

December 23, 1986
21 Kislev 5747

TO: Colleagues
FROM: Dovid Roskies
RE: Idea for a synthesis course

In the Fall of 1987 I should like to teach a synthesis course on the forms of Jewish parody. Exactly eighty years before Israel Davidson published his dissertation on Parody in Jewish Literature (Columbia University Press), but since then, surprisingly little work has been done in the field. My own interest in the subject stems from my work on Against the Apocalypse where I tried to contextualize the writings of Abramovitsh-Mendele in terms of the "sacred parody" that had preceded him in Jewish culture. More recently I argued (in Orim) that parody safeguards the health of modern Jewish culture. In any event, there is much work to be done both on the high literary and popular forms of parody at least from the rabbinic period on and I am writing to enlist your help. If there is a particular period, genre, writer or artist you should like to lecture on, please let me know as soon as possible. This is not a course I can teach by myself, so without your collaboration, I'll have to drop the whole idea. And who knows? Maybe a new anthology will come of it, or at least an issue of Prooftexts!

Dear Dovid,

I am interested in lecturing on the following area(s) for your synthesis-course-in the-making:-----

Sincerely,