

THE WIZARD OF M'OZ  
Minyan M'At Purim 1987

DOROTHY: (Comes on stage, notices sign that reads "Minyan Meeting") I sure hope we can find a good room. It's been so long since we had a permanent home! (Sings)

Somewhere o'er Sloans and Zabars  
Way up high  
There's a place that may be our  
Home way up in the sky.

Somewhere over a chapel  
Many floors up  
There's a place with a promise  
Not to tshedrey our kop.

Our minyan's really rather small  
Yet isn't small  
It seems to be a riddle!  
A minyan on the avant garde  
Traditional  
Yet also in the middle.

Somewhere over the streetlights  
What we seek  
Is a place that can be our  
Home for three hours a week.

Somewhere over a chapel  
Way up high  
There's a room that I heard of  
That we could beautify.

A place where we can be ourselves  
With empty shelves  
It's difficult to find it;  
A place that when we look around  
We each can say:  
(Recitative) "Well, actually, you know, really, I don't  
mind it!"

Somewhere over the streetlights  
If fate is kind  
We'll find a perfect place -- yet  
There's one thing to keep in mind:

That somewhere under the streetlights  
Without exa-a-a-ger-a-tion  
There are homeless minions  
Meeting in Penn Station.

Then enters the "room." The clock reads 4:00.

CLOCK ATTENDANT moves dial to 8:00.

DOROTHY (emerges from meeting in a daze): I feel like I've been hit by a tornado. What was it they said? Letter written 2/1/87...beginning to evaluate...oh yah, a room that is very spacious, resembles the 6th floor, not shared by an intrusive group, with child care facilities nearby, close, but not too close...

BAG LADY (interrupts her rambling): I have one word to say to you: Velcro!

DOROTHY: Velcro! Velcro! (Falls)

CLOCK ATTENDANT showers DOROTHY with sparkles while CAST blows whistles.

DOROTHY (wakes up and rubs her eyes): Yo-yo, what have you done! You've pooped! (Looks around) Wait, I don't need a pooper-scooper. We're not on the Upper West Side anymore. I've gotta get home! My analyst will kill me!

WICKED WARLOCK OF THE WEST SIDE (Rushes in): I want those ruby-red Reebok running slippers. My secretary needs them for when (s)he runs arbitrage errands for my inside trading. Give them to me, dearie.

DOROTHY: No, I can't give them to you. They're the only shoes allowed for jogging on Riverside Drive.

WWWS: I'll get you yet, my pretty, and your dog, too. I can't touch you here in Yuppie-Puppie land, but just try running north of 110th Street! You'll never find a minyan just right for you (faces the audience) and ain't that the truth! (exits)

DOROTHY (keeps walking in a daze and bumps into the BAG LADY): Who are you?

BAG LADY: Ding dong, you came to me  
You won't advance and I can see  
Ding dong I know where you should go!

Ding dong, he's really smart  
He has a heart, he'll do his part  
Ding dong to the Rabbi you should go!

Ding dong, he's really great  
The Rabbi will change your fate.  
Ding dong, the Rabbi of M'Oz!

Ding dong, that's what I'll say  
Be on your way  
Ding dong, can you spare some change today?

DODORTHY (gives her a few homen-tashn. Continues on her way with Yo-yo in tow.) The Rabbi of M'Oz? Who the hell is he? (Bumps into the SPIRITUAL SEEKER who is shaking a tambourine and chanting his Mantra: I say kriyes-shma...2 times daily...

DOROTHY: Are you the Rabbi?

**SEEKER:** Oh man, go easy with me! I'm a spiritual seeker.

DOROTHY: What's that?

**SEEKER** (sings):

I've been looking for salvation  
 All across the nation  
 Praying day and night.  
 I've been Moslem, I've been Buddhist  
 I've been Taoist and a nudist--  
 If I only saw the light!

I'm a spiritual seeker  
 In a world that's ever bleaker  
 How lonely is my plight.  
 I've been silent with the Trappists  
 And been new-born with the Baptists--  
 If I only saw the light!

I've read  
 The Book of the Dead  
 I've slept on nails till I was black and blue  
 I've had nothing but seaweed and rice to chew;  
 I even watched  
 Phil Donahue!

And then I had a vision  
 Of a grand old time religion  
 That I thought might be just right.  
 So I'm trying out things Jewish  
 Even learning some Hebrewish  
 Getting closer to the light!

FEMINIST: (enters in a huff) That's not funny. Spiritual quest is a serious business. I'm frankly offended by people who treat it lightly...by people who treat anything lightly.

DOROTHY & **SEEKER:** She must be a feminist!

FEMINIST: (Starts giggling) Actually, it's very funny.

DOROTHY: What kind of feminist are you?

FEMINIST: I'm a feminist (laughs) without balls.

DOROTHY: Did you say "gall"?

FEMINIST: No, "balls" (laughs some more).

**SEEKER:** I don't get it. What would you do if you had balls?

FEMINIST:

I would spend my time out-drinkin'  
the men instead of shrinking  
like a flower on the walls.  
No more asking, I would demand  
I'd out-bully Betty Friedan  
If I only had the balls!

If some flannel-suited mister  
Tried to harass any sister  
Down through the corporate halls;  
I would flatten his libido  
Like a nuclear torpedo  
If I only had the balls!

I would dominate the minyan  
and insist on my opinion  
No matter whom it galls;  
I'd be brazen, I'd be pushy  
And my davening won't be mushy  
If I only had the balls! (Curtsy)

DOROTHY: So you want to be a tough feminist?

FEMINIST: That's what everyone tells me I should be.

DOROTHY: Sounds like you need a truly egalitarian minyan.

FEMINIST: Where would I find that?

DOROTHY: Come with us to the Rabbi. We're on our way to see him now. The Rabbi will fix everything.

DOROTHY, **SEEKER**, FEMINIST:

We're off to see the Rabbi,  
A Rabbi who'll read us the rules.  
His insight in our plight will help preempt a fight  
For a fight's only fitting for fools.  
If the Israelite creed  
Is the one that you heed,  
A response from a Rov  
Should determine your deeds  
Indeed, indeed, indeed, indeed, indeed,  
For it's an exemplary life he leads!  
We're off to see the Rabbi,  
A Rabbi who'll read us the rules!

DOROTHY: Goodness me, we've gone such a long way already! We must be close to the Rabbi.

WWWS: [appears] Close? You've hardly even started! You'll never find the Rabbi, my sweeties.

SEEKER: Oh yes we will, for the Way is long, the Road is narrow, the Day in short/ but the toll-collector is lazy, the traffic cop is ~~away~~/on the take, so we can speed and get there before nightfall (hee-hee).

WWWS: You cracked, karma-lized cantor of krias-shma, how would you like to experience existential angst, or maybe a bit of anomie, say, for the next 200 years?

SEEKER: Help, help, my soul is being sucked dry! [Falls down. Yo-yo licks his face]

WWWS: As for you, cowardly feminist, you don't really want a minyan. What you need is ... to win the "Miss Minyanette" beauty pageant! With my bankroll and Wall Street connections, it would be a piece of cake!

FEMINIST: No, I'd rather have some balls, if you please.

WWWS: Wait - you could marry some filthy rich white collar criminal, or, hmm ... beauty pageants... [sings (to tune of Rad HaLayla)]  
 Don't act chastely, don't be hasty,  
 To decline the proffered chance!  
 Play a vixen, tell lies like Nixon,  
 Walk through the pageant in a trance.  
 Don't be honest, don't be straight  
 Your next break may come too late  
 "Miss Minyanette" is in your grasp!  
 I'll be laying out the dough  
 To make the judges see it so  
 In sums to make the paying public gasp!  
 So flirt, and flounce,  
 Your upper torso bounce.  
 Bathing suits become you, dear,  
 Innuendos do not hear.  
 Concentrate upon the crown,  
 Opportunities abound:  
 Parades down streets, first class seats,  
 Bloomies' model for designer sheets,  
 Endorsements with kick-backs ten percent, per-ce-nt  
 And if your luck holds out, you might  
 Earn the right to spend the night  
 With some potentate of Persian bent.

FEMINIST: Not me! I would never do business with Iran. Who do you think I am -- the President?

DOROTHY: That's tellin 'em! Don't let him con you! If it's balls you want, the Rabbi will fix you.

WWWS (Disappears with a cry)

DOROTHY: Wow, that was a close call! Are you alright, Yo-Yo?

SEEKER: My karma -- almost lost it!

FEMINIST: Even the witches are men around here. See what I mean? That's why we need to find that Rabbi fast. He'll be sure to help us.

SEEKER: He? Shame on you! What if it's a woman?

FEMINIST: You're right. If the witches around here are men, the rabbis ought to be women.

INTELLECTUAL (interrupts): That's ridiculous! [Additional dialogue; cue]: It's a great magazine.

DOROTHY, SEEKER, FEMINIST: We don't understand.

INTELLECTUAL: [Additional dialogue]

DOROTHY: What would you do if you had a group that understood you?

INTELLECTUAL:

You know it drives me nearly batty,  
That people go to see a rabbi,  
And think he'll do some good;  
And it makes me want to holler  
'Cuz what they really need's a scholar--  
If they only understood!

Just to quote from an amora  
While giving a d'var torah--  
Any bright Ramaz kid could.  
But the group I'd find my friends in  
Knows that texts are for emendin'--  
If I were only understood.

Picture me  
A Ph.D.  
With colleagues all around,  
We'd cite manuscripts that haven't yet been found.  
I feel elite  
How sweet

Just to dismiss with derision  
Those who think with imprecision  
Or don't publish as they should.  
With the books I'd be writin'  
I'd even have Neusner frightened  
If I were only understood.

SEEKER: You sound like loner to me. What you need is a high-powered intellectual minyan. Why don't you come along with us? We're going to the Rabbi of M'Oz.

INTELLECTUAL : Rabbi, Rabbi, Rabbi! What can he do for me?

DOROTHY: He's going to find me a perfect room.

**SEEKER**: And find me some spiritually-fulfilling Jewish environment.

FEMINIST: And give me some balls!

INTELLECTUAL: Oh, alright. At least I could get a paper out of it.

WICKED WARLOCK OF THE WEST SIDE (reappears): I'll fix that nattering narob of narcissistic knowledge! I'll dangle a little POWER in front of him. (To the INTELLECTUAL) Hey you shamanistic Shanmai, how would you like to become...Chairman of the Jewish Agency? Your own chauffeured car, someone to carry your briefcase, all the roast chicken dinners you can stomach, rubbing shoulders with Elie and Edgar and Henry, your name in the headlines of USA Today and The National Enquirer! -- and on top of that, hold the fate of the Jews in the palm of your hand! Who needs a minyan when you can have this?

INTELLECTUAL: Help me, Dorothy, it's so tempting, I'm melting, melting!

WWWS: That's my line, nerd! (exits)

DOROTHY: No, we've got to get to the Rabbi, he'll find you an understanding minyan. And who believes in the Jewish Agency anyway? If it's not a figment of the imagination, it ought to be!

ALL (Join hands singing): We're off to see the Rabbi... (Keep bopping along until they show signs of exhaustion. PROP MAN moves bus sign on stage.)

DOROTHY: Boy, I'm pooped!

**SEEKER**: Me too, and I haven't eaten a thing all day except a soy biscuit.

FEMINIST: And it's starting to rain.

INTELLECTUAL: Let's take umbrage in this bus shelter.

DOROTHY, **SEEKER**, FEMINIST: Umbrage? (Look at one another as if to say: This guy is cracked.)

DOROTHY: Look at all these neat signs. Here's one for Mother Truckers. "Let us schlep all your troubles away. Call 718-279-8295."

**SEEKER:** Here's one for Christian Carpet Cleaners: Let us save your rug today!

**FEMINIST:** "Join the Nicaragua Rally. The war you protest may be your own!"

**INTELLECTUAL:** "Find yourself and help yourself..."

**DOROTHY:** Wait, look at this: "For rabbinical advice on all matters spiritual or spatial. Free consultations daily (except Sabbath and fast days). The Rabbi of M'Oz, West End Avenue at 100th Street." West End Avenue at 100th! Why, we're only a block away!

**SEEKER, FEMINIST, INTELLECTUAL:** Let's go!

**ALL:** We're off to see the Rabbi  
A Rabbi who'll read us the rules...

**DOROTHY:** (Knocks on the "door.")

**RABBI:** (Busy playing with Rebbe cards; calls out the names as he flips them. At the sound of the knock, hastily collects them.)  
Kim du!

**SEEKER:** That's just my problem. I used to be a Hin-du but now me and my friends are looking for a Jewish home.

**RABBI:** Come in, pliss. Von't you have a glass tea and a piece cake? (Points to the Wizard of Oz book) I vaz just studying dis great mystical voyk. (Approaches with cards) You got maybe a Sollie 'Big Chuppah' Schneerson for two Yankel the Schmoover Greenberg?

**ALL:** (Protest) No, no! That's not what we came for!

**RABBI:** Out, goyim! Feh! Feh! Go back to the Vorlock, or vorse, the 92nd strit Vay!

**DOROTHY:** (Grabs RABBI by the beard and pulls it off) You humbug! You're a very bad man.

**RABBI:** (Pulls off beard and hat) No, I'm a very good man and a good minyanite -- JTS born and bred -- I'm just a very bad rebbe.

**SEEKER:** I'm looking for the way, but I can't find the way to the way.

**RABBI:** Back at Minyan M'Oz where I come from they have no better notion of "the way" than you do -- unless it is to the hall to chat -- but there is one thing they have that you don't: an autographed copy of The Jewish Catalogue written by 60s hippies who control their karma the way other people control their bladders. Read it, study it and eventually you, too, will convene a symposium on how the way -- any way -- is outdated.



FEMINIST: What about me, Rabbi, I wanna have balls.

RABBI: (to FEMINIST) As for you, my feminist friend, back at Minyan M'Oz there are plenty of feminists and they have the same problems you do but there are two things they have that you don't: A sense of humor (I hope!) and a copy of this record of Jewish feminist hits including: Tie That Yellow Tefillin Round Your Arm & Head; the great I Can Only Do Kiddush Cause They Say I Have No Chassidus; and the unforgettable If I Don't Count In Your Minyan, You Don't Count in My Bed.

INTELLECTUAL: Rabbi, no one understands me.

RABBI (to the INTELLECTUAL): As for you, my cerebral friend, back at Minyan M'Oz where I come from, the place is lousy with people who do nothing all day but write scholarly works. They are called intell...intelle...eh, smart people -- and their IQs are no bigger than yours; but there are two things they have that you don't. First, they each carry one of these so they know when someone is speaking on their level (gives him a level). Second, they have a certificate which they keep with them always which testifies that they are so smart that the editors of the Journal of Ancient Near Eastern & Biblical Studies will grovel at their feet in public at the simchah of their choice.

DOROTHY: These gifts are all wonderful, but I don't think there's anything in that bag for me.

RABBI: Sure there is. This blindfold. Who cares what your minyan room looks like! You don't even need a room! As long as you have your health and people to daven with who actually like you!

But even with all these things you will never find spiritual peace and communal contentment unless you come to the Minyan on time. So, I tell you what I'm gonna do. The first one of you to come to the Minyan on time from now until Pesach will get a 10 lb. wedge of kosher lepesach Fotzerama, Matcharoni cheese and this brochure showing all the restrooms within five blocks of the Kotel.

**ALL:** But how do we get to the minyan?

RABBI: Ach, I can see with this bunch I'm being forced to make a cataclysmic decision. The only way to get you all to Minyan M'Oz is for me to take you there myself. Take 3 steps back, turn to the left, turn to the right and to the center. (to the audience) And for those of you who don't say Musaf, I have a niggun instead. Now repeat after me: There's no place like M'Oz.

ALL (Sing; WWSWS brings lyrics on a board)  
We're off to see the Rabbi....

THE END / HAZZAK