

*English Abstracts of the Articles || תקצירים באנגלית של המאמרים***"Everyone who hears will laugh at me" – the judicial humor in the rulings of Judge Yitzhak Amit****Shaul Sharf¹****Abstract**

This article examines the phenomenon of judicial humor in Israeli law by applying Lucas K. Hori's typology and balancing framework to the judicial opinions of Justice Isaac Amit, President of the Supreme Court of Israel. It proceeds from the premise that humor is not merely a stylistic embellishment but a rhetorical device with significant implications for the quality of judicial reasoning, the perceived authority of the judiciary, and public confidence in the legal system. Despite the presence of judicial humor in both Israeli and comparative case law, legal scholarship has yet to develop a systematic analytical framework for examining its patterns, purposes, and limits of legitimacy. To address this gap, the article adopts Hori's typology, which distinguishes among three forms of judicial humor: fact-based humor, cultural humor, and humor based on wordplay and wit. Using this typology, the article examines the principal benefits of judicial humor—including enhancing the accessibility of the law, sharpening judicial reasoning, increasing its pedagogical value, and improving the memorability of judicial opinions—alongside its potential risks, such as undermining the dignity of litigants, compromising the appearance of judicial neutrality, and eroding public confidence in the courts.

The article then critically examines Hori's balancing model, which is based on three variables—the target of the humor, its purpose, and its potential for harm—and explores its application in the Israeli context. This framework is systematically applied to Justice Amit's opinions and compared with instances of judicial humor in the opinions of other Israeli Supreme Court justices, thereby laying the groundwork for the systematic study of judicial humor in Israeli law. The article demonstrates that, in the Israeli context—characterized by political polarization, sustained institutional criticism of the Supreme Court, and a crisis of public trust—the use of judicial humor assumes heightened normative significance and requires particular rhetorical restraint. It concludes that judicial humor may serve as a legitimate, and even desirable,

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rhetorical device when it advances judicial reasoning, is employed with moderation, is directed toward ideas rather than individuals, and is appropriately adapted to its institutional context, without undermining the dignity of litigants, public confidence, or the institutional legitimacy of the judiciary.

Key words:

Isaac Amit, Judicial Humor, Judicial Rhetoric, Legal Writing, Judicial Legitimacy, Public Trust, Israeli Case Law, Jurisprudence

Humor without Laughter: A Chronicle of Cynicism in the Haredi Recruitment Discourse in Israel

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Abstract

This article examines the public, political, and social discourse surrounding the conscription of Haredi (Ultra-Orthodox) Jews into the Israel Defense Forces (IDF), with particular attention to manifestations of rhetorical cynicism as an interpretive framework. Against the backdrop of the intensified public debate following the outbreak of the *Swords of Iron* War, the article analyzes selected patterns of Haredi political discourse through three complementary dimensions of cynicism: cynicism as a flexible ideological justification, rhetorical cynicism as a mechanism for redirecting public debate, and institutional cynicism reflected in the gap between normative claims and political or social practice.

Drawing on a qualitative analysis of public statements by rabbis and elected officials, Supreme Court decisions, parliamentary debates, and media publications, the article identifies recurring rhetorical patterns of framing, argumentative reversal, and shifts in the focus of public discussion. It argues that these patterns function as mechanisms for managing the tension between uncompromising ideological commitments and the practical demands of changing political and social realities. Rather than treating cynicism as merely a by-product of political discourse, the article proposes that, in this context, it operates as a recurring discursive mechanism that facilitates the preservation of ideological continuity while accommodating institutional and societal change.

Keywords:

Rhetorical Cynicism; Political Humor; Irony; Discourse Analysis; Political Discourse; Haredi Society; Haredi Conscription; Public Rhetoric.

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The Beilis Trial in the Mirror of the Humor Columns of the Warsaw Yiddish Press

Moshe Rosenberg ³

Abstract

Mendel Beilis Trial in the Pages of the Humor Sections of Warsaw Yiddish Newspapers (1911-1913)

On April 2 1911 the mutilated body of a Ukrainian Christian boy was discovered in a cave near Kiev. As a result of the wild incitement of the antisemitic Russian Right, a blood-libel case was mounted with accusations of ritual murder by a Jew called Mendel Beilis. This blood-libel elicited a very strong reaction by the Jewish press, as well as liberal newspapers around the world, which protested against this terrible injustice. Many articles were published in the “serious” pages of the newspapers, focusing on the process of creation of the bill of indictment and on the coverage of the trial. In this research paper, I cover the responses of the humor sections of the two most popular Yiddish daily newspapers in the Russian Empire of that period: The sections "Tagelicheglych-vertlekh" ("Daily Tongue Sharpening") in the newspaper *Haynt*; "Der hon" ("The Roster") and "Der krumer Shpigel" ("The Crooked Mirror") in the newspaper *Der Moment*, contained much stronger and more sarcastic language than what could be found in the “serious” sections of the newspapers. This paradoxical phenomenon of humor connected to a blood libel, and the accusation against a Jew (Beilis) and all the Jewish population, of ritual murder, is explained by the character of Jewish humor, which is composed of laughter mixed with tears, based on the Psychoanalytical theory of Sigmund Freud which claims that humor enables people to withstand unbearable situations while mitigating the experience of painful feelings.

Keywords:

Yiddish Newspapers, Jewish Humor, Ritual Murder, Blood Libel, Antisemitism in the Russian Empire.

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Is a man a man if his wife allows him? A legal study of the play

Shnei Kunilemel

Yaniv Shimon Goldberg ⁴

Abstract

This article examines Abraham Goldfaden's play *The Two Kuni-Lemls* (*Shnei Kuni Lemeḥ*) from legal, psychoanalytic, and feminist perspectives. At its core is the question of whether a father may compel his daughter to marry against her will. Through an analysis of Jewish legal sources, the article demonstrates that Jewish law requires a woman's consent to marriage. Consequently, the conduct of Reb Pinḥas does not reflect the normative position of Jewish law but rather a patriarchal social reality. The article further interprets the characters through the psychoanalytic and feminist theories of Nancy Chodorow, Jessica Benjamin, and Carol Gilligan. Reb Pinḥas embodies patriarchal authority, seeking to preserve control and masculine identity, whereas Rebecca represents an ethic of care, empathy, and respect for her daughter's autonomy. The article concludes that Goldfaden employs comedy as a vehicle for criticizing arranged marriages imposed without consent and the traditional patriarchal social order, while affirming the values of love, individual choice, and gender equality. In doing so, it highlights the gap between the normative principles of Jewish law and the social realities of nineteenth-century Jewish society.

Keywords:

Abraham Goldfaden, *The Two Kuni-Lemls* (*Shnei Kuni Lemeḥ*), Yiddish Theatre, Jewish Law, Arranged Marriage, Haskalah Movement Patriarchy, Nancy Chodorow, Carol Gilligan, Marriage Law, Gender, Masculine Identity, Comedy, Halakha and Society.

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