



My Dear Friends,

I hope you are well and enjoyed the chaggim. I have just returned from Israel, where I had the opportunity to celebrate with my family, visit our students and alumni, and meet with Israeli leadership. It is always impressive to see how successful our graduates are in all parts of the world and to hear how highly regarded they are from the highest level of global Jewish leadership.



Meeting with Israel's President Isaac Herzog in his sukkah

This is, of course, in line with the national recognition we are receiving as one of [**the top universities in the United States**](#). The value of a YU education has never been more clear. Our high-caliber students receive a world-class education and graduate with top jobs and impactful careers with personal support from our highly successful alumni network and career services. But while this is all true, it is not even the main story. For us, it is not simply the core value of YU that makes our institution a compelling story, but the core values of YU that truly set us apart.

This week we read the Torah portion that tells the story of Noah and the flood. In the story, Noah builds two objects. The first is, of course, well known. He built an ark. The second, however, has historically been less of a focus, but is perhaps of even greater significance. After facing a flood that washed away the world he previously knew, Noah emerged from the ark and built an altar to God. This was not simply happenstance but is reflective of an essential life lesson. While there was much work to be done to rebuild a lost world, before getting down to the practicalities of life, Noah established life's purpose. He consecrated the land with an altar to God, making his values, goals, and ambitions clear that this new world is devoted to serving God.

While COVID-19 is not a flood and we are far from seeing the end of this global pandemic, the lessons of Noah emerging from the ark into a new world resonates strongly with me. We, too, are making our return to a normal routine, and we, too, are resuming our lives once again. As with Noah, there are many practical details to decide as we move forward. And like with Noah, it is first important for us to direct our focus to the broader questions of our lives. Why are we here? What is the purpose of our existence? What do we hope to accomplish in our years? What are the core values that animate and guide our actions?

These are the questions we have all been considering over the past holiday season of reflection. And at Yeshiva University, we are committed to placing these questions at the forefront of our students' minds. It would be a double tragedy if we would unthinkingly return to our routine as it was lived before COVID. Not only would we have suffered the enormously heart-wrenching losses of COVID, but it would also have proven to be meaningless if we were not to gain insight and life lessons from this painful period. And that is why, at YU, we are opening this new chapter of our students' experiences with a focus on [our core Torah values](#).

Our core Torah values are highlighted all throughout our campus.



The whole YU experience is captured by these values.

Our intense study of Torat Emet, combined with our commitment to rigorous academics and research, is inspired by our striving for **Truth**. Our investments in our career center, innovation lab, and alumni network enable our students to achieve enormous success and bring their values to **Life**. Our deep network of support for each student with our mashgichim, madrichim, and madrichot, resident advisors, guidance counselors, small classes, and individual attention by rabbis and professors is reflective of our commitment to see and develop each individual student's **Infinite Human Worth**. Our Student Life and campus experience are infused with the values of chesed, devoted to thinking of one another and reaching out to others with love and **Compassion**. And our increasingly deep connections to Israel with shanah ba-aretz [gap year], winter tech trips, summer internships, and learning programs highlight the centrality of Torat Tziyon, and our aspiration for each of our students to be leaders in the world of tomorrow speaks to our mission of moving history forward towards **Redemption**.

These core Torah values reflect our mission and purpose as the flagship Jewish University, and collectively they form the compass to help you navigate the uncertainties of today and build the world of tomorrow. Yeshiva University stands for Torah, and these core Torah values animate our entire educational experience, as they animate the lives of our entire community.

Through classes, student programs, and yemei iyun over the next few months, we will be spending much time focusing on our values. We will not be coming back from the physical absence induced by COVID without thinking about the larger questions in our lives. COVID has created a watershed opportunity for us to reflect and refine and elevate the system to identify and pursue our Core Torah Values.

This moment in time is an inflection point for our entire community, and we need to bring into this new world a clear sense of identity, purpose, and mission.

These are the conversations we will be having on campus as we educate the leaders of tomorrow, and these are the kinds of questions I encourage you to engage in within your own communities. And together, we will not only move past this time of turmoil, but together we will emerge even stronger.

Looking forward to continuing the conversation.

Warmest regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be the name 'Ari' written in a cursive style.

Ari

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