

ART

Imaginary Travels

by *Camea Smith* | 23.03.18



Several years ago, the artist [David Duvshani](#) and the writer Shahar Fineberg met on a connecting flight in Istanbul, on their way from Tel Aviv to Paris. Duvshani told Fineberg of his fascination with one of his ancestors, the illustrator and miniaturist rabbi Schneur Zalman Mendelovitch, who traveled all over the world in the middle of the 19th century. Duvshani's friendship with Fineberg eventually led to the creation of a comic series that is loosely based on the adventures of Mendelovitch. In the chaotic universe depicted in their [comic strip](#), they follow the protagonist's imaginary travels in partly invented places and events, occasionally weaving historical and biblical elements in the surreal developments.

"The Travels of Reb Schneur Zalman Mendelovitch" has been published as an ongoing comics column in [Tohu Magazine](#) for over a year. The creative partnership continues in a long distance format, as Fineberg lives and works in Paris and Duvshani recently returned to Tel Aviv after a long sojourn in the French capital. Fineberg writes the texts, scripts and synopses for the strip, while Duvshani swiftly draws the compositions in his sketchbook. The preparatory sketches are later adapted into whimsical drawings created by Duvshani with a fountain pen on fine Japanese paper. The beautifully crowded panels are presented in the online magazine in the form of a horizontal scroll.

In order to write the texts and create the artwork for the column, Duvshani and Fineberg drew inspiration from eclectic sources: anarchistic hassidic stories, medieval illustrations and British theatre cartoons from the 19th century. The first chapter that was featured in the comic strip, "The Dream and the Fire," will be launched as a limited-edition scroll in a special [event](#) at [Zimmer](#) (12 Franzois St, Tel Aviv), on Saturday, March 24 at 20:30. Printed by Barhash Publishing, the story of the scroll will be performed in a theatrical play with custom made masks and props. [The Mendelovitch Festivities](#) will also include live music by the dark-cabaret psychedelic band Tonic Clonic and a D.J. set by Danielle Kaganov.

Camea Smith

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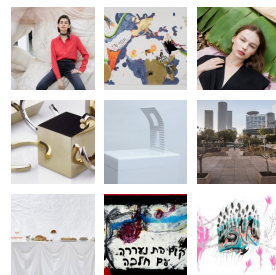
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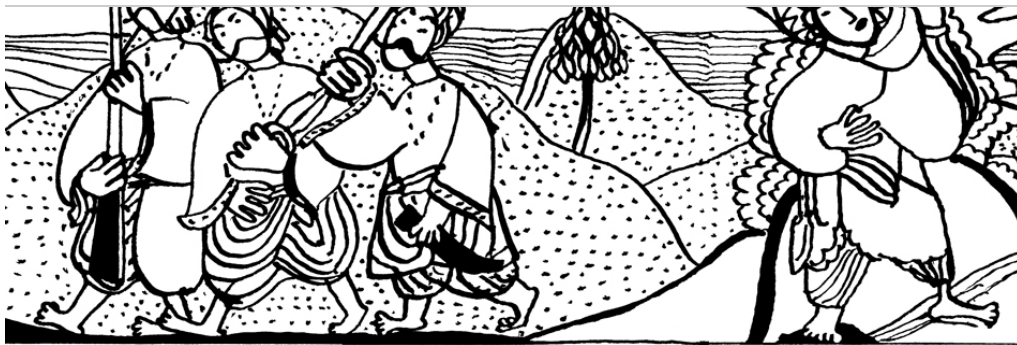
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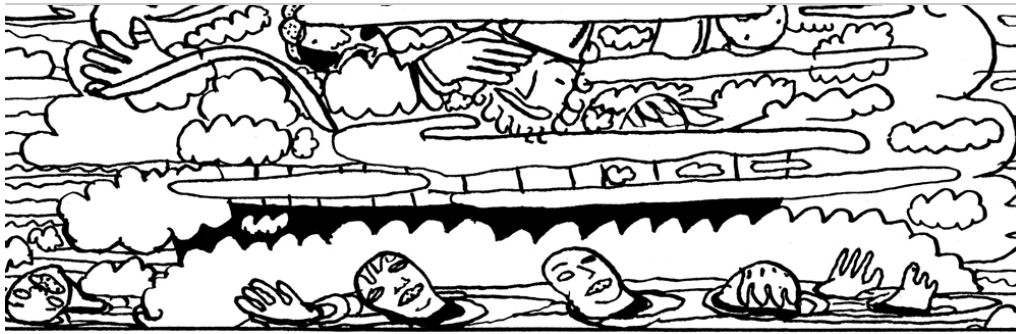
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Images: from the comic strip “Travels of Reb Schneur Zalman Mendelovitch” by David Duvshani and Shahar Fineberg

The comic strip’s website: <http://tohumagazine.com/tags/comics>

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