

Happy Thanksgiving

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A pair of Thanksgiving-related publications from **Sh'ma**:

Thanksgiving in Two-Plus Civilizations. Stephen L. Tobias and his mixed family and friends celebrate American Thanksgiving in Morocco:

The acquisition of a kosher turkey was a journey in itself in the company of our Casablanca kosher butcher who took our order weeks before the occasion. He put the word out to his various suppliers for *adindon*, or as it is called in Moroccan Arabic, a *bibi*. He oversaw the turkey's ritual slaughter and purification, and was amazed to learn of the custom of the distant American Jewish community which celebrated a religious holiday he himself had never heard of... A local winter squash made a serviceable mock pumpkin pie, and someone got us cranberry sauce from the nearby American military base - how often do you get to use the French word for cranberry? How often does anybody?

Our November-December Dilemma. Philip Cohen reflects upon the transition from Thanksgiving to the Christmas season and, as an American Jew, feels whiplash:

Late autumn and early winter inevitably toss us Jews between the poles of a dialectic, yielding perhaps the strongest contrast found in our American social existence. On the one hand, there's Thanksgiving, with its message of America as a land based on fundamental principles of religious freedom... When we celebrate Thanksgiving, we are observing a moment of high American civil religion that Jews therefore share in common with all Americans. On the fourth Thursday of November we Jews are Americans together with all other Americans. With everyone else, we observe the uniqueness and greatness of our nation, against the backdrop of an essentially religious festival that was, after all, roughly patterned on *Sukkot*...

...Well and good. But no sooner are the turkey bones headed for trash than we are tossed to the opposite end of the dialectic. The green and red lights go up around the neighborhood, across the main streets and at the malls, and the variegated forces of the mass media remind us ad nauseam that we have a moral obligation to spend lots of money in the next month in order to mark the upcoming holiday season properly. Christmas music starts pouring over the airwaves sending a message of love and joy to all of us. The subliminal message we receive as non-Christians, I believe, is clear: This glitzy, faintly religious extravaganza of celebration, lights and fellowship is theirs and not ours... as much a part of things as we naturally and rightfully felt ourselves to be at Thanksgiving, that's how remote we feel from the center of America when Christmas rolls around.

Whether you feel near or remote from "the center of America," have a Happy

Thanksgiving!

Check out **our publications on the topic of Food**, too.