

THE EAST 55TH STREET
CONSERVATIVE SYNAGOGUE

PRESENTS



ANYTHING GOES

*Nothing's changed --
Since the days when Pharaoh pursued,
And then Amalek turned the screws,
They keep trying to kill the Jews.
So today --
Though the Jews they would still assail,
All that effort's to no avail,
They can't bring down Yisra'el*

In olden days the wounded pride
Of Haman nearly led to genocide.
Do you suppose, anything goes?

But Mordechai and Esther managed
To foil the plan and salvage
The folks God chose -- so anything goes.

The Jews have gone mad tonight,
And good's bad tonight,
And he's she tonight,
And she's he tonight,
Blessing's curse tonight,
It's all reverse tonight,
We'll just drink till no one knows.¹

So on other days a rabbi mocking
Is looked on as something shocking,
Now Heaven knows, anything goes.

When a foolish king who's failed to grow up
Can order his queen to show up
Without her clothes -- anything goes.

And when government officials abdicate
And those in charge prevaricate
Unopposed -- anything goes.

1. אמר רבא: מיחייב איניש לבסומי בפוריא עד דלא ידע בין ארור המן לברוך מרדכי.
Rava said: A person is obligated to get drunk on Purim until he does not know the difference between "cursed be Haman" and "blessed be Mordechai." (Babylonian Talmud Megillah 7b)

We are now permittin',
What was forbidden,
For the Shushan Yiden,
Were almost smitten,
And in *mitten drinnan*,
God's face was hidden,²
Or, so the story goes.

For while evil men are gaining traction,
The king 'stead of taking action
Is taking a doze -- anything goes.

Through fast and feast and femininity
The will of the Divinity
Esther exposed, rousting our foes.

Or perhaps escape from this precipitous
Brink was just serendipitous --
Think heaven knows? Or that anything goes?

The Jews'll transgress tonight,
And cross-dress tonight,³
And when we bless tonight,
It's half in jest tonight,
We're in disguise tonight,
To analyze tonight,
What concealing can disclose.

So though this *shpiel* may seem a bit risqué
We are compelled to play today.
Rise and pray [*we rise for Maariv*]
*Purim Sameach!*⁴
Barkhu et Adonai HaMevorakh!

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2. The Talmud (Hullin 139b) notes the similarity between the word *hester* and the name *Esther*:
אסתור מן התורה מנין? ואנכי הסתר אסתיר
Where is [the Book of] Esther hinted at in the Torah? "And I will surely hide My face" (*haster astir panai*)
(Deut. 31:18).
The hiddenness of God's face is reflected in the absence of any direct mention of God in the entire Megillat Esther.
3. ומה שנהגו ללבוש פרצופים בפורים וגבר לובש שמלת אשה ואשה כלי גבר
It is the custom to wear masks on Purim, and for a man to wear women's clothes, and for a woman to wear men's clothes. (Shulhan Arukh, Oraḥ Ḥayyim 696:8)
4. *Purim Sameach*: Happy Purim.

I COULD WRITE A BOOK

Since you asked Me, I gave you the Book;
To teach the way to walk, and listen, and look.
And I wrote a preface, on how we met;
That the world will never forget.

And the simple secret of the plot;
Is just to tell you that I love you, alot.
Then the world discovers, when My Book's done;
Adonai Eloheinu is One.

אֶהְבֶּת עוֹלָם בֵּית יִשְׂרָאֵל עִמָּךְ אֶהְבֶּת,
תּוֹרָה וּמִצְוֹת, חֻקִּים וּמִשְׁפָּטִים, אוֹתָנוּ לְמַדְתָּ
Ahavat olam beit Yisrael am'kha ahavta
Torah umitzvot, hukkim umishpatim otanu limadta
עַל כֵּן יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ, בְּשִׂבְבוֹנוֹ וּבְקוֹמָנוּ נִשְׂיַח בְּחֻקֶיךָ,
וְנִשְׂמַח בְּדַבְרֵי תוֹרָתְךָ וּבְמִצְוֹתֶיךָ לְעוֹלָם וָעֶד.
כִּי הֵם חַיֵּינוּ וְאַרְךְ יָמֵינוּ, וּבְהֵם נִהְגָה יוֹמָם וְלַיְלָה,
וְאֶהְבֶּתְךָ אֶל תִּסִּיר מִמֶּנּוּ לְעוֹלָמִים.
בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ, אוֹהֵב עַמּוֹ יִשְׂרָאֵל:
*Barukh atah Adonai ohev amo Yisrael.*⁵

5. The theme of this blessing (the second blessing before the Shma) is our expression of gratitude to God for giving us the gift of Torah, which is an expression of God's love.

LADY IS A TRAMP

I go out dancing, when I'm in the mood
I like to flaunt it but not in the nude
And I will call it when I'm being screwed
That's why the lady is a tramp.

I'll drink l'hayim, but not to excess
I don't respond well when under duress
I know I'm *oblige*, cause I am *noblesse*
That's why the lady is a tramp.

I don't need crowns, thrones, mansions and such
I don't need much
Except -- respect!
I've got my style, and won't have it cramped
That's why the lady is a tramp



I don't do harems with pretty young things
I treasure children, but not when they're kings
Won't be submissive when I can run rings
That's why the lady is a tramp.

I don't play lotto, with other folks' fate
I won't wage warfare to prove that I'm great
Won't cede my power to people who hate
That's why the lady is a tramp.

I like to be free, do what I choose
What can I lose?
That writ -- past nit!
And frankly, my dear, I don't give a damn!
That's why the lady is a --

Grand dame I am, refined as he's coarse
I don't write edicts, that I can't enforce
He'll feel remorse, but I'll be divorced!
That's why the lady is a tramp
That's why the lady is a scamp
I'm out of lyrics, just filling a vamp --
That is why the lady is a tramp!

SWINGIN' ON A STAR



Would you like to swing on a star
Have a *hag* for you in *Adar*⁶
And make Scripture from your memoir
Or would you rather be a duck

A duck ducks her duty cause she's not very brave
She floats but she never makes a wave
She runs for cover when she hears her name
She holds high office but she's often lame
So if your plan is to wait and wish for luck
You will turn out to be a duck

You know your name -- it means hidden star
And you are hinted at in *Torah*
And maybe you could bring *geulah*⁷
Or would you rather be a flea

A flea goes unnoticed and his impact is small
His deeds matter little if at all
He makes no difference as he flits and flies
In insignificance he lives and dies
And no surprise, if your motto is "who me?"
You may grow up to be a flea

We never know what we're meant to do
And it's a risk, that's certainly true
But you see it's all up to you
This could be who you really are
You could be Esther *haMalkah*!⁸

6. The *hag* ("holiday") of Purim takes place in the month of Adar.

7. *Geulah*: redemption, salvation.

8. *HaMalkah*: the Queen.

YOU DO SOMETHING TO ME

Jews do something to me
Somehow they really exercise me
Tell me how could it be
They just refuse to aggrandize me
Hebrews have their own way
They say *oy vey* while they pray to *Yahweh*
Those Jews do something to me
That nobody else could do.

Jews do something to me
Something that really stupefies me
The queen bee invites only me
Still Mordechai stands there and defies me
*Koved*⁹ was my *quid pro quo*
Go know that *shmo* Mo' would no-go my show
Yes Jews do something to me
That nobody else could do.

Jews do something to me
Hebrews give me the heebie-jeebies
I'll hang that *Ish Yehudi*¹⁰
I'll soon say *veni vidi vici*
His very name I abhor
How now he'll kowtow, bow down to the floor
Yes I'll do something to Jews
That nobody else would do.

Jews do something to him
Something that surely will surprise him
He'd kill us all on a whim
But we'll be around to eulogize him
Ask not, for whom tolls that bell
Who knew that two Jews knew to noose so well?
For Jews do something to him
That nobody else can do
That nobody else can do!

9. *Kavod*: honor, respect, dignity, public recognition

10. Mordechai is referred to as *ish Yehudi* ("a certain Jewish man") in Est. 2:8.

OH! LOOK AT ME NOW

MOSES SUPPOSES

Moses supposes the Torah he closes
But Moses supposes erroneously
Esther, she “knowses,” the Torah’s not “closes”
As Moses supposes the Torah to be.

Rashi on Esther 9:32

אסתר בקשה מאת חכמי הדור לקבעה ולכתוב ספר זה עם שאר הכתובים וזהו ונכתב בספר:

Esther requested of the Sages of that generation to commemorate her and to

write this book with the rest of the
Scriptural Writings [i.e., as part of the
Hebrew Bible], and that is the meaning
of “and inscribed in *the* Book.”¹¹

וּמֵאִמֵּר אֶסְתֵּר קַיִם דְּבָרֵי הַפְּרִים
הָאֵלֶּה וְנִכְתָּב בַּסֵּפֶר.

On the basis of Esther’s request,
these Purim matters were perpetuated,
and inscribed in the Book.
(Esther 9:32)

Ruth Rabbah 4:5

רב ור' חנינא ור' יונתן ובר קפרא וריב"ל
אמרו המגילה הזאת אין נאמרה מפי
בית דין מסיני נאמרה . . .

Rab, Rabbi Hanina, R. Yonatan, and

Bar Kappara all said: This scroll was not composed by the Court of that time, but was said upon Mt. Sinai . . .

Haman: I was the guy who was so elated
I thought that I would be elevated to power
This was my hour
But, look at me now!

Mordechai: I was the bloke in sackcloth and ashes
Now I’m bespoke -- with medals and sashes and rings
One of those things
Oh, look at me now!

Esther: I’m not the one who used to take stands, but
Now I’ve begun to issue commands. I’m the queen --
My own halloween!
Oh look at me now!

Haman:

He used to be, as Jews should be,
Powerless, scared and unkempt
Now he’s *farpitzed*, I’m left *farmished*,
Farblondzhet, *farfoylt*, and *farklemp!*



11. Rashi’s comment is based on the verse’s use of the definite article, “*the* Book,” as opposed to “a book.”
“*The*” Book thus refers to the Torah. Indeed, Megillat Esther was included in the Torah via rabbinic dictum,
long after the death of Moses (Megillah 7a).

SWINGIN' ON A STAR - REPRISE

Haman: I trusted luck, so I cast the *pur*¹² but
I was a *shmuck*, cause I was so sure of my mazel
What a *shlmazel*
Oh look at me now!

Mordechai: I'm not the guy who cared about *koved*
Now I'm the guy they say is beloved by -- most¹³
I guess that's a toast
Oh, look at me now!

Esther: It wasn't the guy who brought the salvation
But it's the guy who gets the ovation -- of course
He gets the horse
Oh look at him now!

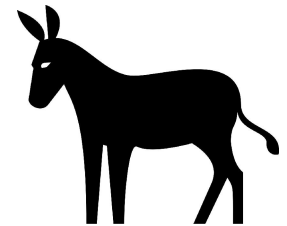
Mordechai and Esther:

We used to be, as Jews should be,
Committed to doing what's right
We got our way, so we'll seize the day,
And kill everybody in sight!¹⁴

God has for us some high expectations
We're *am kadosh*, a light to the nations - we're priests¹⁵
We are for peace
Oh! Look at us now!

Would you like to swing on a star
Have a *hag* for you in *Adar*
And make Scripture from your memoir
Or would you rather be a mule

A mule's always stiff of neck and stubborn of heart
He thinks that his cynicism's smart
He will not study and he will not pray
His thoughts are muddy -- he can only bray
And by the way if you hate to go to *shul*
You may grow up to be a mule



Would you like to swing on a star
Have a *hag* for you in *Adar*
Add *kedushah*¹⁶ to your repertoire
Or would you rather be a bird



A bird is a chatterer who gossips and squeals
Whatever he thinks he must reveal
He loves to *kvetch* and spread *lashon hara*¹⁷
He never thinks to speak *divrei Torah*¹⁸
So if you won't watch your language and your words
You could turn out to be a bird

12. *Pur*: lottery.

13. See Est. 10:3 ("Mordechai the Jew . . . was beloved by the majority of his brethren").

14. See Esther chapter 9.

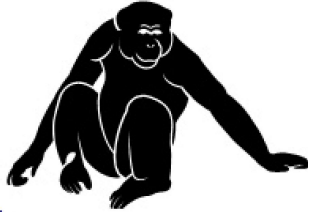
15. *Am kadosh*: holy people. See, e.g., Exod. 19:6 (וְאַתֶּם תִּהְיוּ לִי כֹהֲנִים וְגוֹי קְדוֹשׁ) ("you shall be to Me a kingdom of priests, and a holy nation").

16. *Kedushah*: holiness.

17. *Lashon ha-ra*: evil speech.

18. *Divrei Torah*: words of Torah.

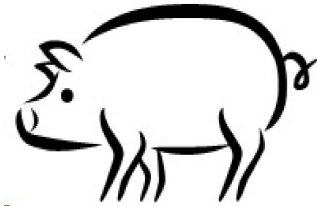
Would you like to swing on a star
Have a *hag* for you in *Adar*
And fulfill who you really are
Or would you rather be an ape



An ape is a mimic - monkey see monkey do
He's never original or new
Because he'll only do what's done before
His creativity goes out the door
And what is more, if evolution you'd escape
You could shape up to be an ape

Would you like to swing on a star
Have a *hag* for you in *Adar*
And make Scripture from your memoir
Or would you rather be a pig

A pig will eat anything no matter how *treif*¹⁹
A limit on food will make him chafe
Because he swallows all that tempts his eye
His gut and head are filled with *hazera*²⁰
So if you think that *kashrut*²¹ is just for pigs
You could grow up to be a pig



19. *Treif*: non-kosher.

20. *Hazera*: Yiddish, non-kosher food, from *hazer* ("pig").

21. *Kashrut*: Jewish dietary laws.

Would you like to swing on a star
Have a *hag* for you in *Adar*
Add *kedushah* to your repertoire
Or would you rather be a leech

A leech is a sycophant who only can take
He won't do a thing for others' sake
To volunteering he will say "not I"
When they pass the *pushke*²² he will pass on by
And that is why, if to give gives you the creeps
You will be thought of as a leech

*Teshuvah tefillah u'tzedakah*²³
And just a touch of holy *chutzpah*
Is what it takes to bring *geulah*
According to the *megillah*

Haman's an external foe but also inside
In the *yetzer ha-ra*²⁴ he does reside
He craves attention and he needs *kavod*
He sows dissension cause he thinks he's owed
So if your ego is what you act upon
You are empowering Haman

*Tikkun olam*²⁵ is long overdue
And it's the heart of bein' a Jew
So you see it's all up to you
You could be better than you are
You could be Esther *HaMalkah*!

22. *Pushke*: collection plate

23. *Teshuvah tefillah u'tzedakah*: repentance, prayer, and giving.

24. *Yetzer ha-ra*: the evil impulse.

25. *Tikkun Olam*: repair of the world.

CREDITS

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SONG CREDITS

“Anything Goes,” Music and Original Lyrics by Cole Porter

“I Could Write a Book,” Music by Richard Rodgers, Original Lyrics by Lorenz Hart

“Lady Is a Tramp,” Music by Richard Rodgers, Original Lyrics by Lorenz Hart

“Moses Supposes,” Music by Nacio Herb Brown, Original Lyrics by Arthur Freed

“Oh Look at Me Now,” Music by Joe Bushkin, Original Lyrics by John DeVries

“Swingin’ on a Star,” Music by Jimmy Van Heusen, Original Lyrics by Johnny
Burke

“You Do Something to Me,” Music and Original Lyrics by Cole Porter

PURIM LYRICS

Rabbi Jan Uhrbach