

ZO, Vat's New?

By Mitchell Bard

Showing their usual capacity to make the immutable mutable, the orthodox in Beverly Hills have interpreted the laws regarding the *eruv* in such a way that a large area has been "fenced off" so that they may carry on Shabbat. The *eruv* is not a Beverly Hills invention (though it probably would have been if it didn't already exist in Jewish law), but what makes this one really unique is that it encompasses a large, heavily travelled public area that is enclosed by fishing line attached to telephone posts. Naturally, there are large segments of the orthodox community who find this to be a violation since intra-movement bickering is the second most popular religious pastime after inter-movement bickering. The great fear whenever a law is bent, spindled, or mutilated is

that a precedent will be set which could lead to even more bending, spindling, and mutilating.

The *eruv* precedent is already being used to justify new modifications on Sabbath observance. One group of Jews, for example, has strung a fishing line from UCLA to the Rose Bowl to allow them to go to football games. Rumor has it that another group is planning a similar line to Dodger stadium. Ingenious students are already working on ways to make it possible to go to the beach on Shabbat. So far, they have not figured out how to get to the beach without camping out before the sun sets on Friday, but once they are there, they have strung a line around the beach and out around some buoys to allow them to surf.

The other religious movements have not been dormant. The Reform movement can always be counted on for its progressive interpretation of Jewish law. The latest edict being "primatelineal descent" which holds that Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob evolved from apes. This has created a major controversy among Reform scholars who are divided over

the question of whether Baby Fae's baboon heart transplant qualified as a Reform conversion under the new edict. An orthodox spokesman refused to comment on the controversy because the operation was conducted in a Seventh-Day Adventist hospital. The conservative movement issued this statement: "We feel very strongly both ways."

Some of you may have seen the article in the December 13 edition of the Los Angeles Times headlined: "Israelis May Try to Sell Camels to Arabs." Given all of Israel's problems, this sounds like a very good use of resources. With inflation increasing faster than the speed of Israeli drivers, everyone is trying to find a way to make a million shekelim so they can afford to buy Purple Rain for their VCRs. One kibbutz in the Negev has begun selling sand to a small town in Iowa that is trying to become the Honolulu of the Midwest. An enterprising moshav, meanwhile, has found a more profitable use for their shekels. Members collect ten shekel notes and recycle them into rolls of toilet paper. This gives new meaning to the saying "it isn't worth the paper

it's printed on."

While I'm on the subject of Jewish stereotypes, I was walking down Bruin Walk last quarter and I overheard a woman say that her friend had just come back from Israel "Miss Jew." We know that a trip to Israel is the best thing to make people feel Jewish, but such trips have even more peculiar affects on young Jewish women. I have never heard of a woman who did not go over to Israel and fall in love with an Israeli and have a summer (fall, winter, and/or spring) romance. This is not that surprising, after all, Israeli men are attractive; they have those dark Middle Eastern complexions and seem to be irresistible to women in their army uniforms.

I was mentioning this phenomenon to an Israeli girlfriend while standing on line for a movie and she informed me that Israeli men love American women because they are "loose." Upon hearing this, the woman standing in front of us turned to me and said she just changed her mind about sending her 14 year-old to Israel. After travelling through Europe, I was aware of the reputation of American women, but American men have a hard time accepting the idea that Jewish women are "willing." There must be something about the long plane flight or El Al's food that changes their psychological makeup.

Some people see this as a sad commentary on American women. I see it as a sad commentary on American men. We go over to Israel and also fall in love because Israeli women are among the most beautiful in the world. We also are attracted to the dark skin, particularly of the Yemenites, although women in uniforms don't usually get us too excited. There is only one small problem, Israeli women won't give American men the time of day. I've asked my female friends about this phenomenon and they just laugh and say American men are losers. Well, I don't know about the rest of you guys, but I see this as a darn good reason for making *aliyah*. After a few months in the desert you'll have the dark skin, sexy Israeli accent, and suddenly find yourself very appealing to women when dressed in fatigues. I, for one, have got to make my move fast because at the rate my hair is falling out, nothing will help me soon.

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