

Lag B'Omer -- Notes from Israel's Burning Man festival:

My neighbours are lighting fires and blasting their music at jet engine decibels. I hope their amplifiers catch fire.

Another Bagrut has come and gone. As usual, some are thrilled, others are morose, and once again it looks as if the letters A, B, C, D, E, F, G were distributed randomly upon the examination forms, like sprinkles on cake. In another week, examiners like me, who have been hovering overhead, are going to sweep down to the Marvad and feed on the corpses of the exam papers. We will fatten upon the answers, and, in my case, will seek out the succulent bloopers, savory misspellings, and mouth-watering malapropisms.

Speaking of flying, rumors are swarming like deranged bees that the whole system is about to change again. Educational programs are a lot like my underwear. They have to be changed frequently, but no sooner do we get used to the new one, than the PoTB (Powers that Be) brings an old one out from the laundry line, smelling fresh and looking new. Unfortunately, it's been washed in Colon (a major Israeli laundry detergent company, and a sad reminder of the level of English in this country), and you can tell. What the Peronistas are going to do to Judy Steiner's masterpiece is still unknown, although I hear that the Minister is hiring hundreds of English speaking salsa dancers.

I've had a hard day. . . I complained to Tech Support at the college that I can't upload files onto the moodle. And they cheerfully informed me that the system was bugged for a week, surprise surprise. But it's just been fixed. So I try to connect, unsuccessfully, go back to the Techies, who tell me my school system must be worked. And so it was. So there went a whole hour of my Shehyyya hours.

I have finally thrown away the computer that you have all come to know and love. Turns out that most of my troubles that I once complained about were caused by its advanced age (Bat Mizva, older than my car). Of course it means putting in Windows 7 , which in turn means that everything I learned in that course in 1995 is totally useless.(remember—that's when they gave us northerners 6 extra Tekken hours plus full course meals plus a laptop)

So I have to spend hours figuring out how to merge a new file with an old or getting files listed by details rather than by little annoying icons. Why can't they update our brains the way they do the systems. I just noticed another great change from windows whatever to windows 7: the old system had the grammar checker underline in green, now it underlines in blue. Subliminal Zionist trickery?

Speaking of trickery, one of the most joyful events of the past weeks was seeing Olmert actually get it. This is what I wrote when the news first broke in March, but it never got put up. (got put? What kind of English is that?):

Faced with conviction for accepting bribes, Former Prime Minister Ehud Olmert is still stubbornly refusing to take a lie detector test. He has, however, offered to strap himself into Former Prime Minister Arik Sharon's life support apparatus.



Now. I thought this was pretty funny, and so did the people on the bench with me and one of the cats, but David L (the one and only,) obviously didn't. Maybe we can sneak it past him by putting it on page 2. (As I write this, I am harried by Computer issues: the alignment keeps switching back and forth, so suddenly

I'm in Hebrew or flown off the other end of the page. And now this tiny grey triangle has appeared at the top of the paragraph. I don't need this. That's what we have acid for.

Here 's another wasted joke: The Mafia has a code: If you squeal on them, they kill you. You must keep the oath of silence: Omerta. All you need is to stick in an 'L' right, and you have instant T-shirt.

I even found a video game : The following was really there; I just added the red 'L'. I thought I was being SOo o o o clever. Then it turns out nobody's ever heard of this game and the joke is dead. But you can see it anyway:

OImerta: City of Gangsters



What else is happ'nin? The Rolling Stones are slouching off to Bethlehem, or at least, Tel Aviv. But I can't get no satisfaction in that, for the concert is slated for right after Shavuot, and it looks like the Bad Boy of Wrinkle is going to have to gyrate without me. The only solution, as I see it, is to make up our own Rolling Stone 'cover' songs to sing on Shavuot between the knishes. Songs that deal with our own plight, living here in the Land of the Holy Traffic Jam.

So far I've come up with these:



I can't get no Shabbes-faction (in 2 part disharmony, sung by Haredim and Seculars.

Ulmert's Little Helper sung by Shula (digitally remastered from the original tapes!)

Can't you Hear me Zokken? Sung by Ehud

Sympathy for the Devil The Israeli press corps

Let's spend NIS 500,000 together.

Angie by my Ethiopian students (in joke: anyone who teaches OLOT hears them saying "angie! Angie! All the time. It means 'Hey, YOU!'

Jumpin' Jack Bresslaver

Sticky fingers (for dollars)

Gimme Shelter (all of us)

You can't always get what you want (John Kerry Abbu Mazn...Bibi All of us?)

And, best of all:

Good bye, Ruby Rivlin (sung by Dalia Itsick)

I'm sure you can think up many more.

So do so. And tell me how to fix the left alignment before I go nuts.

Well, here we are together at the end of the piece. I have saved the best for last. Because, however frustrating the year has been I can always take comfort in the fact that I have a student in the immigrants class whose name... is actually... and I'm not making this up. .

ASKABITCH!!!!!!!!!!!!!! Is this not too much? It has kept me going thru the hard times.

Is this fair, you ask? To laugh at some poor Olah just cause of her name?

Well, don't ask me. Askabitch.

Good night.