



## Yeshiva University

Office of the President

Dear Students, Colleagues and Friends,

Today should have been the 27th birthday of Breonna Taylor, who was killed by police officers in Louisville on March 13. Yeshiva University stands united as we condemn her murder, alongside those of George Floyd, Ahmaud Arbery and so many other victims of racial violence. We mourn their deaths and offer our sincere and heartfelt condolences to their loved ones. Racial violence by any member of society is horrific. It is especially horrific when those perpetuating it are the very same people who took an oath to serve and protect our communities.

We have all watched in horror and been shaken by these brutal deaths. Our hearts are heavy with sorrow and we understand the anger and fear being felt across the country, especially by Black Americans at this time. We join in the national outcry for justice and reforms that seek to prevent these tragic violent acts from continuing to occur.

The Rabbis of Antiquity taught that the most fundamental idea in all of Jewish thought is to be found in the Biblical verse, “in the divine image did God create humankind” (Genesis 5:1). For this verse introduced to human civilization the radical notion of the infinite worth of each individual as each and every human being shares a common sacredness.

Our university is built on this idea and is infused with the mission that we are called upon to heal the world. In our classrooms, in our scholarship, and in all areas of our community life we must oppose racial oppression and work towards a society of racial equity.

Elie Wiesel said, “Wherever men and women are persecuted because of their race, religion, or political views, that place must—at that moment—become the center of the universe.”

The University is working on a number of upcoming programs that will provide opportunities for members of our community to build new avenues to advance racial justice. And we call on all members of

our YU community—from our high schools, to our undergraduate and graduate populations, to our alumni and friends across the world—to use this time as an opportunity to think deeply about the tragic recent events and consider how we are to respond moving forward.

Yeshiva University's mission and history demand we make a comprehensive and deep commitment to the betterment of all humanity. We dedicate ourselves to advancing critical thinking, community discussion, intellectual capacity and to improving the world through vigilant activism for the good of all people.

Let us redeem this moment by turning it into a force for good.

Warmest wishes for a Shabbat of solidarity and peace.

Ari Berman

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