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February 18, 1994
7 Adar 5754

Shéma*

SHÉMA A JOURNAL OF JEWISH RESPONSIBILITY

A JOURNAL OF JEWISH UNCERTAINTY

Why this issue?

Why not? Enjoy!

The top 10 list of when the messiah parties...

Raphael G. Adler, *East Northport, NY*

10. He'll play pin the tail on the white donkey.
 9. Alternate side of the street parking rules suspended in all five boroughs.
 8. Leviathan dip served up with Behemoth chips.
 7. Ladies Night (women dunk free) at participating *mikvahs*.
 6. Martha Stewart decorates 770 in a festive look.
 5. The Grateful Dead perform a special concert featuring Elvis.
 4. Elijah finds your old L.P.s and forces you into a living room Samba line.
 3. Robin Leach will televise "Korbanot of the Rich and Famous".
 2. The Rebbe will receive proper medical attention.
 1. No Tachanun.
7. Prepuce School--Where Preppy *Mohelim* train
 8. Gender Neutral--Tum Tum
 9. Public School--Satmar word for federally-funded yeshiva

If the Orthodox used politically correct terminology...it would go something like this:

1. Sectional Orientation--Mechitzah
2. Herring Impaired--Dislikes *Seudat Shlishi*
3. Halachicly Challenged--Non-Orthodox
4. Politics of *Minim*--The "Who is a Jew" debate
5. Rainbow Curriculum--Teaching of *Sheva Mitzvot B'nai Noach*
6. Developmentally Disabled--What Labor wishes to do to West Bank settlements

***shé-ma (rhymes with the last syllables of di-lem-ma) adv. perhaps, maybe. n., an event which may, or may not happen rendering it an unfavorable condition in Jewish law.**

Book grievIEWS

Marsha B. Cohen, *Miami, FL*

Shy About Shaylas? Everything You Wanted to Know About Running a Jewish Household but were Afraid to Ask by Rabbi Feivel and Rebbitzin Bliemele Mavenkopp. No question is too small or "silly" to be addressed by this 1500 page megaguide to the nuances of Jewish observance: e.g. "How (and why) should I prepare a single plastic-wrapped chicken liver?"; "When do you eat the *zeroah*?"; and "What does a mohel do with the foreskin after a bris?"

"Answers dozens of questions I've never even dreamed of asking!"--Grena Blueberg, Jewish Household Management Specialist

The Green Etrog, and Other Tales Told Out of Shul by Lou Lahvi. An enterprising rabbi's scheme to palm off an oddly-shaped green etrog onto a seemingly unsuspecting congregant sets off a rollicking series of picaresque shul shopping adventures.

"...a p'ri-text for shaking out the 'sin' in 'synagogue'.--Jack Rumor, *The Jewish Spectacle*

Talmudic Roots of Rock Lyrics by Shirah Tzur. You'd probably never guess that the Beatles' hit, "Money Can't But Me Love" can be traced to the Talmud (Sotah 21b). Meticulously researched guide to Talmudic analogues of contemporary song lyrics offers the novel theory that the Talmud can be a treasure trove of ideas for commercially successful rock music. Great Bar/Bat Mitzvah gift!

"...perhaps the most original 20th century book about Talmud not written by me."--Jacob Newsprint, *SUNNY South Review*

Lubavitch and reform join forces

Michael Millenson, *Highland Park, IL*

NEW YORK--Leaders of the Lubavitch Chabad and the Reform movement met together here to announce the launch of *Goy Echad*, a historic joint effort to convert Gentiles to Judaism.

Appearing before the press at Lubavitch headquarters in Crown Heights, representatives of the two groups said they'd decided to set aside their ideological differences to work together to maximize Judaism's appeal to non-Jews. The two groups will launch a marketing campaign that stresses the wide variety of acceptable Jewish lifestyles under the slogan, "Be a Jew--any kind of Jew will do!"

"After all, my grandfather, may he rest in peace, was a Hasidic rebbe," said Rabbi Marcus H. Black, Jr., a spokesman for Reform.

"And my grandfather, *alav ha'shalom*, was a Reform rabbi," said Reb Moishe Haim Schwartz, a spokesman for Lubavitch.

A recent proposal by Reform to proselytize among the Gentiles paved the way for the unexpected reconciliation. To avoid detection, emissaries from the two groups met secretly for weeks in the back row of a daily women's *minyán* at the Reconstructionist seminary.

"It was cheaper than Norway, and, besides, who ever goes to Philadelphia?" explained Black.

Still, both sides were required to make difficult compromises in the name of *shalom bayit*. Lubavitch, for example, has agreed to phase in a new policy whereby its emissaries ask both men and women, "Have you put on *tefillin* and/or lit *Shabbos* candles?" During that same period, meanwhile, the Reform movement will allow Lubavitch to check the *kashrut* of all its *mezuzahs*.

Surprising Reconciliations

Rebecca Jacobs, *New York, NY*

If Mort Zuckerman and Michael Lerner collaborated on a magazine, what would it be called?

U.S. News and World Repair

Latest lines from the leftover rebbe, Purim 5454 and one half

Alan J. Yuter, *Springfield, IL*

1. What does one call the Bostoner rebbe when he opens a shteibel branch in Detroit?

He goes out of his mind and becomes the Michiginer rebbe.

Sh'ma A JOURNAL OF JEWISH RESPONSIBILITY

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2. What does one call the interlude when it is discovered that the Torah was set at the wrong place and one must roll the scroll on the spot?

It is called an "intermishen".

3. What was the name of the Hebrew translation of *Arabian Nights*?

Ma'ariv aravim?

4. How does one describe the goings on during *Arabian Nights*?

Ma'ariv areivim, very pleasant evenings!

Historic accord reached

Michael Mayersohn, Westminster, CA

Rabbis Menachem Mendel Schneerson of Chabad and Alexander Schindler of the Union of American Hebrew Congregations, inspired by the Israel-PLO accord, have reached a historic agreement to merge their two movements. Divided by ideology, theology and decades of communal strife, the two rabbis, both now to be known as the rebbes, have set aside their differences. Their new movement will be known as Reform Chabad.

Months of secret negotiations between the rebbes resulted in this remarkable merger that has adherents of both movements shaking their heads. The Reverend Billy Graham brought the two rebbes together and shepherded the negotiations. Each movement made concessions to reach this accord: all Reform Chabadniks will lay tefillin on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays. They will keep kosher on Tuesdays, Thursdays and Shabbat. On Sundays, Reform Chabadniks will visit the two rebbes in separate rooms, receiving a gift from each rebbe, Schneerson will continue to give each visitor \$1, and will now ask that the *tzedakah* be given to the Gay Rights Action league. Schindler will distribute copies of his new brochure, *Outreach: I Didn't Really Mean It*.

Seeking the high holiday special

Pamela S. Nadell, Washington, DC

While selling High Holiday tickets for his synagogue, a friend of mine heard the following:

"Does the price include meals on Yom Kippur?"

"My husband's church doesn't charge for seats."

"Do you have a discount rate for attending only one service."

"Yes."

"Well, I am only going to go for one hour...."

Stardate 283affe.1a2--Elul 6527

Eric Mendelson, Toronto, Canada

To All Enterprise Crew--

Once again as the *Yomim Noraim* approach, I wish to confirm the details of our celebrations. The four *Slichot* lectures this year will be at 20:00h on the *Motaezi Shabbat* during Elul except the last which will be at 00:01h (Sunday). They are: "Who and/or what is a Jew?", Lt. Commander Data; "Jew by birth, doctor by choice", Dr. Beverly Crusher; "Intuitive guilt, community repentance", Counselor Deanna Troy; "The Captain's log and The Captain's log supplemental, a captain's view of judgment", Captain Jean-Luc Picard.

The Jewish Intragalactical Reconstructionist Federation informs us that the new Mahzor will not be ready for this year since we have discovered 70 new civilizations with evolving traditions whose contexts are not yet integrated. We must use the Birnbaum again.

There will be the following changes from last year's services: The Klingon Akeda service on the second day will use a holographic projection for Isaac and not a fresh cadet from the academy, never seen on the Enterprise before. R. Esav Hamas of the Beth Din of the Klingons approves of this and regrets last year's events deeply. No blame has been assigned to the operator of the transporter for the angel's late appearance.

Commander Riker and the others who insist on *mehitza* because of their personal problems with *kol ishah* and *yetzer harah* will be issued special optic/aural visors that chief Engineer Geordi LaForge has made this year which homogenize perception of the gender of those within 40 *amot* and make all those at the *bimah* appear and sound male.

Romulan and Vulcan *duchennens* will take place in separate locations and the mindmelding during the Avodah service will be restricted to those *Cohanim* actually involved in the ceremony.

Guinan and her Sister Act will use their *nussach* for *mincha* Yom Kippur and *maftir* Yonah.

I must remind all the Jeshuists, Frankists, Sabbatians, Schneersonites, Lernerists, and especially Ferengists, that

the Moshiah has forbidden the use of all pre-arrival names in the liturgy.

We must respect diversity and history even though we are all Jews. There are some Woodlawnists who insist that although Moshiah brought an end to exile, the self-hating traditions of that exile did not need to end. Those who wish to have surrogates during their confessional chanting the *Mia culpa (Aval hee hattah)* for them, please contact personnel and transportation will be arranged.

Finally, as is our custom, I invite you all to 10-Forward after Yom Kippur where Guinan has arranged a multitraditional break-the-fast.

Shana Tova, Gamar Hatima Tova und a Tasha Yahr.
Captain Jean-Luc Picard'd (*Yonatan Ori P'nai Yisroel Kivdu Roshei Dayanim*)

What if....jewish towns in america

Jack Rappoport, *North Canton, OH*

Chahzer, RI
Maz, AL
Shom, Miss
Yonkel, LA
Shon, DE
Coor, VA
Shesh, KY
Faygel, LA

Memorandum

David J. Meyer, *Marblehead, MA*

TO: Executive Committee, Membership Committee
RE: Membership Report and Recommendations

At the last meeting of the Board of Trustees, the Membership Committee presented an outline of several suggested category adjustments to meet the changing needs and realities of temple life. I was asked by the Board to review certain aspects of these proposals and report back with my recommendations. I should like to do so at this time.

Let me begin by reminding you that, although we must remain aware that the temple is not a business, there is, in fact, a great deal we can learn from contemporary

business and marketing strategies. The future well-being of our community will depend on our ability to creatively implement such strategies so as to deepen, enhance and encourage participation in synagogue life. That is why I would ask the Executive Committee to recommend adoption of the following approach for the next five years on a "trial basis".

Rather than offering unlimited access to worship services and other benefits of temple life, the new membership category, called *Emanu-El Ex-press*, will entitle such members to choose from any of the following membership packages:

Ex-press Option #1 includes religious school for members' unmarried children plus unlimited adult education courses;

Ex-press Option #2 entitles the member to High Holy Day tickets plus one rabbinic counseling session;

Ex-press Option #3 includes weekly Sabbath services, three clergy hospital visits and a baby-naming to be designated later.

As a further incentive toward the building of our community, all Emanu-El Ex-press members will receive a *Frequent Prayer Card*. Attending services will thereby enable members to earn special Bonus Awards ranging from the ever-popular "Rabbi-Sanctioned Yom Kippur Fast Exemption Certificate" to Eternal Redemption Stamps and Credits.

What's in a name?

The 'Gragger Rebbe' aka Gershon Schwartz, *Baldwin, NY*

Now that Israel and the PLO are talking, what are the chances that all Conservative rabbis will be able to shake hands as well?

I wondered if peace could be achieved if rabbis with similar names were brought together.

Rabbis Cantor and Layman could open an anti-rabbinic synagogue. Who would talk about the rabbi, if not the Cantor and the Laymen? And if this synagogue's Kashrut were suspect, they could call upon their colleague, Rabbi Lechs. Then Rabbis Cantor and Layman would have Lechs' supervision. If Rabbi Cantor doesn't live up to her name, she can always call upon Rabbi Singer, who may or may not be one.

We could open a colorful synagogue, with Rabbis Gold, Silver, Brown, White and Green joining forces under former Seminary Professor Halivni. Instead of UTJ

(the Union for Traditional Judaism), it would be UCJ, the Union for Colorful Judaism. Or Rabbis Gold and Silver could open a Jewish Commodities Exchange with Rabbis Diamond and Stone. (A reference to God as "Rock Solid" might be helpful.)

We could have Patriarchal Judaism with Rabbis Abrams, Isaacs and Jacobs. After an encounter with the Divine, the third colleague could be traded for Rabbi Israel. Or we could start a Jewish Zoological Society-- Congregation Gan Hayyot--with Rabbis Fox, Beigel and Katz. Perhaps they could convince former RA member Rabbi Shepard to re-join them as their leader so that their motto could be: "The Shepard is our lord!" The zoo would smell better if Rabbis Astor, Rose and Bloom showed up, but there might be a protest if the non-kosher animals were represented by Rabbi Bacon.

The peace process for Conservative rabbis may be long and arduous. If our full-time efforts are too much, Rabbi Brief could give short, witty sermons on how God does not take a vacation and neither should we, calling on his colleagues Rabbi April and Rabbi August for testimonials.

Mix and match

James B. Jalenak, *Memphis, TN*

What do they call a Jew who eats meat and milk together?

A Cross Fresser

The undereducated citizens conceptualization of halacha

Charles Marpet, *Eugene, OR*

There have been rumors circulating for some time that because of global population density (as well, perhaps, as wanderlust), humanity will, in its future, create urban settlements in vastly divergent locations such as: a) under the oceans and seas; b) in outer space both in synchronous and non-synchronous earth orbit and not in earth orbit.

If an undersea temple was constructed, for arguments sake, under the overhanging continental shelf of Eretz Yisreal, it would seem to logically follow that one should

ritually pray the *Amedah* while flat on one's back. The problem comes with taking the three steps forward. I would theorize that one should rise up on the balls of one's feet, thereby increasing the proximity of ones scalp to the crust of the earth, hopefully, directly beneath the rock where that highly notated occurrence happened between an angel, Abraham, Isaac and a ram.

Does it not follow that if one is rich enough to purchase a condominium in space that is in synchronous orbit directly above the city of Jerusalem, that one should pray while lying flat on one's stomach? The question becomes: How does one bow? I would think through logical extension, that, one would simply press or attempt to press one's own personage into the floor.

In non-synchronous orbit around the earth, I would recommend laying out the position in chalk on the floor in such a way as to indicate the correct position at various times on various days.

If you have the great misfortune to find yourself marooned either out of earth orbit, or on another planet, or in another solar system, I recommend consulting your nearest resident halachic authority.

Chaim ben Eliazor
The Undereducated Peasant

Limericks for the jewish year

Avi Rockoff, *Newton, MA*

The Days of Awe

With bitter remorse unrelenting
We sinners shall all be repenting
What seemed at the time
A rather small crime--
Well, all the adults were consenting!

Gedaliah' s Fast

Each Tishri, on day number three
A question which won't let me be
inclines me to scoff:
If I'd been bumped off,
Would Gedaliah have fasted for me?

Sukkot

As into the sukkah we troop
A sturdy and vigorous group
To eat and to serve--
We all lack the nerve
To challenge that bee in our soup!

Simhat Torah

The burly man hoisted the scroll
Of which they'd completed the whole
He started to sway
The *gabbai* said, "Hey,
Don't rock, man, 'cause we gotta roll!"

The Eighth of Heshvan

The holidays help us recall
Our happenings, great ones and small
Of courage and faith
But Heshvan the Eighth
Commemorates nothing at all.

Hanukkah

The Greeks left no usable spices
Or much fuel for lighting devices
But Jews sang God's praise--
One cruse burned eight days!--
Averting the first oil crisis.

The New Year of Trees

Two days of Sukkot, that's a lot
Two Passover days hit the spot
While often Jews choose
To do things by twos
You cannot do two Tu's B'Shevat.

Purim

Some blot Haman's name with a *grager*
Some drown it with cases of lager
Here's one more--no cost
Scratch "Haman" in frost
Then turn on your window defogger!

Pesah

When slim Sam was asked if he got so
By starving himself, he cried, "Not so!
You too could be svelte
And take in your belt
If all you ingested was matzo!"

Shavuot

Say, "cheese", or, "potato"--he winces
He barely can walk, so he minces
With small, dainty steps
He's so full of crepes--
That's Sam, with a ballast of blintzes.

Tisha B'Av

With ladders off limits and shut
And long lamentations, uncut
We pray and we cry
The hours drag by--
This fast is anything but!

Epilogue

Our special days come now and then
Each one with its own what and when
Of fasting or fun
And when they are done
We start them all over again!

Locales of surprising biblical reconciliations

Herbert Kavon, *Flushing, NY*

Esau & Jacob: While sharing a bowl of soup in tent city
Moses & Korach: At a groundbreaking ceremony at the
Ohel Mo'ed synagogue
Moses & Pharoah: While at the Magician's Convention
listening to Moses' song dedicated to Pharoah: "*Hail*
to the Chief"
Eve & the snake: While at a party at the *Garden of*
Eatin' restaurant
Jonah & God: On a joint fishing expedition off the coast
of *Anchorage*

The wisdom of the rabbi

Bernard D. Fischman, *New York, NY*

The driver of a horse and wagon (a *baal hagolah*) in a *shtetl* in Poland in the 19th century, whose occupation was delivering packages to neighboring villages in Poland, a sort of minor Federal Express of that period, woke up one morning to find that his horse had died during the night. He was frantic and went to his Rabbi totally distraught without any money to purchase a replacement horse and without any other source of *parnassah* to support his wife and children.

The Rabbi told our friend to meet the Rabbi at midnight at one of the *shtetl* stables on the outskirts of the village. He obediently followed his Rabbi and showed up on time. The Rabbi told him to select a horse. Knowing that the Rabbi had no authority to permit him to take one of the horses which did not belong to the Rabbi, he hesitated and stood mute. The Rabbi, sensing his reservation, asked our friend whether he had the temerity to question his Rebbe. Our friend complied, selected a

horse which the Rabbi instructed him to take and sent him on his way to resume his package delivery chores.

In the morning the proprietor of the stable came out, noticed that one of his horses was missing, walked over to the empty stall, swung open the gate and found the Rabbi sitting on a stool studying. The perplexed proprietor of the stable asked what was going on.

The rabbi explained that years ago the Rabbi committed a sin--he whispered in confidence that it was adultery--and his punishment was that he was transformed into a horse for his period of penance; that the previous night at midnight his period of penance ended and he was restored to being a man. But, the Rabbi said to the proprietor that there was no reason why the proprietor should suffer a loss because of the Rabbi's avevra. Therefore, the Rabbi was prepared to serve the proprietor in lieu of the horse. The exasperated proprietor sent the Rabbi on his way--back to his Bais Medresh.

Several weeks later, the proprietor was traveling in a nearby village and recognized his horse.

The proprietor satisfied that it was not an apparition, walked over to the horse and whispered in his ear: "Rebbe, you did it again?"

The true history of hamantaschen

Shalom Ben Vevel, *Ridgecrest, CA*

Once upon a time, in a far away land, there was a town called Helm. There are many stories told about the foolish sayings and doings of the Helmites, but the Helmites always said that they weren't foolish--it was just that foolish things kept happening to them. Now, many of our ancestors, mine included, came from Helm. Don't laugh--how do you know we're not related, way, way back?

The other day, my mother--may she live to a hundred and twenty--sent me some old files that had belonged to my father--*alav ha-shalom*. They were musty with age, and it was clear that my mother had never looked at them. I opened up one of the files, and what do you think I found? Stop! You'll never guess. What I found was a scientific treatise written by my great-great-great-grandfather, Shloime the Scientist, entitled "How Hamantaschen Came into the World and Why They Have Two Sides". In case you don't remember, Shloime the Scientist was one of the foremost scientists of his times, and his achievements are duly honored in many of the stories about Helm. It made me proud to think that my

becoming a mathematician and an engineer was a family tradition.

Anyhow, my ancestor's scientific treatise is filled with so much wisdom and insight that I want to share it with you. I don't want to bore or confuse you with a lot of complex mathematical equations, so I will just cover the highlights.

Now, if you've read some of the old stories about Helm, you'll remember that Shloime and the other wise men of Helm would often sit around the potbelly stove in the shul of a winter's evening, roasting potatoes and exchanging profound thoughts. One evening just after Hanukkah, Shloime addressed his friends:

"You know," said he, "I have just returned from taking some marvelous courses at the university. I took a course in trigonometry and another in philosophy. In trigonometry, I learned all about triangles, figures that have three sides, and in philosophy I learned that simpler is better. So, I have been thinking and thinking till my head hurts about how to combine these two areas of knowledge. And after all this thinking, I have decided to develop a new science of trigonometry based on triangles with only two sides. Two is less than three, even here in Helm, so such a science should be simpler, and therefore better."

"That's impossible." roared Shneeman the Shnorrer, "How can a triangle have fewer than three sides?"

"You are just mouthing conventional wisdom." replied Shloime with great calm, "Every great advance in science and engineering has overthrown the conventional wisdom. I'm sure that if I put my mind to it, I can develop a new trigonometry for two-sided triangles."

Shloime retired to the quiet of his study at home. In order to develop his new science, he needed a two-sided triangle to study. So from sunrise until the wee hours, six days a week for a month, he used up ream upon ream of foolscap trying to draw a triangle with only two sides. He knew that a four-sided figure has four corners, and a three-sided figure has three corners. So naturally, a two-sided figure should have two corners. But when he drew two sides starting at the same corner, they demanded two more corners, and therefore, a third side. And when he started with two corners, the sides lay atop one another, yielding a one-sided figure with no angles and no area. How uninteresting! How frustrating!

He then decided to abandon, at least temporarily, the theoretical, paper-and-pencil approach, and try a pragmatic, hands-on approach. He went to his laboratory, the room of their house that his wife called her kitchen. There his sweet, patient helpmate was rolling out some cookie dough. Gently, he explained the task he had undertaken and the problem he was having. He told her

that his credibility with the potbelly stove gang was wearing thin and that his reputation was at stake. Did she have any suggestions?

"Nu," replied his wife, "maybe you can cut your two-sided triangle out of some cookie dough? And she threw him a lump of dough and a knife. This exposure to the real world was the breakthrough that he had been seeking. He quickly discovered these fundamental truths:

1. Cookie dough is better than paper, because you can eat your mistakes.

2. With cookie dough, you can cut out a cookie with three edges, but it will still have only two sides, a top and a bottom.

Shloime rapidly cut out a dozen or so three-edged, two-sided cookies, had his wife bake them, and took them with him to the next gathering of the wise men of Helm. Pinya the Philosopher started to object that calling a side an edge and a surface a side was semantic game-playing, but he quickly stopped, realizing that his objection might result in getting no cookies.

After eating several cookies, Pinya made this telling point: "When I look at one of these marvelous cookies, I can *see* that it has two sides. When I hold one of these marvelous cookies in my hand, I can *feel* that it has two sides. But when I put one in my mouth, both alleged sides *taste* alike. How can I be sure of reality unless all my senses agree?"

Now, that was an important question! The wise men of Helm quickly split into two warring camps on the issue. They debated it hotly for weeks, neither camp yielding a smidgen. Mottel the Mayor offered to appoint a study commission. In a rare display of unity, the wise men of Helm informed His Honor that this was not a job for politicians, but for deep thinkers. The debate raged on.

Then a week before Purim, Shloime told his wife about the deadlock. "This is very simply solved," she told him, "you must make the two sides taste different." "Here, watch," she continued, "I'll cut out a diamond shape, put some sweet preserves on one side, fold it over, seal the edges, and bake it."

She did so, several dozen times, in fact, and Shloime took the results to his fellow sages at the shul. Everybody, even Pinya the Philosopher, now agreed that these two-sided cookies had different tastes on their insides versus their outsides. Beside themselves with joy, the wise men of Helm decided to make these marvelous two-sided cookies the centerpiece of the culinary side of Purim, which by now was upon them. Rapidly, Shloime's wife taught all the other women how to make such cookies, and that is how hamantaschen came into the world. And that is why they have two sides: an outside of cookie dough and an inside filled with delicious, sweet preserves.

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