

# הקשר היהודי שלך

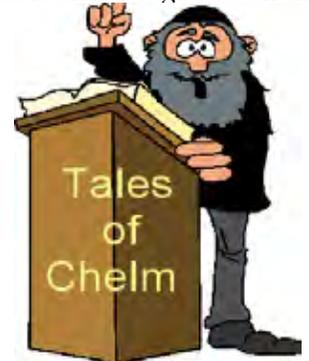
## Your Jewish Connection

*Brought to you by the Lifelong Learning Committee – Written By Linda S Trapasso*

### Did You Hear the One about Chelm?

The town of Chelm decided to build a new synagogue. So, some strong, able-bodied men were sent to a mountaintop to gather heavy stones for the foundation. The men put the stones on their shoulders and trudged down the mountain to the town below. When they arrived, the town constable yelled, "Foolish men! You should have rolled the stones down the mountain!" The men agreed this was an excellent idea. So they turned around, and with the stones still on their shoulders, trudged back up the mountain, and rolled the stones back down again. ([Wikipedia](#))

What is it that causes Jews to good naturedly laugh about their situations? Do Jews use humor as a way to sustain themselves during times of suffering? An article in [The NY Jewish Week](#) published in October, 2013, states that "...for four in 10 American Jews, being funny outranks being frum."



Jewish humor reaches back centuries in Eastern Europe, decades in America to the vaudeville acts in the Catskill Mountains (aka the borscht belt), and up to present day



stand-up comedy and television. Have you ever noticed the high percentage of comedians that are Jewish? Look over the list of Jewish comedians at [the Haunted Smile](#), a web site dedicated to Jewish comedians. And read this essay [On Jewish Humor](#) by (Benjamin) Wright on Film, where he looks at Woody Allen and others who have brought Jewish humor to film. Don't overlook Media and Difference in Southern and Jewish Films, a web site of essays that examine Southerners and Jews in Hollywood films, where there is an essay specifically on [Jewish humor](#).



At My Jewish Learning, you can delve into a [short history of Jewish humor](#). Also at this web site is an article that attempts to [define Jewish humor](#). You may find additional answers on [Wikipedia](#) where Jewish humor is broken down into types, including a section on the people of Chelm. Or read the article at [The Jerusalem Post](#) published in March, 2011, that concludes that Jewish humor began in 1661. The [Yiddish Radio Project](#) has an audio clip of C. Israel Lutsky, a well-known Yiddish radio personality, considering the value and meaning of Jewish humor.

If you like to start your day with humor, [Jewish Humor Central](#) is happy to oblige. This is a blog with a post every Sunday through Friday, many of which include videos of ordinary people telling jokes. For compilations of Jewish jokes, check out [Harry Leichter's Jewish Humor](#) and the [Best Jewish Jokes Website](#). Or go to any online bookstore for a long list of Jewish joke books and books that delve



into the history and meaning of Jewish humor.

Last but not least, how much do you really know about Jewish humor? Take the [Jewish Humor Quiz](#) at My Jewish Learning and see if you are smarter than the men of Chelm.

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