

## Satire in the Work of Uri Orbach

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**Abstract:** The article analyzes satirical statements by the Israeli author Uri Orbach in the bestseller religious-secular lexicon *My Grandfather Was a Rabbi* (2002) and reveals the dialog and the relationship between religious and secular in Israel. We selected 18 out of 550 vastly differing headwords which shed light on customs and experiences through all the life cycles and in various areas of life as lived by Israel's religious population. We also collected headwords by variables such as status, age and gender. The study showed six satire features used most by Orbach: inflation, exaggeration, parody, juxtaposition, absurdity, and camouflage. The finding indicates Orbach's way of criticizing both the religious and the secular in order to bring them closer together and to educate them to constructive communication and mutual respect. This sociolinguistic study shows that even satirical writing can make its contribution to creating a bridge between the religious and the secular.

**Key words:** satire, religious, secular, Uri Orbach

### 1. Introduction

The article analyzes satirical expressions of Israeli writer Uri Orbach in the lexicon *My Grandfather was a Rabbi* (2002) and uses it to reveal relations between Israel's religious and secular populations. Uri Orbach was a journalist, publicist, satirist, broadcaster, author, member of the Knesset and a government minister. He was one of the founders of a religious radio station and of the children's weekly newspaper *Otiot* (Letters). In his journalistic work, Orbach made extensive use of satire and humor, and was awarded several prizes in that field (Tausig, n.d.). He also penned satirical columns and books and wrote more than ten children's books. Orbach died at the age of 55, when he was serving as Minister for Senior Citizens.

Segev (2015) characterizes Orbach's writing as adhering excessively to standard language and high register, based on Jewish culture and the Jewish bookshelf. This singular

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way of writing was expertly woven into his books, creating a refreshing style. According to Segev, many of Orbach's books served, in a way, as a "tribal campfire" for the national-religious stream to which he belonged, in that they described the daily routine of the child, the person and the family, using "sectoral" language and describing situations unique to the members of that sector.

Orbach's book *My Grandfather was a Rabbi* is a religious-secular lexicon that lightheartedly documents the world of terms used by the national-religious sector and the dialog between the religious and the secular in Israel. According to the author, the lexicon holds up a mirror to the religious reader by means of its terms, expressions and nuances, and opens a peephole to be used by the secular reader. The name of the book is a quotation from the mouths of secular people who, upon meeting someone religious, feel it is important to show that the religious world is not foreign to them so that they can be closer to them.

## **2. Religious-Secular Relations in Israel**

Israel is a country that takes in immigrants, and as a result it has a diverse population. Other than the differences between wealth and poverty, there are also differences between new immigrants and longstanding citizens, between *Mizrachim*, whose origins lie in Arabic countries, and *Ashkenazim*, whose roots are in Europe, and most notably the differences between the religious and the secular. The religious-secular divide passes through all the sectors mentioned, and in practice Israel's population is divided into two camps. In the first three decades of Israel's existence as an autonomous state, co-existence between the camps was respectful and accepting, but when the political leadership changed forty-two years ago, the influence of the religious sector on political life started to be felt, and gave rise to an antagonism within secular society. There followed a slow process of erosion of religious life that was expressed in issues of religion and state, and tensions increased between the two sectors.

Religious-secular relations have been described in the studies of Aviv (1993: 9-21), Liebman (2001), Horowitz and Lisak (1988), Bartal (2001), Ravitzky (1997) and others. Sheleg (2000: 283) also reviews in his book the religious-secular relations from 1947 until the end of the millennium and shows how over the years the status quo that was agreed

upon with the establishment of the state eroded. This social change was also apparent in Israel's heretofore culture of discourse, out of which grew lack of tolerance and wariness and mutual accusations. It was against this backdrop that initiatives arose with the aim of bridging between the two camps, encouraging a discourse of respect and tolerance. One of those who encouraged such initiatives was Uri Orbach, who was seen as congenial and was much admired in secular society owing to his unique image, his wisdom and his wit. One of his projects was to write *My Grandfather was a Rabbi*, a lexicon presented to the secular reader in humorous style and defining basic terms in Judaism. Orbach believed that familiarity with the religious world by means of his book could break down the barriers and heal the rift between the two sectors.<sup>1</sup> The lexicon, which was published in 2002, became a best seller.

### 3. Satire as a Kind of Humor

Satire is a literary and artistic technique that mocks and criticizes a social phenomenon, mostly often comically. The purpose of satire is usually to bring about or to prevent change by presenting things in a humoristic way. Satire is most often directed against a regime, religion, social belief, accepted behavior, a political party, and so on. Satirical works were already being written in ancient Greece and at the time of the Roman Empire.

Because satire is a kind of humor, we will present some of what is common to both. Like humor, it is achieved in two ways: written and spoken. According to Sover (2011), a large part of verbal humor is based on disruption of the assumed continuity. When listeners assume the continuation of a sentence they are often right, but sometimes there is a slight deviation from the assumed. When the deviation is too great, the situation becomes unusual and comic. In verbal satire, reading, like listening, is an act of fitting the words of the text into the schema that the reader himself creates based on what he has just read. When the words that he finds fit into his schema, his assumption is confirmed and he can read on.

According to Weisman (1996: 12), Birnbaum (2003: 7) and Steir-Livny (2014), an identifier of satire is witty and sarcastic criticism that arouses mockery and ridicule. The satirists who express their views in this indirect way intend to influence and educate their

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<sup>1</sup> On the influence of satire on various fields of knowledge, including politics, see Massih (2019) and Baumgartner (2018).

audience, and in order to be seen as reliable they must state facts and refer to familiar phenomena and known characters, whether current or historical, but they must do so with excessive exaggeration that gives rise to ridicule. The picture of reality drawn by satirists is a kind of bubble in a crooked mirror that changes the images and dimensions of the image. Steir-Livny (ibid) adds that in its original definition, satire is supposed to criticize reality and present its ridiculous and absurd sides and not to ratify hegemonic content but to present voices and opinions that differ from them. Burke (1984) sharpens the difference between satire and humor, and notes that unlike other genres of humor, whose purpose is "the demonstration of tensions" and severance from the nuisances of day-to-day reality, the purpose of satire is to confront that reality head on. Meijer Drees & Leeuw (2015: 1) see satire as a loaded sociocultural weapon from a communication aspect, which can cross cultural borders between communities at different times, and deal with them.

Weisman (1996: 12) presents characteristics of satire, such as camouflage, parody and allegory. In most cases, satire combines the use of irony and sarcasm with classic forms of comic expression such as enlargement and diminution of something so as to show it as ridiculous; exaggeration and inflation, in which a situation is described in an exaggerated and overblown way so as to open it up to mockery and to emphasize its weaknesses; juxtaposition—the positioning of elements alongside each other despite the great difference in their importance or status, and parody—comic imitation of someone or something (a work of art, a style, etc.). Barenholtz (1985: 81) presents all the means of satirical design: generic, structural, tonal and linguistic, and she includes in the linguistic means both paradoxical and metaphorical wordings.

In the article I sample satirical headwords from Orbach's book *My Grandfather Was a Rabbi*, from which the character of the religious sector in Israel is reflected, as well as the relationship between it and the secular sector. I explain the examples, and comment on the characteristics of satire that arise from them.

#### **4. Methodology**

The research corpus is the lexicon of Uri Orbach, *My Grandfather was a Rabbi* (2002), which contains about 550 headwords. After reading all the headwords, we selected 18

vastly differing ones which shed light on customs and experiences through all the lifecycles and in various areas of life as lived by Israel's religious population: education, community, army, couples, state, and others. We also collected headwords by variables such as status, age, gender. The next stage involved the selection, using the same criteria, of headwords that reflect religious-secular relations.

The examples presented in the next section of this article are divided into two subsections: satire on the religious way of life, and satire on religious-secular relations. The headwords are shown in the following order: the headword itself, with a page reference; a quotation of Orbach's words in the first paragraph, followed by a paragraph containing an explanation and analysis based on the characteristics of satire.

## **5. Satirical Headwords in the Lexicon *My Grandfather Was a Rabbi*.**

### **5.1 Satire on the Religious Way of Life**

In this section I sample nine headwords that reveal the character and way of life of the religious sector in Israel, and I show how Orbach, in his own unique way, uses humor and satire to improve the face of religious society.

#### **5.11 Where Are You on Shabbat? (p. 10)**

A question mothers and mothers-in-law ask the young couple. It is followed immediately by: Are you here on Shabbat? So maybe come to us for Kiddush? In religious circles the question is asking if the young couple's house is available for use by the questioner's guests. They only have nine children, but they will clean up after they scribble on your walls during the holy Sabbath.

Orbach describes a custom that is widespread in the settlements in Israel, where community life, connections and warm relations among residents are part of their character, as if they were members of the same family. They excel in helping one another and in collectivity and offer help to whoever needs it. In such an atmosphere it is entirely acceptable to request to put guests up in the house of friends who are away, and the friends who have made their house available will likely make a reciprocal request when they, in turn, need a place for their guests to stay. Orbach uses inflation to describe the consequences of the generosity of the family that lends its house, to criticize those who, in

such a situation, behave inconsiderately. This means that the explanation of the headword exhibits a desire to repair society by using a characteristic of satire, inflation, camouflaged as diminution—the guest family has "only" nine children (i.e., 11 people will be in the house), the children will scribble on the walls, but they will clean the house before they leave.

### 5.12 With God's Help (p. 23)

These are words intended to qualify the existence of promises and plans for the future. "I'll repay you tomorrow, God willing, with God's help." We can never know what will be, so why not demonstrate the nothingness of our plans compared with what God has in store for us, with God's help!

With this headword Orbach employs parody for an expression of faith that is widespread in the religious sector, where it is standard practice to add the words "with God's help" to future plans or actions. The speaker really wants to fulfill them, but is all too aware that there could be mishaps beyond his control, and if he is unable to fulfill his promise, it is not his fault. Orbach adds "God willing" to the headword expression, which denotes a similar idea. According to Jewish law, an oath should not be sworn because whoever cannot fulfill it might suffer negative consequences. In his parody, Orbach ridicules the speaker, who is doing everything to avoid becoming embroiled in a promise or undertaking, because for him, he must demonstrate the belief that a man is nothing more than a human being, and that everything is in the hands of God.

### 5.13 Third Person (p. 28)

One does not say to the Rabbi in a "high school" *yeshiva* "You said", but rather "The Rabbi said". Do not say "You did not give homework" but "The Rabbi did not give homework". This is a habit of courtesy and respect that many retain forever. God himself is less punctilious, it seems, and therefore in blessings it is customary to say Blessed art thou O Lord.

The *yeshiva* is a high school or tertiary educational framework. It is run by a rabbi who is usually a pedagogic figure with extensive Torah learning to his credit. It is a framework in which it is customary to show great respect to the rabbi, addressing him in the third

person rather than second person. But when reciting a blessing or praying to God, the supreme spiritual authority, the second person is used because He is less punctilious about respect than the rabbis are. By presenting the great God on the side of the human image of the Rabbi, Orbach uses juxtaposition which is one of the means of satire—he places two figures alongside each other despite the great difference in their importance or status.

#### **5.14 Secularization** (p. 46)

It is said that one out of every five removes his *kippa* (skullcap). So, it turns out that religious people give birth to more secular people than secular people do. The secularization and the "ruining" of youth are a favored topic of symposia and meetings of educators. It is particularly worrying when it happens not in mixed cities but even in small religious settlements, the protected incubator. So where did we go wrong?

Orbach presents findings indicating that twenty percent of religious children and teenagers abandon religion and become secular (removing the *kippa* symbolizes leaving the religious life). He uses exaggeration, increasing the dimensions of the findings to the extent of ridicule, noting that in practice, religious families "create" more secular people than secular families do. The reason for this is that religious families are usually much larger than the average secular families.

#### **5.15 Women's Section** (*Ezrat nashim*) (p. 105)

In old synagogues, between the fridge with the pickled herring and sink for washing your hands, you will find the tiny space for women who for some reason have set their hearts on praying. In new synagogues it was already understood that women also come to pray, and a larger space was allocated. The site is used for a mass meeting during the high holy days and on "bridegroom's Sabbath", for hurling candies, and for checking out what the fashionable religious woman is wearing this year. The cantor is inaudible anyway. When the noise increases, there will always be a wannabe man who will halt the prayers and shout "Women, sha!"

According to Jewish tradition, women are not obligated to pray, so the synagogue was intended mainly for men. In the religious sector, the synagogue where the men pray is separated from the "women's section", which is a room or small hall set aside for women.

In the past, synagogues allocated a small space as the women's section, owing to the relatively small number of women who used it. Over time, the number of young women coming to the synagogue to participate in the prayers increased greatly, to the astonishment of the men, who cannot comprehend the reason for their enthusiasm for prayer. When they do come, during the high holidays and on a Shabbat when a bridegroom reads from the *Torah*, they are usually fashionably dressed. After the bridegroom's reading, the women customarily throw candies at him, and the little children, who have been waiting for this moment, dash to pick them up and compete to see who can collect the most. In a situation like this, there will always be someone in the congregants who reprimands the chattering women, who cause a mini-riot by throwing the candies (sha! = Quiet!). Orbach employs inflation to criticize the women's keenness to come to prayers, by describing the synagogue as a "site", as if it were an attractive destination for recreation. Another feature of this satire is the juxtaposition of two elements of differing importance—Orbach describes the poor physical conditions of the women's section in the old synagogues alongside women's wish to pray and to elevate their spirituality.

#### **5.16 *Kabbalat Shabbat*** (p. 115)

The Friday evening prayer service attended also by all those who are absent from the synagogue throughout the week. All shampooed, showered and exhausted, and the languorous Shabbat melody of "*Lecha Dodi*" hovers in the synagogue space. It is the main religious-community event of the week. Cantors start and preachers who never get to the end exploit the event to torment the attendees.

Orbach names the Friday evening prayer service "the main religious-community event of the week". Outwardly, the purpose of the convening is prayer, but in practice it is a social get-together of all those who are tired of the week's events. On its face, the atmosphere is a festive one of the Sabbath, but some of the participants are short-tempered and impatient for the cantor to finish his prayer and the preacher to end his sermon. The latter, delighted by the large congregation, exploits it by extending the prayers and the sermon. To create the satiric effect, Orbach exaggerates his description of the wide gap between those who come to the synagogue and the cantor and preacher who "torment" them. Another satirical feature is the juxtaposition of the three adjectives: shampooed,



showered, and exhausted. Usually, shampooing and showering are refreshing actions, and do not tally with exhaustion.

### **5.17 Connections** (p. 118)

If you have connections, you don't need *protektzia*—says the well-used sentence. The religious man's connections are fully exploited. If a police officer detains him a minute before Shabbat, he will not hesitate to call the deputy minister from the religious party to get him out. The angry settler will need just seconds to get through to the division commander who was his classmate, the Minister himself will ensure that the daughter of Suissa from the southern branch of the party gets the job of the settlement's *mikve* attendant. What else did we elect them for if not for this?

Orbach focuses on a known phenomenon in religious society, where religious men exploit the fact that they know someone of influence who they can rely on to act to their advantage. In Israeli slang it is known as *protektzia*, or vitamin P. Those who use it feel they are entitled to do so, and on the other hand it will also be their duty to do so when friends seek to exploit those connections for a similar purpose. Here too, Orbach creates the satire by using the juxtaposition feature—senior officials are forced to deal with requests of nuisances who know no bounds.

### **5.18 Unmarried Man** (p. 121)

Religious society is designed for couples, which means that the lives of unmarried men are not easy. An unmarried man is someone who is in his mid-twenties and is still alone. Beyond thirty, he is already an old unmarried man. His situation is not as dire as that of the unmarried woman, and he is constantly showered with proposals, blind dates and the teasing of friends.

Religious society is a society in which the value of family reigns supreme, and as Orbach says, the lives of unmarried men are not easy. By his mid-twenties, the unmarried man is already uncomfortable without a partner, and if he reaches the age of thirty and is still unmarried, he becomes an object of numerous attempts at matchmaking. Orbach is critical of religious society, inflating and comparing the likelihood that the man will marry at such a relatively advanced age to the chances of the same for a woman. Great efforts are

directed towards changing the family status of the man compared to the efforts expended on arranged dates for an unmarried religious woman.

### **5.19 Available for Transport** (p. 110)

From the world of arranged marriages. Someone who can be offered a woman because he has just ended a relationship with that other woman and has not yet been introduced to another. "Hey, are you available for transport? Because I've got a truck you can meet."

Are you available for transport? —This is a question asked of a young religious and unmarried man who is looking for a suitable partner. After a relationship that has ended, the questioner hopes that the man can accept his offer. It is a question that is widespread in the religious sector, where family life is paramount, and society tries tirelessly to bring unmarried men and women together in suitable matchups. In explaining this headword, Orbach writes a parody of the quotation: the reader expects to hear in its second half that "I've got a girl you can meet", but instead of "girl" he finds "truck", a word from the transport business—something unexpected that causes laughter.

## **5.2 Satire on Religious-Secular Relations**

After the peek into the religious world, we will see how religious-secular relations in Israel are presented, and what they teach about the secular way of life.

### **5.21 You. Don't Listen** (p. 16)

The reservist is about to tell a dirty joke, but suddenly he notices your presence, Righteous Rabbi. "You. Don't listen," he chuckles, pleased with himself, as if he has just made up the smart-ass comment. So, you don't listen, and you also try not to laugh.

The army in Israel is the crucible of citizens of all sorts and types and is a place where religious soldiers meet with secular soldiers as they embark on missions together. Reservists are soldiers who have already completed their military service, but every year they are called up for a few weeks to refresh their skills and fitness. Orbach describes a routine situation in which a secular reservist wants to tell a dirty joke, but when he sees a religious comrade near him, he asks him not to listen. On its face, this would seem to be consideration for the sensitivities of the religious soldier, whom the joke-teller, by way of

the exaggeration typical of satire, sees as a righteous rabbi. But the truth is, there is no consideration in the utterance because in fact there is no escape from hearing the joke. The secular soldier's words illustrate camouflage, one of the characteristics of satire. He knows it is impossible not to listen, but he pretends to be aware of the religious soldier's sensitivities. Camouflage is also reflected in the behavior of the religious soldier, who is "not" listening and tries not to laugh at the joke.

### **5.22 You Lot Have Connections Up There** (p. 17)

The secular faith in the direct connection that religious people have to the Almighty. "Nu, do something. You lot are on speaking terms with the one up there." Whenever some tragedy occurs, the secular man turns with a chuckle-complaint to the nearest earthly representative of the Holy One, Blessed be He and asks him to use his connections. Somewhat contradictory to "Stop bothering Him with your prayers."

In this headword Orbach is referring to secular people who do not believe in God's dominion of the world, but when they are in trouble, they ask someone religious for help because religious people have connections with Him. Orbach reduces this situation to the absurd by using the phrase "secular faith", which is almost an oxymoron—if you are secular then you have no faith, and yet you believe that God helps his believers. At the end of his explanation, Orbach comments that this saying by secular people contradicts another saying they often use to religious people: "Stop bothering Him with your prayers."

### **5.23 Stop Bothering Him** (p. 134)

"Do you really think God cares whether you travel on Shabbat or not? And that he wants to be pestered every moment with blessings and prayers? You don't give Him a minute's peace. Stop bothering him with your supplications and prayers." A popular secular complaint, as if the speaker is safeguarding the dignity of God and mocking anything perceived as unwarranted in secular eyes.

As already mentioned, this phrase contradicts the phrase in the previous headword because it is based on the assumption that all the deeds of man are of no interest to God and all the prayers to Him are a never-ending nuisance. The request to stop bothering Him mocks religious people for their custom of praying to Him, and yet, according to the

previous saying, there are times when such disturbance is justified, i.e., when secular people need help. The satirical means here is camouflage—pretense of the true secular emotions.

#### 5.24 The Fast of Zecharia (p. 112)

There is no such fast day. It's said that the scheming *hesder* soldier responds to a reprimand: "Why are you unshaven?", or to amazement: "Why no *tzitzit*?" with the immortal words: "Fast of Zecharia!", which is supposed to satisfy the ignorant commanding officer who is sure that this fast day justifies the breach of discipline. "Those secular people with their ignorance, they'll buy any rubbish you sell them, ha ha."

According to Jewish tradition, there are six fast days in a year. One of them is the Fast of Gedalia, which commemorates the murder of Gedalia son of Ahikam, the last Jewish governor of the Jews remaining in Judah, who was appointed by the king of Babylon after the destruction of the first temple. Gedalia was murdered only two months after his appointment. This brought to an end the Jewish settlement in Judah, and also the addition of the fast day to the Jewish calendar. In the army, it can happen that a secular commanding officer oversees religious soldiers. In such cases, when the religious soldiers are tired of all the activities they have to do and they want a day of rest, they invent a name for a fast day. It is a trick by the soldiers that exploits the commanding officer's lack of knowledge of Jewish tradition. By placing the question "Why no *tzitzit*?", a question that only a religious man would ask, next to the ignorance of their superior about fast days, Orbach juxtaposes two completely opposing elements to achieve the satirical effect.

#### 5.25 Bar Mitzvah Kippa (p. 73)

Made of shiny satin, for those for whom the *kippa* is not part of their wardrobe. A forgotten remnant from the *bar mitzvah* that lives in the glovebox of the car and sees the light of day only on *simchat torah* or *Yom Kippur*. More effective than a billboard screaming "Stop! Secular man ahead!" The wearer automatically raises his hand to his head every 30 seconds, to verify that the *kippa* is still in place. At funerals, a dark *kippa* is to be preferred.

The *kippa* is a head-covering used by religious men that has become the external sign distinguishing the religious man from the secular. Many secular men put on a *kippa* out of

respect when they enter a synagogue or attend a religious event. Orbach humanizes the *kippa*, explains that religious men can immediately identify a secular man with a *kippa* on his head because his *kippa* is usually made of shiny white fabric with Jewish symbols printed on it. Such a *kippa* is usually worn by a *bar mitzva* boy from a secular or traditional family who does not customarily wear one, and it remains stored away for years in case it is needed. Orbach notes that at funerals it is better to wear a black *kippa*, because a white one looks too festive for the occasion. In this headword, Orbach uses inflation when he compares the *kippa* to a billboard warning the religious man to stop when he sees a secular man.

### 5.26 The Sabbath Day (p. 68)

*Shabbat*, as it is called in secular circles. Incidentally, it is not advisable to arrange a meeting with a religious man on "Shabbat evening" because the religious man will turn up on Friday evening and the secular man on Saturday evening.

The Sabbath day is the seventh day of the week, and a holy day for Jews. In Judaism, the Sabbath starts after sunset on the evening before the seventh day. It is a day of rest when they abstain from all work, recite Shabbat prayers and study Torah. Orbach illustrates the gap between the religious and the secular man by using parody of the term "Shabbat evening", which is only used by secular people. For religious people, Shabbat evening is Friday evening, not Saturday evening when the Sabbath ends. Orbach depicts a situation in which a religious man and a secular man arrange to meet on Shabbat evening but each of them is referring to a different evening—the religious man means Friday evening, whereas the secular man means Saturday evening.

### 5.27 The Rift in the Nation (p. 44)

The rift marches in pairs: rich-poor, Sefardi-Ashkenazi, veterans-new immigrants, and of course religious-secular. The rift in the nation must be healed, we have to remember we are one people, and you are invited to an evening of dialog about "How to heal the rift in the nation". Conferences on "The rift in the nation—Where next?" are attended mainly, and embarrassingly, by people who coexist happily.

As explained in section 2, there are schisms in Israel between the various groups in society. This is of great concern to many members of the two sectors who are trying everything to heal the rift. One of the initiatives in this regard is the discussion evening, where religious and secular people seeking to bring about change, meet to discuss the question of how to bridge the gaps. Orbach describes the embarrassing outcome—those who should come to the meetings do not, and those who do come are those who in any case coexist amicably. To achieve the satiric effect, he parodies the slogans of the organizers. Another means employed is the absurd oxymoron "The rift marches in pairs". Marching in pairs usually indicates closeness, but the rift reflects the distance between rich and poor and other "pairs".

#### **5.28 Washing Machine** (p. 88)

A popular argument of polemicists and those who try to turn secular people into religious ones: The commandments are the operating instructions given to the world by the Holy One blessed be He. Just as you would never think to operate a washing machine not in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions, so you must not deviate from each and every commandment, even if you do not understand its logic. Convinces mainly housewives and laundry owners.

With this headword Orbach repeats a well-known argument of those who try to convince secular people to become religious. They compare the existence of the commandments with the instructions for running a washing machine, which you must follow if you want it to launder successfully. These instructions may not be logical, but they are a tried and true recipe for success with your laundry. According to them, the same is true when people live their lives not in accordance with a religious way of life. Such lives do not lead to success. Orbach ridicules this argument by way of exaggeration, so as to show that it convinces no-one except for housewives and laundry owners, for whom success with laundry is what counts.

#### **5.29 Daylight Saving Time** (p. 129)

One of the harbingers of spring. The annual argument between the Ultra-Orthodox, who oppose daylight saving time because "It makes life harder for *Sfaradim* who rise early for

*slichot* during the month of Elul", and the secular, for whom the saving of energy is their religion. Nobody really understands what exactly the argument is about, but tradition is tradition and this argument is a never-ending story. Just a minute, so do we put the clock forward or back?

In Judaism, one of the commandments is to recite *slichot*. According to the Jewish faith, God issues the verdict of every person and every country at Rosh Hashana (which usually falls in September). To avoid a harsh sentence, religious people rise early in the morning, before dawn, and ask for forgiveness for their sins during the past year. Some communities do this for a month before Rosh Hashana, while others do it for only one week. For many years, as spring approaches, there has been spirited argument between the religious and secular sectors on the question of when summertime should start and end. The secular wants summertime to continue for as long as possible so as to save more energy, and instead of ending it in September, when the Israeli summer nears its end, they want it to continue until November. The religious, for their part, want it to end earlier, because when the clock is moved back, sunrise is an hour later, making it easier to get up for *slichot*. Orbach uses parody, describing the dispute as a conditioned reflex—an automatic traditional argument in which they don't even know what they're arguing about: "Just a minute, so do we put the clock forward or back?" The satire in his words is strengthened by the absurdity of an oxymoron: "the secular, for whom the saving of energy is their religion."

## 6. Summary

We reviewed 18 examples representing the satirical writings of Uri Orbach in his book *My Grandfather was a Rabbi*. Half of the examples describe the religious way of life, while the others describe the dynamic between the secular and religious sectors in various life situations. An in-depth study showed that the six elements of satire used most by Orbach are inflation, exaggeration, parody, juxtaposition, absurdity, and camouflage. Further examination in all pages of the book showed that Orbach makes equal use of satiric elements in expressions aimed at the religious and those aimed at the dialog between the sectors. The finding indicates Orbach's way of criticizing both the religious and the secular equally, to bring them closer together and to educate them to constructive communication

and mutual respect. This sociolinguistic study shows that even satirical writing can make its contribution to creating a bridge between the religious and the secular.

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