



Yeshiva University

Office of the President

Dear YU Family,

Today I reach out to you not only as members of our Yeshiva University family but also as members of our global family. We've all been following the grim and tragic news of the 7.8-magnitude earthquake that hit Turkey and Northern Syria. Yesterday, another 6.3 magnitude earthquake hit in Turkey's Hatay Province. Buildings have collapsed, infrastructure has been destroyed, and rebuilding will take years. As rescue efforts close and recovery begins, we take time to reflect on the intersection of our core values with the world's most urgent needs. Currently the death toll is well over 46,000 people and climbing. Our core commitments to creating a world of compassion are twinned with the infinite worth of each human life, a story that numbers can never fully tell.



At times of humanitarian crisis, we intensify our prayers for survivors and their families and increase our charitable giving, our *tzedaka*. In his book, *To Heal a Fractured World*, Rabbi Jonathan Sacks writes that, “Charity is a form of prayer, a preliminary to prayer. With its combination of charity and justice, its understanding of the psychological as well as material dimensions of poverty, and its aim of restoring dignity and independence, not just meeting needs, *tzedakah* is a unique institution. Deeply humanitarian, it could not exist without the essentially religious concepts of divine ownership and social covenant.”

As part of the social covenant of global citizenship, our Deans and our Office of Student Life have discussed student engagement to volunteer and donate needed items like disaster tents, blankets, sleeping mats, and heaters through the

guidance of the Turkish Consulate General. Bins are set up on the Beren and Wilf campus for collection efforts, and some of our students on the graduate and undergraduate level are currently volunteering and assessing ways to begin a meaningful charitable campaign.

As the situation evolves, we will continue to assess needs and respond accordingly. My mentor, Rabbi Aharon Lichtenstein, wrote after the 2004 tsunami: “We are left...with shock and silence.” After 9/11 he wrote that “we are capable of responding to catastrophe – and thus also obligated to do so.” After the shock and the silence, let us feel obligated to respond to this crisis.

Thank you for your care and concern.



Rabbi Dr. Ari Berman
President, Yeshiva University

Office of the President, Yeshiva University
2495 Amsterdam Avenue, Belfer Hall 12th Floor
New York, NY 10033

[Unsubscribe](#)