  Rav Yehuda Willig  Rav Moshe Zvi Weinberg  Dr. Steve Glicksman  Rav Shimon Schenker
Rav Yosef Kalinsky  Rav Ari Sytner  Rav Simcha Willig  Rav Jonathan Cohen

Wishing you all a wonderful Winter Zman!

Shmiel Kahn Camp Director & Rav Judah Mischel Executive Director

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From the SCWSC President’s Desk: Lexington, Wilf and the Pursuit of Happiness

By Shoshana Marder

The Tuesday before Thanksgiving, the Stern College for Women Student Council (SCWSC) created probably the most powerful program for the Beren student body to date: our very own Thanksgiving Day Parade. What began as a complete joke turned into a challenge — could we pull off this large-scale shtick in the middle of Manhattan? We gathered our loyal SCWSC followers, transformed a pushcart into a float, printed out pictures of Dean Bacon, President Berman and Snoopy to serve as our balloons, dressed in our best pilgrim costumes (I may have been the only one to do that part) and marched down the sidewalk of Lexington Avenue, waving at babies and singing the two Thanksgiving songs on a pushcart across Lexington Avenue, I felt the exhilarating freedom of the storied American pilgrims, like I too was traveling the Mayflower to a future of hope and happiness.

We often take ourselves very seriously during our college years, and it makes sense. There is an intensity that permeates so much of everyday life on campus. College consists of a frantic search for who we are and what we want, and then an overwhelming planning stage for how to go about getting it. We are tasked with making real decisions and being independent all while grappling with a newfound sense of adulthood. We question what were once unquestionable assumptions as we struggle to understand the world and people around us. Academic success, internships and extracurriculars are not just for our ego, but can have practical implications for the next stages of our lives. Our actions have empowering but ominous magnitude — like shooting an arrow, it seems that any slight turn will cause our efforts to hit an entirely different target, leading us down a drastically different path.

We’re mistaken, though, when we allow the inherent intensity and seriousness of college to be all-encompassing. We miss out on the holistic experience of college — where discovery of our interests, passions and character is not just frantic and painful but also exciting, and even fun. We have a serious duty and responsibility to take ourselves less seriously at times. These moments of laughter and even silliness are not demeaning or degrading, but give us the freedom to express and embrace an often-overlooked part of ourselves. This awareness is the key to coming to know our genuine selves and the ticket to making sure our next steps are reflective of who we really are.

We on SCWSC take our job very seriously. We understand and embrace the serious and intense aspects of the college experience. Through clubs and programming, we aim to create opportunities for students to succeed in college and beyond and do intense exploration of their presents and planning of their futures. But we also take seriously not being serious all the time. Whether it’s bizarre parades, odd emails, club events or just a friendly smile, we want to help foster an environment in Stern and the University as a whole that is also fun, happy and positive. So yes; be on the lookout for multiple surprise birthday parties (my father made me add that) — can be a crucial element creating a unifying environment where people feel free to be who they are and explore new things about themselves. So, of course, take your grades and intellectual pursuits seriously. But also make being happy a priority this year.

The Artist and the Average Commuter

By Mikki Treitel

On long subway rides, I used to draw the commuter across from me. The man with his hands burrowed deep in his denim pockets I’d ask myself — what can I take from him? Hair: already in quick pencil strokes, like stealing candy from a baby. Fingers: tired, but metallic like the coins I’d imagine in his Hands: tucked away. They must be warm in there, I thought.

These days I see hands in pockets, Hands where I can’t see them. Hands holding metal. I ask myself — what can be taken from me? And what would I give? To keep the blood rushing through my body, and not from it?

COURTESY OF THE YU POETRY CLUB

Features Monday, December 3, 2018
Are Patents Public or Private Property?

By Aaron Gourkman

Legend has it that Charles Holland Duell, the former Commissioner of the United States Patent and Trademark Office, once said that “Everything that can be invented has been invented.” His proclamation proved to be absurdly short-sighted as far as modern inventions and discoveries are concerned. After all, antibiotics and planes had yet to be conceived of in his time, let alone high-speed internet or virtual reality technology. Humanity’s innovative capacity is still in its infancy, though in contemporary times we now invent at a rate never seen before. However, the laws protecting the patents and copyrights of these inventions have not advanced nearly as rapidly as the rate of the inventions themselves. In cases of disputes, we look to rudimentary yet precedential eighteenth-century laws for guidance. This came to play recently in the Supreme Court case of Oil States v. Greene’s Energy, where the crux of the case lay on the fine line separating patent private rights from public rights.

In order to understand the importance of this case, it is necessary to understand the difference between a public and private patent. If a patent lies in the public domain, it can be revoked at any time, while a privately held patent cannot. This difference between what is considered public or private property stems from the origin of patent law itself. Laws stemming from statutes and regulations are public, such as revocable business licenses. In contrast, laws stemming from common law, the same laws that give individuals such as revocable business licenses. In contrast, laws stemming from statutes and regulations are public, such as revocable business licenses. In contrast, laws stemming from common law, the same laws that give individuals personal freedom, are immutable private rights. The difference between the two was decided by the King’s bench and circle of advisors when issuing and nullifying patents.

The case of Oil States v. Greene’s Energy is of interest because both sides went to court holding very different views on the domain of the fracking patent— that is, whether it fell in the public or private domain. In this case, Oil States held a patent on new fracking technology, which it claimed that Greene’s Energy had infringed upon. When Oil States sent Greene’s Energy a Cease and Desist letter, Greene’s Energy retaliated by filing a petition with the Patent Trial and Appeal Board (PTAB) in an ultimately successful effort to invalidate the patent. Oil States then sued Greene’s Energy in a case that made it all the way to the Supreme Court. See Supreme Court, OIL STATES ENERGY SERVICES, LLC v. GREENE’S ENERGY GROUP, LLC; ET AL. No. 16–712., Oct. 2017.

The Oil States v. Greene’s Energy ruling has the potential to affect many industries in both positive and negative ways, including but not limited to pharmaceutical, medical and software industries.

Oil States sued Greene’s Energy with the claim that its patent was a private right, or personal property, while Greene’s Energy petitioned based on the assumption that the patent was a publicly held right that could be revoked by the PTAB. IP Watchdog, an organization that evaluates patent policies, suggests that a ruling in Greene’s Energy’s favor, could become a contentious precedent that creates opportunities for abuse of power by the executive branch of government. The PTAB has the power to revoke publicly held patents, a power which is solely under the jurisdiction of the executive branch of the government’s Department of Commerce. The Department of Commerce is led by a political appointee of the president of the United States, giving the president a direct line to revoking patents at will, claiming that rather than being a creation, and therefore personal property, they are more similar to state-granted licenses. Granted, this is an extreme hypothetical case. However, with the case of Oil States v. Greene’s Energy, the Supreme Court ruled in favor of Greene’s Energy, stating that patents are indeed public rights. The court did so based on the precedent set by an old English law, in which the king’s advisors had the power to revoke patents at will. This law implied that patents are more of a government-issued license than a personal right. In the words of Justice Thomas, “It was well understood at the founding that a patent system could include a practice of granting patents subject to potential cancellation,” thus giving the PTAB the ability to revoke patents. See id. at 1374 (quoting Cuozzo Speed Techs., LLC v. Lee, 136 S. Ct 2131, 2137 (2016)). Oil States’ patent was granted some ten years before Congress established IPR, but, as the majority emphasized, “Oil States [did] not challenge the retroactive application of inter partes review.” Id. at 1379.

The Oil States v. Greene’s Energy ruling has the potential to affect many industries in both positive and negative ways, including but not limited to pharmaceutical, medical, and software industries. For example, this ruling has the power to deter the practice of patent trolling, in which individuals file patents for various vague ideas in the hopes that they can sue the inevitable inventor of the idea and settle for a large sum. Patent trolls have long been disrupting the entire patent system, as evidenced by the fact that according to The New York Times, out of 4007 patents filed in 2012, 3000 were filed by patent trolls. By giving the PTAB the ability to revoke patents, the Supreme Court effectively deprives patent trolls of their leverage.

On the opposite side of the outcome spectrum, some worry that the newfound power afforded to the PTAB will devastate the innovative spirit of many industries as we know it. By removing the power of any one individual or entity to monetize an idea, we run the risk of removing one of the most powerful incentives to keep inventors inventing. As put in the Article Three of the American Constitution, the purpose of a patent is “to promote the progress of science and useful arts, by securing for limited times to authors and inventors the exclusive right to their respective writings and discoveries.” By removing this security from a creator, we run the risk of killing the innovative spirit that has guided our progress as a society thus far.
A Comprehensive Analysis of Trends in MYP Shiurim Sizes

By Benjamin Koslowe

Note: This article appears on The Commentator’s website with more visually friendly charts.

This article, continuing in the footsteps of Commentator data-driven analytic articles from this semester, tracks changes in Mazer Yeshiva Program (MYP) shiurim sizes over the past several years. The scope covers the shiurim of MYP rosh yeshiva and ramim. The data begins with the Fall 2013 semester. All male Yeshiva University undergraduates are registered in one of four Undergraduate Torah Studies (UTS) programs, one of which is MYP. Students enrolled in MYP typically learn Gemara together as chavrutot in one of YU’sbatei midrash — Glueck, Fishel and Klein — in the mornings, and then attend a shiur delivered by their rosh yeshiva or ram in the early afternoon.

The data indicates there have been 28 different MYP shiurim since Fall 2013. Most of the shiurim are taught by YU rosh yeshiva, although some are taught by ramim. According to Rabbi Menachem Penner, the Dean of Rabbi Isaac Elchanan Theological Seminary (RIETS) and Undergraduate Torah Studies, the title of “roshei yeshiva” is “a title of kavod.” He added, “In theory, the rosh yeshiu should have even more weight with regard to existential questions facing the yeshiva. In practice, few of those issues arise.”

As far as education is concerned, MYP rosh yeshiva and ramim have essentially identical formal roles. “The differences between rosh yeshiva and ramim are minimal,” explained Rabbi Penner, “as all of the rabbeinenu have a say in the future of the yeshiva.”

Of the 28 rabbis who have taught MYP shiurim since Fall 2013, the only ramim are Rabbi Mordechai Ben-Haim, Avraham Safarta, Netanel Wiederblank, Yehuda Willig and Ari Zaft. As for the 23 rosh yeshiva who teach MYP shiurim, whose last names all appear in the charts below, 21 still currently teach in MYP. Rabbi David Horwitz has not taught an MYP shiur since Spring 2017, and Rabbi Gershon Yankelewitz passed away in August 2014. Besides for Rabbi Yankelewitz, the other rosh yeshiva who have passed away since Fall 2013 are Rabbi Ozer Glickman, who taught an MYP shiur during the indicated semester. A bolded number indicates that a shiur studied a halachic masekhet rather than the standard MYP masekhet, and an italized number indicates that a shiur studied a non-halachic masekhet rather than the standard MYP masekhet. The standard MYP masekhet which were studied by the vast majority of MYP shiurim in recent years have been: Shabbat (‘13-’14), Ketubot (‘14-’15), Sukkah (‘17-’18), Baba Kamma (‘18-’19), and Kavod (‘16-’17).

Though the charts largely speak for themselves, some trends are worth pointing out. Most shiurim have not varied much from their average sizes from year to year. Exceptions include Rabbi Bass-Haim, Goldwicht and Kahn, whose shiurim have seen mostly steady declines in size in recent years, and Rabbi Safarta, whose shiur has seen mostly steady growth in size in recent years. Some shiurim’s sizes differ markedly from their averages during years in which they do not study the standard MYP masekhet. For example, whereas Rabbi Mordechai Willig’s shiur averages just over 13 students, during Fall 2013 has been Rabbi Michael Taubes, who was named rosh yeshiva in Fall 2016 after having served as rosh yeshiva of Marsha Stern Talmudical Academy/Yeshiva University High School for Boys (MTA). According to Rabbi Penner, “We do not yet have a set plan for the future of rosh yeshiva appointments.”

All of the data comes from MYU listings. Since all MYP shiurim are cross-listed with RIETS, the numbers below include not only Yeshiva College (YC) and By YU’sSchool of Social Work (SSWB) undergraduates, but also graduate semikhah students.

Empty boxes indicate that the corresponding rosh yeshiva did not teach an MYP shiur during the indicated semester. All male Yeshiva University undergraduates are registered in one of four Undergraduate Torah Studies (UTS) programs, one of which is MYP. Students enrolled in MYP typically learn Gemara together as chavrutot in one of YU’sbatei midrash — Glueck, Fishel and Klein — in the mornings, and then attend a shiur delivered by their rosh yeshiva or ram in the early afternoon.

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fit and free of disease. This seems like a benefit; however, there is a darker side to consider. Firstly, this could lead to a more genetically homogenous population, with parents favoring genes in line with desirable or “in vogue” traits. Genetic diversity is very important since it renders different people resistant to different types of diseases and threats, which prevents a single cause from being able to wipe out entire populations.

Additionally, treatment to select or alter embryos would likely be expensive. This could increase the disparity between wealthier and poorer classes, creating an upper class that is smarter, stronger and otherwise could be considered “genetically superior.” This would make it much more difficult for poorer classes to achieve for survival mobility. Even more alarmingly, it could pave the road for a culture of eugenics, a social philosophy which favors promoting populations with genetic superiority and reducing those with genetic inferiority.

So in summation, should designer babies be legalized? Obviously, there is no simple answer. When thinking of worst case scenarios — violations of medical autonomy, debilitating heritable mutations and a whole host of societal inequities — it may be tempting to keep this Pandora’s box safely shut. But when one considers the possibility of extraordinary good — the eradication of diseases, advancement of humanity and other benefits that we, in our narrow scope of vision, can’t even begin to imagine — the prospect of leaving this area of medical unexplored can feel, at the very least, anticlimactic.

DESIGNER BABIES, continued from Page 12

a parent should not be allowed to alter a child’s DNA and genetic makeup for superficial or cosmetic reasons without their consent.

Society at large: One last factor to consider is the impact that designer babies could have on the global population. Overall, the proliferation of designer babies would likely result in a greater percentage of the population being more intelligent, physically

During every academic year besides for 2014-2015, the aggregate number of students in MYP shiurim has shrunk after the fall semester. This trend is most likely due to a combination of the fact that many YU students graduate in January after completing three and a half years of college, as well as the fact that students often switch morning programs from semester to semester. From Fall 2013 to Fall 2018, the total number of students in MYP shiurim has dropped by 99 students, from 657 to 558.

As with other data-driven Commentator pieces, explanations for shiurim sizes are beyond the scope of this article.

— Notes on methodology:
— MYP data from yu.edu/myu (MYU) was copied into fixed and organized Commentator database.
— The numbers of registered students might differ from the numbers of students who are present in any given shiur, since some shiurim include alumni or non-registered students, and some shiurim include many registered students who sometimes are not present for shiurim.
— The median sizes for shiurim were typically very close to the average sizes for shiurim, the medians were not included in this article.
— The total number of MYP and RIETS students produced by MYU data differs slightly from the total number provided by Office of Institutional Research & Assessment (OIR). This is most likely due to the fact that every semester, some MYP students choose to do independent studies and therefore do not register for any MYP shiurim.
Babies at YU: An Appreciation

By MICHAEL WEINER

If you spend enough time on the Wilf Campus, you will see lots of babies. Granted, none of them have a makom kavua in the beit midrash (yet), but their presence is unmistakable. Every day without fail, walking through campus between classes, I inevitably cross paths with some babies in strollers, being pushed by students about my age who are “on duty” as fathers and mothers.

That kind of environment can have some seriously negative effects. After living on a typical college campus for a few months, you might (justifiably!) start to get the feeling that everyone in the world is 20 years old. And by the same token, that everyone in the world has the same thoughts, feelings, experiences, hopes and dreams that you and your 20-year-old friends do.

In its worst incarnation, a college campus can become a sort of Never Ever Land, where, because we only spend time with peers just like us, we stop growing up. And just like in the story, although Never Never Land might sound like paradise, it ends up becoming a nightmare. Classes, shiur, homework, clubs. These are all enriching, meaningful activities, but they’re also all about you. Most of life, as a spouse and a parent and a coworker, will be lived with and for other people.

Stuck inside this cocoon, thinking about ourselves, our work and the present moment, we can be in danger of forgetting that college is just one leg of the journey of life, and that we have a number of critical life milestones coming up that we desperately need to prepare for. Unfortunately, acting all your classes or even getting an internship is not the right kind of preparation.

Enter babies. Their presence, even for just a few moments, keeps us grounded in reality, gently and adorably reminding us to think of others and of the future. “Finding yourself” is absolutely about exploring personal passions and career options, but for Orthodox Jews, it’s just as much about growing into the kind of person who can one day be a wonderful parent and spouse.

Walking down Amsterdam Avenue, lost in thought about essay deadlines and my next class, babies help snap me out of my reverie. Looking down at their adorable faces buried in the recesses of their strollers, I hear the message: you will soon grow up. You will face greater challenges than a midterm. You will one day be a parent to a baby just like this one. And your choices now do matter, shaping you into becoming the most caring and empathic human being you can be. Thanks for those daily reminders of humility and empowerment that you unconsciously send me, anonymous babies. They’re coming at the perfect time.

By PHILLIP NAGLER

Editor’s Note: Certain details in this piece have been deliberately obscured out of concern for the safety of Yeshiva University campuses.

The scope of this article is regarding the security standards on the Wilf Campus. The security on the Beren campus is not addressed in this article.

More than 200 mass shootings have occurred in America this year. A few weeks ago, the Jewish community mourned the loss of 11 of our brothers and sisters who were murdered in Squirrel Hill. In Thousand Oaks, 12 lives were taken by a deranged gunman, where many of the victims were college-aged students. As a Jewish institution and major university, YU is a conceivable target of gun violence. While accepting this fact is difficult and frightful, we have to be preparing ourselves in case of an emergency.

Last semester, I wrote an Opinions piece to promote student awareness of active shooter protocols. I was pleased to see that the school held two active shooter drills this semester that were open to the entire student body; I decided to attend one of them. The drill was led by Mr. Paul Murtha, Director of Security at YU. He discussed the general protocol and how to best approach different active shooter situations.

At the end of the drill, I had not felt a sense of safety on campus. It seemed that in many situations there is not much that one can do to ensure their safety in the event of an active shooter. A feeling of helplessness lingered inside of me. This feeling compelled me to ask a question: “How many armed guards are there on campus?” I approached a source familiar with security at Wilf who told me that there are a few armed guards, but they are not stationed in every building on campus.

Administering these drills was a step in the right direction. After much thought, however, I am not satisfied with the amount of security we have on campus. How can I truly feel safe in those buildings that do not have an armed guard? These shootings can happen in the blink of an eye. By the time an armed guard hears of a shooting in another building — one without an armed guard — lives could have already been taken. This is not a scenario that other students and I should have to wonder about.

One can argue that there is a lack of evidence that armed guards prevent mass shootings in the first place. Additionally, it can be argued that armed guards, police officers and the strong presence of guns can cause discomfort amongst students. My response to both of these arguments would be that the benefits of having more campus security would highly outweigh the points brought across from these arguments. While some students may be uncomfortable in the presence of guns, I think most can recognize the extra measure of safety that they bring to campus.

By no means is this article trying to tackle the debate on gun control versus Second Amendment rights. I am simply addressing concerns I have about the unsound climate of the country we are living in. We need to accept that at this point in time, a mentally ill person can easily get their hands on an assault rifle. The only way to ensure our safety is to fight fire with fire, and right now, we barely have a flame.

YU Needs More Armed Security Personnel

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Two smiling babies.
Something for the Spirit: A Response to Fear in Talmud Torah

By LAVI TEITELBAUM

Since the time of our father Yaakov, who united the house of Abravanel and the genava of Yitzhak, our people’s scholars and teachers have treasured the treacherous path between mesorah and hiddush — tradition and discovery. In every generation, our yeshivos must raise both Rabbi Eliezer ben Horkenos, the plastered cistern that does not lose a drop, and Rabbi Elazar ben Arakh, the ever-strengthening fountain. Like Rabbi Shimon bar Yohai in his cave, our institution of Torah learning is sustained by a slow-growing carob tree, gathering water, and a rushing spring, shooting water out. For that reason, the emerging discussion in this publication of the place for academic Talmud study is an essential one to be had both inside and outside the walls of the beit midrash.

Unlike the giants of Torah in our institution and in countless others, I am not a scholar. I am neither a plastered cistern nor a strengthening fountain. Many gedolei of our generation and of those past have written on the subject of academic methodology, but this is neither the place for a thorough treatment of derech halimmud nor of the exact parameters of academic Talmud. In his recent Commentator headline, Michael Weiner posed what is certainly the most important question in any beit midrash: What is Yirat Shamayim?

That is a question I can answer. In this pursuit, I would like to analyze three sub-questions raised in the article: The fleeting identity of classical Talmud Torah, concern for the undermining of kavod for our sages and the claim that certain methodologies offered nothing to the spirit.

Nothing New Under the Sun

In discussing academic methodology in Talmud, it should be noted that virtually all of the methods in question are not themselves products of some twentieth-century enterprise of secular academia, but have been held dear by our own great sages in every generation. As the author duly noted, the comparison of manuscripts to produce a reliable text is all but unquestionable. My teacher Rabbi Jeremy Wieder was quick to point out that most significant textual variants were already noted and considered by the rishonim. Archeological and linguistic findings, though sometimes less available to previous generations, have been utilized everywhere from the Ramah’s treatment of avodah zarah to Rabbi Steinsaltz’s masterful glosses.

Beyond these universally utilized methods, many talmidim trained in the conceptual analysis common in many modern yeshivoh bear approaches that recognize layers in the text of the Gemara. But such recognition is far from foreign. As Rabbi Wieder explains in his article on academic Talmud in the beit midrash, the ba’alei hatosafot distinguish in numerous cases between a statement of an amora and its interpretation by the Gemara. Just a few weeks ago in shiur, I learned such a case (Bava Kamma 194a s.v. Rav Ashi) where Tosfot explains an inconsistency between a cited question and a later question of Rav Ashi by claiming that the Gemara’s citation included a later interpretation which was not shared by Rav Ashi. Clearly, there can be no threat to “traditional” study of Talmud from suggestions of historical development per se. They have already sat firmly in the beit midrash for a thousand years.

Dignity of the Law

In his article, the author cites Professor Lawrence Kaplan to voice concern that a “diachronic” approach to Talmud study — one that analyzes historical development within a sugya by deconstructing its layering and redaction — is “undermining respect for chazakah in suggesting they are poor, careless or uninformed interpreters.” This accusation is understandable. After all, some secular scholars do espouse such disrespect, and, in doing so, do cite changing interpretations between redactional layers. Nonetheless, many gedolei haTorah are unphased. Rabbi Yehiel Yakov Weinberg in the Sridei Esh (vol. 3 p. 22) stresses:

One should not be surprised when into an answer of Rava a later interpretation is inserted, for we find this sort of thing in many places in the Talmud, that the stamta d’Gemara or rabanan sa-vorai added explanatory words of their own to the language of a brayta or of an amora, and even a few commentaries of the geonim entered into the body of the Gemara after the sealing of the Talmud, something that the rishonim have already testified to and explained. We even find in later additions that entered a statement of the amora things that seem to contradict the amora himself.

Are we to say that the Sridei Esh lacked respect for talmidei hakhamim? In his fourth volume (p. 246), the Sridei Esh quotes the Vilna Gaon as asserting that the phrase hisu-rei mehasura vehechi ketani indicates that the authors of the Gemara disagree with the Midrash. Surely the Gaon did not lack respect for Torah scholarship.

If this is so, how can we understand historical layering differently? The question of why certain sugyot are layered is one that requires deep iyun and careful individual treatment that is far beyond my place to provide here. One answer is certain, though: We search for truth with ahuvat haTorah and yirat shamayim.

Something for the Spirit

In every generation, as our sages held together both mesorah and hiddush — Rabbi Eliezer ben Horkenos and Rabbi Elazar ben Arakh — an element of fear has driven their search for truth. Through our travails in exile, our study of Torah has been driven by fear of Karaites, Christian censors, heretical reformers and false messiahs. Each generation’s search for truth is tainted, rahmana lzetlan, by the pressing need to refute enemies of that truth. It is therefore nothing new that we fear secular academia. Nevertheless, we cannot let this fear compromise our girat shamayim by denying our own traditions and rejecting truths latent in the pages we hold dear. What of Torah lishmah?

In his article, the author suggests, following an online statement in which Rabbi David Brofsky explains Rav Lichtenstein’s approach to academic Talmud, that “philosophical-historical study ... offered nothing to the spirit.” Even if the academy indeed looked coldly upon our sacred traditions and out of them sought only to know what kind of house Abaye lived in or what he ate for breakfast, it is our great avodah to inquire into our sacred traditions and discovery. In every generation, our study of Torah has been driven by fear of the words of Eliezer ben Horkenos and Rabbi Elazar ben Arakh — an element of fear that has driven their search for truth.

The layers of the text of the Gemara opened my eyes to the dynamic genius of our sages in revealing retzon Hashem in every generation. Based on my own experience in Eretz Yisrael, I cannot accept this argument. I merited to sit for many months in the Beit Vaad Torah Har Hevron in Otzniel, a sizable and well-respected yeshivah headed whose beit midrash resounds constantly with historical analysis of our layered tradition. Similar methodologies are used extensively in the yeshivot of Mahanya’im, Petah Tikva, Maale Gilboa and Tekoa, not to mention hareidi institutions such as Yeshivat Keshe Rahamin, which perpetuates the Tunisian tradition of Talmudic analysis. It cannot be said that there is no movement of girat shamayim for layer-sensitive reading.

In my Introduction to Bible course, we have examined uncomfortable issues of authorship, redaction and textual transmission from the perspective of rishonim and abaromin. These issues may be practically irrelevant for psak halakha, but they are essential for understanding the nature of mesorah. Uncomfortable questions are of course amplified when they come to Talmud, the core of our avodah in the beit midrash, but we cannot be disinclined to fear the truth. Fundamental questions of textual layering and historical development of halakha have already been addressed by the geonim, discussed by the rishonim and deliberated by the abaromin. To shun these discussions is to shun our own tradition.
Spread the Student Council Wealth

By Samuel Gelman (Houston, TX)

The announcement of a coed Shabbaton uptown left many excited. It is about time something like this happened, and I am looking forward to seeing how the parties involved approach it. However, this announcement also brings back memories of my time on the Student Organization of Yeshiva (SOY) last year, when I served as the Isaac Breuer College (IBC) Representative. This Shabbaton is an amazing accomplishment for the current student council, as well as for past leaders who helped lay the foundation, and it made me ask myself what I accomplished during my time serving on SOY.

The short and long answers are nothing. Aside from answering logistical questions about IBC for various students, I really did not do much with my position. The conversion of the Rubin Shul to an IBC Beit Midrash last year allowed me to propose new freedom in terms of program spending, and I did not have the experience to make any real time decisions. The OSls and RIETSs have a meticulous vetting process for speakers and programming, and I did not have the patience or the energy to go through this process with them, even when I wanted to help. But part of the blame lies in how student council is structured. The president of each council has full control over their respective bodies. There is a level of responsibility and prestige not seen before for a level of responsibility and prestige not seen before.

By designating a certain amount of the budget to each individual council member, as opposed to leaving it all in the hands of the president, these positions would gain a level of responsibility and prestige not seen before. Money makes the world go round, and it is no different here. What I propose, therefore, is for the OSL to designate a certain amount of money to non-presidential members of student council to oversee on their own. Take SOY as a test subject. Each morning program has a representative on the council, yet they do not garner much attention or interest. In the Spring 2018 elections, the winners of the Mazzer Yeshiva Program (MYP) and James Striar School (JSS) elections ran unopposed, and no one ran for the IBC or Irving I. Stone Beit Midrash Program (SBMP) representative positions, forcing another election to take place in the fall.

By designating a certain amount of the budget to each individual council member, as opposed to leaving it all in the hands of the president, these positions would gain a level of responsibility and prestige not seen before. It could bring in an entirely new contingent of students who would be interested in running in the elections. After all, where there is money concern, people will start caring. It would also weed out students who are not qualified or interested, as they would now know that this position comes with actual responsibility and expectations.

Furthermore, it would give those members new freedom in terms of program planning. No longer tied to the president, their budget and their “agenda,” these members could pursue their own “agenda,” filling them with a sense of accomplishment and achievement that they can take with them once they graduate. The middleman would be removed, making the process faster and more efficient. The president should not be the only one deciding on student programming, and this restructuring would add more diverse voices to the student life initiatives.

Additionally, this plan could also lead to a diversification in programming. Once again, the student body could pursue their own “agenda,” filling them with a sense of accomplishment and achievement that they can take with them once they graduate. The middleman would be removed, making the process faster and more efficient. The president should not be the only one deciding on student programming, and this restructuring would add more diverse voices to the student life initiatives.

This idea does not have to be confined to SOY. Think of the possibilities if each class representative had a designated budget to run programming specifically for their class. The freshman representatives could sponsor an early year gathering for new students to get to know each other; the sophomore class could plan their own “halfway there” dinner; the junior reps could sponsor a day trip upstate. Some of these programs happen already, but empowering the representatives with a budget would streamline the process and allow for more creativity.

I am not suggesting that each member get their own $45,000 budget. Just a small amount in order to empower them to run something significant. The amount can be determined by the percentage of students in each class or morning program, or can be fixed. The money can come from the greater council’s budget itself, or a new fund entirely. With the increase in the student activities fee, there should be plenty of money to get these programs off the ground. Yes, this would take some power out of the hands of the president, but if they truly want their university to succeed and feel like a community where everyone feels welcome, they should trust their fellow council members to share some of the power and, therefore, the wealth. Our council members have ideas. Let’s help make them a reality.
The Vaccination Debacle

By Yosef Lemel

There is no question that vaccinations are a positive result of the medical advances in the modern era. As a result of vaccinations, diseases such as smallpox and measles have respectively been eradicated and receded significantly in the U.S. However, in certain Jewish communities, measles is resurfacing due to a lack of children being vaccinated. I believe that this proliferation is the result of certain prominent religious leaders being opposed to vaccination.

The modern anti-vaccine movement began with a study published by Andrew Wakefield in *The Lancet*, a prestigious peer-reviewed medical journal which suggested that the combined vaccine of measles, mumps and rubella (MMR) directly correlated to the development of autism in young children. It spread to the U.S. through travelers from Israel and was then transmitted to the Ramapo Daily Voice, there have been at least 77 reported cases of measles in Rockland County (where Monsey is located). In addition, the Orthodox Union and the Agudath Israel, a major organization which represents the yeshivish ideology in America, has not officially taken a position on the vaccination debate. They must denounce the unscientific and dangerous beliefs of anti-vaxxers. Finally, rather than solely listening to a rabbi, parents should rely on professional medical advice when making health decisions for their children. If such action is not taken, lives will be put at risk.

In 2010, Wakefield was stripped of his medical license by the General Medical Council of the UK because of his irresponsible research methods. As a result, the Lancet retracted the study published by Wakefield. In addition, a vast majority of the co-authors of the study withdrew their support of the findings. Credible organizations, such as the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), Food and Drug Administration (FDA), American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) and World Health Organization (WHO), have confirmed the relative safety of vaccine use. Unfortunately, Wakefield’s inaccurate findings were still able to sway masses of scientifically illiterate through social media, documentaries and the advocacy of pop-cultural icons such as Jim Carrey and Jenny McCarthy, both of whom virulently speak out against the use of the MMR vaccine.

Then, somehow, this became a religious issue. Rabbi Shmuel Kamenetsky, the rosh yeshiva of the Talmudical Yeshiva of Philadelphia, and his wife, Temi, were persuaded that vaccines are extremely harmful to humans. Mrs. Kamenetsky publicly lectures against the use of vaccines. In a 2014 exploration into anti-vaxxers, the Baltimore Jewish Times quotes Rabbi Kamenetsky, saying that “vaccinations are the problem. It’s a hoax... It is just big business.”

In 2015, Rabbi Kamenetsky turned his flawed beliefs into policy when he signed a letter prohibiting yeshivos from refusing admission to unvaccinated children. He signed the letter along with Rabbi Malkiel saves a Jewish soul, the Torah considers it as if he saved the world. This is how much a soul is worth in our religion. The disregard for the child’s death lies squarely on the parents for not immunizing their child.

In the case of vaccinations, Rabbi Kamenetsky is talking about a field of knowledge of which he has little comprehension. Yet, some ultra-Orthodox individuals listen to his views on vaccinations without consulting with their physician. This is a gross misinterpretation of daas Torah. Those who believe in this erroneous doctrine of daas Torah contend that the gedolei hador have a special insight into worldly matters because they use their Torah perspective to assess situations.

In response to the most recent measles outbreak, the Beth Medrash Govoha recommended that its students to get vaccinated. In addition, the Orthodox Union and the Rabbinical Council of America published a joint statement strongly urging “all parents to vaccinate their healthy children on the timetable recommended by their pediatrician.” Be that as it may, Rabbi Kamenetsky and all other rabbis who persist in their dangerous anti-vaccination beliefs must immediately retract their previous statements and rulings on vaccine use. The Agudath Israel, a major organization which represents the yeshivish ideology in America, has not officially taken a position on the vaccination debate. They must denounce the unscientific and dangerous beliefs of anti-vaxxers. Finally, rather than solely listening to a rabbi, parents should rely on professional medical advice when making health decisions for their children. If such action is not taken, lives will be put at risk.
**Don't Embolden Anti-Semites By Giving Airbnb A Pass**

By Etan Neiman

Airbnb recently jumped into the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, announcing a decision to forbid homeowners in the "occupied" West Bank from listing their properties on the popular rental platform and remove all current listings. Members fortunate enough to live in an area which Airbnb deems to be sufficiently uncoupled use the platform to arrange or offer lodging. In a press release titled "Listings in Disputed Regions," the company reported that the decision to remove the listings came after "considerable time" was spent consulting experts on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict about how they should "treat listings in occupied territories."

Airbnb (which operates in 191 countries) said that as an industry leader, we "must consider the impact we have and act responsibly."

Let's talk anti-Semitism. For assessing this decision, we will overlook that one can still enjoy Airbnb's platform in the West Bank Palestinian city of Qalqilya — a city just a few hundred meters away from some of the delisted "occupied territories," and a territory in which a Palestinian Authority court recently sentenced two Palestinians to 15 years of hard labor "for the crime of leaking [Jesus] Messiah's secrets to the Jews." This should be considered a lenient ruling as the punishment under Palestinian law for trying to sell or selling land to Israeli Jews can include execution. We will also overlook the fact that one can continue to surf Airbnb's listings for a rental on the Gaza Strip. A territory governed by Hamas, who has a charter demanding the destruction of every Jew on earth. A territory which indiscriminately fires missiles as fast as they can accumulate them at Jewish civilians to cheers of the populace.

We will overlook both of these because the decision-makers at Airbnb never claimed an industry leader must act responsibly in a territory governed by oppressive laws or a group identified as terrorists by numerous countries and international organizations. It is disputed territories which an industry leader has an inactive responsibility to police.

In assessing if Airbnb's decision is anti-Semitic, it is important to note that among the listings available as of this writing on Airbnb are a "modern apartment studio in the city-center of Sevastopol, Ukraine (annexed by Russia)" and a "Cozy Studio in Tibet, China (formerly known simply as Tibet)." Additional disputed territories with listings on Airbnb include Western Sahara (in the occupied "occupied territories" of the delisted "occupied territories," and a territory in which a Palestinian Authority court recently sentenced two Palestinians to 15 years of hard labor "for the crime of leak[ing] Messiah's secrets to the Jews") and Northern Cyprus (which Turkey invaded before expelling nearly all the ethnic Greeks and seizing their homes). Indeed, the West Bank is virtually the only disputed territory Airbnb has taken action on.

This double-standard is key because the widely respected International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (boasting 33 member countries including superpowers such as the United States and the United Kingdom) weighs in on exactly this tactic in defining anti-Semitism. Their definition includes singling out Israel for special attack, or in other words applying a double-standard.

Certainly, there is adequate room to argue that Airbnb's action is not, in fact, anti-Semitic. There are those who fear — including some within the United Kingdom's Labour Party — that the "double-standard" aspect of the definition limits the free speech protections it offers, too difficult to criticize Israel. Moreover, two days after the West Bank decision was made public, amidst backlash, Airbnb reported solemnly that they will look into whether it should drop listings within Western Sahara.

Perhaps strongest in defending Airbnb's decision is that they were likely bullied into it by the influential Human Rights Watch (HRW), an organization no stranger to accusations of anti-Israel bias. Airbnb felt that it was the best business decision to appease HRW and similar advocacy groups, though at the same time risk a loss of business from Israeli and Jewish defenders. A day after the announcement, HRW published a preplanned scathing report detailing the cooperation it had found between the Israeli government and the Jewish settlements.

Whether anti-Semitic, anti-Israel or a product of caving into pressure, Airbnb's decision was a boon to anti-Semites.

**Whether anti-Semitic, anti-Israel or a product of caving into pressure, Airbnb's decision was a boon to anti-Semites.**

Noah Marlowe, Yeshiva College '19

In addition, the author adds that pre-law students encounter an exceedingly difficult application process and therefore require a specialized pre-professional advisor. This rationale, however, subtly deviates from the demographics argument. Most likely, this would require individuals with a specific background in a professional field, and not merely a general career advisor. Though slightly beyond the scope of this piece, I think we must question the existence and efficacy of the Career Center, in its current form, to properly assist students pursuing specialized fields. Perhaps the Career Center should be composed of one or two general advisors and five or six, for example, specialty advisors for computer science, psychology, and has research experience, YC and other programs require research experience, YC and other programs have less access to research and research experience, and since most graduate programs require research experience, YC and other programs have a clear and unambiguous message — the Jewish community will not allow anti-Semites to be emboldened.

Noah Marlowe, Yeshiva College '19

m much more difficult. As Yu administrators recently shifted the Psychology department's focus from research to teaching, students have less access to research and research experience, and since most graduate programs require research experience, YC and other programs have a clear and unambiguous message — the Jewish community will not allow anti-Semites to be emboldened.

Noah Marlowe, Yeshiva College '19

In addition, the author adds that pre-law students encounter an exceedingly difficult application process and therefore require a specialized pre-professional advisor. This
“The Office:” The Virtues Learned in the Halls of Dunder Mifflin

By Aaron Karesh

There’s no shortage of television shows that are based in offices. From “Billions” in Stamford, to “Suits” in New York City to “House of Lies” in Los Angeles, we have come to expect certain things out of certain industries based on what these shows portray. But life is not as it is on the screen; TV shows do not accurately portray life in corporate America. But there is one exception: “The Office.”

We’ve all seen “The Office,” if you haven’t, borrow a Netflix login and watch it now. “The Office” is based in Scranton, Pennsylvania and focuses on a fictional, regional paper company called Dunder Mifflin. Unlike the aforementioned shows, “The Office” comes pretty close to portraying office life in a realistic manner.

Ask any hedge fund employee or “hedgey” and they’ll tell you that while intriguing, “Billions” is not what their day-to-day looks like; ask any attorney or consultant and they’ll say the same about “Suits” and “House of Lies,” respectively. Those shows play up the glitz, glamour and cut-throat nature of corporate America, while, in reality, it is nothing like that. “The Office” on the other hand, shows what an office environment really looks like. Blatant HR violations and other cringe-worthy moments aside, Michael, Jim and the rest of the Scranton branch introduced us to true friendship, the inevitable time-wasting that goes on at work and the personal sacrifices people make for their loved ones.

Throughout the show, the members of the Dunder Mifflin Scranton branch have fun both in and out of the office. Be it the infamous “Chili’s Dundie Awards” or the Flonkerton competition at the “Office Olympics,” the paper-sellers are enjoying themselves every step of the way, building true camaraderie — no small feat considering their dreadful job selling paper in the Scranton Metropolitan Area. Another major feature of “The Office” is how much time is wasted. Now, in the real world you will be hard-pressed to find another Jim-Dwight relationship where all they seem to do is waste time. Jokes are made, pranks are pulled and conversations are had, and you know what? That’s not a bad thing at all. Lastly, we see real people make real sacrifices for their loved ones. Michael left Scranton to move to Colorado with Holly. Jim gave up on his successful side-gig because it took him away from Pam and his kids. All of these portrayals are real, and they happen in every single office in every single city across the country.

Yes, “The Office” is souped up in its own way, but at its core, it has a certain realism that isn’t found in most shows.

Blatant HR violations and other cringe-worthy moments aside, Michael, Jim and the rest of the Scranton branch introduced us to true friendship, the inevitable time-wasting that goes on at work and the personal sacrifices people make for their loved ones.

Companies feature a broad range of creative names. But do they make much of a difference?

In “Billions,” “Suits” and “House of Lies,” we are taught that in order to be successful, you need to be the biggest, baddest shark in the water. You need to eat what you kill and be utterly ruthless. “The Office” teaches us that chasing money and corporate domination just might not be worth it.

Continued on Page 23

Michael, Jim, and the rest of the Dunder Mifflin Scranton branch

Does a Company Name Really Matter?

By Akiva Clair

Does a company’s name really matter? No. It doesn’t. At least not nearly as much as you’d think.

Let’s try the following experiment. We need five letters:

--The first consonant in your name
--The first vowel in the city you grew up in
--The first consonant in your favorite “High School Musical” character
--The first vowel of your favorite sports team
--The first consonant in your favorite TV show

Unless your Xavier from Utica who likes Chad, the Bulls and Canada’s Got Talent, you should have a somewhat reasonably sounding name. For me, I got “Kitel” (Akiva, Chicago, Troy (dub), Steelers, LOST) which we’ll pronounce kih-TELL.

Now, we have to be perfectly intellectually honest for a second. Let’s say we take that name and replace the name “Facebook” with it. You still have the liking and the sharing, the photos and the videos, but instead of it all being on a website called Facebook, it’s on Kitel. Would it be less popular? What if we gave it a name like Pepsi or Target? Could we honestly say that we think this revolutionary product wouldn’t be nearly, if not exactly, the same?

The point is pretty straightforward: most names of companies really don’t matter. Granted, there are some names that are great and help the product, while there are others that are stupid and harmful. Yet, for the most part, if the rest of the company’s marketing mix (product, place, price and promotion) is good, then its name doesn’t really matter.

Before we analyze some examples, we have to make a key distinction: When we mention a company’s name, we mean literally only the name and not also the brand image. For example, if we were to talk about “Nike,” we’re just talking about those four letters and what they look like, sound like and the meaning behind them (i.e. the Greek goddess of victory). What we’re not talking about is what Nike’s brand stands for (i.e. “Just do it” and pushing past personal obstacles) or Nike’s social or political image (i.e. Nike’s Kaepernick ad).

As mentioned above, there are three classes of company names: Ones that help, ones that hurt and ones that really make no difference at all. Let’s start with the good ones. Dreamworks vs. Pixar. Which name do you like better? Look at Pixar first. I guess it sounds cool; it has an “x” in it, after all. And the “pix” part of it is somewhat relevant to pictures and animation. But compare Pixar to Dreamworks. The latter has all these positive associations with things like creativity, imagination and building these magical worlds that our lovely remiscient of our childhood. Of course, this all comes back to show that names are not so important, as Pixar as a company is a legend in the animation business.

In a similar example, compare Burger King to McDonald’s. The former, while perhaps a bit pretentious, is obviously a better name for a fast-food store. Yet, McDonald’s is still historically more popular and successful.

Another good name is BuzzFeed. “Buzz” if exciting and synonymous with virality and super-interesting content and news that everyone wants to get, and “feed” is like your source of information. So, essentially, every time you see the name you’re reminded that this is a place where you can get all of your interesting news and content. Other good names are Under Armour (associating itself with things like strength and power) and Intel (with the obvious theme of intelligence and sophistication).

On the other end of the spectrum are the bad names. Now, these names are either

Continued on Page 23
The Subscription Model: What's All the Hype?

By Sarah Torgueman

When a dairy in rural Vermont made the first milk delivery back in 1785, it soon became mainstream to have your milk delivered from the local dairy directly to your front door on a subscription basis. The American milkman certainly played a role in what has escalated to the subscription model of business.

Years later, the magazine and newspaper industry hiked in on it and enabled their readership to receive yearly, monthly or daily print deliveries for a monthly or annual fee. Now, this very model in which companies focus on selling a product or service in exchange for a monthly or yearly subscription fee is exploding. One after another, today’s entrepreneurs are increasingly utilizing this strategy, creating opportunities in stagnant markets and eventually disrupting entire industries.

The classic case is Netflix. After competing with Blockbuster, it boosted the company from the game and took the movie entertainment industry by storm with an IPO in 2002, eventually earning a 75% share of today’s U.S. market, according to Forbes. Netflix’s defeat of Blockbuster may have been a direct result of the former’s specific business model. Blockbuster charged customers per movie rental and employed inconvenient late fees when films were returned after the return deadline, while Netflix replaced rental and late fees with a simple monthly subscription fee for unlimited television and movie streaming.

For those who aren’t familiar, Netflix requires a relatively low monthly fee in exchange for access to thousands of shows and movies streamed to your television and just about any other smart device on the market today. Recognizing its own popularity, and therefore, potential to increase profits, Netflix began producing and streaming a slew of original series and movies, becoming a player in the entertainment production side of the industry as well.

One after another, today’s entrepreneurs are increasingly utilizing this strategy, creating opportunities in stagnant markets and eventually disrupting entire industries.

Back in 2006, entrepreneurs Daniel Ek and Martin Lorentzon founded Spotify, which transformed the music industry. Spotify was actually created as a response to the global piracy problem that greatly affected the music industry at the time through illegal platforms like LimeWire. Apple’s iTunes platform required consumers to purchase each song or album individually, which tended to add up quickly. Spotify provided an app that enabled access to music streaming from as many artists as you want whenever and wherever you want for a low monthly fee. This subscription model has expanded to special student and family plans for their goods and services as the cost of subscriptions is generally less than that of the accumulation of individual purchases.

Vendors tend to prefer the subscription model as well. It essentially generates continuous revenue streams as consumers are automatically charged each month or year until customer cancellation. This consistent source of funds is what has made these companies extremely attractive to venture capitalists and investors. Moreover, while VCs have been rushing to translate subscriptions to just about every other product and service category, entrepreneurs are eager to join the shift from a single sale business model to a recurring revenue one and push to earn said VC backing.

Dollar Shave Club was founded in 2012 and is just one of these companies. The founders set out to replace the generally high-priced disposable razors retailers keep locked up in their toiletry aisles. This company provides new razor blades shipped directly to consumers for a monthly subscription fee. Additionally, Chewy figured out how to include pets in the mix. It sells pet food and supplies and offers reorders for a monthly subscription fee. PetSmart acquired Chewy for $3.5 billion last April according to Inc.com.

A New York City-based cosmetics company known as Birchbox offers a box shipped to consumers that is filled with about five selected samples of beauty products each month for a subscription fee. Rent the Runway enables women to literally rent the runway by ordering designer clothing to their homes and returning it typically after use. The company introduced a subscription model, allowing consumers to keep four items of clothing at a time with unlimited exchanges each month. Another New York City-based startup, MM.LaFleur, launched a weekly box they call the “Better Box” that delivers polished, professional outfits direct to consumers for every day of the week work. Its target consumers are working women.

Companies continue joining the trend and dive right into industries from all directions. MoviePass has employed the subscription business model to bring once consistent moviegoers back to movie theaters in an ever-so stagnant industry. It has partnered with movie theaters to provide flexible access to watch their movies for a monthly fee instead of purchasing tickets on a per movie basis.

AMC recently decided to join the subscription shift and compete against MoviePass with its own subscription movie pass. While Movie Pass had to readjust its model and raise its subscription fee to keep up with rising movie ticket prices, AMC’s pass has started at a hefty price of $19.95 a month in hopes of maintaining convenience while staying afloat with rising prices.

An extensive report by Inc.com noted that meal delivery kits, which operate primarily on a subscription basis, are not as sustainable as one may believe. For example, more than half of subscribers to HelloFresh and Blue Apron canceled their subscriptions within one month of signing up and just 20 percent remained after six months.

When it comes to the subscription model of business, customer retention is key in order to maintain the glorious recurring revenue stream. It becomes a massive hurdle and a tremendous cost for these companies’ sales and marketing teams when too much effort is devoted to customer acquisition rather than to product development and expansion.

Convenience coupled with recurring revenue generation has encouraged mutually beneficial relationships between busy consumers and profit-seeking entrepreneurs and VCs. This has allowed many variations of the subscription model than ever before.

What’s next?

A COMPANY NAME, continued from Page 22

stupid or provide negative or contrary associations. One of the most stupid names is WhatsApp. Think about it: It’s a combination of the common message “what’s up?” and the fact that it’s an app. It’s really just an awful pun. Moving onto the sports world, let’s look at the New Orleans Pelicans. Does that name inspire themes of dominance, power and confidence? Of course, not all sports teams have great names, but I’d much rather play for a team called the Bulls or the Warriors than the Pelicans.

Lastly, we have the neutral names. The ones that aren’t bad but aren’t good either. For these names, you can interchange almost all of them without the success of the company changing significantly. Disney, Uber, Verizon, General and Ford Motors, Dell, 7 UP, Sprite, Procter and Gamble, Tyleton and so many others.

Of course, when you’re making a company, you should definitely take time to think of a good name. As mentioned above, creating a clever or relevant name could garner more success in the industry whereas a stupid name could do just the opposite. However, in order to create the next big thing, you won’t need some legendary name. Even a simple “Kitel” or “Xucuc” should be fine.
Yeshiva University UNDERGRADUATES can take courses at the Bernard Revel Graduate School of Jewish Studies.

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

### CLASS SCHEDULE FOR SPRING 2019

#### MONDAY

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<td>Tsadik: JHI 5336 Jews in the Lands of Islam II</td>
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<td>Carlebach: JHI 6385 Kehillat Yisrael: The Jewish Community in Early Modern Europe</td>
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<td>Eichler: BIB 6212 Genesis: Patriarchal Narratives</td>
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<td>Rynhold: JPH 5012 Survey of Modern &amp; Contemporary Jewish Philosophy</td>
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<td>Koller: BIB 8801 Northwest Semitic Inscriptions &amp; the Bible</td>
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<td>Dauber: JPH 6735 Kabbalistic Views of Maimonides</td>
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<td>Hurvitz: TAS 5871 Introduction to the Midrashic Literature of the Tannaim</td>
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<td>Leiman: BIB 5031 Introduction to Biblical Studies I</td>
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<td>6:50 PM</td>
<td>Fine: JHI 6255 Jewish Art &amp; Visual Culture</td>
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#### THURSDAY

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<td>Kanarfogel: JHI 6812 Devotional and Ascetic Practices and Ideals in Medieval Ashkenaz</td>
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<td>Angel: JHI 6241 Second Temple Period Aramaic</td>
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#### Language

Tsadik SEM 5112 Arabic II Monday and Wednesday 4:40 – 5:55 p.m. Does not count toward the ten required MA courses, but scholarship grants apply to this course.

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Yeshiva University UNDERGRADUATES can take courses at the Bernard Revel Graduate School of Jewish Studies. Classes are open to students either within the BA/MA Program or as upper-class undergraduates taking graduate courses with permission.

Please check our website for any updates at www.yu.edu/revel/courses

For BA/MA Program requirements, please visit www.yu.edu/revel/bachelor-arts-master-arts/

For information on taking a Revel course outside the framework of the BA/MA Program, please contact Rona Steinerman, Revel Director of Admissions, at steinerm@yu.edu