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JEWISH FOLKSONG : AN ETHNOMUSICOLOGICAL STUDY  
OF CATEGORIES OF YIDDISH FOLKSONGS WITHIN THE  
CONTEXT OF JEWISH LIFE IN EASTERN EUROPE, FROM  
THE NINETEENTH CENTURY UP TO WORLD WAR II  
INCLUDING PARTISAN SONGS, AND SONGS OF THE  
HOLOCAUST AND RESISTANCE.

passed away in Johannesburg  
February 1960

SARA FAY SINGER

A dissertation submitted to the Faculty of Music,  
University of Cape Town, in partial fulfilment of  
the requirements for the degree of Master of Music

CAPE TOWN

October 1988

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Dedicated to the  
 memory of my beloved mother  
 Milly Kopinsky

אשר נאספה אל עמה

born in Lithuania

passed away in Johannesburg  
 February 1960

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## P A R T O N E

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# ABSTRACT

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## ABSTRACT

This study sets out to provide a cultural analysis of 56 Yiddish folksongs which are representative of some of the bestknown folksong styles among Ashkenazi Jews. Actual research was carried out over two years, mainly in Cape Town, with short visits abroad to the United Kingdom, and to Israel. The research procedure is based on Gerhard Kubik's 'integrated-study' approach. Accordingly, I approached my subject from several perspectives: historical, sociological, musicological, literary, and linguistic - and researched it on an emic basis.

The research material was obtained from a number of sources - from oral information, literature, song collections and sound recordings, and from personal observation. The aim of this study is:

- (i) to identify intrinsic structural and stylistic features within Yiddish folksongs;
- (ii) to investigate significant traits concerning their performance practice in their original social contexts, and in presently 'controlled' contexts.

The study design is as follows: there are two main parts, Part I and Part II.

Part I comprises three chapters:

- Chapter 1 is an Introduction giving a historical and socio-cultural overview of Ashkenazi folksong, and the work of pioneer folksong investigators;
- Chapter 2 surveys historical and political factors which have been largely responsible for the great diversity of Jewish musical traditions, and delineates the various Jewish communities living in geographically defined areas today. The need for comparative studies spanning these different communities is stressed;
- Chapter 3 is concerned with the history of the Yiddish language, its emergence and development as a spoken language (with dialects), and as a literary language with a standardized orthography;

Part II comprises two chapters:

Chapter 1 explains the reasons for my adoption of certain research procedures, and pays particular attention to the socio-cultural background and content of the songs, and their arrangement according to genre. Each song is handled as a distinct item, and transcriptions and texts of all the songs appear at, or near the end of, each genre description. Recorded performances of 27 of the 56 songs appear on a cassette tape which accompanies this study; their texts and music appear on yellow pages, to make for easy location.

Chapter 2 concentrates on the purely musicological aspects of the songs. Particular attention is drawn to the way in which songs of 'shtetl' (village/ small town) origin have been transformed to accommodate the necessities of their mass distribution.

A Summary concludes this study, in which attention is also drawn to the 'recreative' aspects of Yiddish folksongs, which persist despite the impact of the huge Jewish folklore industry and the mass media. A plea is made for a synchronic 'context sensitive' approach to the study of CURRENT performances of Yiddish music, in different performance environments, along the lines advanced by ethnomusicologist Regula Burckhardt Qureshi (1987).

This study contains a Preface, and a Glossary of Yiddish and Hebrew terminology, a Bibliography and a Discography.

\* \* \* \* \*

## PREFACE

Although I heard Yiddish spoken in the home as a child, and became familiar with some Yiddish songs which my mother knew and sang, interest in them as a subject for study was aroused only after I had attended a Yiddish language course at the University of Cape Town. The course was offered by the Adult Education programme of the University's Department of Extra-Mural Studies. This was the first time I received formal instruction in the language of my parents.

Some time later I enrolled for another Yiddish course at the University of Cape Town, which comprised evening classes given by Ya'acov Eyal, an Israeli Visiting Lecturer from Jerusalem. His stimulating and thought-provoking lectures on the history of Yiddish, and Yiddish oral traditions generally, made a deep impression on me. They taught me so much about my Eastern European Jewish heritage, and introduced me to the rich traditions of Yiddish folksong. As a result of these lectures, I was encouraged to perform folksongs, and ultimately accepted an invitation to sing some of them in public - at the Silver Jubilee celebrations of the Gitlin Library (1985) of Cape Town's Zionist Federation. I did so with considerable apprehension, because my Yiddish pronunciation was a little shaky, and I was not sure how to perform the songs satisfactorily, and successfully convey the meaning and beauty of their texts.

The performance was very successful, and I think it was then that I began to consider the possibility of making Yiddish folksongs a subject for serious study, and not use them as items of music to be performed only for recreation and enjoyment.

The interest of relatives and friends, and acquaintances in Cape Town (in particular the members of the Yiddishe Kultur Federatzie), who soon came to know about my tentative plans, was a great stimulus to me. They began to present me with songs and published material on Yiddish folklore, including songs. They kept me informed about people and institutions who were likely to be sympathetic to my plans, and possibly even assist me financially. The help and encouragement of these members of Cape Town's Jewish communities was invaluable, because it was largely through their efforts, made in response to my continual queries, that I came to realise a major problem that confronted me - the gathering of sufficient data and musical material, on which to base my research.

The number of musicological publications on Yiddish music is - as I soon found out - insignificant, in contrast to the large number of folksong collections which have been assembled. Although living in South Africa made many such collections inaccessible to me, I was able to accumulate a sufficient amount of material, thanks to the sustained interest and co-operation of many people here in Cape Town. They brought me books, tape-recordings and discs, and also gave me the names and addresses of

people living abroad, who would be able to assist in my gathering of research material. I owe a debt of thanks to Mrs Lilian Dubb of Claremont, who permitted me to have the loan of her many books of Yiddish music and poetry, and sound-recordings. She too kept me informed about important events in the Yiddish-speaking communities both within and outside South Africa.

In 1986 I registered for a B.Mus. Honours degree (by Performance and Long Essay), and I decided to make a preliminary study of Yiddish folksong as the focus of the Long Essay. My academic supervisor was Dr D D Hansen, Senior Lecturer in Ethnomusicology in the University's Faculty of Music. I was awarded the degree (First Class) at the end of 1986. Having obtained it, I looked back on a year that had been filled with many crowded hours of diverse activities, a year in which I had expanded my song repertoire as well as my piano repertoire, and generally enriched my musical experience. It seemed logical to pursue further studies in both areas, but I realised that I would need to travel abroad to obtain more data and song material for my research. Grants from the Mauerberger Foundation Fund, and the University of Cape Town, gave me the opportunity to attend a one-month Yiddish language course at Oxford University, in 1987. The course was sponsored by the Oxford Centre for Post-Graduate Hebrew Studies.

At Oxford I learnt a great deal about Yiddish oral and literary traditions, as well as the language itself, and at the end of the course, I came away with an ability

to read and understand Yiddish song texts in their original language, an ability that has added to my enjoyment and appreciation of Yiddish.

I learnt many things from many people while at Oxford. I am especially indebted to Mr Majer Bogdanski (of London) who delivered weekly lectures on Yiddish folksong - lectures which always included quite an amount of singing. Mr Bogdanski lent me his own, personal copy of Yiddish folksong material, notably his copy of Moshe Beregovski's collected Essays and Music studies. In this way I found out that Beregovski (a name not previously known to me, and, neither to many Jews), was a pioneering Jewish ethnomusicologist who had lived and worked under Soviet rule. Beregovski's work came as a revelation to me, and gave me a deeper insight into the musicological, sociological and psychological aspects of Yiddish folksongs.

Beregovski provided his research work with meticulous transcriptions of songs into staff notation, and included many details referring to ornamentation in what is essentially an oral musical tradition. I believe that, without Beregovski's work as a main source of reference, this study could not have been written; nor could it have been written without the support and co-operation of many people. I must state, however, that I alone am responsible for any inaccuracies and omissions in this work.

In the Encyclopaedia Britannica there is a sentence on folksong that reads: '.. a folksong is like ... an

individual flowering on a common stem ....' a description which I find singularly appropriate for Yiddish folksongs.

There is no definitive style of performance for them, because singers will always bring something new to them in each performance. Thus, in this sense, Yiddish folksongs are 'ageless' - they are neither old nor new, because they are constantly being added to in the 'recreative' performances of singers who contribute their individual characters of expression.

In times like these, when the value of music is being questioned, the performance of Yiddish folksongs is for me - and for Ashkenazi Jews the world over - an irreplaceable, fundamental, enriching and unifying experience.

*Sara Fay Singer*

Sara Fay Singer

University of Cape Town

CAPE TOWN

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### DECLARATION

To my father (Jerusalem) - a beloved teacher of Yiddish, who encouraged me to begin singing Yiddish songs.

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## GLOSSARY

## ORTHOGRAPHY

## Transliteration Guide

Letter	Sound	Remarks	Letter	Sound	Remarks
א	a	similar to <b>a</b> in <b>father</b> but shorter	מ,ם	m	
אָ	o	between the <b>aw</b> of <b>dawn</b> and the <b>o</b> of <b>done</b>	נ,ן	n	
ב	b		ס	s	
בֿ	v	only in the Hebrew words	ע	e	similar to the <b>e</b> in <b>bet</b>
ג	g		פ	p	
ד	d		פ,ף	f	
ה	h		ץ,צ	ts	
ו	v		ק	k	
וּ	u	so spelled in the combinations: וּוּ — uv; וּוּ — vu; וּי — uy.	ר	r	
וֵי	oy	shorter than <b>oy</b> in <b>boy</b>	ש	sh	similar to <b>sh</b> of <b>shoot</b>
ז	z		שׁ	s	only in the Hebrew words
ח	kh	like <b>ch</b> in German <b>ach</b> only in the Hebrew words	ת	t	
ט	t		ת	s	only in the Hebrew words
י	i	following a stressed vowel or under stress adjoining a vowel	זש	zh	like <b>s</b> in <b>measure</b>
י	y	like <b>y</b> in <b>yes</b>	זשׁ	tsh	as <b>ch</b> in <b>such</b>
יי	ey	similar to <b>ey</b> in <b>grey</b>	יע	ye	אָסיען — osyen
יי	ay	similar to <b>i</b> in <b>fine</b>	יאָ	yo	קאַזיאָנע — kazyone
כ	k		יאַ	ya	ניאַניע — nyanye
כּ,כך	kh	like <b>ch</b> in German <b>ach</b>	אי	ay	
ל	l		אָי	oy	

## GLOSSARY

- ALEPH-BAYZ** (Yiddish) In Yiddish, the first three letters of the alphabet are alef, bayz, and gimmel. Since that is a bit cumbersome, everyone refers to the Yiddish-Hebrew alphabet as 'The Aleph-bayz'.
- ALIYAH** Hebrew for "ascent". The term is used for immigrating to Israel, but means more than just immigration. According to Encyclopaedia Judaica, '... it implies personal participation in the rebuilding of the Jewish homeland and the elevation of the individual as a member of the renascent nation'.
- ASHKENAZ** Name applied generally in mediaeval rabbinical literature to Germany
- ASHKENAZI** (pl. **ASHKENAZIM**) Jews who lived originally in the Rhineland and spread through central and eastern Europe; the term was eventually used to include all Jews who observe "German" synagogue ritual.
- The terms Ashkenaz, Ashkenazi are used in contradistinction to Sepharad, Sephardic, the Jewish cultural 'complex' originating in Spain.
- AVINU MALKEINU** (Our Father, Our King). Avinu Malkeinu is a prayer consisting of a series of supplications recited in the synagogue during services, during the ten-day period of the High Holydays, and on fasts.
- BAAL SHEM** The name given to saintly men, men believed to possess mystical powers because they were chosen by G-d for the performance of divine intentions. The most famous Baal Shem was Baal Shem Tov (good), the legendary Israel ben Eliezer (b. 1770), also known by the acronym "Besht". He was a visionary, a miracle worker, an apostle of religious ecstasy. He founded the Chassidic(Hasidic) movement.

- BABYLONIA            Babylonia, now Iraq, influenced Jewish life and culture more than any other country except Eretz Yisrael (Israel). The ancient city of Babylon and the land of Babylon are mentioned in the Bible more than two hundred times.
- BAHELPER (Yiddish) from 'helper' = helper, the melamed's (teacher's) assistant.
- BAIGEL                A hard roll shaped in the form of a ring, resembling a doughnut; the dough is boiled and then baked.
- BALEGOLEH (Yiddish) A coachman, a wagoner. One who carts goods or passengers.
- BAR-MITZVAH        Literally "son of the commandment". It is a religious ceremony at which time a Jewish lad of thirteen becomes a member of the Jewish community and assumes his responsibilities.
- BETH MIDRASH        Place where rabbinical literature is studied; meeting-place of a study group.
- BORSCHT             A soup made either of beets or cabbage
- BUNDIST             A member of the Bund, the Jewish labour organisation of pre-revolutionary days which was militantly allied with the Socialist Menshevik opposition to the Bolsheviks. Founded in Vilna in 1897, the Bund supported Jewish national rights but remained Yiddishist and anti-Zionist.
- CHALLA                The braided white bread, glazed with egg white, which is a Sabbath delicacy.
- CHASSIDIC/ CHASSIDISM    See Hasidic/ Hasidism
- CHAZAN              See also 'Hazan': Cantor or reader who leads the congregation in prayer.
- CHEDER              Jewish parochial school for the teaching of the Bible, Hebrew, history, prayers, etc. in the Jewish liturgy.
- DAVEN                To pray
- DOINA                Instrumental music performed at weddings
- DUMY (plural)        Ukrainian epic songs

- DYBBUK            A condemned spirit who inhabits the body of a living person and controls his actions.
- ERETZ ISRAEL (Hebrew)    ERETZ YISROEL (Yiddish)  
Literally 'Land of Israel' i.e. the promised land, the Biblical territory of Israel.
- FREILACHS (Yiddish) - a round dance with an unlimited number of participants
- FRIGISH (Yiddish) - Yiddish term for the altered Phrygian scale.
- GALITZIANER        A Jew from Galicia.
- GAON (pl. Gaonim)    Title of the head of a Jewish academy, formerly the highest authority on Jewish law.
- GHETTO            The term 'ghetto' came into use in 1516 when the Jews of Venice were confined in a special quarter of the city. A century before that, in 1416, the Spanish kings ordered the Jews' quarters (as well as those of the Moors) to be surrounded by walls and provided with gates locked at night. Many mediaeval ghettos have been 'preserved' in Rome, Prague, Amsterdam and Frankfurt. Communal feeling and the traditional Jewish culture were maintained and nurtured in the ghettos.
- The Nazis set up ghettos in eastern Europe (1939 - 1945) to concentrate, isolate and break the spirit of the Jewish people prior to the 'final liquidation' and annihilation. They systematically starved the ghettos, which they instituted in overcrowded areas in Warsaw, Lodz, Vilna, Cracow, and elsewhere in Poland, Hungary, Rumania and Russia.
- GEMARA (Hebrew)    In Yiddish, pronounced Gemóreh. It is part of the Talmud which deals with the interpretation and discussion of the law as presented in the Mishna.
- HAFTORAH (Hebrew)    Selected readings from the Prophets recited in the Synagogue on Sabbath and festival mornings and fast-day afternoons.
- HAGGADAH (Hebrew)    Book which is read at the Seder, the festive home service of Passover. The Haggadah recounts the liberation of the Jews from bondage in Egypt.

- HAHAM / or Chacham (Hebrew) Title given to rabbinic scholars ; originally inferior to 'rabbi', later used for ordained scholars. Used for their local Rabbi by the Sephardi communities of Amsterdam and London.
- HALACHA (Hebrew) The laws, rules and regulations which govern Jewish life.
- HASKALA The movement of enlightenment and secular education among Jews : the forerunner of Reform Judaism. Haskala was launched by Moses Mendelssohn (1729-1786) and was denounced by orthodox Jews, who recognised the threat that secular education and Western rationalism, and philosophy, posed to traditional faith. Those who followed the Haskala called themselves 'maskilim' or 'enlightened ones'.
- HASID (or Chassid): Follower of Hasidic sect.
- HASIDISM A popular religious movement which began about 1740 in southern Poland as a reaction against rabbinic intellectualism.
- Hasidism stresses faith, trust in G-d, religious emotion and ecstatic prayer as the principal ways to approach G-d.
- HAZAN See Chazan / 'cantor'
- HEDER See 'cheder'
- HOLOCAUST The organised mass persecution and annihilation of European Jewry by the Nazis (1939 - 1945).
- KADDISH The solemn prayer, glorifying G-d's name, that closes synagogue prayers. Also the prayer of mourners for the dead.
- KASHA Groats (buckwheat)
- KLEZMER (pl. KLEZMORIM) Originally troubadours and singers of epics of chivalry. In later centuries these little bands of professional musicians performed Jewish folk-tunes (by ear) at weddings and festivities. A klezmer is, literally, an itinerant musician;

- KLEZMER (contd) The term klezmer, however, refers to a particular kind of music, an amalgam of eastern and central European popular forms, "leavened" by a distinctive "hot" improvised style. The European klezmerim could be found in small towns as well as in the big cities, playing for weddings and other festivals. These klezmer came in 'dynasties', cultivating their inherited skill. Although not formally trained, they were often the extremely gifted and anonymous creators of folksongs and dances beloved to the Jewish people. As they travelled, the musicians - generally regarded as wild, somewhat disreputable sorts - would pick up local melodies and transform them to fit the instrumentation and talents of the particular klezmer group.
- KOSHER from Hebrew 'kasher' : meaning prepared properly, fit to eat. Applies to food ritually fulfilling the Jewish dietary laws. These laws are based on biblical and rabbinical ordinances as old as the Jewish people themselves and have had a great influence on Jewish life. A distinction is made between food which is kosher (permissible) and treif (forbidden).
- LAMDAN Erudite scholar
- LANDSMAN (pl. LANDSLEIT) Countryman/ (pl) Countrymen
- LITVAK Lithuanian Jew
- MAFTIR One who reads the weekly selection of the Prophets after the reading of the Torah in synagogue
- MAGID / MAGGID (pl. MAGIDIM) : Popular preacher
- MAME-LOSHN Literally, in Yiddish, 'mother's tongue'. Because Hebrew was the loshn kadosh (holy tongue), Yiddish, which was spoken at home, became known as "mother's tongue".
- MARRANO Name used for the Jews of Spain and Portugal and their descendants who were converted to Christianity in order to escape persecution, but continued to adhere secretly to Judaism.

- MAZELTOV (Hebrew) - Good luck
- MEGILLA / pl. MEGILLOT The 5 Megillot (scrolls) of the Song of Songs, the Book of Ruth, the Book of Lamentations, Ecclesiastes and the Book of Esther. (Megillat Esther).
- MIDRASH (Hebrew) Rabbinical literature containing homiletic interpretations
- MINCHA Afternoon devotional prayers
- MINYAN Quorum of ten males required before public religious services may begin.
- MISHNA The authoritative digest of the oral Torah, elaborating and interpreting the laws of the Pentateuch. (see 'Pentateuch').
- MITZVA / MITZVAH A mitzvah is a divine commandment; a 'good deed'. It is the Hebrew term for a religious and moral obligation. In tradition all commandments, statutes teachings and observances are mitzvahs (pl.)
- MUSAR Traditional ethical literature
- MUZHNIK (MOUJIK) - A Russian peasant
- NIGN/ NIGUN (Pl. 'niggunim') - Hasidic songs without words, regarded as the highest of all songs because they express a communion with G-d. In a nign, the singer asks G-d questions, and is answered; he gives expression to supplications and hopes, his sorrows and his profound beliefs in G-d.
- OLAV A SHOL'M Yiddish pronunciation of Alav ha-sholem (masc.) Aleha ha-sholem (fem.) (Hebrew)  
The two words for the masculine are pronounced as if one word. The feminine form is pronounced ah-LEY-a ha-SHO-lem (Yiddish). The meaning is:
1. Literally: Unto him (her) peace.
  2. May he (she) rest in peace.

- PALE OF SETTLEMENT A forbidding, though invisible, wall began to rise all around the Jewish communities of Russia, the Ukraine and Poland, beginning in 1772. Jews were forbidden residence in any place outside of the communities in which they were already living. This geographic restriction became known as the Jewish Pale of Settlement and was more precisely delimited by statute in 1804. \* It was, in a manner of speaking, a gigantic ghetto. Jews remained in the Pale of Settlement right up until World War I. (\* Jews were permitted permanent settlement in 25 provinces of Czarist Russia.)
- PENTATEUCH The Five Books of Moses: Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy. Ever since the time of Ezra the Scribe, who arrived in Jerusalem in 450 B.C.E., the five books of the Torah have been the basis of religion and education.
- PIYYUTIM Hebrew liturgical poetry (singular, piyyut)
- PIZMON (Hebrew) - Poem, with refrain
- POGROM From Russian: pogrom : destruction. Refers to the massacre of Jews.
- RABBI In Yiddish, Rebbe. From Hebrew, 'rabi' : 'my teacher'. The title Rabbi refers to an ordained Jewish cleric, spiritual leader of a congregation. Rebbe refers to the revered leader of a Hasidic sect, not necessarily ordained.
- RASHI The name of the great commentator of the Talmud, Rabbi Shlomo Yitzhki. Known as 'RASHI' - he was born in France in 1040, and after spending his life in the Rhineland, died in Troyes in 1105. Very little is known of his life except that his chief occupation was teaching the Talmud. He possessed a marvellous gift of clear and terse writing. Chumash with Rashi has meant average Jewish education everywhere throughout many generations. Thousands of French glosses, introduced by Rashi under the term of la'az are preserved in his commentaries on the Bible and the Talmud. The name of Rashi is inseparably connected with Jewish learning, as one of the masterminds of rabbinical literature.

- REBBENYU This is a term of endearment for a rabbi, rather like saying "Rabbi, dear"
- REBBETZIN Wife of a rabbi; wife of a teacher; wife of a Chassidic leader.
- SEDER (Hebrew) The Passover ritual at home, during which the 'Haggadah' is read, with family and guests seated round the festive table. A number of Passover customs are observed, principally the eating of matza, the recounting of the story of liberation from Egyptian bondage, the partaking of traditional Passover delicacies.
- SEPHARDIM Term denoting those Jews whose ancestors lived in Spain and Portugal; derived from the traditional mediaeval Hebrew name for Spain (S'pharad). Sometimes applied to the Oriental element in the population of Israel, in contradistinction to Ashkenazim.
- SHABBES (Yiddish) - The Sabbath i.e. from sundown on Friday, to sundown Saturday
- SHADCHAN Sometimes written as shadkhn:  
A marriage broker; a professional matchmaker.
- SHALOM (Hebrew) SHOLEM (Yiddish) In Yiddish, one places the emphasis on the first syllable, thus:  
shólem
- The Hebrew root of this word means 'peace'. Shalom is used as a greeting to mean "hello", "goodbye" or "Au revoir". The traditional greeting of Jews upon meeting, or when entering or leaving a group. The full phrase is "Shalom (Sholem) Aleichem".
- SHOLEM ALEICHEM Lit. "peace unto you". Also the pen name of Solomon Rabinowitz (1859 - 1916), the great Jewish writer and humourist.
- SHOFAR (Hebrew) Ram's horn. It symbolizes the call to repentance and is blown on Rosh Hashana (New Year) as part of the ritual.

- SHOCHET (Hebrew) Man trained and authorised to slaughter beasts and poultry according to Judaic law.
- SHTETL / YESH Jewish small-town or village community in Eastern Europe
- SHTIBL Chassidic prayer-room
- SHUL Literally "school" and therefore synagogue. The shul was the centre of life of religious Jews. All day and at night, men would sit in the synagogue to read, study, discourse, and debate, and, of course, pray.
- TALLITH (Hebrew)/ TALLIS (Yiddish) - Prayer shawl worn by male worshippers in order to remind them of their bond to the Almighty.
- TALMUD The assembled, centuries-long analysis, debate and legal findings of Jewish scholars, jurists, philosophers and sages - from the 5th century B.C.E. until the second century after.
- TALMUD TORAH Hebrew school for children
- TEFILLIN Phylacteries. Small leather "cases" containing quotations from the Pentateuch, worn by male worshippers on the forehead and on the left arm, during early morning prayers.
- TORAH (Hebrew) Literally, "teaching" or "doctrine". May refer to the first five books of the Bible, to the parchment scroll used in the synagogue on which the five books have been lettered, or generally to the entire body of Jewish faith, morality, ethics, values, jurisprudence, social thought and culture.
- YAD VASHEM Yad Vashem in Jerusalem is the Israel official authority for commemorating the Holocaust in the Nazi era, and Jewish resistance and heroism at that time.

YARMULKE Skull cap worn by religious Jews, in order to keep the head 'covered' at all times. 'Yarmulke' is a word of Slavic derivation.

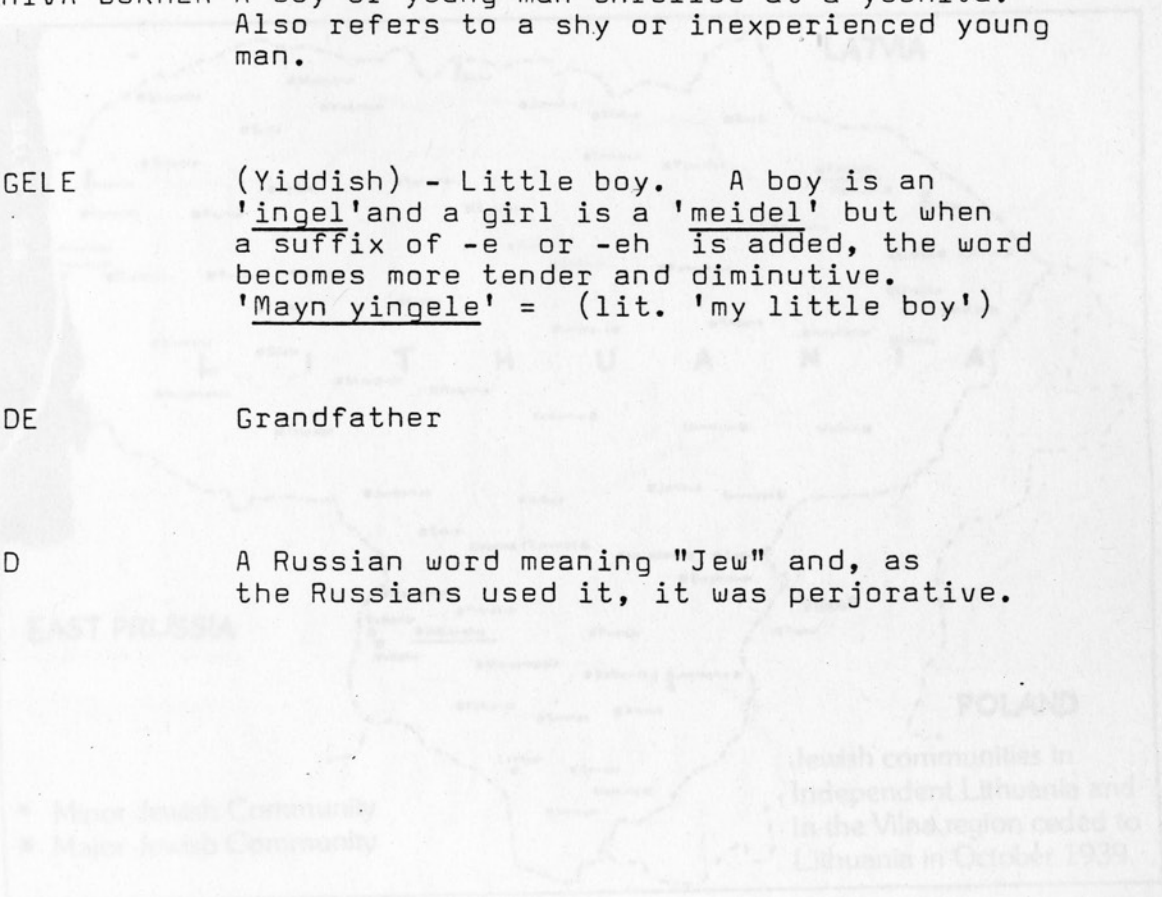
YESHIVA / YESHIVAH (Hebrew) - Rabbinical academy; talmudic college.

YESHIVA BOKHER A boy or young man enrolled at a yeshiva. Also refers to a shy or inexperienced young man.

YINGELE (Yiddish) - Little boy. A boy is an 'ingel' and a girl is a 'meidel' but when a suffix of -e or -eh is added, the word becomes more tender and diminutive. 'Mayn yingele' = (lit. 'my little boy')

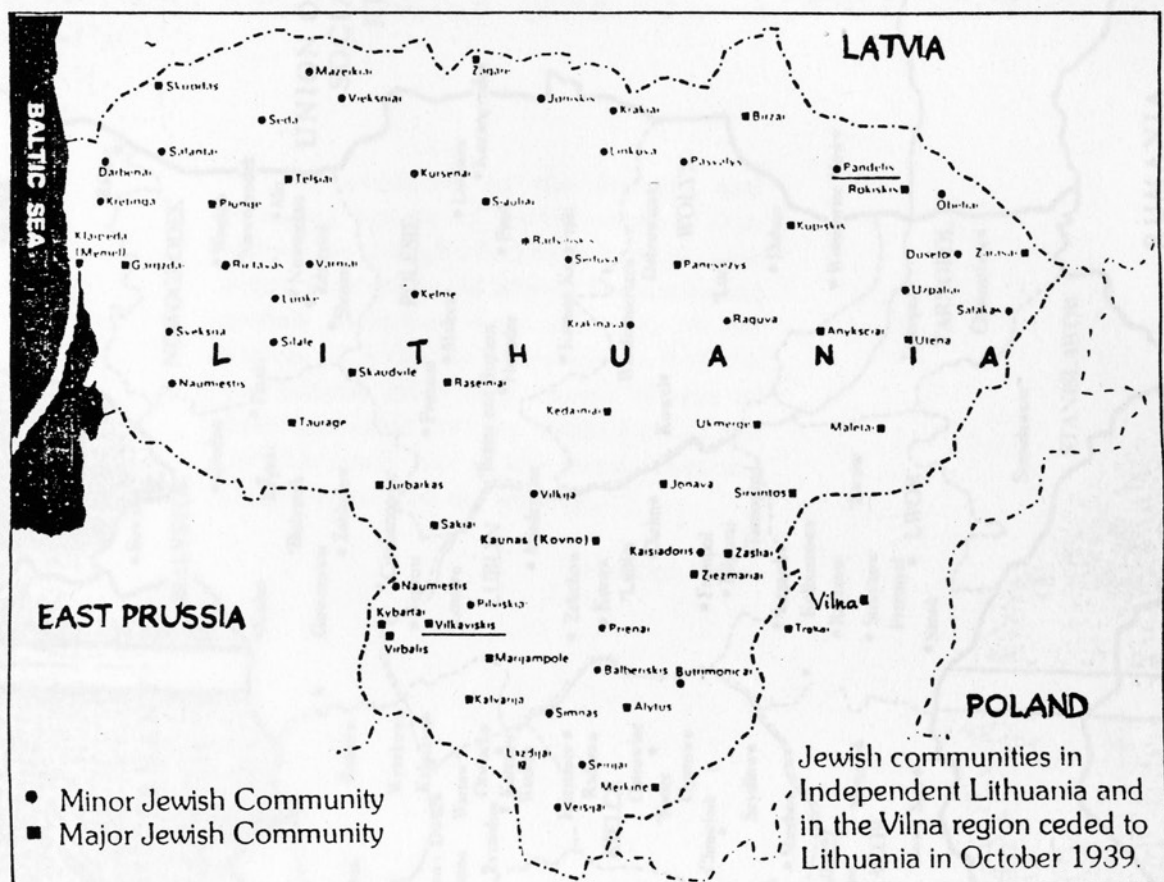
ZAIDE Grandfather

ZHID A Russian word meaning "Jew" and, as the Russians used it, it was perjorative.



\* \* \* \* \*

Map No. 1



JEWISH COMMUNITIES IN INDEPENDENT LITHUANIA AND THE VILNA REGION (CEDED TO LITHUANIA) in OCT. 1939

Map No. 1



JEWISH COMMUNITIES IN INDEPENDENT LITHUANIA AND THE VILNA REGION (CEDED TO LITHUANIA) in OCT. 1939



Map no. 2  
 P O L A N D  
 1921 - 1938

## **PART ONE**

**“I was attracted to the strange and haunting beauty of Jewish music. I felt, almost, as though I had been brought into a new musical world when a few authentic Jewish melodies were brought to my notice. I was so bewitched by the mysterious color and exotic charm of these melodies that for weeks I could not get this music out of my mind. Then my imagination was set aflame...”**

**Maurice Ravel.**

**“The innermost history of the Jewish people is expressed in its Folksongs.”**

**Aaron Jellinek**

INTRODUCTION: ASHKENAZIC JEWISH FOLKSONG TRADITIONS:  
HISTORICAL AND SOCIO-CULTURAL PERSPECTIVES

The aim of this study is to attempt a contribution to the knowledge and understanding of eastern and western Jewish folk songs from the Ashkenazic ('European') tradition, which are still enjoyed, maintained and transmitted by South African Jews, of whom more than two-thirds are, or are descended from, Ashkenazic (e.g. Lithuanian, Russian, Polish, German).

**CHAPTER ONE**

These folk songs are essentially vocal, with texts in Hebrew and in Yiddish. Typologically they comprise

- (i) True folk songs, both secular and semi-religious (i.e. with biblical themes and/or texts) and of unknown origin and traditional age;
- (ii) Folk songs of the 19th century of different age and provenance, most of which have been profoundly influenced by western European 'art' music, folk song and popular music;
- (iii) Modern Yiddish and Hebrew folk songs i.e. special song types which emerged during the period 1880 - 1940 with extensive migration of Jews from Germany, Poland and Balkan states to the earlier centres of Jewish culture in areas from Europe to the United States, Israel (formerly Palestine), South America, Australia and South Africa.

## P A R T O N E

## C H A P T E R O N E

INTRODUCTION: ASHKENAZIC JEWISH FOLKSONG TRADITIONS:  
HISTORICAL AND SOCIO-CULTURAL PERSPECTIVES

The aim of this study is to attempt a contribution to the knowledge and understanding of eastern and western Jewish folksongs from the Ashkenazic ('European') traditions, which are still enjoyed, maintained and transmitted by South African Jews, of whom more than two-thirds are, or are descended from, Ashkenazic (e.g. Lithuanian, Russian, Polish, German) immigrants. \*<sup>1a</sup>

These folksongs are essentially vocal, with texts in Hebrew and in Yiddish. Typologically they comprise:

- (i) True folksongs, both secular and semi-religious (i.e. with Biblical themes and/or texts) and of unknown origin and inestimable age;
- (ii) Folksongs of the 19th century of different age and provenance, most of which have been profoundly influenced by western European 'art' music, folk song and popular music;
- (iii) Modern Yiddish and Hebrew folksongs i.e. special song types which emerged during the period 1900 - 1948 when extensive migrations of Jews from German, Slavic and Balkan states caused the earlier centres of Jewish culture to move from Europe to the United States, Israel (formerly Palestine), South America, Australia and South Africa. \*<sup>1b</sup>

Such a study presents certain problems. Firstly, the current state of research into Jewish musical traditions - as seen through selected, representative and published studies - does not compare quantitatively with the state of research into other musical traditions, such as those of, say, Asia and Africa. These latter have been the focus of many scientific and scholarly investigations which have produced a considerable amount of documentation. As far as Jewish musical traditions are concerned, in particular the oral traditions of folksong, interest in them as a subject for serious study is of relatively recent origin.

Secondly, although we have today large collections of Yiddish Ashkenazic folksongs available in notated and recorded form, \*<sup>2</sup> we still know little about them as products of a specific social, cultural and intellectual milieu. The documentation which exists is scanty, and is based upon (i) collected samplings of old songs from western European communities (mainly German) that exchanged melodic material with mediaeval German folksong (Hofman 1980 : p 641 New Groves\*<sup>3</sup>): (ii) new melodies composed predominantly in late Baroque style; and (iii) a small number of melodies showing the varying degrees of assimilation of oriental modal cantillation (loc. cit).

As far as nineteenth century Jewish folksongs are concerned i.e. those practised and maintained by Jewish communities in German, Slavic and Balkan states, these comprise distinct repertoires of songs which are linked to the different stages in the life cycle of the Jewish people,

and the Jewish liturgical calendar. Many of these folksongs have disappeared, but those which have survived through oral transmission and written documentation reveal, stylistically, a unique blending of musical traits from various sources, both Jewish and non-Jewish, and in both semi-religious and secular songs: . e.g. the metric tunes and rhythms of popular folksongs and marches, as well as their instrumentation; and even the melismatic cantillations of liturgical music. This synthesis of Jewish and non-Jewish trends is also evident in the basic tonality of these songs, most of which are set in variants of a minor 'mode' that have been described as '...a synthesis of oriental modes of Biblical cantillation: the mediaeval modes of Western songs; and some of the most favoured Arab maqamat, reduced and changed to conform with European major and (preferably) minor scales ...' (Hofman 1980: 642). It is very noticeable in the secular folksongs and in some of the modern songs, e.g. songs of the Holocaust and Resistance.

The Yiddish/Jewish folksongs traditions are essentially oral - and have always been so, despite the impact of cultural influences and the many widespread wanderings of the Jewish people, which caused the essence of these folksongs to change tonally and stylistically. The collection of Yiddish folksongs - comprising written texts, and some orally transmitted music, first attracted the attention of two Jewish historians, Peysakh Marek and Saul Ginzburg,\*<sup>4</sup> who in 1898 began collecting and assembling selected examples of recorded and documentary material, most of which was obtained directly from

traditional performers. But these historians also collected by mail, a practice which has limited value even though it is still pursued today. The procedure is simple enough: one has merely to publicize the fact that one is wanting certain types of material, and interested persons who possess such material are likely to respond enthusiastically. The flaws and problems in such collecting projects, however, have to do with the actual material obtained in this way: one has to find out whether the material is really in the oral tradition, or known only in writing by the correspondent, who may even have obtained it from another source. Bruno Nettl\*<sup>5</sup> has discussed the pros and cons of collecting projects in Chapter 3 of his book *Theory and Method in Ethnomusicology* (1964: 71 - 73), and rightly maintains that it '... probably has no value at all unless re-inforced by real field work. But some important collections have been made partly through the mail so that this approach is worth a brief commentary'. The few positive aspects of collecting by mail include (i) the indication to the collectors as to what types of song are available for their projects, and (ii) a useful means of approaching informants '... who might otherwise be hard to locate in a community of thousands' (loc.cit.)

Messrs. Ginzburg and Marek's collected song material constitutes the first major collection of Yiddish folksongs, and was published in 1901 in St. Petersburg \*<sup>b</sup> with an introduction in the Russian language, providing some information on the collecting project itself, and the song material. Some seven years later, the Society for Jewish

Folk Music was established in St. Petersburg, and gave even greater impetus to interest in Yiddish cultural traditions. The Society 'developed as a result of the nationalistic trend in east European, particularly Russian, music and under the influence of the Russian Ethnological Society' (Hofman 1980: 643). The main purpose of the Society was to gather specimens of Jewish folk music, to arrange and prepare it for publication, and performance, and thus ensure as far as possible the preservation and propagation of songs of Jewish communities of eastern Europe. The Society attracted the interest of many scholars, poets and musicians, and interested laymen, who came to be known as 'The Petersburg Group' (loc.cit.); many of them were students and friends of the composer Rimsky-Korsakov: Yoel Engel (1868-1927), the Yiddish poet, who, with Kisselgov, Shitomsky and others, edited and arranged solo and choral songs, with or without accompaniment and with texts by Yiddish poets and so reached the wider Jewish communities. Other members of the St.Petersburg Group included Lazare Saminsky (1882-1951), Joseph Achron (1886-1943), Alexander Krein (1883-1951), Solomon Rosowsky (1878-1962), Mikhail Fabianovich Gnesin (1881-1950) and Moses Mikhail Milner (1886-1952). Milner composed a number of works which were based on Yiddish folk melodies e.g. his opera-ballet Ashmeday, and some vocal works with texts by the renowned Yiddish author Yitschok Leibush Peretz (1851-1915).<sup>7</sup> Gnesin and Krein were composers, as was Grigory Klein. Many of these persons were friends of Rimsky-Korsakov, and in their music they were strongly influenced by Jewish liturgical melodies

and those of Yiddish folksongs. Because of this, these composers have been categorised in literature as members of a 'Jewish School' of music ( L.L. Sabanayev 1924:

Yevreyskaya natsional naya shkola v musiki (Moscow):

translated into German, Vienna 1927: Hebrew translation 1978.)

Folklorist members included Y.L. Cahan, who also pursued the serious collection of Yiddish folksong. The first Jewish Ethnographic Expedition sponsored by this Society \*<sup>8a</sup> took place in 1912, led by S. Anski, author of the wellknown play Der Dybbuk (The Dybbuk). \*<sup>8b</sup>

The work of members of the 'Petersburg Group' was important in that it influenced scholars and poets and other interested persons to commence folksong collecting in and near other Jewish communities e.g. in Kiev and Minsk, and later Vilna (Vilnius) where large quantities of folk material was amassed, especially after World War I. Encouragement was also given by the Yiddish Scientific Institute\*<sup>9</sup> of Vilna (Later called the YIVO Institute for Jewish Research) under the direction of Dr. Max Weinreich.\*<sup>9</sup>

These newer centres attracted more collecting and contributors of folksong, who extended the scope of their activities to include oral traditions of many dispersed Jewish communities, and also of Judaism generally i.e. the ancient traditions carried on since Biblical times; the synagogue tradition, and the various traditions of the oriental Jewish communities. Right from the time of the activities of the 'Petersburg Group', however, the

collection of Ashkenazic folksong traditions had as its background the development and establishment of archives, with the result that very little importance was attached to information about the music in its cultural context.\*<sup>10a</sup>

As Mark Slobin points out in his book on the popular music of the Jewish immigrants to the U.S.A. (1982 : 28),\*<sup>10b</sup> even though music was an integral part of eastern European Jewish communities, '... that music was based on folk traditions which showed a wide range of familiarity and interaction with whatever was most modern in Europe'. The first Yiddish song collections virtually neglected the socio-cultural significance of this music. Because of this, '... what we can know of the musical life must be inferred, extrapolated from the written and live collections of survivors of that bygone era and from the scattered writings of the few scholars who took music seriously in the years from 1901 to 1939 before the culture and vast majority of its carriers disappeared forever' (1982: 13).

The virtual neglect of the study of folksongs as cultural phenomena i.e. as musical structures which are inextricably bound up with social ones, is not surprising, if one considers the approaches adopted by the early researchers into musics, which were, at the time, described as non-western and 'folk' musics. These researchers were active towards the end of the nineteenth century, and focussed on non-literate cultures i.e. cultures with oral traditions of music. Most of these scholars came from disciplines

other than music, and were variously influenced by trends in musicology and cultural anthropology.\*<sup>11</sup> They carried out their work on a comparative basis - and were centred mainly in Germany and the U S A. Scholars of these centres differed in their basic approaches: the former were more concerned with collecting material via field recordings, and with the music sound itself, whereas the latter showed more interest in the description of music and musical activities in specific geographical areas. At this time, ethnomusicology was in its infancy, and was known as 'comparative musicology' (vergleichende musikwissenschaft), and it is not surprising that East European Jewish scholars were more prone to adopt the musicological approach taken by European researchers, and to virtually neglect the ethnological/anthropological parameters of a musical culture. Hence the meagre information which is available on early Jewish folksong generally, in relation to its specific cultural contexts.\*<sup>12</sup>

Despite the influence of important trends in early 'cultural' research and the lack of adequate recording equipment, '... the first systematic attempt to codify the entire oral tradition of Jewish music' was undertaken by A.Z. Idelsohn (1881-1938), a Lithuanian-born Jew who had been educated in Germany. He later moved to Jerusalem and assumed duties as a teacher and cantor until he took up a post at the Hebrew Union College, Cincinnati, Ohio where he taught until he retired in 1934. Idelsohn is the author of many major publications on Jewish music, not the least of which is the mammoth project previously cited.\*<sup>13</sup>

Idelsohn is acknowledged as one of the most important scholars of Jewish music. This first project focussed on the oriental communities of Jews, who were located in Syria, Morocco, Iraq, Persia, the Yemen, and Bukhara, and included also some of the Sephardic traditions of Spanish Jews residing in various parts of the Mediterranean (the South of France, the Iberian Peninsula, Italy, Greece, Turkey, Lebanon and North Africa) as well as folksongs of the Ashkenazic traditions. Most of Idelsohn's research work (which centred on recordings and transcriptions of the collected material) was published in several volumes under the title Hebräisch-Orientalischer Melodienschatz (Leipzig 1914-1932/ Reprinted 1973). (ibid.)

Idelsohn's recordings were initially made while he was active in Jerusalem between the years 1909-1921, and he subsequently provided the various genres recorded with a historic overview. Additional information concerning the performers, performance styles and provenance and meaning of song texts, was also obtained, as well as some transcriptions of individual songs. Despite the incompleteness of the transcriptions (owing to lack of adequate sound recording equipment at that time), and the gaps in documentation, Idelsohn's lengthy projected research work is a seminal one. Unique at the time, it is still regarded as one of the most valuable contributions to research on Jewish oral traditions: many of the oriental cultural centres in which Idelsohn worked no longer exist (Baghdad, the Yemen, Damascus: HOFMAN: 1980: 616 ) while large centres in western and Eastern Europe have either been

uprooted or completely destroyed. Thus Idelsohn's works contain a treasury of entire repertoires of folksong which are now virtually obsolete.

Idelsohn's project had considerable influence on the collection and analyses of Yiddish folksong, on which subject Moshe Beregovski became one of the foremost early ethnomusicologists.

Beregovski was born in 1892 in Kiev, Russia, where he grew up and eventually became Director of the Folk Music Division of the Kiev Conservatoire. Like Idelsohn's

research, Beregovski's research was also protracted -

indeed it continued until he died in 1961. But unlike

Idelsohn's, much of it was carried out in the most

difficult circumstances. Yiddish Ukrainian/Russian music

in oral tradition, to which Beregovski was wholly

committed, was an expression of the historical, social,

religious and political conscience of the Jewish people

living under Soviet/Stalinist rule. Consequently,

Beregovski's work was carried out against a background of

anti-Semitic repression and persecution. Beregovski

himself was sent to a Soviet work camp but this did not

deter him. On his release in 1956 he persevered in

collecting and researching Yiddish folksong, and all this

culminated in a study of folkmusic contained within at

least four volumes. According to Beregovski's

biographical researcher, the ethnomusicologist Mark

Slobin \*<sup>15</sup> (who has edited and translated two volumes of

Beregovski's work), '.... there is evidence that two more

volumes exist in manuscript form in the USSR, but it is impossible to predict whether they will ever have been published.' (Slobin: 1982). Slobin also states that a microfilm of one of Beregovski's volumes (in typescript) was '... recently brought to Israel by a Soviet emigré scholar' and was 'kindly loaned' to Slobin for a 'brief reading' in Jerusalem in 1978. (Slobin 1982: 291). This manuscript is missing all the music examples, both in the text and those appended as the main body of the anthology, save for a few fragments; nevertheless it sheds light on '... Beregovski's attitude toward and research on the purimshpiel ('folk drama') and its music.' (loc.cit.).

Beregovski's investigations were much more detailed than Idelsohn's, and comprise descriptive AND comparative documentation on all kinds of song: festive songs, trade songs, soldiers' songs (historical songs of the time of Nicholas I, Czar of Russia)<sup>16</sup> all of which are provided with ethnomusicological and musicological information. The depth and substance of his documentation was remarkable at that time, his sources being the living music itself, and the musicians who performed it. He paid special attention to emic perspectives of the music, and in this way he was very much ahead of his time. A study of musical terminology and classification of genres on a comparative basis revealed, for example, that the same terms in common use in different geographical areas (in the Ukraine, and in Poland) and even in neighbouring towns and villages in the same areas, did not necessarily have the same meanings. \*<sup>17</sup> For instance, the names, and even the

structures, of categories of music have different meanings, and differ considerably, in different areas. Beregovski's approach to his work is also devoid of ethnocentrism: thus the presence of characteristic non-Jewish musical elements (e.g. Ukrainian elements) is typical. Yiddish folk songs did not mean that musical borrowing was one-sided (with the Ukrainians borrowing from the Jews), but rather that such borrowings were cross-cultural and reciprocal.

Beregovski was especially interested in the class of professional musicians in the German ghettos and the many Jewish communities in eastern Europe, known as klezmerim \*<sup>18</sup> (singular, klezmer), who customarily performed instrumental entertainment music at festive events - especially at weddings, circumcisions, and even events held by Gentile (i.e. non-Jewish) neighbours.

He recorded their music, as well as the songs of the non-professional folk singers, individuals and groups alike, and he provided each item with its cultural context, and an unusually detailed transcription. As Slobin has pointed out: '.... his transcriptions hold up well even under the scrutiny of present day standards. No one up to that time had transcribed Yiddish folksongs with such accuracy.' \*<sup>19</sup>

Beregovski's two volumes of Yiddish Ukrainian-Russian folksong were written and compiled in the 1930s, and they were published many years later, in translation, in 1982, under the title OLD JEWISH MUSIC: The Collections and

Writings of Moshe Beregovski (ed. & translated by Mark Slobin) Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press. This publication also includes many Beregovski klezmer music transcriptions. \*<sup>20</sup>

As stated earlier, documentation on Jewish oral traditions before the nineteenth century is meagre, but then the history of Jewish music (including folksong) becomes clearer after the First World War, when Jewish cultural centres of Kiev and Minsk (in the USSR) and Vilna (Vilnius) in Lithuania, attracted many potential collectors and researchers. They were encouraged to embark on specific projects, for which they were provided with some basic methodological training, and the main research resources which were available at the time.

Vilna was a particularly active centre; the Institute of Jewish Research (Yidisher Visnshaftlekher Institut, usually referred to by its acronym YIVO) had its beginnings in that city.\*<sup>21</sup> The YIVO Institute is now located in New York.

From about 1920 up to the present day, numerous collections of Jewish folksong have been put together, and many of them have been transcribed and even provided with harmonization; at the same time, the centres of Jewish cultural research have shifted from USSR and Europe to the U S A and Israel. Shortly after World War I there was a mass migration of Jews from Russia and Poland, to the U S A. But long before that, smaller emigrations had taken place from time to time. Groups of Jews from Spain and Portugal were among

the Early American settlers, and they were followed by Ashkenazic Jews from the western European diaspora (from France, Germany, Holland and Britain). Within the last three decades of the nineteenth century, huge numbers of Jews from Austria, Poland and Russia also flocked to the U S A (di goldene medina: Yiddish for 'the golden land') where today more than two-thirds of the American Jewish population are descended from Polish and Russian immigrants.

After World War II there was a stream of oriental Jews\*<sup>22</sup> into the State of Israel (which had been established in May 1948), when '.... more than a million Oriental Jews .... after almost 2000 years of separation, were reunited with their European brethren' (GROVES: p.616).

There are several centres for Jewish/Yiddish cultural studies in the U S A , notably the YIVO Institute already mentioned. It was originally established as a branch of the earlier Institute for Jewish Studies in Vilna, and today is a leading resource centre of Jewish/Yiddish folklore and linguistic studies. Other centres in U S A worthy of mention include the new National Yiddish Book Center in Amherst, Massachusetts; the Jewish Theological Seminary; the Lincoln Centre branch of the Public Library, both in New York; the Tyson Music Department of Gratz College (Philadelphia) and the Library of Congress, Washington D.C. which also houses research studies and collections of many different cultural traditions. Next to Israel, and perhaps even more so than Israel, the U S A is

the largest promoter of Jewish studies generally. The amount of published material, publications on Yiddish folksong, poetry etc. during the past decade has been considerable. Much of this has been funded by private foundations, and by influential wealthy Jewish families, enthusiastic about preserving their heritage.\*<sup>23</sup>

Some eminent researchers attached to the YIVO Institute in New York include Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, and music archivist, Henry Sapoznik. An impressive set of folk-singers' biographies was gathered for the YIVO Institute by folklorist Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett. In 1977, Kirshenblatt-Gimblett delivered a paper entitled: 'The Shtetl Model in East European Jewish Ethnography' at the conference on Jewish Folklore of the Association of Jewish Studies. The paper is based on notes of Margaret Mead's seminar which culminated in the production of the book Life is with People (Zborowski and Herzog : 1952\*<sup>24</sup>). The deliberate 'selectivity' of the book, and of the shtetl model of Eastern European Jewish culture it helped create, have influenced the self-perception of Jewish-Americans for nearly thirty years. Kirshenblatt-Gimblett has also compiled a project entitled East European Jewish Folksong in its Social Context: An Analysis of the Social Systemization of Folksong Performance (publ. YIVO Institute for Jewish Research, N Y ) and is currently head of the Department of Performance Studies, New York University, as well as Research Associate, YIVO Institute.

Henry Sapoznik, now thirty-four years of age, was raised

in Brooklyn, the son of a chazan ('cantor'). As a young guitar and banjo player, his 'heroes' were Bob Dylan and Woody Guthrie, and Sapoznik founded an instrumental group - a 'country' string band called "The Delaware Water Gap." Curiosity led him to the music collection at YIVO at the suggestion of his grandfather, who encouraged him to look at klezmer music. He was introduced to the sound archives at YIVO by Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, and he himself began working there in 1977 on a sponsored grant. Using his training in ethnomusicology, he assembled a definitive discography of all Jewish recordings. Henry Sapoznik has played an important part (and continues to do so) in the revival of klezmer music in the U S A, having formed his own band Kapelye. He issued 'Klezmer Music 1910-1942' (in 1981) from original material.\*<sup>25</sup> Later this year, a two-volume set of recordings will be issued by him. He has also written 'The Compleat Klezmer' (published by Tara Publications: 1988), a book which includes a history of klezmer as well as music of 33 songs. In 1984, determined that Jewish folk "arts" should continue as 'living expressions', he produced the First Klezmer Music Festival which became the forerunner of one-week camps which he has run successfully, named Klezkamp, an ambitious venture where participants gather for all aspects of Yiddish culture, folklore, old Yiddish films, oral history, singing - a 'celebration' of Eastern European Jewish art and culture. There are also workshops for professional or aspiring klezmer musicians, in arranging and music theory, as well as classes in East European and Hasidic dance.

An interesting and indefatigable performer and scholar of Yiddish folksong is Dr. Ruth Rubin, who although approaching her eighty-first birthday this year, shows no signs of slowing down her activities. Ruth Rubin has been a zamlar ('collector') all her life, collecting Yiddish folksongs and recognised as one of the foremost American ethnomusicologists. Almost fifty years ago, she began the fieldwork of recording, cataloguing and transliterating Yiddish folksongs. She has 'preserved' more than two thousand items, many of which have been published in her books, namely: A Treasury of Jewish Folksongs (1950) which is still a popular work; Voices of a People (1963) and Jewish Folksongs in English and Yiddish (1965). She is currently completing a new major work (tentatively entitled A New Anthology of Yiddish Folksongs) as well as distributing a cassette of a lecture/demonstration entitled 'Yiddish Songs of the Holocaust'. A videotape on the life of Ruth Rubin, made by an independent producer\*<sup>26</sup> who followed Ruth Rubin for two years, portrays her life and work in a 38-minute programme. The documentary focusses on Dr. Rubin's motivation to preserve and pass on Jewish culture for the younger generation, offering a sampling of Yiddish folksongs, dating from mid-nineteenth century through to the Holocaust period.

The U S A has become the stronghold of Yiddish cultural traditions. This is evident in publications like The Book Peddler: a quarterly newsletter of the National Yiddish Book Center, located in Amherst, Massachusetts. In the latest edition (Winter 1988 no.9 - 10), the Executive

Director, Aaron Lansky, explains how the Center came to be established, and why it was decided to launch one special issue which '... is devoted to the theme of Yiddish music.' Lansky writes: '.... there is an instinctive longing on the part of many American Jews to come to terms with the cultural legacy of their own parents and grandparents. Few Jews of my generation can read or speak Yiddish, but they CAN gain access to Yiddish culture through the universal language of music.' This special Winter 1988 issue of The Book Peddler - funded through the generosity of an American couple, Mel and Shifra Gold - is expected to become '... a collector's item and a historical document in its own right'. \*<sup>27</sup>

The enormous task of collecting and cataloguing a backlog of thousands of Yiddish books, currently undertaken by the National Yiddish Book Center in Amherst, is a concerted and highly-planned operation. \*<sup>28</sup> \*<sup>29</sup> If successful, most of the books processed will '.... end up in the world's leading university and research libraries'. All this will keep alive the Yiddish traditions for the younger generation of American Jews.

At this point, it is relevant to draw attention to the invaluable work being done in Oxford, England, at the Oxford Programme in Yiddish, at the Oxford Centre for Hebrew Studies, headed by its dynamic director, Dr. Dovid Katz. \*<sup>30</sup> This year (1988) will mark the seventh year that the Oxford Programme in Yiddish offers an intensive one-month summer course in Yiddish language and literature.

Participants in the Yiddish course are drawn from many countries, and are themselves not necessarily Jewish; in fact, in 1987, when I was fortunate enough to study there for one month, two of the lecturers, namely Elinor Robinson, and Professor Christopher Hutton, both Oxford-born and Oxford-educated, and who are excellent exponents of the Yiddish language, were both on the academic staff.

One of the world's great collections of Yiddish books is housed in the Bodleian Library at Oxford, a fact which surprises many people when they hear of it, yet Oxford acquired the main 'core' of its Yiddish collection some two hundred years ago. Dr. Max Weinreich of the YIVO Institute (in Vilna) wrote an account in 1928 describing how the Bodleian Library ('Der Bodleiane') came to purchase a valuable collection of Yiddish books and manuscripts which had been put together as far back as the eighteenth century by R. Dovid Oppenheimer.

Oppenheimer (1664-1736), an enthusiastic and wealthy collector of books and manuscripts, was forced to send his entire collection to Hanover, in order to protect it from harm. On his death, this valuable treasure of books was inherited by his children; but this second generation did not perceive the importance of the books and one of his sons - in dire need of cash to pay a debt - pawned the entire collection for fifty-thousand Deutsch marks. When he in turn could not honour his obligations, the pawnbroker put the collection up for sale, hoping that the German government might be interested. The sum asked (£2,000) was

modest in comparison to what the books were actually worth, but Germany was impoverished after the Napoleonic wars, and there was no purchaser for the Oppenheimer books. At this point, the Bodleian negotiated to acquire the collection and that is how it came to England. An outcry followed when Germany realised what they had 'lost'. Weinreich writes: '.... ot dos iz di geshikhte fun der hebräische/yidisher opteilung in der Bodleiane'. (Translation: ...and this is the story of the Hebrew/Yiddish collection in the Bodleian). Further purchases have been made over the years (e.g. in 1848, a collection of Chaim Michl of Hamburg, of 860 Yiddish books), but the nucleus ('der iker') was the Oppenheimer legacy.

\* \* \* \* \*

## N O T E S

## NOTES TO CHAPTER ONE

1 a According to latest available figures, there are approximately 120,000 Jews in South Africa.

1 b In June 1986, an exhibition of photographs entitled 'THE JEWS OF SOUTH AFRICA' was mounted in Cape Town, in collaboration with the Museum of the Diaspora (Tel Aviv, Israel) and the South African Airways. The exhibition reconstructed, through photographs, the history of the South African Jewish community, from the arrival of the first Jews at the beginning of the 19th century until today.

It was divided into sections: 'BEGINNINGS: 1806-1880' showing Jews settling in the Cape after 1803. By the year 1880, there were approximately 4000 Jews out of a white population of 200,000.

The photographs of 1881-1939 showed Jewish life in South Africa. During the years 1881-1930, a great wave of Jewish immigrants from Eastern Europe, and in particular from Lithuania, arrived in South Africa. The encounter between them and the Jews from England and Germany, who had preceded them, created the special character of South African Jewry.

The 'Litvaks' (\*see Glossary) brought with them a long tradition of mutual aid and Torah study, a deep attachment to their religion and customs, and their Zionist fervour. Most of them only spoke Yiddish, although while still in Lithuania many of them had been influenced by the spirit of Enlightenment (\* see Chapter 3 on Yiddish Language). The relationship between the "veteran" Jews already settled in S. Africa and the 'Litvaks' was complex.

The Litvaks disassociated themselves from the "English" Jews whom they regarded as haughty and lacking roots in Jewish tradition. The "English" Jews thought their Litvak brethren coarse and ill-mannered. Despite this, the E. European Jews were forced to emulate the English Jews, in order that they might integrate in South African society. Despite the tension between the groups, the English Jews felt responsible for the new immigrants and helped them in many different ways.

Until the 1920s most of the communal leaders, rabbis etc. were of English or German origin. Gus Sharon, a wellknown commentator on South African Jewry, stated: " ....It was a case of pouring Litvak spirit into Anglo-Jewish bottles."

Within the space of a generation, the Lithuanian immigrants succeeded in striking roots in their new country without relinquishing their Jewish identity.

By 1936, the number of Jews in South Africa reached

1b contd.

almost 100,000. It is important to realise that in 1902 a law had been passed in the Cape Province parliament restricting immigration by means of a 'test of education'. Permits were only granted to immigrants who met the required standard of writing in any European language.

This threatened East European Jews whose first language was Yiddish.

The status of Yiddish was unclear.

As a result of strenuous efforts of Rabbi Bender and the Cape Board of Deputies (of which Morris Alexander and David Goldblatt were the leaders) a new clause was added to the immigration law in 1906, which specifically stated that Yiddish was a European language.

Most of the immigrants from Lithuania arrived penniless and suffered considerable deprivation during their first years in South Africa. They worked as small businessmen and craftsmen, just as they had done in Lithuania. Many Jews began as "peddlers" (known as Afrikaans, as 'smous') - and were sometimes the only human link between far-flung farms and the outside world. As a result, a special relationship existed between them and the Bible-loving Boer farmers.

Others were tradesmen and craftsmen, opening their own stores and businesses, and serving the population in the rural areas.

By the end of the 19th century, with the economic upsurge due to gold and diamonds, there was rapid development in trade and industry. In light industry e.g. the clothing trade, textiles, etc. many Jews began to establish themselves. Many of the children of these immigrants turned to academic studies and the free professions when their parents' economic position and social status continued to improve.

During the time that Dr. Malan was Prime Minister, the Quota Law was imposed, which severely restricted immigration.

After World War II there was a resurgence of anti-Semitism in South Africa. Apartheid and racial tension caused some Jews to emigrate and an increased number proceeded to Israel on aliyah (\* See Glossary).

In 1940 there were 104,000 Jews in South Africa.

In 1960 there were 114,000.

In 1980 the figure given was approximately 119,000 Jews.

On a more personal note, I might add that I am a South African-born daughter of immigrant parents: my father being a Londoner who arrived in South Africa in 1927 on contract, to work as a master craftsman in a furniture factory in Cape Town; my mother who was Lithuanian born, came to South Africa in 1928. My parents married in Johannesburg in 1934.

- 2 Refer to Note 21 on YIVO Institute, New York. Examples of collections of folksongs available include collections published by YIVO, by many publishing houses in the U S A e.g. Schocken Books, New York ; and, ANTHOLOGY OF YIDDISH FOLKSONGS (The Hebrew University of Jerusalem, Mount Scopus Publications by the Magnes Press, Israel).
- 3 Book of Jewish-German folk poetry collected by Eisek Wallich in the period 1595 - 1605, which contains fifty-four poems, above each of which are cited the names of the melodies - Hebrew hymns and German folk melodies - to which the words of the texts should be sung. (Hofman 1980 : 641-2 ).
- 4 Saul Ginzburg and Peysakh Marek: Yevreskaya Narodnya Pyseni v Russii ( Jewish Folksongs in Russia ) St. Petersburg: Voskhod, 1901. TEXTS ONLY - annotations in Russian. (Furnished notes, critical, explanatory.)
- 5 Nettl: (The Free Press of Glencoe, Collier-Macmillan, 1964) Chapter 1 : 1-26
- 6 Texts only. See Note 4
- 7 See Chapter 3 : Yiddish language page  
Peretz stands at the intellectual centre of Yiddish culture and literature, and is considered one of the three 'classical' writers of Yiddish prose, together with Mendele Moykher-Sforim (1834 - 1917) and Sholem Aleichem (1859 - 1916).
- 8a The first Jewish Ethnographic Expedition was organised and led by S. Ansky (also spelled An-ski), the Yiddish author and playwright. The aim was to collect folk songs of the Jews living in Ukrainian towns and villages. This initial expedition was highly successful, and led to several more such ventures during the next seven years, aimed at preserving Jewish folk culture '... before it was too late' (The Book Peddler 1988: 20).
- The end result was an assemblage of literally thousands of Yiddish folksongs, which were subsequently compiled by the Jewish folklorist Moshe Beregovski.
- 8b During his travels, Ansky inevitably encountered popular myths and beliefs of the people among whom he worked, the influence of which is strongly evident in his bestknown work, the drama Der Dybbuk ('The Dybbuk'). For explanation of 'Dybbuk'\* see Glossary.

Anski was the pen name of Shloime Zanvil Rapaport (1863 - 1920). The Dybbuk has been produced on the leading stages of the world. In fact, this year, in June 1988, the noted choreographer Maurice Béjart was commissioned to write and produce a new ballet for the 40th Anniversary of the establishment of the State

8b contd.

of Israel, and he chose to create a full-length work, the new ballet The Dybbuk, having been inspired by Anski's story.

A Cape Town production ( in English) of The Dybbuk was staged in 1984 at the University of Cape Town's Little Theatre, production by Rudi Nadler-Nir, and choreography by Jasmine Honoré of the U C T Ballet School.

9 Yiddish Scientific Institute: see note 21 on YIVO.

Dr. Max Weinreich died in New York in 1969. His son, Uriel Weinreich, wrote the standard textbook for learning the Yiddish language: COLLEGE YIDDISH (published by YIVO New York 1949).

10a Refer to Note 11 on 'ethnomusicology', 'musicology' and 'cultural anthropology'.

10b Mark Slobin TENEMENT SONGS : The Popular Music of the Jewish Immigrants: University of Illinois Press, 1982.

11 With acknowledgment to Dr Deidre Hansen, University of Cape Town, 1988 I would like to set out a broad explanation of 'ethnomusicology' and 'cultural anthropology'.

The beginnings of ethnomusicology are usually traced to the last two decades of the 19th century, when cultural anthropology (\* a sub-discipline within anthropology, and focussing primarily on the study of culture, and the social structure within communities societies and also nations; nowadays it is used as a synonym for social anthropology) and ethnomusicology (then known as comparative musicology or 'exotic music' studies), were in their infancy.

It was also the time when evolutionary thinking emerged, when Charles Darwin put forward his 'gradualist' concepts of origin of species by natural selection, and had a profound influence on all theoretical and philosophical thinking for decades to come.

Cultural anthropologists concerned themselves with non-literate societies, especially the Non-Western (a limitation which does not apply today), while the early ethnomusicologists dealt with the study of non-Western musics i.e. with living musical traditions (including instruments and the dance) that were transmitted orally. Thus their main research areas were so-called 'tribal' or 'primitive' musics of the Asian 'high' cultures (e.g. India, China, Japan, Iran, Indonesia, as well as oral traditions of 'folk' music i.e. the orally transmitted music that exists alongside the 'art' musics of the 'high' cultures e.g. Asian/Oriental musics, and also

11 contd.

European art music. I have placed the descriptive labels in commas because they were in common use at the time, and used in accordance with evolutionary thinking; these labels are no longer used in current cultural research.

Most of the early comparative musicologists were Germans and Americans, although a number of scholars in Austria and Britain also became involved in cross-cultural studies. They differed essentially in their theory, method, approach and emphasis in their research work. The Germans were most concerned with matters relating to structural aspects of music (i.e. of musical styles, including instruments and the dance): but they studied musical styles as music per se, without relating them to their socio-cultural contexts.

They also concerned themselves with non-structural musical aspects e.g. speculative theories about the ultimate origins of music from primeval sounds to fully developed tonal systems.

In contrast to the approach adopted by German scholars, their American counterparts, strongly influenced by American anthropological trends, were more concerned with the studying of music in its ethnological context.

Aspects of music structures were somewhat neglected in favour of descriptions of the social functions and use in specific geographical areas. Although field work was a basis for this type of approach, emic ('folk') evaluations were of little importance, and the aspect of music change was scarcely considered. Indeed, what characterized basic research in those days was a call for 'preservation' of 'folk' or non-western musics: scholars constantly stressed the need to record and study oral traditions before they disappeared forever. As Merriam (1964) Blacking (1973) and Kubik (1986) have pointed out, the aim for 'preservation' may be commendable, but it is hardly realistic: the 'preservist' attitude fails to consider the inevitability of change in music, an aspect which has increasingly attracted the attention of many researchers during the past two decades.

Over the years, the discipline formerly known as comparative musicology had its name changed; the field of ethnomusicology expanded rapidly, and, in the works of various researchers, was constantly defined and re-defined, until it came to encompass '...almost any type of human activity that can conceivably be related in some manner to what may be termed music' (List: 1976).

As a discipline, it has, however, ceased to be an AREA of study as it was in its infancy. Today it is still perhaps a 'discipline undefined', but, most researchers, working as they have done, and do, within different

11 contd.

conceptual frameworks, would tend to agree with Alan Merriam's basic concept of ethnomusicology; that it should be the study of music in culture, because no music can be understood except within the context of its own culture, and on the basis of the emic notions of the people who maintain it.

The role of the ethnomusicologist (or cultural scientist or music ethnologist) and the problems of his discipline are still much-debated issues. Even the basic concept on intracultural study is being questioned e.g. V. Kofi Agawu, a Ghanaian ethnomusicologist has questioned the need for 'social props' of music to be considered as secondary as to that which happens in the music. Agawu advocates extensive transcriptions of detailed recordings of music.

In the present situation, John Rahn's comments on the question 'What is ethnomusicology?' are singularly pertinent. He states: 'I won't try to answer this question. Ethnomusicologists are, as Bruno Nettl and others have remarked (Nettl 1983: 3) are quite fond of answering it themselves in various ways. Consequently almost anything said about them won't fit many of them'. \*

\*'Ethnological Approaches to Western Art Music: a Native Reflection' in The World of Music (Journal of the International Institute for comparative music studies and documentation (Berlin) in association with the International Music Council (Unesco). Vol.XXIX No.1 1987 : 9).

What IS ethnomusicology? How does it compare with musicology? With anthropology? Attempts to explain and define continue: perhaps what Merriam wrote in his important book 24 years ago would seem to be particularly relevant now: 'It is not surprising to find that the definition of the field, as well as a general discussion of its proper boundaries, have differed widely, and have tended to take polar extremes, depending upon the emphasis desired by the individual scholar' (1964: 5).

12 One key difference between research in music of the Jews in Europe is discussed by Mark Slobin (1982 : 29) '...With the destruction of the culture and its carriers in Eastern Europe, it is extremely difficult for us to understand the Jews' musical life. Though Hungarians, Poles, and Rumanians - among others - suffered greatly, their research institutes have restocked the destroyed archives and have turned out voluminous recordings and publications that detail older musical traditions. A scholar of Hungarian-song ... can find all the variants he needs in

12 contd.

Budapest as a control on his study: in contrast, the student of Jewish music has no such resource available.'

- 13 A.Z. Idelsohn: Hebraisch-orientalischer Melodienschatz  
 Leipzig 1914-32 / R 1973  
 \_\_\_\_\_ : 'Parallelen zwischen gregorianischer und  
hebräischer Gesangsweisen' ZMw, iv  
 (1922), 515  
 \_\_\_\_\_ : JEWISH MUSIC IN ITS HISTORICAL  
 DEVELOPMENT (N.Y. 1929)  
 \_\_\_\_\_ : 'Der Missinai-Gesang der deutschen  
Synagoge' (1926)  
 'The Kol Nidre Tune'  
 Hebrew Union College Annual (1931 : 493)  
 \_\_\_\_\_ : SONGS AND SINGERS IN THE SYNAGOGUE  
 IN THE 18th Century  
 Hebrew Union College Annual  
 Jubilee Volume (Cincinnati 1925)
- 14 Mark Slobin is currently Professor of Ethnomusicology  
 at Wesleyan University, Middletown, Connecticut,  
 U S A.  
 Slobin has also done work (1973) on the music of  
 Afghanistan and Central Asia.
- 15 Slobin in OLD JEWISH FOLK MUSIC : The Collections and  
 Writings of Moshe Beregovski. (1982 : 8,9)
- 16 Nicholas I, Czar of Russia, reigned 1825-1855.  
 Soldiers' songs of the time are set against a  
 background of forced conscription, for which the  
 Russian term was 'rekрутчина'. This was applicable  
 to young Jewish boys, and accompanied by pressure to  
 convert to Christianity.
- 17 Similar findings have been made in the research work  
 of later ethnomusicologists e.g. Blacking, Kubik.
- 18 Klezmorim (pl.) klezmer (sing.) : Klezmorim were  
 bands of musicians who were hired especially for  
 weddings. A usual klezmer band might consist of a  
 violinist, a double bass, a clarinetist, a drummer  
 and any additional instruments available. They  
 played dance music and accompanied the singing, and  
 their repertoire included songs which had widespread  
 popularity.
- 19 Cited in SLOBIN : Tenement Songs (1982: 19)
- 20 'THE BOOK PEDDLER' (Der Pakn-treger). Newsletter of  
 the National Yiddish Book Centre Winter 1988/5748  
 No.9-10 . Amherst, Massachusetts U S A Page 58

21

## YIVO Institute for Jewish Research

This remarkable institution is the world's great repository of documents and books dealing with the life and world of the Yiddish-speaking Jews ('YIVO' is an acronym for Yiddisher Visnshaftlekher Institut, which can be translated as Jewish Scientific Institute). It was founded in Berlin in 1925, with Vilna - 'the Jerusalem of Lithuania' - as its headquarters. The institute's goal was not only to gather information on Yiddish and its culture, but also to disseminate knowledge of it. When Hitler's war began, YIVO's extensive archives were seized by the Nazis. A new headquarters was established in New York, where Dr. Max Weinreich, one of the institute's founders, had settled, and efforts to start anew began. When World War II ended, much of the archive was discovered intact in boxes in Frankfurt and sent to New York. YIVO now occupies premises on Fifth Avenue, and continues a vigorous programme of collection, study, exhibition and publishing. Among its many notable publications, perhaps the best known are Dr. Weinreich's monumental study of the Yiddish language, recently issued in English translation, and the Yiddish-English dictionary and Yiddish textbook COLLEGE YIDDISH written by Weinreich's son, Uriel, who was head of the linguistics department of Columbia University.

- 22 Most of the Oriental Jews who came to Israel in such large numbers after 1948 were poor and uneducated. Many of them arrived en masse, in airborne operations e.g. Operation "Magic Carpet" (the Jews of Yemen) and Operation "Ezra and Nehemiah" (the Jews of Iraq).
- 23 Example: The Mel and Shifra Gold Music Project (1987) of the National Book Center at Amherst, funds a massive project to sort, shelve and "accession" 450,000 Yiddish books over a period of three years. The cost has been projected at \$250,000 per year, and further grants and pledges have been promised, e.g. a grant of \$50,000 to help cover the cost of computer accessioning. Gifts have also been received to fund 'interns' - young university students who spend time sorting and shelving books, packaging books, preparing bibliographical data, while learning the Yiddish language. (THE BOOK PEDDLER 1988: p.7)
- 24 LIFE IS WITH PEOPLE: Zborowski, Mark and Herzog, Elizabeth. Schocken Books, New York. 1952
- 25 A cassette of 'Klezmer Music 1910-1942' was purchased in New York by a Cape Town resident, Mrs Frances Losman, who kindly gave me the tape, in 1986. Only after reading about Henry Sapoznik in the Book Peddler (Winter 1988) did I discover that it was he who had catalogued, sorted and issued this cassette from original material housed at the Yivo Institute, New York.

- 26 'A Life of Song: A Portrait of Ruth Rubin, Yiddish Folksinger and Folklorist' is the title of the videotape produced and directed by Boston independent producer, Cindy Marshall, who won an award for this film at the Columbus International Film Festival. In the U S A, this videotape is available both for rental (hire) as well as for sale.
- 27 Having myself ordered sheet music by mail from The National Yiddish Book Center in Amherst, U S A, and being a member of the National Book Center, I then became "eligible" to receive a copy of the special Winter 1988 issue of The Book Peddler. This was posted to me in June 1988.
- 28 For the past seven years, the National Book Center has organised a network of hundreds of zamlers ('collectors') who have 'rescued' almost three-quarters of a million Yiddish books. At one time, 8000 volumes were pulled from '... a rain-soaked garbage dump' and a 15,000-vol. library was rescued at the 'last minute' from a demolition site in the Bronx. The work of staff and volunteers has fired the imagination of thousands in America itself, as well as attracting international attention. With generous sponsorship, the National Yiddish Book Center has assembled the '...physical remnant' of East European Jewish culture, so that it will not perish with our generation.
- Until now, the Center has dedicated its resources to collecting books. As long as these books remain unprocessed, they remain inaccessible to the students, scholars and librarians who need them most. The Center is therefore launching 'Phase II' which is to return the books to active use.
- 29 Phase II of the National Yiddish Book Center is a three-year project, in which it is planned to sort, shelve, and computerise the entire backlog of 450,000 volumes. As stated above (Note 28) almost three-quarters of a million books have been collected, of which only 300,000 have been unpacked and sorted. Phase II is an ambitious plan, but, if successful could lead to the 'publication of a comprehensive catalogue, as well as access to virtually the whole of modern Yiddish literature. The Phase II campaign was launched in January 1988.
- 30 Dr. Dovid Katz, Brooklyn-born, majored in Yiddish linguistics at Columbia University, New York. His doctoral thesis 'Exploration in the History of the Semitic Component in Yiddish' was completed at the University of London. . Since 1978, he has taught Yiddish language, literature and linguistics at the Oxford Centre for Postgraduate Hebrew Studies. He is Leslie Paisner Research Fellow at St. Antony's College, Oxford. He directs Yiddish Studies at the University of Oxford.

CHAPTER TWO

THE JEWISH PEOPLE IN THE MIDDLE AGES

The destruction of the Temple in Jerusalem by the Romans in the year 70 C.E. was a catastrophe for the Jewish people. The Temple, which had been the center of Jewish religious life, was destroyed, and the Jewish people were dispersed throughout the world. This dispersion was the result of a series of persecutions and expulsions, which culminated in the Crusades and the pogroms of the Middle Ages.

**CHAPTER TWO**

In the widely scattered centers of their dispersal, the Jews established new, self-contained communities in which they pursued a vigorous economic life. In these communities, they maintained their religious and social traditions, and they developed a strong sense of identity and solidarity.

It developed with, and was a result of, the "Ghetto" system, which was a result of the persecution and expulsion of the Jews from their native land. The Ghetto was a place where the Jews were forced to live, and it was a place where they were often subjected to discrimination and persecution. Despite these hardships, the Jews managed to maintain their religious and social traditions, and they developed a strong sense of identity and solidarity. This sense of identity and solidarity was a result of the persecution and expulsion of the Jews from their native land, and it was a result of the fact that the Jews were a people who were united by their religion and their traditions.

## CHAPTER TWO

### THE DIVERSITY OF JEWISH MUSICAL TRADITIONS

The destruction of the Temple in Jerusalem by the Romans in the year 70 C E <sup>1</sup>\* (Tisha b'Av - the ninth day of the month of Av in the Jewish calendar) was a cataclysmic historical and political event which initiated the disruption of 'Jewish life as a whole' (Rothmüller 1967: 88). The Jews were expelled from Israel, and dispersed to farflung areas around the world during the ensuing centuries;\*<sup>2</sup> communities of Jews which had formerly been culturally homogeneous, were separated from each other geographically and politically.

In the widely spread countries of their dispersal, the Jews established new, self-contained communities in which they pursued a vigorous communal life, in which music was ritually and socially important.

It developed with, and was influenced by, the 'foreign' musics of the diasporic environments. Thus the description 'Jewish music' (including folksong as a component of folklore), does not denote a unified tradition of music representing Jewish national life, in which musical features and traits are all the same, and have the same meanings within different community cultures. The description denotes rather '... a multitude of Jewish musical traditions', which exhibit considerable diversity in certain aspects of overall style, practice and usage, and which '... clearly mirror the changing conditions of

life' in the many scattered communities of the Diaspora. (Hofman 1981: 634). These diverse musical traditions also show varying degrees of assimilation of 'foreign' musical elements, as a result of cultural interaction, combined with essentially Jewish/Semitic characteristics e.g. melodic patterning, performance style and musical use and function.

To date, musicological research has identified THREE main centres in which Jewish folklore traditions developed, these centres being distinct by virtue of the culture-specific forms of musical expression found in groups of Jewish communities. These groups have already been mentioned \*<sup>3</sup> : (i) Oriental, and (ii) Sephardic \*<sup>4</sup> communities, whose geographical areas cover Spain and Asian/Islamic countries, and (iii) 'Occidental' or Ashkenazic communities \*<sup>4</sup> who were located in mainly non-Jewish 'host' countries with Germanic, Slavonic, and later, American populations.

At this point it will be useful to enumerate the various Jewish communities and to comment briefly on their folksong traditions, most of which have not been researched ethnomusicologically.

(i) ORIENTAL and (ii) SEPHARDIC COMMUNITIES:

Oriental communities are located in many parts of the world - in terms of main concentrations, Asia (Turkey, Syria, Lebanon), in Asiatic countries of Afghanistan, Iraq and

Iran, and Soviet republics of Gruzia (Georgia) and Kurdistan; in Japan, India, Africa and Israel, United States of America, South America, Australia and South Africa. All are Sephardic communities and all '... observe the essentials of Sephardic rite and intonation of Biblical cantillation' (Hofman 1981: 636). Although their liturgical music has been investigated to some extent, there is little documentation on their folksong traditions.

Gruzian (Georgian) Jews ('Gruzinskei Ivrei'<sup>6</sup>\*) are still living in the Soviet republic of Gruzia, although considerable numbers have emigrated to Israel over the past sixty to seventy years. According to historical evidence, their ancestry is traceable to the Jews of the ancient kingdoms of Babylonia (a country now part of Iran) and Persia (now called by its official, modern Persian name, Iran). The Gruzian Jews are wellknown for their strict observance of religious customs and associated music, but are less conservative regarding their secular songs, and their music education system, both of which are strongly influenced by western European 'classical' musical conventions, and their own national Gruzian music. This latter is characterized by the almost excessive use of microtonal intervals within melodic structures, and their melismatic ornamentation, and the use of 'harmonic' devices '..characteristic of Georgian music' (ibid). According to the Life World Library series on Russia, '... Georgia is a wild land of rugged mountains which have long sheltered fierce men ...' (1961 : 22,23 \*<sup>7</sup>) and one

must take cognizance of their geographical situation to understand how the Georgians, for centuries, were able to repel invaders. With towering mountains to protect them, a few tough horsemen could hold a pass against an entire army, and thus Georgian tribes stayed free of czarist attempts to subdue them. Gruzian Jews bear a close physical resemblance to the Georgian population, and also display the hardy and aggressive characteristics of the Georgians.\*<sup>8</sup>

Kurdistan, a mountainous region extending roughly from south eastern Turkey into north-western Iran, has been the traditional home of Kurdish Jews since historical times. Like the Gruzian Jews, Kurdish Jews also claim descent from Babylonian and old Persian Jewry. Their emigrations to Palestine go back to the early years of the sixteenth century, but small numbers still live in Iranian Kurdistan. They speak a language known as Targum, which is a dialect of Aramaic.\*<sup>9</sup>

It has been established that the Kurdish Jews possess a repertory of secular music that is reputedly of great age, and which was traditionally performed in psalmodic recitative style. Otherwise very little seems to be known about their oral traditions, and even less of their musical structures and performance styles, since '... they have no stated theories regarding scale system or metrical structure' (op. cit.: 637). \*<sup>10</sup>

The Samaritan Jews are one of the oldest Middle Eastern peoples, being descendants of 'an ancient sectarian tribe' who once inhabited Samaria, an ancient kingdom and province in northern Palestine situated between the Jordan river, and the Mediterranean sea. Today there are two main centres of Samaritan Jewry, one in Nablus, and the other in Holon (near Tel Aviv), both in the State of Israel. Although the language of their liturgy is a form of Aramaic, it is Arabic that is commonly spoken in Nablus, as it is by older people living in Holon. The younger generation (including children) speak Hebrew, the language of modern Israel. According to existing documentation, Samaritan Jewish music comprises two main distinct styles of vocal music:

(1) the kaved or 'heavy' style in which formal texts are rendered in a cantillatory style at a fairly slow tempo; syllables of words and word-phrase patterns are extended and embellished by melismas, and glissandi (incurring wide intervals and sudden changes in dynamics), and (2) the lighter ('light') style gal, in which the setting of words to music is more syllabic, and done according to regular metres. Both styles (1) and (2) are employed in Samaritan secular folksong, a repertory which also contains some of the oldest known poems in the Arabic language, the performance of which is based on antiphony and a certain amount of harmonic ('organum-like') part-singing (Hofman loc. cit.).

Egypt was the historical home of the Karaite Jews, whose wandering westwards, through Egypt and as far north as

Lithuania in eastern Europe, were both extensive and continuous. Most Karaite Jews now live in Israel, having moved there from Egypt. Their musical traditions demonstrate an interesting blend of diverse musical elements, deriving from oriental modal music (e.g. the use of melody modes and major and minor modes closely resembling those of Western music).

The Yemenite Jews are probably the '... least homogeneous Asiatic community' (Hofman loc.cit.) although perhaps 'communities' would be a more apposite description. They are descended from '... many different tribes ... and come from more than a thousand different localities', historical and cultural facts which would account for the many rich and varied styles of traditions maintained to this day by the Yemenite Jews. Because of this, it has been stated they they 'may be regarded as one of the most important sources of Jewish folksong' (loc. cit.). Prior to being 'resettled' in Israel in the period 1948/1949 when '... the entire population of 40,000 Yemenite Jews were transferred to Israel by air' (loc.cit.).\*<sup>11</sup> Yemenite folksong traditions are among the very few to have been subjected to ethnomusicological analysis.

In an impressive study of Yemenite chants (1981), different categories of Yemenite-Jewish music are analysed and discussed by Uri Sharvit and Yehiel Adaqi \*<sup>12</sup> in terms of their musical structures, performance styles and socio-cultural uses and functions. Although Yemenite music is

essentially vocal, certain song types e.g. semi-religious songs with Arabic texts (and some in a mixture of Hebrew, Arabic and Aramaic languages) are traditionally accompanied by drumming (loc.cit.).

Since the mid 1950s a number of scholars have investigated some areas of the folksong traditions of the many Sephardic communities who settled among indigenous populations on and about the Iberian Peninsula. These migrations took place from the first millenium B.C until the Jews were expelled from Spain (1492), and from Portugal (1497). According to historical and cultural research, there were two mass migrations of Jews, the Mediaeval migration, in which Jews moved to North Africa and the eastern Mediterranean area, and the Renaissance migration in which large numbers of Jews moved and settled in various parts of western Europe. Whereas the 'Mediaeval' emigrants continued as self-contained 'folk' societies and maintained their Hispanic culture, the Renaissance emigrants assimilated many non-Jewish cultural influences. Their musical traditions developed apace with those of their new environments, and ultimately '... led to the elimination of almost all traces of their Hispanic past' (op. cit.: 640). The Spanish and Portuguese Jews readily adopted/borrowed culturally from their neighbouring or host countries, which is probably why Sephardic folksong traditions are so distinctive and differ radically from those of other oriental communities, as revealed in the literature which is available on music of the Sephardic Diaspora and the

other oriental communities. In one sound recording in my possession, of Sephardic songs and romances ('Romanzas Y Cantigas Judeo-Españolas')\*<sup>13</sup> one can immediately detect the distinctive 'Spanish' sound, particularly in songs like 'A La Una Nasi Yo' (At One o'Clock I Was Born), 'El Prisionero', 'Tres Hermanikas' and 'Dia Y Noche Rogo Al Dio'. These songs are sung in Ladino.\*<sup>13</sup>

Other communities of oriental Jews are the Iraqi, Iranian, and Bukhara communities (Middle Eastern areas), the Cochin and Bene-Israel communities of Indian Jews, the Japanese Jewish community on the island of Honshu (about which very little is known), and the African Jewish community of the Falashas of Ethiopia, and, nearer home, the Sephardic Jewish community in Southern Africa.\*<sup>14</sup>

The Iranian Jewish communities are descendants of Jewish peoples who were deported there by successive Assyrian kings (Pul, Tiglatpileser, Salmanasser and Sennacherib) about a century before the Jews were sent into exile (Babylonian exile) by King Nebuchadnezzar (op. cit.: 639).

The Bukhara Jews constitute a relatively small community whose original home was in the former kingdom of Persia. From the amount of researched material available, it is known that they have a rich body of folklore associated with the many different festivals which they observe. Their language is Tadjik-Persian (Judeo-Persian written with Hebrew characters), and in their language and

culture, they created, in the course of centuries, a literature of their own. One of their poets, Moses ben David, who flourished toward the end of the fifteenth century, also wrote in the Persian language and was greatly admired by the Persians of this time. In 1893, as a result of restrictions and persecutions, many Jews from Bukhara turned towards Palestine, where they established a large colony in Jerusalem,<sup>and</sup> where they have been worshipping in their own synagogues and are trying to preserve their old customs.

The folksong repertory of the Iraqi Jews incorporates TWO distinctive traditions of folksong (1) in which both the religious and secular songs show influences of Arab modal music, and (2) in which religious and secular songs each have distinctive performance styles: the former are rendered in a quasi-declamatory style (non-melodic to western ears), while their secular songs include items of instrumental music i.e. dance songs which are characterized by alternating rhythm patterns played on a shawm ('oboe') and a drum (Hofman 1981 : 638).

Before the mass emigration of Iraqi Jews to Israel in 1951, there were some 150,000 Arabic-speaking Jews in Iraq. Of this number, almost half lived in the city of Baghdad. Their cultural level was not higher than that of their '... Mohammedan neighbours' (Ausubel 1953: 218) because they had been '...held back' (loc. cit.) by their Moslem feudal rulers.

In addition to the communities discussed, there are other 'Lost Tribes' and remote communities on which subject there is very scanty information; there are a number of peoples who cling to the ancient tradition that they are descended from the Jewish Lost Tribes: the tribesmen of Afghanistan, the Mohammedan Berbers of West Africa, the Ibo peoples of Nigeria. Unquestionably they all practice certain Hebraic customs and beliefs, which lends some credibility (as well as speculation) concerning their claims.

Ausubel (1953 : 217-229) lists and describes several 'remote' communities, e.g. the Jews of Iran, Kurdistan, Yemen, Georgia, Bukhara, Hadramaut (Arab-speaking Jews), 'Mountain' Jews (who claim an ancestry that goes back to the destruction of the First Temple), Afghanistan, the Bene-Israel, the Jews of Cochin, China & Egypt, Algeria, Morocco, Libya, Tunisia, Djerba and the Sahara. Closely 'related' (culturally and historically) to the Jews of the Sahara, are the Cave Dwellers, who live in settlements in various stony ranges in the Atlas Mountains south of Tunisia, in the most forbidding of physical conditions. These people have their own synagogues, each with its own chacham ('wise man' or rabbi); their isolation from the mainstream of Jewish life adds poignancy to their longing for the 'redemption' of Israel and for their own return to the land of their forefathers.\*<sup>15</sup> Ausubel also discusses the Falashas of Ethiopia, the Samaritans and Karaites. The Karaites are known in Hebrew as 'Karaim', (People of the

Bible), and they hold that their sect originated before the Destruction of the First Temple. They have their own liturgy and their own body of religious scholarship in Hebrew.

Of all the aforementioned oriental and Sephardic communities, the only group which seems to have preserved a most distinctive 'music' are the Jews of Yemen. Their synagogue chants and their melodies are of striking originality and beauty. This 'folk-religious' music has been grafting itself significantly on the musical culture of present-day Israel.

In South Africa, descendants of both the Oriental and Occidental communities, known respectively as Sephardic and Ashkenazic communities, are to be found. In Cape Town, the Sephardic Jewish community is made up largely of Jews born on Rhode Island, or Alexandria (Egypt), or in France, Belgium, who later settled in the (Belgian) Congo and Zimbabwe (formerly Rhodesia) prior to coming to the Cape. The Sephardic community has its own synagogue in Sea Point under the leadership of Rabbi R. Suiza.

Most of South Africa's 120,000 Jews descend from the Jewish communities of Eastern Europe, Lithuania, Poland, Russia and a smaller number from Germany. These are Ashkenazi Jews, the name stemming from the Old Hebrew term Ashkenaz (meaning Germany). Today the term Ashkenazi denotes, generally, all the Jews of northern, western, and eastern european origin, and the communities deriving

from them in North and South America, Australia and South Africa. (It should be noted that in Europe, west of the Rhine there are small groups of both Ashkenazic and Sephardic Jews).

This dissertation is concerned with Yiddish folksong within the context of South African Jewry, most of whom are descendants of Ashkenazic communities of Jews.

The many zones of Jewish culture are indeed widespread, as can readily be perceived by even a superficial survey of all the Jewish communities the world over, and yet the study of Jewish folksong remains '... one of the least explored realms of Jewish music' (op.cit.: 637). Despite large collections of folksong (i.e. orally transmitted melodies) which are available, and which are stored, in centres such as the YIVO Institute in New York (United States) and the Hebrew University (Jerusalem, Israel), and which are available in both written and recorded form, little attention has been paid to the ethnomusicological study of Yiddish folksong. Perhaps this is due in some measure to the fact that more attention has been given to Jewish liturgical music, largely because it provided material for interesting comparative studies of early Christian liturgical music. The pioneering work of Idelsohn, Beregovski and others have provided a fair amount of conclusive information regarding the essential aspects of Jewish musical traditions e.g. they are oral traditions, have always been so, and have remained essentially so, notwithstanding

the impact of outside cultural influences. But there is still much work to be done. The different traditions of Jewish folksong, representative of regional traditions and community styles, have yet to be studied and identified ethnomusicologically, with reference to their cultural uniqueness, their distinguishing socio-musicological traits, and the '... many hidden traits they may have in common' (op.cit. : 636)

Titus led the Roman army against Jerusalem in the year 70 C.E. and set the gates of the Temple on fire, sacked and vandalized the sacred buildings, and destroyed the Temple. To this day, the tragedy of the destruction of the Temple is remembered with fasting and tears on its anniversary, the ninth day of Av.

The destruction of Jerusalem in 70 C.E. marked the death of the Jewish state. Yet, of course, it did not mark the end of the Jewish people. If anything, the final dispersion intensified Jewish consciousness of identity and tightened bonds of group kinship.

Jews constantly turned a longing gaze toward their far-off homeland. When they prayed, they faced eastward toward Jerusalem, and their passionate love and mourning for Zion permeated the liturgy of the synagogue. \* \* \* \* \*  
 To leave a square yard unfinished on one of the walls when they built a home or synagogue. On it, they inscribed in Hebrew the words of the Psalms: '... 'zacher lachurban' ( "In memory of the Destruction" ).

Because Jews had voluntarily chosen to go into perpetual mourning for the vanished glories of Zion and the Temple, they banished sensory beauty from the synagogue service. e.g. the shofar (the organ played in the Temple) and other musical instruments of the Levites were barred both by religious decision and custom.

Jewish captives in Babylonia were allowed a measure of self-rule in their own community. In respect of their superior education (Isaiah 45: 16) and their 'skills as artisans', as well as ability as merchants and farmers, they were even permitted to acquire property and acquire wealth. Most significant of all was the freedom with which they were allowed to worship their own G-d in their own way without

## N O T E S

## NOTES TO CHAPTER TWO

THE DIVERSITY OF JEWISH MUSICAL TRADITIONS

- 1 The year 70 C E marks the Destruction of the Second Temple. The First Temple was destroyed by the Babylonians in 586 B C E when Nebuchadnezzar, King of Babylonia, captured Jerusalem. The captivity of the Jewish people lasted 70 years.

Persia conquered Babylon, and Cyrus of Persia ordered the Jews to rebuild their Temple. It is estimated that 42,000 Jews returned to Judea.

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The destruction of Jerusalem in 70 C E marked the death of the Jewish state. Yet, of course, it did not mark the end of the Jewish people. If anything, the final dispersion intensified Jewish consciousness of identity and tightened bonds of group kinship.

Jews constantly turned a longing gaze toward their far-off homeland. When they prayed, they faced eastward toward Jerusalem, and their passionate love and mourning for Zion desolated, pervaded the liturgy of the synagogue. It became a custom for pious Jews to leave a square 'yard' unfinished on one of the walls when they built a home or synagogue: on it, they inscribed in Hebrew the words of the Psalmist .... 'zecher lachurban' ( "In memory of the Destruction" ).

Because Jews had voluntarily chosen to go into perpetual mourning for the vanished glories of Zion and the Temple, they banished sensory beauty from the synagogue service e.g. the magrepha (the organ played in the Temple) and other musical instruments of the Levites were barred both by religious decision and custom.

- 2 Jewish captives in Babylonia were allowed a measure of self-rule in their own community. On account of their superior education (Ausubel 1953 : 66) and their 'skills as artisans', as well as ability as merchants and farmers, they were even permitted to acquire property and acquire wealth. Most significant of all was the freedom with which they were allowed to worship their own G-d in their own way without

2

contd. interference. Also, every Jew knew his 'family tree'. No attempt was made by the Babylonian authorities to break up the clan and tribal groupings headed by their own elders.

Communal necessities led them to form assemblies - out of these developed the synagogue. It grew out of the urgent need for religious worship because the Temple no longer existed, and they were exiles in a distant land.

In exile, with the holy Temple in ruins and the priesthood scattered, there was (paradoxically) an intense spiritual and cultural awakening. In adversity, the Jews had developed a feeling of group solidarity. The teachings of Moses and the Prophets, which they had previously taken lightly, now took on a '... soul-stirring significance.' (Ausubel loc. cit.)

3 Refer also page 48, note 14

4 In his excellent book 'THE SIEGE: The Saga of Israel & Zionism' (1986) Conor Cruise O'Brien prefers the geographical distinction between Sephardic and Ashkenazic communities.

As he points out in his book: '... Ashkenazim and Sephardim .... the two sets of people often referred to as Ashkenazim and Sephardim after the branches of Judaism to which they belong. As some of the European Jews belong to the Sephardic branch, by their traditions, and as the present perceived differences between the two main groups have much more to do with the social and cultural context of their regions of origin than with any difference in forms of religious observance, I prefer the 'geographical' terms - even though "Oriental" is a bit strained by the inclusion of the Maghreb. I am following the usage which applies "Oriental" to all Jews from Muslim countries.'

(Ch.2 The Second Israel pp.333-361)

5 I have found very little information on Sephardic music. The occasional song appears in a published collection of 'general' songs (i.e. Yiddish and Hebrew song collections), and one can find sound recordings e.g. 'SEPHARDIC SONGS AND ROMANCES' with ETTY KAN (soprano) 1973 (produced in Tel Aviv, Israel. While I was in Oxford in August 1987, I heard 'Quando El Rey Nimrod' ('When King

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contd.

Nimrod') being sung by a participant on the Yiddish course, Mr. José-Luis Serrano, who is not Jewish, but is studying for a doctorate in the Yiddish language. Being Spanish himself, he gave us a most beautiful performance of this song. 'Cuando El Rey Nimrod' was one of the Sephardic songs on the programme of the concert of Jewish Music put on at University of Cape Town (August 1986) - and was sung by Ann Rajna (Ann Champion). She taught it to herself from listening to a recording. Her husband, Dr. Thomas Rajna, added the chords, and she accompanied herself on guitar.

6

The phrase 'Gruzinskei Ivrei' was given to me by informant Mr Anatoly Shinkar of Cape Town, who was born in Kishinev, Russia.

7

'LIFE' WORLD LIBRARY : 'RUSSIA' (1961). Note also the Russian leader, Josef Stalin, was a Georgian.

8

Informant Mr Anatoly Shinkar.

9

Aramaic refers to a group of Semitic languages and dialects of which the most important are Syriac, Palestinian Aramaic and Biblical Aramaic, and also the Samaritan language.

Prof. Simon Hopkins, a non-Jew who is a specialist in Semitic languages, and who was Professor of Hebrew at the University of Cape Town, is fluent in several Aramaic dialects. He now lives in Israel, and according to informant Ya'acov Eyal (of Jerusalem), Simon Hopkins is teaching himself the Kurdish language directly from Kurdish Jews residing in the Jerusalem area.

10

I have been unable to ascertain the nature and extent of studies carried out on Kurdish Jewish music, but it is conceivable that very detailed research might well provide more evidence to substantiate, or else, query, this statement. As Hofman himself has pointed out '... in Judaism, as in the rest of the ancient orient, oral tradition was no less important than written tradition' (Hofman: 615). Studies of Indian and Persian/Iranian music have shown that theories of music have tended to be very elaborate, and have gone beyond their actual application in performances of that music. (Indian theorists and philosophers theorised a great deal about

10 contd.

Indian music and documented it, but not all their theories were actually applied in the performance of that music).

Conversely, scanty documentation precludes one from deducing the absence (or presence) of any theories of music; ethnomusicological research has shown that all cultural groups the world over, do not always theorize or even verbalise about their music, but performances of their music demonstrate that the structures are highly organised, and even complex, all of which indicate that theories or rules of music DO exist, be they only in the minds of the performers themselves.

- 11 The Yemenite Jews lived for almost two and a half thousand years among Arab populations, and yet were able to maintain an autonomous communal life with many diverse cultural traditions.

Waves of emigration back to Palestine began in 1881, but in 1948/49, when '... the entire population ...' (Hofman: loc. cit.) was transferred to Eretz Yisrael ('The Land of Israel') by air, this was a historic event known by the name Operation Magic Carpet.

These unsophisticated people, flying in aircraft for the first time, accepted this modern 'miracle' without question, taking it in good faith as a Biblical prophecy coming true, namely to be sent back to Eretz Yisrael, their Biblical homeland, on the 'wings of eagles'.

- 12 A Treasury of Jewish Yemenite Chants  
(Yehiel Adaqi and Uri Sharvit)

Israeli Institute for Sacred Music, with the aid of the Centre for the Absorption of the Oriental Jewish heritage, Ministry of Education 1981.

At an ethnomusicological Congress held at the University of Cape Town in July 1984, Dr. Uri Sharvit delivered an illustrated address on Yemenite wedding traditions and music. One feature I recall was his description of the higer: that is, a long and high tone in "falsetto" register, with a vibrating of the tongue on the upper lip. In general, this is begun by one woman, and immediately she is joined by other women, who will continue this 'peculiar' sound for some five or ten seconds. The higer contributes to the raising of happiness, and also it expresses an uplifting of the spirit which emanates from the successful performance of song and dance.

- 13 'Romanzas Y Cantigas Judeo-Espanolas' / 'Sephardic Songs and Romances' performed by Etty Kan (soprano) accompanied on guitar by Dany Akiva. These recordings were made in Israel in 1984.

For 'Ladino' see Glossary.

Etty Kan is Israeli-born, of family originally from Salonika. Dany Akiva is from a Haifa family of Sephardic Jews, who had been settled in Jerusalem for several generations.

- 14 The Sephardic Jews of Cape Town have a most interesting history. Most of them were born, or originate from, the island of Rhodes. (Rhodes is the largest of the Dodecanese group lying in the southern part of the Aegean Sea.)

In 1492, the Jewish community of Spain was expelled by Ferdinand and Isabella. This event had an enormous impact on the small island of Rhodes, as numbers of exiles from Spain made their way to Rhodes. This was an influx of highly cultured, talented and worldly Spanish Jews. During the period of the Ottoman Empire, which lasted right up until the twentieth century, Jews on Rhodes lived a fairly comfortable existence. This vibrant, close-knit and intensely religious community of Rhodes came to be known as 'Little Jerusalem'.

Under Mussolini, life grew a little more uncomfortable for the Jews of Rhodes. In 1939, a decree emanating from Rome, ordered that all Jews who were not born on Rhodes, must leave. They were sent to Turkey. After the Italian capitulation to the Allies in September 1943, the Germans took over the island. Those Jews remaining in Rhodes had no idea of the horror in store for them. On 17 July 1944, all Jewish males were ordered to assemble in the Plaza de la Palaz. In the days following, all the Jews were rounded up, and on 21 July 1944, one thousand seven hundred and eighty men women and children were taken from the island on three small ships. Under inhuman and unbearable conditions, they were transported to Auschwitz and Bergen-Belsen ..... of these, only about 160 survived. One of these survivors, Mrs. Violette Fintz, who still bears a concentration camp number on her fore-arm; recited Ladino poetry for us at the presentation of Jewish music (University of Cape Town, August 1986) and sang, most movingly, one verse of a song which she had composed in memory of her sister, who perished in the Holocaust. Mrs Fintz lives in Sea Point, Cape Town. Her poignant contribution to the evening of Jewish music, elicited the following remarks in the Cape Argus (\* 'Cape Argus

music review' Wednesday 28 August 1986) from critic Johan Cloete: "... and Violette Fintz's all-too-brief song dedicated to the memory of her sister .... spoke straight from the heart to the heart, loud and clear. I was transfixed."

Most Cape Town Sephardic Jews can claim a link of descent from Rhodes, or from Belgian Congo (Zaire) or Rhodesia (Zimbabwe). Before the Federation broke up, the Jewish population of Rhodesia (now Zimbabwe) numbered approximately 7,500 souls, of whom a third were Sephardi Jews. Today there are only about 80 families of Jews in Zimbabwe.

In December 1985, the Cape Town Sephardi community celebrated its 25th anniversary. The first substantial group had arrived from Zaire (the Congo) in 1960 and since then their numbers have increased. Today the Sephardi congregation numbers approximately 500 people. When Rabbi Ruben Suiza was invited to speak to the entire Jewish community of Cape Town, at the annual memorial meeting (or, 'service') held at the Pinelands cemetery to honour the victims and martyrs of the Holocaust,\* he gave a most inspiring and fearless address, detailing the history of what had happened to the Jews of Rhodes.

\* Yom Hashoa v'ha'gvura: 'Day of Remembrance of the Holocaust and Resistance'.

At this ceremony, when six symbolic candles were lit in memory of the six million who lost their lives in the Holocaust, Mrs. Violette Fintz was called up to light the first candle.

The Sephardic community of Cape Town is intensely proud of its unique origins and traditions. One can refer also to the well-researched and beautifully presented book by Mrs Elsie Menasce of Cape Town, on Sephardic cuisine.

15. Ausubel (1953 : 228) details a quaint custom of these people. They have a custom of 'cutting out' little paper boats with which they decorate their synagogues. Then they pray fervently: "May a boat come and carry us to Jerusalem."

## CHAPTER THREE

### THE YIDDISH LANGUAGE

In 1935, prior to World War II, almost two-thirds of the Jewish people claimed Yiddish as their mother tongue. That mater-loshen ('mother tongue') barely survives today as a result of the Holocaust, the religious-national priorities given to modern spoken Hebrew, and the fact that most Jews in the Diaspora now speak English.

Yiddish was not the original language of the Jews. Hebrew<sup>1</sup> was the Semitic language of the ancient Israelites for thousands of years until the destruction of Solomon's Temple in the year 586 B.C. when they were taken into captivity in Babylonia.

## CHAPTER THREE

Thereafter, throughout their history, Hebrew remained the language of the Jewish liturgy and prayers and Scriptures. In spite of absorbing components of several other languages including Aramaic. Even today, wherever Yiddish is still spoken, Hebrew remains as the language of prayer and religious ceremonies, although discussions and interpretations of these and other religious matters are usually conducted in Yiddish, in yeshiva<sup>2</sup> hagada<sup>3</sup> and shema [prayers].

Yiddish developed about one thousand years ago. It is a distinct vernacular language consisting of basic elements of four languages: Hebrew, German, Slavic (Polish) and Latin (the Jewish correlates of old French and Italian).<sup>4</sup> Thus, because of its ancient roots, Yiddish is essentially a much older language than either English or German.

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Yiddish was not the original language of the Jews. Hebrew\*<sup>1</sup> was the Semitic language of the ancient Israelites for thousands of years, from about 4000 B.C. until the destruction of Solomon's Temple in the year 586 B.C. when they were taken into captivity in Babylonia.

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Yiddish developed about one thousand years ago\*<sup>4</sup>. It became a distinct vernacular language consisting of basic components of four languages: Hebrew, German, Slavic dialects\*<sup>5</sup> and Laaz (the Jewish correlates of old French and old Italian). \*<sup>6, 6a</sup> Thus, because of its ancient semitic roots, Yiddish is essentially a much older language than either English or German.

Yiddish developed in stages corresponding to chronological events in the history of European Jewry. In its initial period (up to the 12th century) Yiddish was the speech used by the Jews who had come from Romance-speaking areas and had settled in the regions of the middle and upper Rhine. Large portions of local varieties of German were adapted. A number of Hebrew and Aramaic words, which had been used by Jews long before they settled in the Rhineland, became part and parcel of the language which was evolving. From the beginning, Yiddish incorporated many words from the Romance languages, (Old French, Old Italian), which the Jewish settlers had spoken before.\*7

Under the impact of the Crusades, these Rhenish Jews, subjected to much persecution, were forced to emigrate into southwestern and central Germany, and further afield to Austria, Bohemia Bavaria and the northern regions of Italy. They took with them their vernacular tongue, which was described by a contemporary Talmudic scholar\*8 as loshen Ashkenaz ('the German tongue').

Thereafter, growing numbers of Jews moved eastward into Poland, Lithuania and the Ukraine, where they found old and well-established communities of Slavic-speaking Jews. These latter had not been forced to reside in ghettos, and had not been subjected to the persecutions and discriminations suffered by the Rhenish Jews.. They mixed easily with their "German" counterparts, and in time there emerged among them a common language - Yiddish.\*9 By the eighteenth century, Yiddish was the language of virtually all European Jewry, excepting the Sephardic ('Spanish')

Jews, whose vernacular tongue was, and still is, Ladino. \*<sup>10</sup>

As a mechanism of social and economic changes, Yiddish had a lasting influence on the growth and spread of Jewish cultural and economic aims and aspirations, especially during the 19th century. This was in some respects a surprising development, since Yiddish was regarded by most educated Jews of those times as the language '... of a socially inferior group' (meaning those Jews who were not well-educated, and who lived so-called restricted lives in ghettos). To the educated classes, Yiddish was a constant reminder, and therefore a symbol, of the '.... backwardness, ignorance, cultural stagnation' that had been the lot of the Jewish people for so many centuries. It was thus the Jewish intelligentsia who responded enthusiastically to the emancipatory ideals of the Jewish Enlightenment (Haskala, or, as pronounced in Yiddish, Haskóle) a socio-cultural and intellectual movement which emerged in the latter half of the 18th century, swept across Europe and profoundly influenced Jewish life and thinking. Its protagonists were known as maskilim ('enlightened men'), most notable of whom was Moses Mendelssohn (1729 - 1788), a Jew of Berlin, acknowledged founder of the Haskala movement.\*<sup>11</sup> The aims of this movement were '... to break down the walls of the ghettos, symbols of their economic and social strangulation', and '... to destroy the equally imprisoning ghetto within' i.e. the hopeless living conditions and cultural isolation in which many Jewish communities had to survive. From the beginning of the 19th century onward, the Haskala movement

gained momentum and spread from Germany to other countries in which Jews had settled - Galicia, Poland, Lithuania, and Russia. In Lithuania, in particular, the egalitarian ideals of the movement, which stressed the need for the socio-economic advancement of all Jews, won many supporters. And yet there was always strong opposition to the use of Yiddish as a literary language. Isaac ben Levinsohn (1788 - 1860), the leader of the Haskala movement in Russia, described Yiddish as '... an ugly mish-mash of Biblical, Polish, German, Russian and other words. Being poor and little developed it is not suitable for expressing fine feelings and serious abstract thoughts ....' (Ausubel: loc. cit). Despite this antipathy toward Yiddish, a significant number of maskilim deliberately promoted its use as a necessary language medium, because they realised that it was only through Yiddish that their aims and objectives would reach the Jewish masses. They were supported by growing numbers of Lithuanian Jews who, although they personally favoured Hebrew as a literary language, also encouraged the recognition of Yiddish not only as a common language of communication, but its acceptance as a language of well-lettered and less-educated people alike. To this end, Jewish lay preachers (magidim) began to preach and teach the Scriptures in Yiddish. By so doing, they 'created a popular unwritten language which was thought out in Yiddish' (U. Weinreich: 1949). The use of Yiddish to preach, and to expound Jewish religious tenets and laws to the laity, resulted in an assimilation of Yiddish words and phrases into Jewish religious ritual.

Moses Mendelssohn was responsible for the translation of the Pentateuch (The Five Books of Moses) into the German language, and its publication with a parallel text in Hebrew. Published translations like these (and there were many) made it possible for German Jews who knew Hebrew and Yiddish to learn the German language. The establishment of printing presses in major cities of Vienna, Prague and elsewhere, accelerated the dissemination of translated literature, and in due course thousands of Jews residing in different parts of Europe, Poland, Russia, Bohemia, Hungary and even Turkey and the Balkan states, were able to acquire and have access to Hebrew and Yiddish religious and devotional books of all kinds, published in both Hebrew, and Yiddish, and also German.\*<sup>12</sup>

As a standard example of a 'fusion language' i.e. a language exhibiting extreme linguistic borrowings, Yiddish seems to exhibit some very prominent German characteristics (something which seems evident in the name of the language itself ( Dictionary entry Yiddish = derived from German 'Judisch' = Jewish ). However, the common assumption among non-Jews that Yiddish is derived from German, is not accurate (Weinreich 1948: 58). Modern Yiddish and modern German may share a common ancestry in mediaeval German, but the differences between the two languages are considerable. 'They are reflected not only in the vast divergence of their vocabularies, but also in morphology and the sound system.' For example, the mediaeval German word vater developed into 'foter' in modern Yiddish, and later appeared as 'Vater' in modern standard German. But ultimately Old Yiddish (or 'early' Yiddish) and mediaeval

German developed as two distinctive languages, with Slavic linguistic traits being incorporated into the former - via the dialects spoken by Czech, Polish, Ukrainian and Russian Jews. Yiddish also includes words and phrases taken not only from Hebrew (the language of the Scriptures) but also from Aramaic. This Hebrew/Aramaic component is an ancient one, and survives to this day in the sacred language (loshen koydesh) of the Jewish peoples.

Spoken Yiddish can be divided into four main groups:

1. Lithuanian Yiddish (a north-european dialect)
2. Ukrainian Yiddish (a south-eastern european dialect)
3. Polish Yiddish (central european dialect)
4. Western Yiddish (western european dialect).

A person speaking the north eastern dialect is commonly referred to as a litvak (i.e. from Lithuania), while someone from Galicia speaking the south-eastern or central dialect, is referred to as a galitsianer. The essential differences in these dialects are found in the pronunciation of vowel sounds. For example, the phrase meaning 'one day' is pronounced 'ayn tug' in central Yiddish, 'ayn tog' in the north-eastern version, and 'eyn tug' in the south-eastern dialect. Most speakers of Yiddish in South Africa today, would opt for the pronunciation 'ayn tog' because of the largely Lithuanian element in the Jewish population in this country. The standard Yiddish in use today resembles most closely the north-eastern (Lithuanian) dialect.

Several orthographies have been formulated for Yiddish. The first modern standard orthography was devised in 1913 and modified in 1920 by the great Yiddish scholar Zalman Reisin.\*<sup>13</sup> Reisin's version went into effect worldwide wherever Yiddish was read and spoken. Yiddish scholars of the early twentieth century realised the need to modernize and rationalize Yiddish orthography, unhampered by inconsistencies and the '.... cumbersome machinery of silent letters that had been incorporated several decades earlier by the Germanizing press of the late nineteenth century'. (Dovid Katz 1987 : 20)

Yivo orthography: A widely taught variant of modern standard orthography is that of the Yivo Institute for Jewish Research. The Yivo system arose in the 1930s. In his GRAMMAR OF THE YIDDISH LANGUAGE, Dovid Katz (1987) adheres to modern standard orthography.

Yiddish is written in Hebrew characters, using the Hebrew alphabet. The transliteration of Yiddish into Roman characters was a long and difficult task, attempted by a number of scholars and editors, notably some who were/are attached to the Yivo Institute mentioned earlier.\*<sup>14</sup>

The results of their efforts were eventually published in 1937 but were largely ineffectual. Neither they, nor the Jewish philologists were able to reach an agreement on a uniform system of writing Yiddish in Roman letters. According to Rosten, '... part of the problem lay in the fact that certain linguistic rules, necessary for scholarly and scientific publications, are intensely resisted - by the

popular press, by deeply ingrained habits, by the preference of influential Jews to whom their own version of the vernacular remains sacrosanct.' (Rosten: 526)

This dissertation makes use of the transcriptional system (phonetic transcription of Yiddish into Latin characters) of the Yivo Institute which was designed for English speakers. It can be noted, however, that I have not been absolutely consistent in rendering all the Yiddish words according to the Yivo system, often for reasons explained in the preceding paragraph, particularly in regard to habit and what one has become used to. I myself only became aware of the Yivo system of transliteration into Latin characters, while studying the Yiddish language in Oxford in 1987, having previously used variant ways of rendering Yiddish phonetically.\*<sup>15</sup>

A number of sounds occur in Yiddish which have no exact parallel in English or other Western languages. Yiddish kh - for example - is not used in English; and although a similar sound does exist in German e.g. Bach, or in Scottish loch, or Afrikaans 'nag', its usage differs. Also, Yiddish R differs strikingly from the usual English r.

Yiddish is written and read from right to left. Books and newspapers therefore begin 'at the back' from the English point of view. Paragraphs are indented on the right. Pages are therefore numbered 'backwards'.

The most common word rhythm in Yiddish is a trochee pattern of ' (high tone) followed by \_ (low tone) e.g.

'baker' [bék<sub>er</sub>] בֵּאָקֶר 'nudnik' [núd<sub>nik</sub>] נִידְנִיק

Nudnik: 'boring person; pest; poor conversationalist'

The master rhythmic pattern entails high speech-tones at roughly equal intervals interlaced with numbers of 'middles' and 'lows', the result being starkly contrasting 'mountain range' patterns (Dovid Katz 1987: 37). The Yiddish rhythm pattern extends word rhythm over phrases and sentences, and the actual stress pattern varies depending on message and emphasis. Hence ikh veys nit vos er

plapt [(i)khvéysnitvoserplàpit] can be realised "I don't know what he's babbling about" or [(i)khvèysnitvoserplápit] "I don't know what he's BABBLING about".

Dovid Katz' Grammar of the Yiddish Language (1987) is the first comprehensive work of its kind to appear in English in nearly forty years, as the previous authoritative grammar was published in 1947 by Uriel Weinreich. Katz has based his book on new methods of teaching Yiddish developed at Oxford, and covers many aspects from satiric intonation to compound sentences, in an up-to-date reference work.

Both Weinreich and Katz have used the spelling which was adopted by the Yiddish Scientific Institute - YIVO\*.<sup>16</sup>

At this point, it may be pertinent to discuss the development of Yiddish literature. The very earliest Yiddish literature of which we have some small traces is an oral and manuscript literature. During the twelfth

and thirteenth centuries, there grew up among Mediaeval Jews a bardic literature, derived from the German. Popular German romances such as the Hildebrand Lied were adapted into Yiddish and recited or sung by Jewish troubadours. Gradually, subtly, these epics and romances were given a somewhat Jewish flavour. References to Christian myth were excised, and value system of chivalry was subjected to humane modulations, and incongruous elements of tragic feeling were introduced in the Yiddish adaptations.

A few Yiddish lyrics have survived from this early period; they express, with homely earthiness, the quality of Jewish religious life and the burden of sustaining it in exile. Such poems, together with the translations of glosses on Biblical passages, were sometimes collected by wealthy Jewish women. The first sustained work in Yiddish that has distinct literary merit is the SHMUEL BUCH (Samuel Book), which appeared in the mid-16th century. An epic poem of some grandeur, it elaborates the Biblical stories of King David.

After the invention of printing, the use of Yiddish increased tremendously, e.g. Tsenna-Urenna, a late 16th century compendium of Biblical paraphrases in Yiddish prose and verse, wise comments from sages, all woven into one text. Numerous collections of women's prayers, or Techinas (Hebrew: Tehinot) began to appear towards the end of the sixteenth century. These were prayers to be uttered at home, e.g. when a woman would light the Sabbath candles, these prayers are intimate and direct - requests for family health, prosperity, elaborate expressions of woe, complaints direct to G-d.

The Techina books are an impressive mode of folk expression. Two widely read Yiddish works of the sixteenth century were (a) the Bova Buch, a verse narrative in ottava rima, an adaptation of the English tale of Bevis of Hampton; and (b) the famous Ma'ase Buch (Story book), a collection of more than 250 tales drawn mainly from the Talmud and also stories including European folk material. These two books went through numerous editions and were popular.

In the 17th and 18th centuries, a stream of Yiddish books on ethical reflection and satirical verse appeared. Not many of these would tempt modern tastes. One Yiddish work of this period which can still be read with pleasure is the memoirs of Glueckel of Hameln, (late 17th century, early 18th century) considered to be a masterpiece of narrative and descriptive composition, full of details of Jewish family life. At the same time, the folk song continued to be one of the more vital elements in oral Yiddish literature.

One must also note the influence of Chassidism on Yiddish literature. Chassidism helped prepare the way for modern Yiddish literature by validating the language, by raising it to a plane of esteem as the companion of Hebrew. Its use of Yiddish was entirely spontaneous and natural. Leaders like Rabbi Nachman of Bratzslav were genuinely inspired poet-sages whose parables and allegories raised the tradition of Yiddish story-telling to a new level of moral and literary value. The Chassidic tales were told ORALLY by their masters and copied by their disciples.

The classical "trio" of Yiddish prose were the three beloved Yiddish writers, Mendele Moykher-Sforim, Sholem Aleichem and Peretz. Mendele Moykher-Sforim (Mendele the Bookseller) was the pen name of Sholem-Yankev Abramovich (1834-1917) who is known as the "grandfather" of modern Yiddish literature. Mendele's detailed descriptions of small-town Jewry in old Russia document life and manners of a bygone era. Sholem Aleichem was the pen name of Solomon Rabinovich (1859-1916). His delightful humour revealed his understanding and love of the men, women and children whom he portrayed, with insight into the Jewish mentality with all its faults and merits. Yitskhok Leibush Peretz (1852-1915), the third classic writer, became the undisputed leader of the younger literary generation. When Peretz passed away in Warsaw in 1915, more than 75,000 people attended his funeral, an outburst of affection which the Jewish masses felt for him. Mendele, Peretz and Sholem Aleichem died during the war years (World War I), Sholem Aleichem died in New York. Until the Nazi invasion, Poland remained the centre of Yiddish culture. Jewish life in Poland during the period between the two world wars, had something of brilliant feverishness, a violent mixture of material poverty and intellectual restlessness. The major literary achievement of the period was the creation of the full-scale Yiddish novel: I.J.Singer in The Brothers Ashkenazi and Sholem Asch in Three Cities. The main theme of Yiddish fiction continued to be the shtetl.<sup>\*17</sup> Writers who followed after the classical "trio" included Sholem Asch, David Pinski, Zalman Schneour, Avrohom Reisin, and Joseph Opatoshu. Asch and Opatoshu also wrote about

the Jewish underworld e.g. Mottke the Thief (Asch).

In Russia everything was different. After the February Revolution of 1917, Russian Jewry no longer had to suffer the humiliation of anti-Jewish laws. Until the end of 1924, one can speak of a flowering of Yiddish literature, developing in an atmosphere of relative freedom. Yiddish groups were formed in Moscow, Minsk, Kharkov and Kiev. After 1924, however, the content of Yiddish literature began to be controlled with the same lumbering fanaticism as was applied to Russian literature. The Stalinist government began purging Yiddish writers in the 1930s. Yiddish writers were by circumstance forced to turn out standard poetry about Soviet patriotism, heroic guerilla fighters and other such subjects. Isolated for almost two decades, Yiddish writers of Russia fell behind those of Poland and America. In the late 1940s, with sickening anti-Semitic overtones, the drive against Yiddish writers put an end to Yiddish literary activity. Publication of Yiddish books ceased. Most of the Yiddish writers "disappeared". \*<sup>16</sup> Nothing remained but silence. There is still, however, a flicker of activity behind the Iron Curtain. In Rumania, if not in Russia itself, some Yiddish schools are tolerated, and in Poland, Yiddish books were published in 1953 - with the predictable introductions by Stalinist critics.

America has now become the last stronghold of Yiddish culture; in America, poets and novelists in Yiddish work without impediment and sometimes, alas, without an 'audience'. A few of the Yiddish writers who managed to escape the Holocaust in Europe have settled in Israel, but most have

gone to the U S A. Yiddish literature now has its centre in New York. The serious study of Yiddish literature is also flourishing in England, especially since 1978 at the Oxford Centre for Post-Graduate Hebrew Studies, which has emerged as an international centre for Yiddish Studies. The Oxford Winter Symposium in Yiddish Language and Literature, an academic conference convened each year in December, has yielded much fruitful study material. And right here in Cape Town, we have a small but devoted band of members of the Cape Town branch of the Yiddishe Kultur Federatzie (Yiddish Cultural Federation) and its new offshoot The New Yiddish Cultural Federation, where regular public readings of Yiddish poetry and fiction take place. The journal Dorem Afrika is published regularly, from Johannesburg. The Kaplan Centre of the University of Cape Town \*<sup>19</sup> has recently ventured into publishing, and the first book released (1987) was of Yiddish stories i.e. written in the Yiddish language, by South African Jewish writers, and newly translated into English by Joseph Sherman of Johannesburg.

The creation of Israel as an independent state in 1948, though it aroused great hopes among Jewish writers, brought about intense disappointment and controversy. For the State of Israel, for a variety of reasons, and for the prominence given to Hebrew, has discouraged the use of Yiddish among its citizens. The language is looked down upon for the very reason that Yiddish writers cling to it so fiercely and with so desperate an affection: because it is the language of the Jewish "dispersion". Nevertheless, Israel remains an important centre for Yiddish culture. Over a half million

Jews in Israel, it is thought, still speak Yiddish, and a large section of the Israeli population understands it.

Yiddish books and magazines continue to be published in New York, London, Tel Aviv, in Paris, Buenos Aires, Mexico City and even in Johannesburg. The Yiddish audience makes up for its smallness by its admirable devotion.

The situation is nevertheless paradoxical. As the older Yiddish-speaking generation dies out, the number of native Yiddish speakers declines. And yet, at the same time, it is encouraging to observe a worldwide revival of interest in Yiddish, which can be attributed\* in large measure, to the current nostalgia for an East European civilization that has vanished. In universities in Israel and North America, many 'chairs' in Yiddish language and literature have been established, providing courses for students with minimal or even no background to Yiddish.

There is very little possibility\*<sup>20</sup> of Yiddish regaining its lost status as the Ashkenazi lingua franca, but it can still be preserved as the important cultural language of the Jewish people, serving as a vital link to Jews living in communities the world over.

\*The words have survived in Yiddish to

day.

<sup>20</sup> (to read), which was formerly 'Laxa'

derived from a Romance word which goes back to

Hebrew.

Hebrew Jewish Encyclopedia, V.M. 1111

1945 3, cited in Kaban op.cit. (1971: 53)

## NOTES

## NOTES TO CHAPTER THREE

- 1 Hebrew has always been - and remains - the loshen kodesh ("sacred tongue"/ "holy language") of world Jewry, in contrast to e.g. Yiddish, which is the mame-loshen ("mother's tongue") of Ashkenazic Jews.
- 2 see Glossary
- 3 see Glossary
- 4 Hence the popular description of Yiddish as the 'thousand-year-old language' in publications and in everyday parlance.
- 5 ROSTEN, Leo 1971: 538 (The Joys of Yiddish, Penguin Books 1971).
- 6 '.... If Yiddish is to be seen as an expression of Ashkenazi culture, then it certainly mirrors, in its components, the interchange between cultures. Weinreich (1967) puts forward its large Germanic component as proof of a large degree of contact with non-Jewish society, yet also posits that since Jews saw fit to add their own Hebrew/Aramaic, Laaz and later Slavonic components to the German, then this might be seen to reflect a large degree of independence and cultural insularity.' Unpublished essay on SOCIOLOGY OF YIDDISH Essay No.4 p.2 Aviva Singer, Oxford 1987
- 6a Laaz (sing.) La'azim (plural):  
 '...It was only years later, when Romance philology became part of my syllabus at Oxford, that I started to explore the Old French glosses (la'azim) of Rashi and began to take Yiddish more seriously.'  
 Gabriel Sivan, in 'Jewish Affairs' July/Aug.1988 Vol.43 no.4  
 Dr. Sivan is the deputy editor of a new Encyclopaedia of Judaism to be published in Jerusalem and New York.
- 7 Some Romance words have survived in Yiddish to this day.  
Leiyenen ליינען (to read), which was formerly 'leyen' is derived from a Romance word which goes back to Latin 'legere'.  
 The Standard Jewish Encyclopaedia, W.H. Allen ed.: 1966: 1945 6, cited in Rosten op.cit. (1971: 537)

- 8 The Talmudist scholar Solomon ben Isaac of Troyes. "Ashkenaz" was the mediaeval rabbinical name for Germany.
- 9 Commenting on the startlingly different way of life which the Rhenish Jews experienced among the 'Polish' Jews, which contrasted strongly with the precarious conditions under which they had lived in the Rhineland, Abraham Menes writes: '.... since the golden age of Jewish life in Babylonia, Jews had not felt as much at home in a country as they did in Poland ....' A. Menes in "Patterns of Jewish Scholarship in Eastern Europe", in THE JEWS: Their history, culture and religion (Louis Finkelstein, ed.) Harper 1960 vo.i: 379-80. Cited in Rosten:539.
- 10 Ladino (also known as Judesmo, or Judeo-Spanish is the 'mother tongue' of Sephardic or Hispanic Jews living along the south-eastern littoral (coastal region) of the Mediterranean: Spain, Portugal, North Africa (Morocco), the Maghreb, the Balkan countries of Yugoslavia, Rumania, Bulgaria, Albania, and Greece and Turkey, and wherever Spanish and Portuguese Jews have settled.

Ladino is a form of "Old Spanish" i.e. 15th century Castellian Spanish hence the Spanish description idioma Castelliano. It is a language comprising a mixture of Hebrew (especially phraseology and terms from the Talmud (the body of Jewish civil and canonical law), and elements of Arabic, Turkish and Greek. In this extremely hybrid language, many Hebrew words have become 'Spanish-ized' (e.g. Hebrew words are used as roots of Spanish ones, even within Spanish verbal conjugations), while many Spanish words have in turn become Hebraised. Some of these Hebrew/Hispanic terms etc have become part of modern Spanish and Portuguese. Ladino and Yiddish are not mutually intelligible.

I might mention that at a concert presented by myself in Cape Town during August 1986 to a largely Ashkenazic audience, performances of songs and poetry in Ladino elicited an adverse reaction. The older members of the audience could not relate to the Ladino language as an expression of what they perceived to be Jewish culture. By contrast, performances in Yiddish elicited a warm and emotional response.

- 11 Ausubel (1953: 239) Pictorial History of the Jewish People.
- 12 Without a doubt, the Enlightenment movement, though it showed eager preference for Hebrew, also gave a tremendous impetus to the development of Yiddish as a medium for literary creation.
- 13 Dovid Katz 1987: 20
- 14 Among the many notable publications of the YIVO Institute (Yidisher Visnshaftlekher Institut), perhaps the best known are Dr. Max Weinreich's monumental study of the Yiddish language, recently issued in English translation, and the English-Yiddish dictionary (and textbook "COLLEGE YIDDISH") written by Weinreich's son, Uriel, who was head of the linguistics department of Columbia University.

- 15 In an unpublished long essay for the degree B.Mus.(Hons.) in 1986, I used ch throughout to represent the 'ch' sound as in Scottish 'loch' e.g.

The word badchen (1986) (wedding entertainer) would now, to be more correct, be rendered into Latin characters as

badkhn

and likewise, shadchen (1986) would be rendered now more precisely as

shadkhn (matchmaker)

The correct form of kh was of course in use in the U S A all the time, but in South Africa we are far more used to transliterating the sound with a ch. A delicatessen store in Cape Town, for example, might advertise the kitke (the plaited loaf traditionally used on the Sabbath) as 'challah' - note the spelling in Latin characters with 'ch' - and certainly never as

khalla

which would probably be considered as the more correct phonetic transcription.

Further reference can be made in the essay ibid: SINGER, S.F. JEWISH FOLKSONG: An overview of representative examples of folksong styles which were an integral part of Jewish life in Eastern Europe. Cape Town 1986.

Likewise in the selection of song titles for this dissertation, there will be discrepancies e.g. song 13 Patshe patshe kichelakh, where for preference I would have written

kichelach

I cannot use the form kikhelekh as it appears

15 contd. to me to be too unwieldy, and all my life  
I have written kichel\*

(\*sweet sugared flat biscuit)

as kichel and not as kikhel. I have  
therefore compromised by using kichelakh  
although both ch and kh here, are to be  
sounded as '....ch' in Scottish loch or the  
'g' in Afrikaans.

I am not quite comfortable with some other  
transcriptions/ transliterations, and have  
occasionally chosen to retain the ch, as in the  
word for 'cantor'

chazan

which does not, for me, lend itself to being  
written khazn.

For pronunciation of diphthongs:

[ AY ] is similar to "i" in fine

[ EY ] is similar to "ei" in vein

[ OY ] is shorter than "oy" in boy

In Yiddish, [ sh ] is pronounced as in English,  
but there is a counterpart

[ zh ] which is pronounced like s in "measure"

ts corresponds to English 'parts' or 'belts'  
but in Yiddish it may occur in the middle  
or beginning of a word e.g.

tsi

and is treated as a single sound

tsh corresponds to ch in English 'church' and  
is treated as a single sound

ei as in Yiddish shteit is pronounced 'shtait'  
as in English 'bait'

ay as found in Yiddish fayer is pronounced as in  
the English word 'fire'

16 Weinreich uses and refers to the following:

Takones fun yidishn oysleyg (Rules of Yiddish  
spelling) New York, 1941 34 pp.

Yidisher ortografisher vegvayzer (Guide to the  
Standardized Yiddish Orthography), New York,  
Committee for the Implementation of the Standardised  
Yiddish Orthography 1961, 112 pp.

17 see Glossary

18 During a lecture in Oxford (August 1987) Mr. Avrohom  
Lis, a Yiddish scholar, gave a most moving address  
in memory of prominent Yiddish writers who  
lost their lives in Russia. 38 writers perished  
during World War II. An even more tragic event

18  
contd. occurred on the night of 12 August 1952, when,  
in one night, the following Yiddish writers  
were arrested and shot:

Dovid Bergelsohn	(date of birth 1884)
Dovid Hoffshstein	1889 -
Peretz Markish	1895 -
Der Nister	1884 -
Itzik Feffer	1900 -
Elye Spivak	1890 -
Shmuel Persoff	1889 -
Leib Kvitko	1890 -
Shlome Lozofski	1878 -

a sad and tragic ending to Soviet Jewish  
literature.

19 The Isaac and Jessie Kaplan Centre for Jewish  
Studies is situated in the Leslie Social  
Sciences Building on the Upper Campus of the  
University of Cape Town. Plans are well in  
hand for new buildings, particularly a library  
and resource centre, and, I am happy to note,  
there will be space for Yiddish books as well.

'From a Land Far Off' (translated by Joseph  
Sherman) is a collection of short stories  
written in Yiddish, which can now reach a much  
wider readership in translation. (1987)

20 Gabriel Sivan, in 'Jewish Affairs' July/  
August 1988 Vol.43 no.4 page 9. Dr. Sivan  
believes that in order to survive and flourish,  
Yiddish needs more backing than university  
teaching and learned congresses can ever  
provide. 'Yiddish needs - and deserves -  
to be fostered by our educational authorities,  
to be taught systematically in Jewish day  
schools throughout the world ....'

## **PART TWO**

**We feel a desire  
To ease our pain  
With a song, a dance  
A moment of play**

Zelik Barditchever

### **CHAPTER ONE**

**“Jewish folkmusic has made a most powerful impression on me. I never tire of delighting in it. It is multifaceted: it can appear to be happy, while it is tragic. It’s almost always laughter through tears.”**

Dimitri Shostakowich

PART TWO

CHAPTER ONE

YIDDISH FOLKSONGS

Even people who know little Yiddish derive no end of satisfaction from singing or listening to Yiddish folksongs. The feelings which the songs express are easily appreciated even though their content may be far removed from the present.

Apart from their emotional 'value', folksongs are a rich source of insight into Jewish attitudes and culture patterns. In times of greatest suffering the Jews put their feelings into song. Ever since the great catastrophe of World War II the Jews in Eastern-European ghettos sang old songs and created scores of new ones - songs of love and faith, of defiance and hope.

**CHAPTER ONE**

\*\*\*\*\*

The 111 songs that I have chosen to study and analyse belong to the two main classes of eastern European folksong: 1. The religious folksong: songs of a ceremonial nature, the texts of which are based on passages from the Bible and Talmudic commentaries, and/or express metaphysical, mystical, meditative thoughts and concepts, e.g. Eliyahu ha'navi ('Elijah the Prophet'), Einu Meleinu ('our Father our King'). In this class are included 'wordless' songs; textless songs which also express such thoughts and concepts, e.g. Yehi. (Some songs are built on one syllable, or one sound, e.g. Oh meaning 'Yehi' (see part of Einu Meleinu, the Chasidic song A Dumble). The vocalising has distinct meanings, i.e. prayers to G-d.

## PART TWO

### CHAPTER ONE

#### Y I D D I S H F O L K S O N G S

Even people who know little Yiddish derive no end of satisfaction from singing or listening to Yiddish folksongs. The feelings which the songs express are easily appreciated even though their content may be far removed from the present.

Apart from their emotional 'value', folksongs are a rich source of insight into Jewish attitudes and culture patterns. In times of greatest suffering the Jews put their feelings into song. Even during the years of the great catastrophe in World War II the Jews in German-made ghettos sang old songs and created scores of new ones - songs of love and fear, of defiance and hope.

\* \* \* \* \*

The 56 songs that I have chosen to study and analyse belong to the two main classes of eastern european folksong:

1. Semireligious folksong: songs of a ceremonial nature, the texts of which are based on passages from the Bible and Talmudic commentaries, and/or express philosophical, mystical, meditative thoughts and concepts e.g. Eliyohu ha'novi ('Elijah the Prophet') and Avinu Malkeinu ('our Father our King'). In this class one includes 'wordless' songs; textless songs which also express such thoughts and concepts, implicitly. (Some songs are built on one syllable, or only one sound e.g. Du meaning 'Thou' (see part of Song 38, the Chassidic song A Dudele). The vocalising has implicated meanings, i.e. prayers to G-d.

2. Secular folksong: Domestic and social songs which express or reflect, and also comment upon, the realities of Jewish daily life. These songs often have texts which are descriptive, but which are also full of intellectual and satirical allusions and comments.

Some folksongs are traditionally sung by men, while others are sung mainly, or exclusively, by women. ( One example of songs sung exclusively by women emerged with the entry of the women of Eastern Europe into industry at the end of the nineteenth century, with songs composed by seamstresses. In these songs they bewailed their unhappy lot, their life of hard work and social degradation. As working girls, lacking a dowry, they were usually destined to remain spinsters. This is one aspect of the love songs. )

The transcriptions in this study follow more or less the different stages in the life of the Jewish individual and reflect different social milieus. Thus the selection consists of many categories, in the selection of which I have been guided by the format of the most recent anthology published in Jerusalem, Israel; the editorial board spent three years probing, scanning and selecting 340 songs, which were published between 1983 and 1986, in four volumes: ANTHOLOGY OF YIDDISH FOLKSONGS: Aharon Vinkovetzky, Abba Kovner, Sinai Leichter, 4 vols (in Yiddish, Hebrew and English) Mount Scopus Publications by the Magnes Press: The Hebrew University, Jerusalem. The editors have grouped the songs into 14 sections according to their basic themes, and I have adapted these for my own study.

The songs in this study have been grouped as follows:

Love songs Libelider

Cradle songs Viglider

Children's Songs Kinderlider

Songs of family and lifestyle Familye un shteyger-lider

Wedding, Celebration & Holiday Songs Lider oyf Chasenes, Simchas un Yomtoyvim

Humorous and Satirical Songs Lider fun humor un satira

Religious Folksongs Religiezer-lider

Songs of poverty and toil Lider fun oremkayt un arbet

Conscripts' and Soldiers' Songs Rekrutn un Soldatn-Lider

Songs of World War II:

Ghetto and Partisan Songs, Struggle and Resistance Songs

Geto un Partizanen-Lider, Kamf un Vidershtand-Lider.

This sampling is representative of some of the bestknown Eastern European folksong. Some of them are very old, and reveal something of the past history of the Jewish peoples generally, and Ashkenazi Jewry in particular, because in their texts, they refer to specific periods of, and events, in that history. In a number of songs, however, textual allusions are not immediately understood, especially by those outside Jewish culture. But in their performance styles, these songs express social experiences and social concerns which prevailed and affected the lives of the Jews, thus these songs have meanings at different levels of analysis.

Indeed, a study of the song texts alone could be of great value to students of Jewish history and culture: in almost every song there are phrases and expressions which refer to a custom, a belief, a significant event, desired codes of

social and moral behaviour. Thus these texts give a deep insight into Jewish/Ashkenazi culture. However, it is outside the scope of this present study to embark on a discussion of the song texts beyond that which is given for each song.

Regarding the social background to Yiddish lullabies/ cradle songs it can be noted that some of the oldest Yiddish folksongs of Eastern Europe are lullabies, which first made their appearance in the latter part of the Middle Ages. Many songs which are considered to be entirely Jewish in origin derive from a wide variety of peoples and places outside Eastern Europe.

Although the Yiddish songs were tempered by the languages and mores in the locales to which they were brought, the strong moral values were treasured, as evidenced even in the simple lullabies which mothers would sing to their children. The dream of every Jewish mother is reflected in these tender songs e.g.

mayn kind vet lernen Torah (my child will grow up to study the Holy Scrolls)

This was a basic aspiration, and parents endured great hardship in order to educate their sons. The keen desire for scholarship went deeper than the mere wish for economic security. The working mother, in making it possible for her husband and sons to pursue studies of the Torah, felt she was achieving a strong place in the religious community in which she lived.

Note, that in the text of Song No.1 Unter dem kind's vigele ('Beneath baby's cradle') the singer, presumably a mother, does not only wish her young son to be able to

read books, but is specific about the STUDY of HOLY books,  
and thus she sings:

sforim vet er shraybn ( lit. 'he will write books')  
meaning, religious books/ holy books

Here is verse 2 as translated into English by Ruth Rubin:

Healthy's better far than wealthy  
Baby will grow up a scholar  
A scholar of the Torah he will be  
A writer, too, of holy writs  
A good man and a pious  
G-d willing, thats what he will be.

There are two further interesting aspects to the texts of  
the cradle songs, namely

a klor-vays tsigele 'a little white goat'  
and, rozhinkes mit mandlen 'raisins and almonds'

There are frequent references to both of these concepts  
in the songs, which makes them significant. A 'little  
white kid'/ nannygoat, is often used, also, in Yiddish  
poetry and painting. It was desirable for any poor  
family to own a goat; the family could obtain sustenance  
from the goat in the form of milk, and, for a people  
living in an oppressed community where at any time they  
might have to move and relocate themselves, the goat was  
a movable possession. A goat was also a saleable  
commodity when times were hard. In the humorous childrens'  
song Bay dem Shtetl (Song No.15) ('Near the Village'),  
a father brings home a goat with a little beard, and out  
of sheer necessity the goat is spanned in to a cart, as  
if he were a little horse:

Brengt a tsig vos meket, meket / Shoklt mitn berd /  
Shpant men ayn di tsig in vogn / Vert fun tsig a ferdl ....

'... brings a goat which stutters, stutters, shakes its  
little beard, ... spans the goat to the cart, turns  
the goat into a little horse ....'

Rozhinkes and mandlen, raisins and almonds, feature in many songs, particularly in one of the most beloved of all Yiddish folksongs, Rozhinkes mit Mandlen. In the shtetl (Jewish town or village) of Eastern Europe, boys as young as three or four years of age, were carried in their father's arms, wrapped in a prayer shawl (tallith) to cheder (religious school). As the first letters of the Hebrew alphabet were shown to the new pupil, raisins and almonds were scattered on to the page, to show how sweet the learning process was going to be. During the long winter months when the roads were covered in snow and sleet, it was hazardous for little children to go alone. They would be carried pick-a-back by the bahelfer (the assistant to the teacher). Many poets and authors have given accounts in Jewish literature of such childhood years spent in study.

In the Jewish Pale of Settlement (\*see Glossary), one did not sing openly of love. Young girls and boys knew that it would be their parents who would decide upon a future wife or husband. For this reason, according to Ruth Rubin (1964: 47) '...the average Jewish boy or girl of that day was deprived of a normal adolescence.' The young people, if they fell in love, did so secretly and were compelled to hide their emotions, as arranging matters without parents or marriage-brokers was frowned upon.

The expulsions of entire communities from their homes, the harsh military laws, and the constant struggle for a

livelihood, caused the break-up of many love affairs and even of the established homes of young married couples. The theme of separation/ or parting, is prominent in many songs e.g. Dortn dortn, ibern vaserl (Far off, far off, across the bridge, far off across the river blue, you have driven me, yet I still long for you.)

Seen as a whole, the Yiddish love songs of a century ago served as a means of indirect protest '...against life in the Pale.' (Ruth Rubin 1964: 48). Perhaps that would explain why the love song, more than any other category of Yiddish folksongs, achieved such a measure of poetic beauty and was able to inspire the generation of Yiddish poets which emerged at the end of the nineteenth century.

Some of the love songs are composed as a dialogue between ihm and ihr ('him' and 'her'). These may be declarations of love, but at times they seek out whom or what to blame for their relationship if matters are not proceeding smoothly. Favourite themes in Yiddish love songs are trust and longing, or disappointment as in "Du host mir tsugezogt mikh nemen ..." ('You promised you would take me' ...) as well as songs in which the motif was hopeful dreams and youthful joy. These styles are also found later in the songs of later Yiddish song writers - Goldfaden, Cebirtig, Itzik Manger - and in the folk motifs of some of the poems by Y.L. Peretz, Ch. N. Bialik, Reisin, Schneour and others. It is thought that collectors of Yiddish folksongs have in fact collected hundreds of old love songs. Unfortunately,

though, according to the Introduction to the LOVE SONGS in ANTHOLOGY OF YIDDISH FOLKSONGS (Vol.I : p.2) '... much of this material was lost during the Nazi occupation of Eastern Europe ...'

Children in Eastern Europe a hundred years ago, did not lead a carefree life. Girls did not go to cheder (the religious school), but boys attended cheder until they were of marriageable age. Then the prospective bridegroom (who was often not more than eighteen years of age), after the marriage contract had been drawn up, would in most cases go to live with his in-laws, continuing his studies there. A typical household of those days would show a group of younger children under the care of perhaps an older sister, with the mother away earning a livelihood, while father, together with the boys, would be poring over the Torah in the synagogue, or House of Study.

Nevertheless, the children of the Jewish Pale\* (see Glossary) were no different from children in any other part of the world. They composed songs, ditties, taunts, nonsense rhymes and chants. My own mother would say the following, for which there was no given translation, and in fact, this is possibly Russian or Lithuanian:

sók sók nebeyók/ Súmer gíke tanse vók

which children used to say in her home shtetl. (Kelm, Lithuania). Ruth Rubin (1964 : 33) gives an equivalent of the American 'Eenie meenie mynie mo' as:

Enge, benge, stupe, stenge, artse, bartse, gole shvartse, Eymele, reymele, beyemele, feygele, hop!

Details of daily life are reflected in the childrens' songs, e.g. lokshn (noodles) are made, wood for the fire is gathered, the house is swept clean, babies are rocked to sleep, baigel (\* see glossary) are baked in the oven, ink is made in the home, music instruments are mentioned e.g. flute, drum, fiddle, triangle and bugle. Some of the songs, in imaginative fashion, endow animals with human capabilities e.g. oxen can cut up noodles, bears can sweep floors. Humour shines through many of the songs, as in the following example, which has a universal theme:

In a little house/ lives an old Jewish  
woman/ with her seven children/  
Wondrous all! With such noses/ with  
such beards! With such hair! with  
such heads! With such stomachs! with  
such feet! with such hands!

Of the five songs used in this section of the dissertation (Songs 13, 14, 15, 16 & 17), three will be found on the cassette, namely nos. 13, 14 and 16. At the appropriate place, short comments will be given to each of these, but I should like to explain certain aspects of Song 16, Dyfn pripetshik (variously translated as 'At the Fireplace' or 'In the tiny grate').

The text of Dyfn pripetshik provides a visual picture of a small-town shtetl teacher / rebbe who is teaching children in his own house; they are all seated around the table learning the Alphabet (der alef-bayz). At the same time, one can imagine the domestic cameo of the rebbe's wife in the next room, attending to her many children or doing the washing and cooking, as her husband would not be at all well-off. She might be tending the fire, too. As

soon as this song is sung in public performance, as I personally have experienced, among Jewish audiences, a strong feeling of nostalgia is evoked. It is partly a nostalgia for those sterling values which go with the ethic of learning and respect.

In one public performance in Cape Town in July 1988, a member of the audience, Mrs Esther Wilkin of Sea Point, told me the following: Mark Warshawsky, the composer of this song (Oyfn pripetshik), was distraught at the number of families leaving the shtetl to seek a better life by emigrating to America. When his beloved mentor Sholem Aleichem also declared his intention of sailing for America, and began to pack his bags, Warshawsky was moved to write this song, and, in particular, to exhort his people never to forget the letters of the Alef-bayz (the alphabet) in their new homeland - inferring that they must not forget their traditional ways and customs, and not discard their age-old traditions and values. He feared they would become assimilated in the new country - 'assimilated' meaning that they might spurn their Jewish faith. This was prophetic.

..... When you grow older  
 You will understand/ that this alphabet  
 contains/ the tears and the weeping of  
 our people. When you grow weary/ and  
 burdened with exile/ You will find strength  
 and comfort/ within this Jewish alphabet.

Warshawsky was born in 1840 and died in 1907, yet most Jewish people do not realise that he is the author of Oyfn pripetshik, - that this song is relatively "new". Although not all Jewish audiences know all the verses of

Oyfn pripetshik, they will spontaneously join in the refrain, often with tears in their eyes.

Sholem Aleichem befriended Warshawsky, and assisted in the publication of two collections of Warshawsky's songs in 1901 and 1914. When I attended a lecture in Oxford (August 1987) given by the Yiddish scholar Mr. Avrohom Lis, currently Curator of Sholem Aleichem House in Tel Aviv, Israel, it was mentioned that Sholem Aleichem and Warshawsky sometimes travelled together to various towns and villages, with Sholem Aleichem reading his stories aloud to audiences and Warshawsky performing his repertoire of his own songs.

The songs of family and lifestyle, as selected in this study, cover a wide range of topics: Hobn mir a nigundl (Song 18) ('We have a little tune..'), A brivele der mamen ('A letter to mother' Song 19), Moyshеле mayn fraynd (Song 20 'Moyshеле, my friend'), Kinderyorn ('Childhood' Song 21), (Song 22 'The bent tree') 'Oyfn veg shteyt a boym' and the song Az me fort keyn Sevastopol (Song 23 'When you go to Sebastopol') which was recorded firstly by Beregovski and Feffer in Kiev 1938. People sang of their work and their friends, their crafts, of thieves and tricksters, of the Czar's decrees, always stressing inner joy and courage, even in the face of poverty and adversity. The distinctive aura of a Friday evening and the holy Sabbath day would be a typical feature of a 'family' song: e.g. Fraytik oyf der nakht ('Friday nights') '... with what delight I recall our Friday nights/ when father and mother

and children/ sat around the table singing Sabbath songs/  
How my father would beat time with a spoon/ and my grannie  
would sway her head .....!.

The wedding songs, which celebrate the high point in the life of the Jewish community, are vigorous and joyful songs, but with an undertone of sadness. Song 25 'Di mizhinke oysgegebn' ('The youngest daughter about to wed') seems to indicate a sigh of relief now that the youngest daughter is about to be married and will leave home. Song 26 (not illustrated) contains at least 15 verses, and is often sung at such occasions as a celebration of a Golden Wedding anniversary. The song is variously titled as Der Zayde mit der Bobbe /or/ Achtsik er un zibetsk zi ('Grandpa and Grandma' /or/'Eighty he and seventy she'); a loose translation of the third verse might read:

They have been blessed with a life  
of comfort and honor/ Nor through the  
years have they ever quarrelled.  
"Nathan, darling" and "Bobbe, dear,"  
so they called each other / Eighty  
he and seventy she.

An attempted translation of this song into English sadly dilutes its 'flavour' as the Yiddish is 'quaint' and almost 'rural', imbuing the text with a wistful quality.

The humorous songs laugh at poverty; at the way the town Rabbi (e.g. Rebbe Elimelech Song 34) behaves when he is feeling merry. The townsfolk, having advertised the fact that a position of Cantor in the synagogue is vacant, 'interview' prospective candidates in the song (Song 31) A chazan oyf Shabes (A cantor for the Sabbath) which gives rise to various opinions being aired in humorous fashion.

A chazan oyf Shabes is almost a 'virtuoso' song to perform, and a standard item of repertoire for cantors if they perform in a secular situation, e.g. a family gathering, a concert, etc. The ornamentation lends itself to individual interpretation. A little talent for dramatisation or comedy is essential for a satisfactory rendering of this song.

The Chassidic song, with or without words, occupies an important place in eastern european song. Some of the Chassidic rabbis, like the Puritan fathers of colonial America, sought to '...rescue a tune' (Ruth Rubin 1946 : 77) for use in the service of the Lord. They did not hesitate to borrow freely from the tunes of shepherds, the march rhythms of passing regiments, or songs of the peasants. There was also a 'notion' that the life of a text is 'limited', but that a melody lives forever - with the result that a preponderance of songs WITHOUT words were created. Each composer of a chassidic melody sang according to his own particular mood and temperament, in order to achieve the closest possible communion with the Creator. Virtually every corner of Eastern Europe had Chassidic shtieblakh (small congregations) of Rabbis' courts and followers (one can read of this in the eloquent novels of Isaac Bashevis Singer) - where tunes, chants and dances (strictly for men) were enjoyed and practised. During the last quarter of the nineteenth century when the Chassidic movement began to decline, a number of anti-Chassidic songs were current. One such song is Song 40 Kum aher, du filozof! /or Vos farshteystu filozof? 'Come,

my fine philosopher' or 'What do you know, philosopher?' which pokes gentle fun at the ability of the Rebbe ('rabbi') to fly-up-to-the-sky, in an almost unworldly scenario. The Chassidic songs reveal a deep religious feeling, especially in the songs without words (textless) also known as nigunim (Singular, nigun: 'melody') through which Chassidim (followers of the Chassidic movement) could attain an ecstatic state. Song 38 A Dudele might be translated in title, as: 'May He Plead for Us' has a complete text of its own, composed by Rabbi Lévi Yitzchak Bardichever. Although I have several recordings of women singers who include this song in their repertoire, I would certainly regard this as a song for men to sing. In Jewish orthodox observance, and more so in Chassidic tradition, the separation of the sexes for worship is strictly enforced. In a Chassidic synagogue, the women sit behind a partition. For this reason, one could consider this as a song for men, using all the elements of cantorial art, with added bitter-sweet pathos in interceding with the Almighty.

Most of the Jews of Eastern Europe lived by the work of their hands. They took pride in their occupations, whether tailor, blacksmith, shoemaker, seamstress, storekeeper or factory worker. Restraining edicts barred Jews from the big cities, causing a limited capacity for earning a livelihood. Hours were long and hard. In the songs of poverty and toil, the texts often describe craftsmen who relate their plight. e.g. 'The tailor deftly/ works the thread/ but can it buy bread?'

'The cobbler pleads/ strike on little hammer/ even past midnight/ else we starve!' When the Sabbath ends the stallkeeper resumes his worries: 'So many debtors/ so empty the till.' Not all the songs of workers are sad. One cobbler's song has the following line in the text: '... I patch up another heel/ in this labor a joy I feel..'

To understand the background to Conscripts and Soldiers' songs, one would have to understand the edict issued by Czar Nicholas the First in 1827 which was carried out in cruelty until it was rescinded in 1856. The edict called for all men to be conscripted from the age of 18, to serve in the Army for a period of twenty-five years. To "prepare" for such service, Jewish boys from the age of twelve, were forced to go to "camps" far from their homes. During this period of "preparation" every effort was made to force the boys to accept Christianity. The first forced marches in the bitter Siberian cold, often left half of these children frozen at the wayside. This was a 'tragic chapter' (Anthology of Yiddish Folksongs Vol.III: 234) in that the State demanded a certain quota of recruits, and if there were insufficient, they did not hesitate to grab eight and nine-year-old children. Long after this period, with sad memories incised in the minds of the Jewish people, texts of songs would still reveal the bitterness e.g. '... the children, the fledglings are drawn from heder/ And thrust into uniform/ Alas! will day never dawn?' The fate of Jewish conscripts did not change in later years. Inhuman attitudes of anti-Semitic officers caused young Jews to try ways of avoiding

that kind of military service. In Songs 47, 48 and 49, the pain of separation from parents and loved ones finds expression. In Song 47 Az Nikolai iz Keyser Gevorn, I have been able to find fifteen verses, but quote here only from the first few lines:

Az aleksander pavlovitch iz meylekh gevorn  
Zaynen yidishe hertser freylekh gevorn, oy vey, oy vey!

When Nicholas I became king  
Jewish hearts became "happy", oh woe!

Der ershter ukaz iz aropgekumen oyf yidishe zelner  
Zeynen zich ale tselofn in di puste felder, oy vey!

The first decree for Jewish soldiers was issued,  
Then all fled to the wild woods, oh woe!

It is significant to note that Yiddish folksongs of the nineteenth century do not include epic songs which glorify war. In fact, in all of these soldier songs, and there are many, there are no glorious accounts of battles. The texts of these songs reveal the suffering and hardship of the soldiers, the deprivations which new recruits had to suffer, and the enforced break from family life. In the song (not included in this study) Keyn esn un keyn trinken: 'No food, no drink', a young woman says to her mother '... I cannot eat and I cannot drink, I have not tears now that my betrothed has been conscripted. I shall climb up a ladder, to G-d, and I shall ask him why my bridegroom must be a soldier....' Several of the songs contrast the bitter life in the Czarist army with the warmth of home, and the Jewish environment at home, including fond memories of the Rebbe teaching Chumash and Rashi (\* see Glossary). The word Fonye in these songs refers to 'Russian soldier' - a derogatory adaptation of the Russian name Ivan, as the 'stereotype' Ivan.

The few songs - eight in all - which have been selected in this study for the category of songs of World War II, represent only a minute portion compared to the number of songs that were lost. There are still people who survived the Holocaust, people whose lives were deeply rooted in the Yiddish language and culture, who may still be able to continue 'saving' or 'recording' what they can still remember of songs of that catastrophic time. 'In a sense, all Jews are survivors of the Holocaust' (Sinai Leichter, Anthology of Yiddish Folksongs Vol.4 : VII) and one would want to encourage the younger generations of Jews to keep alive the 'great treasure of beauty and feeling' (Leichter: *ibid.*). In the words of the poet Bialik, the "embers saved from the ashes" constitute the collective memory of the Jewish people.

The terrible catastrophe which struck the Jewish people during the Nazi occupation of Europe during 1939 - 1945 is not to be compared '.... to any other event in the civilized world'. (English translation: Sol Liebgott: Anthology of Yiddish Folksongs Vol. 4: 49). Despite great suffering, hunger and illness, fear and torture, facing death at every turn, one wonders how songs could have been created. Song, however, is a formidable weapon, and I should like to quote from a collection of songs kindly loaned to me, of Shmerl Katcherginski, whose poignant collection of songs was published in post-War Paris in 1947. Katcherginski writes about the young poet Hirsh Glick: '... songs, humour and biting wit

TRANSCRIPTIONS AND TEXTS OF FIFTY-SIX YIDDISH SONGS

accompanied him everywhere - when he was forced into the work camps, when he queued up for a plate of soup, when he went into combat, in moments when it seemed that only death remained - there stirred up in our souls the words of Hirsh Glick "Never say you tread the last road". We sang this song which united our souls, raised our spirits, strengthened our will and determination. Even when we sang of sadness it aroused in us hate and fury and called to us for vengeance.' Glick's partisan hymn 'Never say you tread the last road' 'Zog nit keynmol az du geyst dem letsten veg' is the last song discussed in this study. Songs 50, 51, 54 and 56 were the last songs recorded on the cassette which accompanies this section; this proved to be the most difficult songs to sing, overlaid as they are with overtones of heaviness and sadness. Towards the end of this study, individual explanations are given for the eight songs, although the texts often speak for themselves, and one has tried only to give a clearer picture of the background and circumstances to each song. One would also not like to end this section on a despairing note. Holocaust survivors in Cape Town have conveyed to me a great sense of hope, particularly in the light of the fact that the State of Israel was established so soon after the War, (historically speaking, 'soon') which is regarded as a miracle, and in a small way, helps to ease the burden of the dark years of Nazi cruelties and Nazi domination of Europe, and the heroic struggle of the Jewish people.

TRANSCRIPTIONS AND TEXTS OF FIFTY-SIX YIDDISH FOLKSONGS

Note: Out of the 56 selected songs, 27 songs have been recorded on cassette by myself, and printed scores with texts have been provided. Yellow paper has been used for the scores of the 27 aforementioned songs.

1. Water	Once upon a time
2. Shlof	Sleep, my child
3. Naol iz geven a mayse	Once upon a time
4. Yankels	Yankels
5. Shlof mayn kind (Sholom Alieichem text)	Sleep, my child
6. Say ikh mir shpatsirn	As I stroll
7. Reizels	Reizels
8. Shvetsse Marshelach	Black cherries
9. Margeritkelekh	Daisies
10. Herr nor du sheyn maidel	Listen, pretty girl
11. Lovir zikh Iberbetn	Let's pardon one another
12. Yome, Yome	Yome
13. Patane patane kichelakh	Clap hands
14. Arum dee fayer	Around the campfire
15. Say dee shietl	Near the village
16. Dyfn pripetshik	In the tiny gate
17. A kleyn maidel klapt	A little girl taps
18. Hoon mir a nigundl	We have a little tune
19. A brivele der mamen	A letter to mother
20. Moyshela mayn fraynd	Moyshela, my friend
21. Kinderyorn	Childhood
22. Dyfn Veg shleyt a boye	The bent tree
23. Az me fort keyn Sevastopol	When you go to Sebastopol
24. Mareltovl	Mareltovl
25. Di mizhinke dyegegetn	The youngest daughter about to wed
26. Ahtsik er un zibetsik zi (Der zeyde mit der bubbe)	The Golden Anniversary, or Grandfather and grandmother
27. Chatzkele	Chatzkele
28. Lovir als in synen	Let us all together
29. Zechuteneste mayne	My dear in-law
30. Mir zaynen ale brider	We are all brothers

## P A R T T W O

## LIST OF SONGS

Yiddish title	English translation
1. Unter dem kind's vigele	Beneath baby's cradle
2. Shlof mayn kind	Sleep, my child
3. Amol iz geven a mayse	Once upon a time
4. Yankele	Yankele
5. Shlof mayn kind (Sholem Aleichem text)	Sleep, my child
6. Gey ikh mir shpatsirn	As I stroll
7. Reizele	Reizele
8. Shvartse karshelach	Black cherries
9. Margaritkelekh	Daisies
10. Herr nor du sheyn meidele	Listen, pretty girl
11. Lomir zikh iberbetn	Lets pardon one another
12. Yome, Yome	Yome
13. Patshe patshe kichelakh	Clap hands
14. Arum dem fayer	Around the campfire
15. Bay dem shtetl	Near the village
16. Dyfn pripetshik	In the tiny grate
17. A kleyn meidele klapt	A little girl taps
18. Hobn mir a nigundl	We have a little tune
19. A brivele der mamen	A letter to mother
20. Moyshele mayn fraynd	Moyshele, my friend
21. Kinderyorn	Childhood
22. Dyfn veg shteyt a boym	The bent tree
23. Az me fort keyn Sevastopol	When you go to Sevastopol
24. Mazeltov!	Mazeltov!
25. Di mizhinke oysgegebn	The youngest daughter about to wed
26. Achtsik er un zibetsik zi (Der zeyde mit der bobbe)	The Golden Anniversary, or Grandfather and grandmother
27. Chatzkele	Chatzkele
28. Lomir ale in eynem	Let us altogethger
29. Machuteneste mayne	My dear in-law
30. Mir zaynen ale brider	We are all brothers

Yiddish title	English translation
31. A chazan oyf Shabbes	A cantor for the Sabbath
32. A ganeyve	A theft
33. Dire-gelt	Money for rent
34. Der Rebbe Elimelekh	Rabbi Elimelekh
35. Rabeynu Tam	Our Rabbi Tam
36. Eliyohu ha'novi	Elijah the prophet
37. Avinu Malkeinu	Our Father, Our King
38. A dudele	A dudele
39. Sha, shtil!	Hush, quiet
40. Kum aher, du filozof! (Vos farshteystu, filozof?)	What do you know, philosopher?
41. Ot azoy neyt a shnayder	Thus sews a tailor
42. Mashines klapn	Machines clatter
43. Zuntik bulves	Potatoes
44. Hemerl, hemerl	The hammer
45. Ich bin a balegole	I am a wagon-driver
46. Mayn yingele	My little boy
47. Az Nikolai iz kaiser gevorn	When Nicolai became Czar
48. Yoske fort avek	Yoske departs
49. Fonye Ganev	In the Czarist army
50. Ani ma'amin	I believe
51. Es brent	It is burning
52. Rivke di Shabbesdike	Rivke
53. Yisrolik	Yisrolik
54. Shtiler, shtiler	Quiet, quiet
55. Mir lebn eybik	We are an eternal people
56. Partizaner-lied: Zog nit keynmol	Hymn of the Partisans

Songs recorded at UCT (Rob Johnson: sound engineer)

LIST OF SONGS

<u>Yiddish title</u>	<u>English translation</u>
1. Unter dem kind's vigele	Beneath baby's cradle
4. Yankele	Yankele
6. Gey ikh mir shpatsirn	As I stroll
7. Reizele	Reizele
8. Shvartse karshелеkh	Black cherries
9. Margaritkelekh	Daisies
12. Yome, yome	Yome
13. Patshe patshe kichelakh	Clap hands
14. Arum dem fayer	Around the campfire
16. Dyfn pripetshik	In the tiny grate
18. Hobn mir a nigndl	We have a little tune
20. Moyshеле mayn fraynd	Moyshеле my friend
22. Dyfn veg shteyt a boym	The bent tree
28. Lomir ale in eynem	Let us all together
29. Machuteneste mayne	My dear in-law
30. Mir zaynen ale brider	We are all brothers
34. Der Rebbe Elimelekh	Rabbi Elimelekh
36. Eliyochu hanovi	Elijah the prophet
37. Avinu malkeinu	Our Father Our King
39. Sha, shtil!	Hush, quiet!
41. Ot azoy neyt a shnayder	Thus sews a tailor
43. Zuntik bulves	Potatoes
46. Mayn yingele	My little boy
50. Ani ma'amin	I believe
51. Es brent	It is burning
54. Shtiler, shtiler	Quiet, quiet
56. Zog nit keynmol	Hymn of the partisans

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# A GUIDE TO YIDDISH PRONUNCIATION

The Yiddish song texts in this section follow the rules of standard Yiddish formulated by YIVO (Yidisher Visnshaftlikher Institut) in Poland in 1937 in order to establish a uniform Yiddish for the linguistic community. To facilitate the reading of Yiddish texts for those unfamiliar with Hebrew letters, a consistent system of transliteration into Latin characters was established by YIVO in New York. This system has been adopted by the Library of Congress and by academic institutions.

## *Pronunciation Guide to Transliterated Standard Yiddish*

Vowels	Yiddish Examples	As it sounds in English
a	<u>far</u>	part
e	<u>ven</u>	when
i	<u>visn</u>	miss
o	<u>hot</u>	not
u	<u>fun</u>	put
Diphthongs		
ey	<u>tsvey</u>	pray
ay	<u>fayer</u>	fire
oy	<u>oyg</u>	toy
Consonants (if different from the English sounds)		
kh	<u>ikh</u>	Bach
g	<u>gey</u>	give
dz	<u>undz</u>	rounds
ts	<u>tants</u>	fits
tsh	<u>mentsh</u>	pinch
zh	<u>shpil-zhe</u>	measure

TRANSCRIPTIONS AND TEXTS OF FIFTY-SIX YIDDISH FOLKSONGS

CRADLE SONGS

VIGLIDER

sung mainly by women

1 Unter dem kind's vigele

'Beneath baby's cradle'

This is a simple cradle song, yet it encompasses all the examples of the 'basic aspirations' which a Jewish mother wished for her infant - the concepts as discussed in the introduction to this section, namely: devotion to learning, the hope that the child will grow up to be a good scholar, a pious man. Immediately we are aware of the quaint picture of the 'little white goat'. In this instance, the goat stands guard at the child's cradle and tells of his exploits in trading with almonds and raisins - is this perhaps a hint that the child might grow up to be a merchant?

2 Shlof mayn kind, shlof keseyder

'Sleep my child, sleep'

The eighties and nineties of last century saw the rise of an organized movement of the workingmen and women of Eastern Europe. Shlof mayn kind, shlof keseyder, is a song of that period. In the text here, the difference is between 'rich' and 'poor': the singer describes to the baby that although the 'poor man' will be the one who is 'building' a fine home on the hill, it is not he who will live in it. Gor nisht er, nor der raycher man: 'Not he, but, of course, the rich man!' A contrast is shown in the last

verse, that der oriman ligt in keler : 'the poor man lives in a cellar' where he suffers rheumatism.

### 3 Amol iz geven a mayse

'Once upon a time'

Cradle songs were not only sung by the mother. Often the working mother would have to call in a neighbour's child to "sit" with her baby. When the sitter had his or her own tale to tell, the lullaby could take the form of Amol iz geven a mayse .... 'Once upon a time'. The text of this song was published in 1901 by S. Ginzburg and P. Marek; the text and music were published in 1911 by Platon Brounoff and S. Kisselgof. This folksong uses the metaphoric 'king' and 'queen' in referring to man and wife, in keeping with the Sabbath and Passover tradition.

'Once upon a time there was a king who had a queen. The queen had a vineyard with a tree and a bird nesting in its branches. But the king died and the queen became desolate, the branches broke and the bird flew away.'

The refrain between verses, in English translation, is 'Hush my little bird, hush my little baby, I have lost my own true love, Ah woe is unto me!' The Yiddish text has a descriptive 'sound', a lilt, especially to the word for 'hush' e.g. Lyulinke mayn feygele  
lyulinke mayn kind.  
Ch'ob ongevoyrn aza libe - vey iz mir un vind.

### 4 Yankele

'Yankele'

Yankele was written by Mordecai (Mordche) Gebirtig (d. 1942), favourite folk singer of the Polish Jews. He wrote this lullaby and many other songs e.g. Es Brent,

Reizele, Motele, Moyshеле mayn fraynd, Dray Tekhterlekh, before the Nazis overran his country and he was led to his death in 1942. Gebirtig's songs were as popular in Poland during the 1920s to 1940s as were the songs of Mark Warshawsky in Russia at the end of the nineteenth century. Yankele is part of the standard repertoire of all who sing Yiddish folksongs in U S A, Israel, and Soviet Russia, and wherever else Yiddish is sung. In this song, the mother stresses that the child (the boy Yankele) should study Torah and become a scholar. In her brooding, the mother nevertheless complains that the child robs her of sleep and that he wakes up "wet".

5 Shlof mayn kind, mayn kroyn (Sholem Aleichem text)

'Sleep, my child'

Life was hard and despite the mother's efforts to sing of joy and happiness, some reflections on the family's worries are bound to emerge. One song, such as this, may tell of a father who wanders over the villages to eke out a living, or one who has made the far-off journey to America in search of the Golden Land. Sholem Aleichem's lullaby Sleep my child, my crown speaks for these hopeful but abandoned mothers, and this became one of the most popular folksongs which gained '... a wide currency' (RUTH RUBIN 1964 : 15) in the Eastern European communities even before Sholem Aleichem made it known that the text was his, and the music David Kovanovski's. Shlof mayn kind was published in 1892. The text was included in the first major collection of Yiddish folksongs by S. Ginzburg and P. Marek (1901) as an anonymous folksong, and has since

1

# UNTER DEM KINDS VIGELE

*Beneath baby's cradle*

אונטער דעם קינדס וויגעלע

Handwritten musical score for "Unter dem Kinds Vigele" (Beneath baby's cradle). The score is written in G major (one sharp) and 3/4 time. It consists of five staves. The first staff shows the vocal line with a treble clef and a key signature of one sharp (F#). The second staff begins with a treble clef and a key signature of one sharp, followed by a series of notes with fingerings (1, 2, 3) and a slur. The third and fourth staves continue the melody with similar notation. The fifth staff concludes the piece with a double bar line.

## 1

UNTER DEM KINDS VIGELE  
BENEATH BABY'S CRADLE

אונטער דעם קינדס וויגעלע

Andantino  $\text{♩} = 69$

Un - ter dem kinds vi - ge - le shteyt a klor vays tsi - ge - le, dos  
tsi - ge - le z'ge - fo - rn hand - len ro - zhln - kes mit mand - len.  
Ro - zhln - kes mit mand - len iz zey - er zis, mayn kind vet zayn ge - zunt un frish.

Unter dem kinds vigele  
Shteyt a klor vays tsigele,  
Dos tsigele z'geforn handlen  
Rozhinkes mit mandlen.  
Rozhinkes mit mandlen  
Iz zeyer zis,  
Mayn kind vet zayn gezunt un frish.

אונטער דעם קינדס וויגעלע  
שטייט א קלאָר-ווייס ציגעלע,  
דאָס ציגעלע זיגעפֿארן האַנדלען  
ראָזשינקעס מיט מאַנדלען.  
ראָזשינקעס מיט מאַנדלען  
איז זייער זיס,  
מיין קינד וועט זיין געזונט און פֿריש.

Gezunt iz di beste skhoyre —  
Mayn kind vet lernen toyre.  
Toyre vet er lernen,  
Sforim vet er shraybn,  
A guter un frumer yid  
Vet er im-yirtse-hashem farblaybn!

געזונט איז די בעסטע סחורה —  
מיין קינד וועט לערנען תורה.  
תורה וועט ער לערנען,  
ספֿרים וועט ער שרייבן,  
א גוטער און פֿרומער ייד  
וועט ער אים - ירצה - השם פֿאַרבלייבן!

Beneath baby's cradle stands a little white goat.  
The little goat went off to trade in raisins and almonds.  
As almonds and raisins are tasty and sweet  
So my child will be healthy and strong.  
My child will study Torah and write many learned books.  
G-d willing he will grow up to be a good and pious Jew.

2

SHLOF, mayn KIND, SHLOF KESEYDER

Sleep, my child

של אָן קינד

Handwritten musical score for 'Sleep, my child'. The score is written on four staves. The first staff is a treble clef with a key signature of one flat (B-flat) and a common time signature. It begins with a whole note chord consisting of a B-flat, a D, and a G. The second staff contains a melody of eighth notes, starting on a G and moving up stepwise to a B-flat. The third and fourth staves continue the melody with eighth notes and include some chromatic alterations (sharps and naturals) under the notes. The piece concludes with a double bar line.

Sleep, my child, sleep  
I'll sing you a lullaby.

Verse 4: 'The poor man lives in a cellar/  
The walls are wet with damp/ He gets pains  
in his arms and legs/ Derfun bakumt er  
a rematn-feler ('from this he gets a  
rheumatic cramp')

3

AMOL IZ GEVEN A MAYSE  
Once upon a time

אמאל איז געגעבן א מאַסע  
א געווען אַ מאַסע



4

YANKELE

(M. Gebirtig)

יאַנקעלע

## 4

SHLOF SHOYN AYN, MAYN YANKELE  
SLEEP, MY YANKELE

## שלאף שוין איין, מיין יאנקעלע

טעקסט און מוזיק: מ. געבירטיג  
Text and Music: M. Gebirtig

Allegretto ♩ = 106

Shlof-zhe mir shoy'n Yan-ke-le mayn shey-ner, di ey-ge-lekh, di shvar-tsin-ke makh  
tsu . A yin-ge-le vos hot shoy'n a-le tseyndlekh, muz  
nokh di ma-me zin-gen, ay-li-lyu? A yin-ge-le, vos hot shoy'n a-le  
tseyndlekh, muz nokh di ma-me zin-gen ay-li-lyu?

Shlof zhe mir shoy'n, Yankele mayn sheyner,  
Di eygelekh, di shvartsinke, makh tsu!  
A yingele, vos hot shoy'n ale tseyndlekh,  
Muz nokh di mame zingen ay-li-lyu? ...

שלאף זשע מיר שוין, יאנקעלע, מיין שיינער,  
די אייגעלעך די שווארצינקע מאך צו!  
א יינגעלע, וואָס האָט שוין אַלע ציינדלעך,  
מוז נאָך די מאַמע זינגען איי-לי-ליוּ?...

A yingele, vos hot shoy'n ale tseyndlekh  
Un vet mit mazl bald in kheyder geyn,  
Un lernen vet er khumesh un gemore,  
Zol veynen, ven di mame vige im ayn? ...

א יינגעלע, וואָס האָט שוין אַלע ציינדלעך  
און וועט מיט מול באַלד אין חדר גיין,  
און לערנען וועט ער חומש און גמרא,  
זאָל וויינען, ווען די מאַמע ווינט אים איין?...

A yingele, vos lernen vet gemore, —  
Ot shteyt der tate, kvelt un hert zikh tsu —  
A yingele, vos vakst a talmid-khokhem,  
Lozt gantse nekht di mame nit tsu ru ...

א יינגעלע, וואָס לערנען וועט גמרא —  
אָט שטייט דער טאַטע, קוועלט און הערט זיך צו —  
א יינגעלע, וואָס וואַקסט אַ תלמיד-חכם,  
לאָזט גאַנצע נעכט די מאַמע ניט צו רו...

A yingele, vos vakst a talmid-khokhem  
Un a geniter soykher oykh tsu glaykh,  
A yingele, a kluger khosn-bokher,  
Zol lign azoy nas, vi in a taykh ...

א יינגעלע, וואָס וואַקסט אַ תלמיד-חכם  
און אַ געניטער סוחר אויך צו גלייך,  
א יינגעלע, אַ קלוגער חתן-בכור,  
זאָל ליגן אזוי נאַס, ווי אין אַ טייך...

Nu, shlof zhe mir, mayn kluger khosn-bokher,  
Dervayl ligstu in vigele bay mir —  
S'vet kostn nokh fil mi un mames trern,  
Biz vanen s'vet a mentsh aroys fun dir ...

נו, שלאָף זשע מיר, מיין קלוגער חתן-בכור,  
דערווייל ליגסטו אין וויגעלע ביי מיר —  
סיוועט קאַסטן נאָך פֿיל מי און מאַמעס טרערן,  
ביז וואַנען סיוועט אַ מענטש אַרויס פֿון דיר...

## 4(i)

Sleep now Yankele my pretty one  
 Close your little dark eyes.  
 A little boy who has all his teeth  
 Still needs his mother to sing him to sleep?

A little boy who has all his teeth  
 And will soon attend cheder  
 There he will study Torah and Talmud  
 But still he cries when mother rocks him  
 to sleep.

A little boy who soon will study Talmud  
 How his father rejoices as he listens!  
 A little boy who will become a great scholar  
 Gives his mother many sleepless nights.

A little boy who will become a great scholar  
 And a successful business man as well,  
 A little boy who'll grow to be a bridegroom  
 Has soaked his bed as if he's in a pool.

So hush-a-bye my clever little bridegroom  
 Meanwhile you lie wet in your cradle.  
 Your mother will shed many a tear  
 Before you grow up to be a man.

---

5(1)

5

SHLOF MAYN KIND  
MAYN KROYN

של אף מין קינד  
מין קרוין

Text : Sholem Aleichem  
Music : D. Kovanovski

Sleep, my child, my consolation

The musical score is written on four staves. The first staff begins with a treble clef and a key signature of one sharp (F#). The first two notes are marked with a circled '2' and a circled '#', indicating a second ending or a specific fingering. The second staff contains a series of eighth and sixteenth notes, with a circled '3' under a triplet of notes. The third staff continues the melodic line, also featuring a circled '3' under a triplet. The fourth staff concludes the piece with a double bar line. The notation is handwritten and includes various musical symbols such as clefs, notes, rests, and accidentals.

## 5(i)

SHLOF, MAYN KIND, MAYN KROYN  
SLEEP YOU ARE MY LIFE

## שלאף מיין קינד, מיין קרוין

Andante ♩=66

Text: Shalom Aleikhèm שלום עליכם  
Music: D. Kovanovski קאָוואַנסקי

Shlof, mayn kind, mayn kroyn, mayn shey - ner, shlof zhe, lyu - lyu - lyu!

Shlof mayn le - bn, mayn ka - dish ey - ner, shlof zhe, zu - ne -- nyu!

Shlof mayn le - bn, mayn ka - dish ey - ner, shlof zhe, zu - ne - nyu!

Shlof, mayn kind, mayn kroyn, mayn sheyner,  
Shlof-zhe, lyu-lyu-lyu!  
Shlof mayn lebn, mayn kadish eyner,  
Shlof zhe, zunenyu!

שלאף, מיין קינד, מיין קרון, מיין שיינער,  
שלאף זשע, ליו-ליו-ליו!  
שלאף מיין לעבן, מיין קדיש איינער,  
שלאף זשע, זונעניו!

Bay dayn vigl zitst dayn mame,  
Zingt a lid un veynt, --  
Vest a mol farshteyn mistame,  
Vos zi hot gemeynt...

ביי דיין וויגל זיצט דיין מאַמע,  
זינגט אַ ליד און וויינט. -  
וועסט אַ מאָל פֿאַרשטיין מסתמא,  
וואָס זי האָט געמיינט...

In Amerike dayn tate  
Dayner, zunenyu...  
Bist a kind nokh - shlof lesate,  
Shlof zhe, shlof, lyu-lyu!

אין אַמעריקע דיין טאַטע  
דיינער, זונעניו...  
ביסט אַ קינד נאָך - שלאָף לעת-עתה,  
שלאָף זשע, שלאָף, ליו-ליו!

Dos Amerike iz far ycdn,  
Zogt men, gor a glik,  
Un far yidn a gan-eyden,  
Epes an antik...

דאָס אַמעריקע איז פֿאַר יעדן,  
זאָגט מען, גאָר אַ גליק,  
און פֿאַר יידן אַ גאָן-עידן,  
עפעס אַן אַנטיק...

Dortn est men in der vokhn  
Khale, zunenyu,  
Yaykhelekh vel ikh dir kokhn,  
Shlof zhe, lyu-lyu-lyu!

דאָרטן עסט מען אין דער וואָכן  
חלה, זונעניו,  
יאַיכעלעך וועל איך דיר קאָכן -  
שלאָף זשע, ליו-ליו-ליו!

## 5(ii)

Er vet shikn tsvantsik doler,  
Zayn portret dertsu,  
Un vet nemen, lebn zol er,  
Undz ahintsu-tsu.

גר וועט שיקן צוואנציק דאלער,  
זיין פארטרעט דערצו,  
און וועט נעמען, לעבן זאל ער,  
אונדז אהינצורצו.

Er vet khapn undz un kushn,  
Veynen azh far freyd,  
Ikh vel kveln, trern gisn,  
Veynen shtilerheyt. . .

ער וועט כאפן אונדז און קושן,  
וויינען אזש פאר פרייד,  
איך וועל קוועלן, טרערן גיסן,  
וויינען שטילערהייט...

Got vet heysn, vet er shikn  
Brivlekh, zunenyu,  
Gor in gikh undz baglikn  
Shlof zhe, shlof, lyu-lyu!

גאט וועט הייסן, וועט ער שיקן  
בריוועלעך, זונעניו,  
גאר אין גיכן אונדז באגליקן  
שלאף זשע, שלאף, ליו-ליו!

Biz es kumt dos gute kvitl,  
Shlof zhe, zunenyu -  
Shlofn iz a tayer mitl,  
Shlof zhe, ay-lyu-lyu!...

ביז עס קומט דאס גוטע קוויטל,  
שלאף זשע, זונעניו -  
שלאפן איז א טייער מיטל,  
שלאף זשע, איי-ליו-ליו!...

Sleep my child, you are all my life to me  
My heart is sad as I sing you to sleep  
Some day you will sense my grief  
Your father is in distance.

Sleep my child, you are all my life to me  
My heart is sad as I sing you to sleep  
Some day you will sense my grief.  
Your father is in distant America  
Where Sabbath bread and chicken broth  
Are eaten each day of the week.

One day your father will send for us  
We will join him and together  
We will enjoy all that America offers.  
But until that moment comes, my child  
Slumber sweetly for in sleep  
You will find repose.

enjoyed '....enduring popularity' (Mlotek 1986 : 149). It later served as a source for numerous parodies and adaptations with typical text referring to specific social situations e.g. in a song from the period of the abortive revolution of 1905, a mother sings about a child's father who is in Siberia. After World War I, a parody on the same song criticised the new Poland for its worthless currency and the American delegates, who sat around like lords, eating broth and chicken, while mother and child went hungry! I have provided full text and translation for Shlof mayn kind, mayn kroyn in which the English translation is self-explanatory. \*See Song 5 (i) & 5 (ii).

LOVE SONGS

LIBELIDER

Sung by both men and women

6 Gey ikh mir shpatsirn

'As I stroll'

First published in Ost und West in 1905, this song is on a very similar theme to the German folksong 'Ich ging ein Mal spazieren'. In performing this song, a certain degree of characterization is necessary to highlight the a-ha! which is a distinctive feature of this song. I first heard a live performance of this in Bethal, Transvaal, in October 1985, by the cantor of the Bethal synagogue, Cantor Singer. (Incidentally not a relative of mine, although same surname.) He sang this with obvious enjoyment and a "twinkle" in his eye, as if he were dramatising an entire opera/story in these four short verses.

7 Reizele

'Reizele'

This is one of the most popular songs by M. Gebirtig. The girl who is being courted, namely Reizele, is modest and obeys all the social conventions, being obviously from a home where her mother is an Orthodox Jewess. She does not want her Dovid (or, diminutive, Dovidl) to whistle, as it is not polite. She is willing to knit a bag for him, in which he will proudly put his tefillin (\*see Glossary) i.e. his phylacteries. In performance of the song, one has to alter the tempo and mood according to the text, at appropriate moments.

8 Shvartse karshelkh

'Black cherries'

Parts of Shvartse karshelkh were published by Y L Cahan in 1912. A similar version was published by M. Gelbart in 1938. The stanza about black cherries was traced back to the 16th century by Y L Cahan. It is also part of a children's song that once was a love song: 'Kumt der liber zumer shplin mir in zamd' / (when summer comes, we play in the sand). Although this song is presented by myself singing one verse of it on the cassette, my performance of it is sadly lacking in an important aspect - namely, that for good effect, Shvartse karshelkh ought to be sung with a Polish-Yiddish accent, in the manner of the Yidisher Te'ater (the Yiddish stage/ theatre), which adds greatly to the humour. This was told to me in Oxford by Charles Nydorf, a Yiddish scholar of Columbia University, U.S.A.

9 Margaritkelekh

'Daisies'

Margaritkelekh was originally titled Tra-la-lo-lo.

This popular song, which usually has the indication 'ballad style' in several editions which I have seen, has a text written by the Hebrew-Yiddish poet Zalman Shneour (1887-1959) in 1909. It was included with the music in M. Kipnis' collection of 1918. As in Reizele (Song 7), the girl Khavele of this song, is suitably modest and does not wish to disobey or 'bend' any of the social conventions of being too friendly with a good-looking 'stranger'. 'O, loz mikh' she says, 'men tor nit' /O, leave me, it is not permitted/ My mother says it is not allowed/ my mother is elderly and will be angry. A full text in Yiddish is given, with abbreviated English translation. On the cassette, only the first verse is sung.

(Kindly note that through a technical fault, the verse (on the recording) is unintentionally repeated. - S.F.S.)

10 Herr, nor, du sheyn meidele

'Listen, pretty girl'

A textual variant of this song was published in 1901 by S. Ginzburg and P. Marek. Text and music were published in 1905 in Ost and West. 'Tell me pretty maiden: What will you do on such a long journey?' She answers '.. I will go through the streets crying LAUNDRY-TO-WASH .../ as long as I can be with you.' 'What will you eat on such a journey?' She answers: '... I will eat bread and salt. I will forget father and mother, as long as I can be with you.' 'On what will you sleep?' Her answer is: '.. I am young. I will sleep on a bundle of straw, as long as I can be with you.' 'How will you cover yourself?' '...The dew from the sky will cover me. The birds will awaken me - As long as I can be with you.' This song provides a good example of a 'dialogue' between 'him' and 'her'.

11 Lomir zich iberbetn

'Lets pardon one another'

This song has six verses. A shortened translation could be given as follows: Let us forgive each other/ Prepare the urn for tea (Shtel dem samovar!) Let us forgive each other/ For my heart is on fire with love. Let us forgive each other/ why do you stand outside the room? You are my most beautiful! (Du bist dokh mayn shenster!) This song has a pleasing and engaging rhythmic pattern which should be vigorously emphasized in performance. One of the unusual Yiddish words in the text is fistashkes which, after a long search in the dictionary, I found to mean 'peanuts'.

6

GEY IKH MIR SHPATSIRN  
As I stroll

ה"א יך גיר שפאצירן

GEY ICH MIR SHPATSIRN

Folksong, published in Ost und West in 1905. A very similar theme can be found in the German folk song: "Ich ging ein Mal spazieren".

The musical score is written on four staves. The first staff shows a treble clef and a key signature of one sharp (F#). The melody begins with a half note G4, followed by quarter notes A4, B4, C5, and D5, ending with a half note E5. The second staff contains the main melody with eighth and sixteenth notes, including two triplet markings. The third and fourth staves provide accompaniment with eighth and sixteenth notes, also featuring triplet markings. The piece concludes with a double bar line.

## 6

GEY IKH MIR SHPATSIRN  
AS I STROLLגוי איך מיר שפאצירן  
אצאה לי לשון

Moderato ♩ = 90

Chords: Gm, Cm, D7, B, F7, B, Gm, Cm, Gm, Cm, Gm, FINE

Lyrics:

Gey ikh mir shpa-tsi - rn, tra-la-la, la-la-la, la! Gey ikh mir shpa-tsi - rn,  
zogt er vet mikh ne - men, Er zogt er vet mikh ne - men,

tra - la - la, la - la - la, la! Ba - ge - gent mikh a bo - kher, a -  
Er leygt es op oyf zu - mer,

ha, a - ha! Ba - ge - gnt mikh a bo - kher, a - ha, a ha! Er  
Er leygt es op oyf zu - mer,

Gey ikh mir shpatsirn,  
Tra-la-la, la-la-la, la!  
Bagegnt mikh a bokher —  
Aha, aha !

גוי איך מיר שפאצירן,  
טראלא-לא, לא-לא-לא, לא!  
באגעגנט מיך א בחור —  
אהא, אהא!

Er zogt, er vet mikh nemen,  
Tra-la-la, la-la-la, la!  
Er leygt es op oyf zumer —  
Aha, aha !

ער זאגט, ער וועט מיך נעמען,  
טראלא-לא, לא-לא-לא, לא!  
ער לייגט עס אָפּ אויף זומער —  
אהא, אהא!

Der zumer iz gekumen,  
Tra-la-la, la-la-la, la!  
Er hot mikh nit genumen —  
Aha, aha !

דער זומער איז געקומען,  
טראלא-לא, לא-לא-לא, לא!  
ער האט מיך ניט גענומען —  
אהא, אהא!

Itst vil er mikh shoyrn nemen,  
Tra-la-la, la-la-la, la!  
Itst vil ikh im nit kenen —  
Aha, aha !

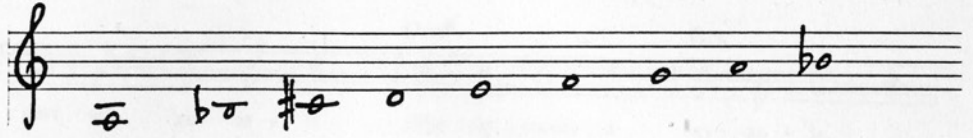
איצט וויל ער מיך שוין נעמען,  
טראלא-לא, לא-לא-לא, לא!  
איצט וויל איך אים ניט קענען —  
אהא, אהא!

I sauntered aimlessly one day.  
Along my path I met a lad.  
He wanted to marry me  
But asked that I wait till summer.  
But summer came and went,  
And his promise he failed to keep.  
Now he truly wants me for his bride  
But now 'tis I that cast him aside.

7

# REYZELE

(M. Gebirtig)



## 7

REYZELE  
REYZELE

## רייזעלע

Allegretto  $\text{♩} = 108$ 

Shteyt zikh dort in ge - se - le shtil far - trakht a hay - ze - le,  
 dor - tn oy - fn boy - dem shtil - bl voynt mayn tay - er Rey - ze - le.  
 Ye - dn o - vnt fa - rn hay - zl drey ikh zikh a - rum,  
 kh'gib a fayf un ruf oys: "Rey - zl, kum, kum, kum!"

Shteyt zikh dort in gesele  
 Shtil fartrakht a hayzele,  
 Dortn, oyfn boydem-shtibl  
 Voynt mayn tayer Reyzele.  
 Yedn ovnt farn hayzl  
 Drey ikh zikh arum,  
 Kh'gib a fayf un ruf oys: "Reyzi,  
 Kum, kum, kum!"

Efnt zikh a fensterl,  
 Vakht oyf s'gantse hayzele,  
 Un bald klingt in shtiln gesl  
 A zis kol — s'redt Reyzele:  
 — "Nokh a vayle vart, mayn liber,  
 Bald vel ikh zayn fray,  
 Gey zikh nokn a por mol iber —  
 Eyns, tsvey, dray!"

Gey ikh mir a freylekher,  
 Zing un knak mir niselekh;  
 Her ikh oyf di treplekh loyfn  
 Ire drobne fiselekh;  
 Shoyn arop fun letztn trepl,  
 Kh'nem zi lib arum,  
 Kh'gib ir shtil a kush in kepl:  
 Kum, kum, kum!

שטייט זיך דאָרט אין געסעלע  
 שטיל פֿאַרטראַכט אַ הײַזעלע,  
 דאָרטן אויפֿן בוידעם־שטיבל  
 ווינט מײַן טײַער רײַזעלע.  
 יעדן אָונט פֿאַרן הײַזל  
 דריי איך זיך אַרום,  
 כּיגײב אַ פֿײַף, און רוף אויס: "רײַזל,  
 קום, קום, קום!"

עפֿנט זיך אַ פֿענצטערל,  
 וואַכט אויף ס'גאַנצע הײַזעלע,  
 און באַלד קלינגט אין שטילן געסל  
 אַ זיס קול — ס'רעדט רײַזעלע:  
 "נאָך אַ ווײַלע וואַרט, מײַן ליבער,  
 באַלד וועל איך זײַן פֿרײַ,  
 גײ זיך נאָך אַ פֿאַר מאָל איבער —  
 איינס, צוויי, דריי!"

גײ איך מיר אַ פֿרײַלעכער,  
 זינג און קנאַק מיר נײַסעלעך;  
 הער איך אויף די טרעפלעך לויפֿן  
 אירע דראָבנע פֿײַסעלעך.  
 שוין אַראָפֿ פֿון לעצטן טרעפל,  
 כּינעם זײ ליב אַרום,  
 כּיגײב איר שטיל אַ קוש אין קעפל:  
 קום, קום, קום!

## 7(i)

"Kh'vil dikh betn, Dovidl,  
Zolst aroyf nit fayfn mer.  
"Herst, er fayft shoyfn", - zogt di mame,  
Zi iz frum, s'fardrist zi zeyer;  
Fayfn, zogt zi, iz nit yidish,  
S'past nor bloyz far "zey"...  
Gib a tseykhn prost oyf yidish:  
Eyns, tsvey, dray!"

— Kh'vel fun haynt nit fayfn mer,  
Droyf gib ikh a shvuele  
Dir tsulib vel ikh afile  
Vern frum, mayn tsnuuele...  
Kh'vel zayn, Reyzl, ven du vilst nor,  
Vi dayn mame frum,  
Yedn shabes geyn in klayzl -  
Kum, kum, kum!

— Kh'gleyb es dir, mayn libinker,  
Un derfar dir, Dovidl,  
Shtrik ikh a sheyn tfiln-zekl  
Mit a mogn-dovidl;  
Ven gefeln s'vet in klayzl,  
Zogn zolstu zey:  
S'hot geshtrikt mayn libe Reyzl,  
Eyns, tsvey, dray!

— Kh'dank far dayn matonele!  
Kh'lib azoy dikh, Reyzele,  
Kh'lib dayn mamen, kh'lib dos gesl,  
Kh'lib dos alte hayzele;  
Kh'lib di shteyndlekh lebn hayzl —  
Tretst oyf zey arum...  
Her, dayn mame ruft shoyfn: "Reyzl,  
Kum, kum, kum!"

Gey ikh mir a freylekher,  
Zing un knak mir niselekh,  
Her ikh oyf di treplekh loyfn  
Ire drobne fiselekh.  
Vider shteyt fartrakht dos hayzl,  
S'gesl - vider shtum...  
Kum tsu mir in kholem, Reyzl,  
Kum, kum, kum!...

"כיוויל דיך בעטן, דודל,  
זאלסט ארויף ניט פֿינפֿן מער.  
"הערסט, ער פֿיפֿט שוין" — זאָגט די מאַמע,  
זי איז פֿרום, ס'פֿאַרדריסט זי זייער;  
פֿינפֿן, זאָגט זי, איז ניט ייִדיש,  
ס'פֿאַסט נאָר בלויז פֿאַר "זיי"...  
גיב אַ צייכן פֿראַסט אויף ייִדיש:  
איינס, צוויי, דריי!"

כיוועל פון היינט ניט פֿינפֿן מער,  
דרויף גיב איך אַ שבועהלע  
דיר צוליב וועל איך אפֿילו  
ווערן פֿרום, מיין צנועהלע...  
כיוועל זיין, רייזל, ווען דו ווילסט נאָר,  
ווי דיין מאַמע, פֿרום,  
יעדן שבת גיין אין קלייזל —  
קום, קום, קום!

"כ'גלייב עס דיר, מיין ליבינקער,  
און דערפֿאַר דיר, דודל,  
שטריק איך אַ שיינ תפֿילן-זעקל  
מיט אַ מגן-דודל;  
ווען געפֿעלן סיוועט אין קלייזל,  
זאָגן זאלסטו זיי:  
— ס'האָט געשטריקט מיין ליבע רייזל —  
איינס, צוויי, דריי!"

כ'דאַנק פֿאַר דיין מתנהלע,  
כ'ליב אַזוי דיך, רייזעלע!  
כ'ליב דיין מאַמען, כ'ליב דאָס געסל,  
כ'ליב דאָס אַלטע הייזעלע,  
כ'ליב די שטיינדלעך לעבן הייזל —  
טרעסטט אויף זיי אַרום...  
הער, דיין מאַמע רופֿט שוין: "רייזל,  
קום, קום, קום!"

גי איך מיר אַ פֿריילעכער,  
זינג און קנאַק מיר ניסעלעך,  
הער איך אויף די טרעפלעך לויפֿן  
אירע דראַבנע פֿיסעלעך.  
ווידער שטייט פֿאַרטראַכט דאָס הייזל,  
ס'געסל — ווידער שטום...  
קום צו מיר אין חלום, רייזל,  
קום, קום, קום!...

## 7(ii)

In a quiet street,  
 In the attic of a little house,  
 Lives my dear Reyzele.  
 Every evening I pass under her window,  
 Whistle and call her to come out.  
 A window opens,  
 The old house awakens,  
 And Reyzele's sweet voice is heard:  
 "Wait a little, my dear.  
 I shall soon be ready.  
 Walk around the street a while."

Cheerfully I walk,  
 Singing and cracking nuts,  
 Listening to the patter of her little feet  
 Skipping down the steps.  
 I embrace her,  
 Kiss her warmly and say, "Come."

"I beg you, Dovidl,  
 Not to whistle anymore.  
 Mother is upset,  
 For it is not polite for Jewish boys to whistle.  
 Just give me a signal in Yiddish when you call."

"I won't whistle anymore.  
 I give you my word.  
 I will even become pious because of you.  
 I will be as observant as your mother  
 And go to the synagogue every Sabbath."

"I believe you, my dearest  
 And for that I shall knit you  
 A bag for your tefillin with a Star of David.  
 And if people admire it,  
 Tell them your Reyzele  
 Made it for you."

"I thank you for your gift.  
 I love you dearly, Reyzele.  
 I love your mother,  
 Love the street,  
 Love the little old house.  
 I love the stones near your house

Since you walk on them.  
 But listen  
 Your mother is already calling you  
 To come home."

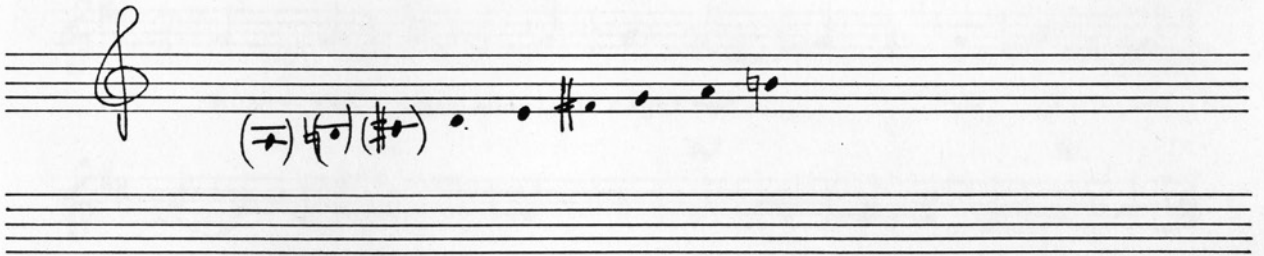
So cheerfully I go my way,  
 Singing and cracking nuts,  
 Listening to the patter of her feet  
 On the steps.  
 Again the house and street fall silent.  
 Come to me in my dreams,  
 Reyzl,  
 Come, come, come!

8

SHVARTSE KARSHELEKH

שוואַרטצע קאַרשעלעך

BLACK CHERRIES



The second through seventh lines of musical notation are arranged in a system of six staves, each with a treble clef. The music continues with a variety of note values including quarter, eighth, and sixteenth notes, as well as rests and slurs. The key signature remains one sharp (F#). The notation is handwritten and includes various musical symbols such as beams, slurs, and dynamic markings.

# SHVARTSE KARSHELEKH

## Black Cherries

Brightly

D B7

Shvar - tse Kar - she-lekh rayst men, Un gri - ne

Em A7 D

lozt - men shteyn; Shey - ne mey - de - lekh nemt men

D A D Refrain D

Un mi - se lozt - men geyn. Oy,

G D D A

vey iz tsu mir, Un vey tsu may - ne por

D D A7 D

yor, A li - be - hob ikh ge - firt

Em A7 D

Fe - li - ke dray fer - tl yor

## 8(i)

Folk song, parts of which were published by Y.L. Cahan in 1912; a similar version was published by M. Gelbart in 1938. The stanza about black cherries was traced to the 16th century by the folklorist Y.L. Cahan. It is also part of a children's song that was once a love song: "Kumt der liber zumer shpiln mir in zamd" (When summer comes, we play in the sand).

Shvartse karshlekh rayst men,  
Un grine lozt men shteyn;  
Shteyne meydelekh nemt men  
Un miese lozt men geyn.

**Chorus:**

Oy, vey iz tsu mir,  
Un vey tsu mayne por yor,  
A libe hob ikh gefirt  
Felike dray fertl yor.

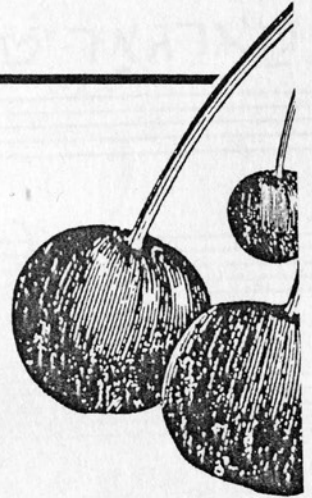
Vos toyg mir di polke mazurke,  
Az tansn tants ikh zi nit,  
Vos toyg mir dos meydele fun vurke  
Az libn libt zi mikh nit.

Vos toyg mir der nayer valets  
Az tansn tants ikh im nisht,  
Vos toyg mir dos meydele fun shilets,  
Az libn libt zi mikh nisht.

As black cherries are picked  
And green ones discarded,  
So pretty girls are courted  
And plain ones passed by.

Woe to me  
And to our love affair!

What good is the polka mazurka  
When I can't dance it?  
What good is that girl from Vurka  
When she won't have me?

**שוואַרצע קאַרשעלעך**

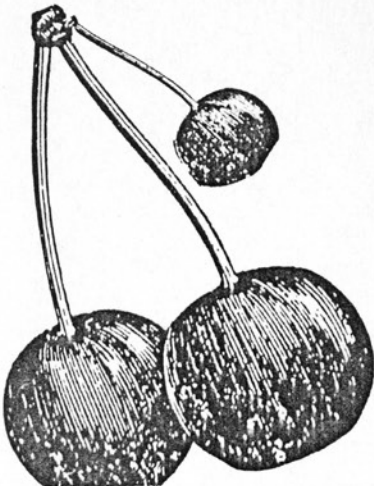
שוואַרצע קאַרשעלעך רייסט מען,  
און גרינע לאָזט מען שטײן;  
שײנע מײדעלעך נעמט מען  
און מײאָסע לאָזט מען גײן.

**רעפֿריין:**

אוי, וויי איז צו מיר,  
און וויי צו מײנע פֿאַר יאַר,  
אַ ליבע האָב איך געפֿירט  
פֿעליקע דרײ פֿערטל יאַר.

וואָס טױג מיר די פֿאַלקע מאָזורקע,  
אַז טאַנצן טאַנצן איך זי נישט,  
וואָס טױג מיר דאָס מײדעלע פֿון וורקע,  
אַז ליבן ליבט זי מיך נישט.

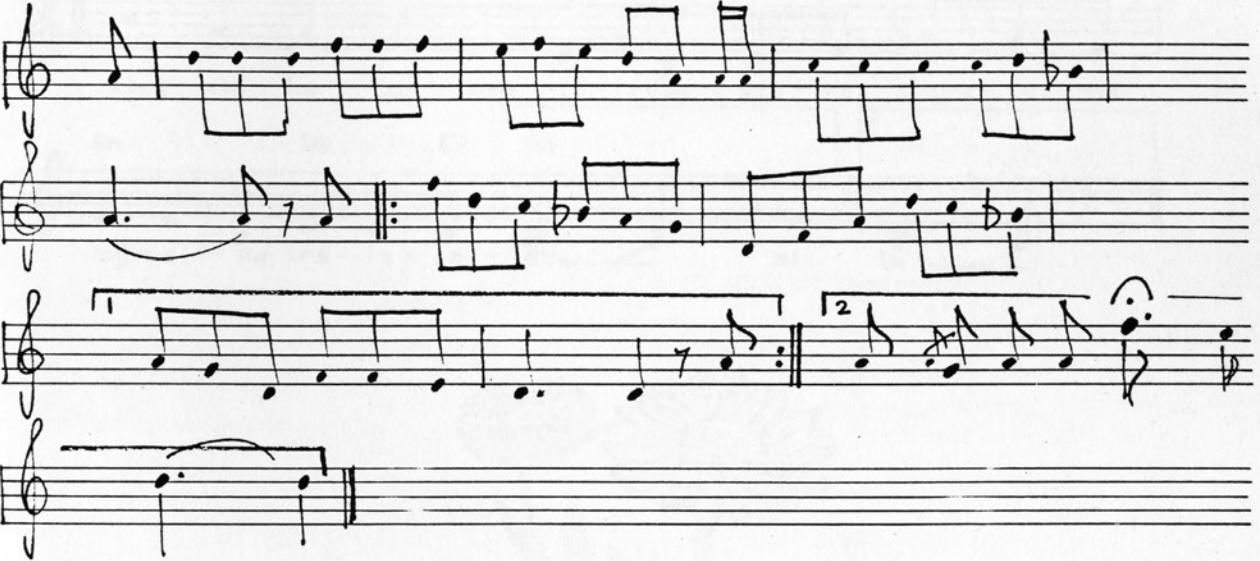
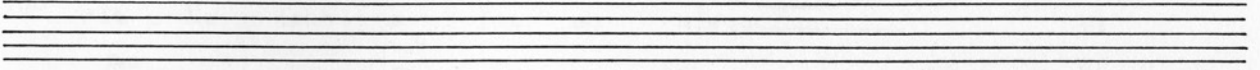
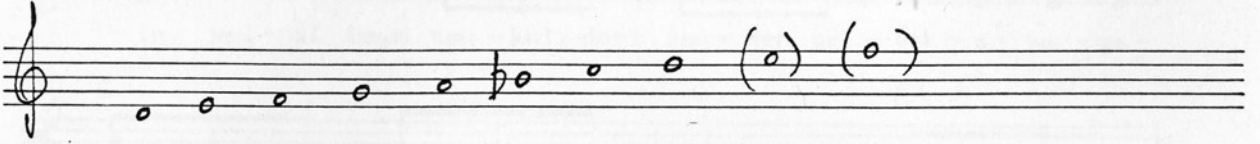
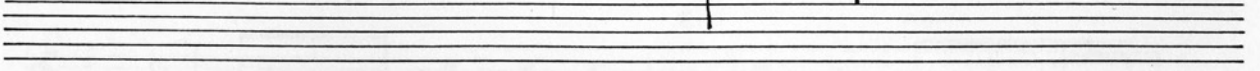
וואָס טױג מיר דער נײער וואַלעין,  
אַז טאַנצן טאַנצן איך אים נישט,  
וואָס טױג מיר דאָס מײדעלע פֿון שײלעין,  
אַז ליבן ליבט זי מיך נישט.



9

MARGARITKELEKH  
Daisies

מַאֲרֵאָה יִטְקַעֲלֶעךָ



9

# MARGARITKELEKH

## Daisies

Ballad style

Am E Am

In vel - dl baym tay - khl, dort zay - nen ge - vak - sn mar - ga -

G C E7

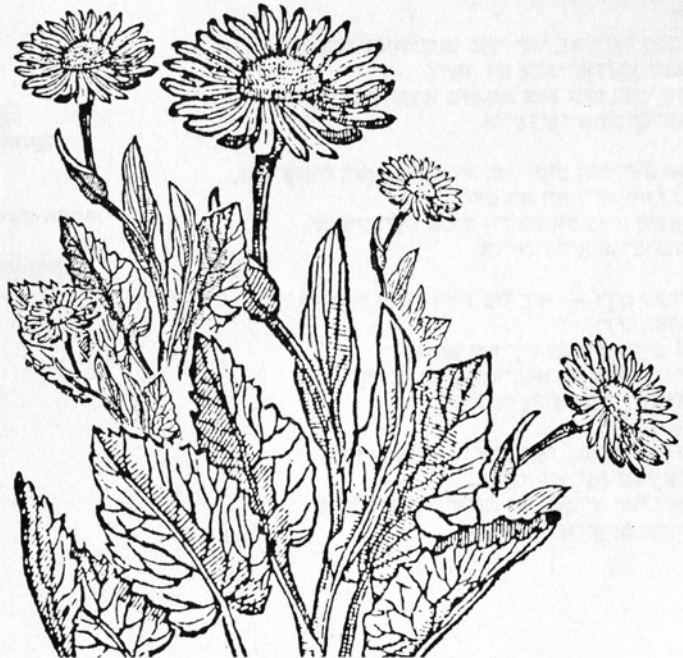
rit - ke - lekh, e - lnt un kleyn \_\_\_\_\_ Vi

Am Dm Am F

kley - nin - ke zu - nen mit vay - sin - ke shtra - in, Mit

Am Dm E7 1. Am 2. Am

vay - sin - ke tra - la - la - la \_\_\_\_\_ Mit la. \_\_\_\_\_



9(i)

## MARGARITKELEKH

In veldl baym taykhl, dort zaynen gevaxsn  
Margaritkelekh, elnt un kleyn —  
Vi kleyninke zunen mit vaysinke shtraln,  
Mit vaysinke, tra-la-la-la.

Gegangen is Khavele shtil un farkholemt,  
Tselozn di gold-blonde tsep, —  
Dos heldzl antbloyzt un gemurmlt, gezungen  
A lidele: tra-la-la-la.

Do kumt ir antkegn a bokher a shvartser,  
Mit lokn mit shvartse, vi pekh;  
Er flamt mit di oygn un entfert ir lustik,  
Un entfert ir: tra-la-la-la.

— Vos zukhstu do, meyd! vos hostu farlorn?  
Vos vilstu gefinen in groz?  
— Ikh zikh margaritkes, — farroytlt zikh Khave,  
Farroytlt zikh tra-la-la-la.

— Du zukhst nokh? un ikh hob shoyn take  
gefunden  
Di shenste margaritke in vald,  
A margaritke mit tsep un mit oygn safirn,  
Mit eygelekh tra-la-la-la.

— O, loz mikh, men tor nit; di mame zogt m'tor nit,  
Mayn mame iz alt un iz beyz.  
— Vu mame? vos mame? do zaynen nor beymer,  
Nor beymelekh tra-la-la-la.

— Du libst mikh? — Ikh lib dikh!  
— Du shemst zikh? — Ikh shem zikh!  
— O lib mikh un shem dikh un shvayg.  
Un ze vi es mishn zikh pekh-shvartse kroyzn  
Mit goldene . . . tra-la-la-la.

Di zun iz fargangen, der bokher — farshvundn,  
Un Khavele zitst nokh in vald.  
Zi kukt in der vaytns un murmlt farkholemt  
Dos lidele: tra-la-la-la.

*To the woods, near a quiet stream, a maiden  
Khavele goes to pick daisies. On the way she  
meets a handsome, dark stranger, who calls her  
"the prettiest daisy of all." At sundown he leaves  
her alone in the field of daisies.*

## מאַרגאַריטקעלעך

אין וועלדל ביים טייכל, דאָרט זײַנען געוואַקסן  
מאַרגאַריטקעלעך, עלנט און קליין —  
ווי קלייניקע זונען, מיט ווייסיקע שמראַלן,  
מיט ווייסיקע טראַלאַלאַלאַ.

געגאַנגען אין הוהלה שמיל און פאַרחלומט,  
צעלאַזן די גאָלד־בלאָנדע צעפּ, —  
דאָס העלדזל אַנטבלויזט און געמורמלט, געזונגען  
אַ לידעלע: טראַלאַלאַלאַ.

דאָ קומט איר אַנטקעגן אַ בחור אַ שוואַרצער,  
מיט לאַקן מיט שוואַרצע ווי פעך,  
ער פּלאַמט מיט די אויגן און ענטפערט איר לוסטיק,  
און ענטפערט איר: טראַלאַלאַלאַ.

— וואָס זוכסטו דו, מיידל? וואָס האָסטו פאַרלוירן?  
וואָס ווילסטו געפֿינען אין גראַז?  
— איך זוך מאַרגאַריטקעס, פאַררויסלע ויך חוה,  
פאַררויסלע ויך טראַלאַלאַלאַ.

— דו זוכסט נאָך און איך האָב שוין מאַקע געפֿונען  
די שענסטע מאַרגאַריטקע אין וואַלד,  
אַ מאַרגאַריטקע מיט צעפּ און מיט אויגן סאַפֿירן,  
מיט אייגעלעך טראַלאַלאַלאַ.

— אַ, לאַז מיך, מען טאָר ניט; די מאַמע זאָגט, מיטאַר ניט,  
מיין מאַמע איז אַלט און איז בייז.  
— וווּ מאַמע? וואָס מאַמע דו זײַנען נאָר ביימער,  
נאָר ביימעלעך טראַלאַלאַלאַ.

— דו ליבסט מיך? — איך ליב דיך — דו שעמסט דיך  
— איך שעם מיך  
— אַ ליב מיך און שעם דיך און שווייג  
און זע ווי עס מיטשן זיך פעך־שוואַרצע קרויזן  
מיט גאָלדענע . . . טראַלאַלאַלאַ.

די זון איז פאַרגאַנגען, דער בחור — פאַרשוונדן,  
און הוהלע זיצט נאָך אין וואַלד.  
זי קוקט אין דער ווייטנס און מורמלט פאַרחלומט  
דאָס לידעלע: טראַלאַלאַלאַ.

10

HER NOR, DU SHAYN MEYDELE  
Listen pretty maid

הער נאך דו  
שיין מיידעלע

The musical score is written on a grand staff with five staves. The first staff is a single treble clef line containing five quarter notes: C4, D4, E4, F4, G4. A plus sign (+) is written below the first note. The second staff begins with a treble clef and contains a melody of eighth and quarter notes. The third staff contains a similar melody. The fourth staff continues the melody with some sixteenth notes. The fifth staff concludes the piece with a double bar line and a fermata over the final note.

12

YOM E. YOM E

יָאָמַע יָאָמַע

11

LOMIR ZICH IBERBETN

Let's pardon one another

לאָגיר זיך איבערבעטן

The musical score is written on four staves. The first staff is a single treble clef line with a key signature of one sharp (F#) and a common time signature (C). It contains a sequence of notes: a whole note with a plus sign in brackets, followed by half notes G4, A4, B4, C5, B4, A4, and G4. The second and third staves are grand staves (treble and bass clefs). The second staff begins with a treble clef and contains a melodic line with eighth and sixteenth notes. The third staff begins with a bass clef and contains a bass line with eighth and sixteenth notes. The fourth staff is another grand staff (treble and bass clefs) with a treble clef, continuing the melodic and bass lines. The piece concludes with a double bar line and repeat dots.

12

YOME, YOME

יָמָי, יָמָי

The musical score is written on a page with five systems of staves. The first system consists of two empty staves. The second system contains a single treble clef staff with five whole notes. The third system contains four staves: the top staff is a treble clef staff with a melody of eighth notes; the second staff is a treble clef staff with a melody of eighth notes; the third staff is a treble clef staff with a melody of eighth notes; and the fourth staff is a treble clef staff with a melody of eighth notes. The fourth system contains four empty staves. The fifth system contains two empty staves.

12

# YOME, YOME

## Yome, Yome

Brightly

Yo - me, Yo - me, shpil mir a li - de - le,  
 Vos dos mey - de - le vil; Dos mey - de - le vil a por  
 shi - khe - lekh ho - bn, Muz men geyn dem  
 shus - ter — zo - gn! Neyn, ma - me - shi, neyn! Du  
 kenst mikh nisht far - shteyn, Du veyst nisht, vos ikh meyn!



## 12(i) YOME

— Yome, Yome, shpil mir a lidele,  
Vos dos meydele vil;  
— Dos meydele vil a por shikhelekh hobn,  
Muz men geyn dem shuster zogn!

— Neyn, mameshi, neyn!  
Du kenst mikh nisht farshteyn,  
Du veyst nisht, vos ikh meyn!

— Yome, Yome, shpil mir a lidele,  
Vos dos meydele vil;  
— Dos meydele vil a hitele hobn,  
Muz men geyn dem putserke zogn!

— Neyn, mameshi, neyn! . . .

— Yome, Yome, shpil mir a lidele,  
Vos dos meydele vil;  
— Dos meydele vil a khosndl hobn,  
Muz men geyn dem shadkhn zogn!

— Yo, mameshi, yo!  
Du kenst mikh shoyn farshteyn,  
Du veyst shoyn vos ikh meyn!

*"Yome, Yome,\* sing to me  
Of what my little girl wants."  
"Your little girl wants a pair of shoes.  
So we'll order them from the shoemaker."*

*"No, no, mother dear, no.  
You don't understand.  
You don't know what I want."*

*"Your little girl wants a hat.  
So we'll order one from the milliner."*

*"No, mother dear, no."*

*"A husband?  
So we'll speak to the matchmaker."*

*"Yes, mother dear, yes.  
Now you understand me.  
Now you know what I want."*

**יאָמע, יאָמע**

— יאָמע, יאָמע, שפּיל מיר אַ לידעלע,  
וואָס דאָס מיידעלע וויל:  
— דאָס מיידעלע וויל אַ פּאַר שויכעלעך האָבן,  
מוז מען גיין דעם שוסטער זאָגן

— ניין, מאַמעשי, ניין  
דו קענסט מיך נישט פאַרשטיין,  
דו ווייסט נישט וואָס איך מיין

— יאָמע, יאָמע, שפּיל מיר אַ לידעלע,  
וואָס דאָס מיידעלע וויל:  
— דאָס מיידעלע וויל אַ היטעלע האָבן,  
מוז מען גיין דער פּוצערקע זאָגן

— ניין, מאַמעשי, ניין . . .

— יאָמע, יאָמע, שפּיל מיר אַ לידעלע,  
וואָס דאָס מיידעלע וויל:  
— דאָס מיידעלע וויל אַ חתנדל האָבן,  
מוז מען גיין דעם שדכן זאָגן

— יאָ, מאַמעשי, יאָ  
דו קענסט מיך שוין פאַרשטיין,  
דו ווייסט שוין וואָס איך מיין

12 Yome, Yome

'Yome, Yome'

A textual variant of this song was published in 1901 by S. Ginzburg and P. Marek. In 1912, the text and music were published by Y L Cahan. This dialogue or miniature folk 'play' has many parallels in other languages, e.g. the English "Whistle, Daughter Whistle" the German "Spinn, spinn, liebste Tochter" the Polish "Dziwna, dziwna, oj dzwina ja matke mam" the French Languedoc "Ma filha, to vos una bela rauba" the Alsatian "Mueder, ich vil a Ding".

Weinreich (1949: 238) suggests '.... in the song Yome, Yome we see a girl waiting for her mother to guess her thoughts ...' . Yome is a diminutive of the name Benyomen.

CHILDRENS SONGS

KINDERLIDER

Songs sung by children, and by adults, about children.

13 Patshe, patshe kichelakh

'Clap hands'

Mlotek (1987: 7) classifies this song as 'one of the many lullabies ...' in which mothers express the hope that their infant boys will study and grow up to be learned men. The Vinkovetzky/Kovner/Leichter Anthology of Yiddish Folksongs has grouped Patshe into the Childrens Songs. The text has been provided and is self-explanatory. I do not consider this a 'lullaby' nor a song to soothe a fractious baby; it would seem, rather, to be a hand-clapping 'game' or a knee-ride for a baby or older child.

14 Arum dem fayer

'Around the campfire'

Arum dem fayer is a song which I have sung in Jewish youth movements during my childhood in Johannesburg. It is the 'spirited' and lively kind of campfire song, which was enjoyed by all, especially when seated in a large circle. According to Mlotek (1987 : 169) this song was popular in the 1930s in Poland and the United States. It was published by M. Gelbart in 1938.

15 Bay dem shtetl

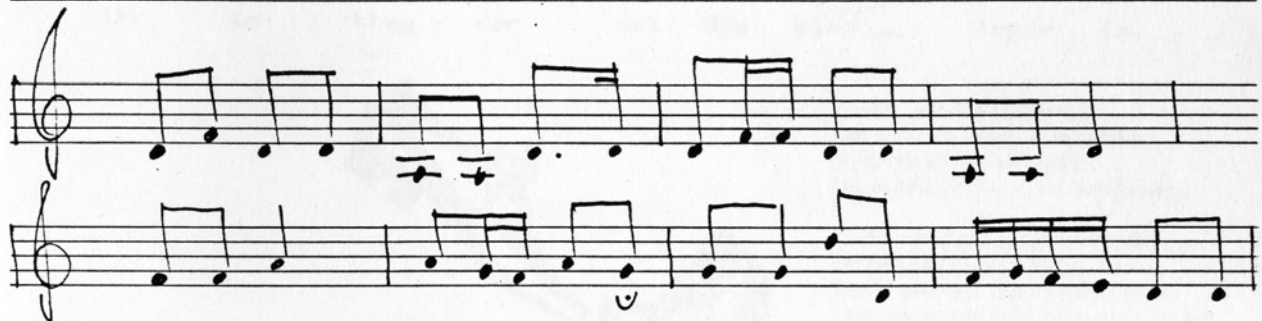
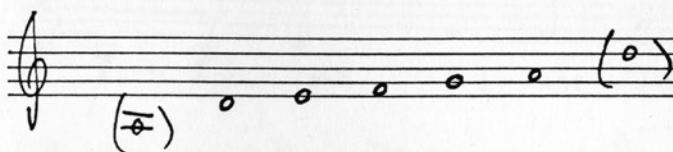
'Near the village'

This song, in delightful fashion, describes the village life, the shtetl life, with a little house/trees/ father working hard/ father buying a horse named Mutzik/ father buying a dog named Tzutzik. This is the song in which 'father' brings home a goat, which is then spanned into the cart! Father also brings a goose mit a vaysn halz ( with a long white neck ) and feathers like snow. A hen is also purchased, and after she has laid eggs, Mother gathers the newlaid eggs, puts the hen to "sit", with the result that a brood of chicks is hatched. The sounds of the animals give this song its special appeal: e.g. koyft a hon (buys a hen) vos kvoket, kvoket (which cackles, cackles)/ and earlier in the song, Brengt a hintl (brings a small dog) - havket, havket ( barks, barks). I have found seven verses to this song. One could almost classify it as a 'narrative' song, as it unfolds verse by verse.

13

PATSHE PATSHE KICHELACH  
Clap hands

פֶּאָטשע קיכעלעך



13

# PATSHE KIKHELEKEH

## Clap Hands

Moderate tempo

One version of the text was published in 1901 by Saul Ginzburg and P. Marek. This text and melody were published by the St. Petersburg Society for Jewish Folk Music in 1918. This is one of the many lullabies in which mothers express the hope that their infant boys will study and grow up to be learned men. If they had daughters, they hoped they would find learned husbands.

Pa - tshe, pa - tshe ki - khe - lekh, Der ta - te vet koy - fn  
 shi - khe - lekh, Shi - khe - lekh vet er — koy - fn,  
 Un in khey - der vet dos kind — loy - fn.

Patshe, patshe kikhelekh,  
 Der tate vet koyfn shikhelekh,  
 Shikhelekh vet er koyfn,  
 Un in kheyder vet dos kind loyfn.

Loyfn vet dos kind in kheyder.  
 Lernen vet er dort keseyder,  
 Dort keseyder etleke shures —  
 Tate un mame veln hern gute bsures.

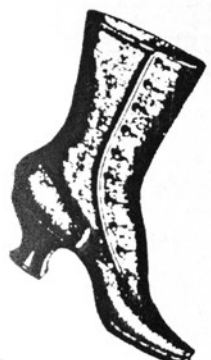
Clap hands, clap hands!  
 Daddy will buy you shoes,  
 And you will run to kheyder.

There you will learn  
 A few lines every day  
 And daddy and mummy  
 Will get good reports about you.

### פאטשע קיכעלעך

פאטשע, פאטשע קיכעלעך,  
 דער טאטע וועט קויפן שיכעלעך,  
 שיכעלעך וועט ער קויפן,  
 און אין חדר וועט דאס קינד לויפן.

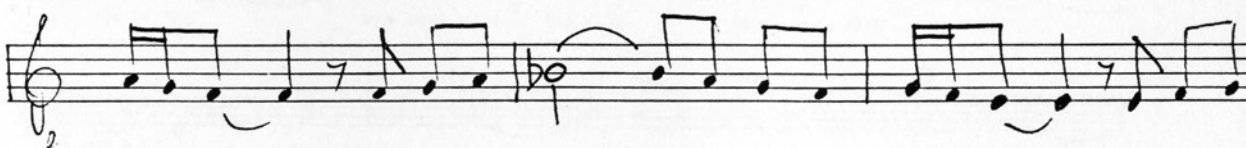
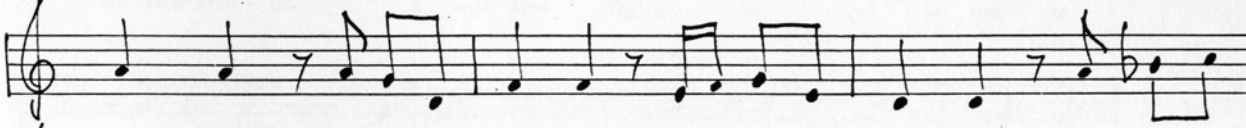
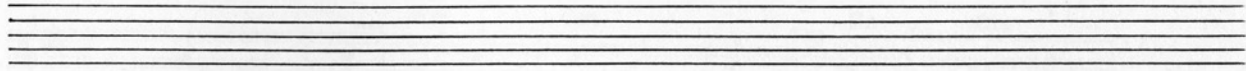
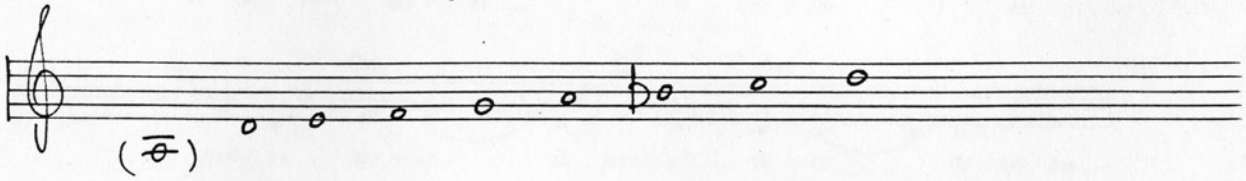
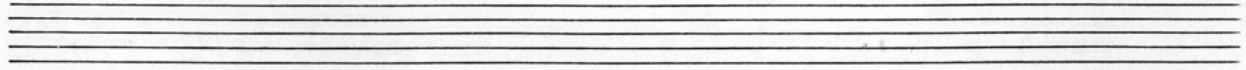
לויפן וועט דאס קינד אין חדר,  
 לערנען וועט ער דארט פסדר,  
 דארט פסדר עטלעכע שורות —  
 טאטע און מאמע וועלן הערן גוטע בשורות.



14

ARUM DEM FAYER  
Round the Campfire

ארום דעם פיינער



## 14

ARUM DEM FAYER  
AROUND THE CAMPFIRE

אַרום דעם פֿײַער

Animato  $\text{♩} = 124$ 

Cm Fm G  
 A - rum dem fay - er mir zin - gen li - der,  
 Fm Cm G<sup>7</sup> Cm  
 di nakht iz tay - er zi kumt nit vi - der. Un vet dos  
 Fm Cm Fm Cm  
 fa - yer far - lo - shn ve - rn, shaynt oyf der hi - ml  
 G<sup>7</sup> Cm  
 mit di shte - rn. Ba - putst di kep mit  
 Fm Bb<sup>7</sup>  
 blu - men kran - tsn, a - rum dem fay - er iz gut tsu  
 Eb Fm<sup>6</sup>  
 tan - tsn, vayl tan - tsn zin - gen iz und - zer  
 G<sup>7</sup> Cm  
 le - bn, a - rum dem fay - er kha - loy - mes ve - bn.  
 Fm G  
 A - rum dem fay - er mir zin - gen li - der,  
 Fm Ab<sup>7</sup> G<sup>7</sup> Cm  
 di nakht iz ta - yer zi kumt nit vi - der.

## 14(i)

Arum dem fayer  
 Mir zingen lider,  
 Di nakht iz tayer -  
 Zi kumt nit vider.  
 Un vet dos fayer  
 Farloshn vern,  
 Shaynt oyf der himl  
 Mit di shtern.

ארום דעם פֿײַער  
 מיר זינגען לידער,  
 די נאַכט איז טײַער -  
 זי קומט ניט ווידער.  
 און וועט דאָס פֿײַער  
 פֿאַרלאָשן ווערן,  
 שײַנט אויף דער הימל  
 מיט די שטערן.

Baputst di kep  
 Mit blumenkrantsn,  
 Arum dem fayer  
 Iz gut tsu tantsn.  
 Vayl tantsn, zingen  
 Iz undzer lebn,  
 Arum dem fayer -  
 Khaloymes vebn . . .

באַפּוצט די קעפּ  
 מיט בלומענקראַנצן,  
 אַרום דעם פֿײַער  
 איז גוט צו טאַנצן.  
 ווייל טאַנצן, זינגען  
 איז אונדזער לעבן,  
 אַרום דעם פֿײַער -  
 חלומות וועבן...

Arum dem fayer  
 Mir zingen lider,  
 Di nakht iz tayer -  
 Zi kumt nit vider.

אָרום דעם פֿײַער  
 מיר זינגען לידער,  
 די נאַכט איז טײַער -  
 זי קומט ניט ווידער.

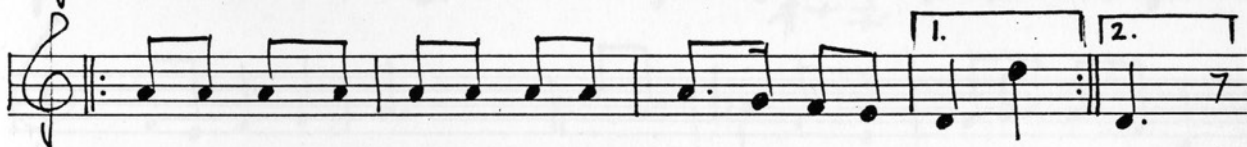
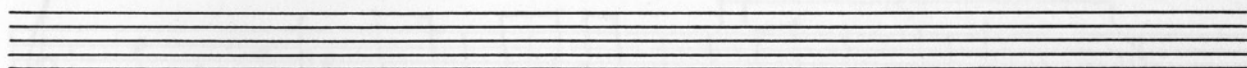
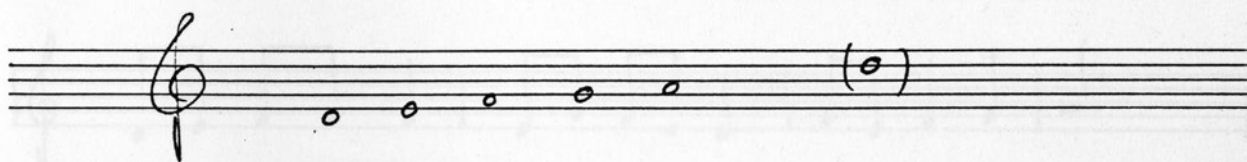
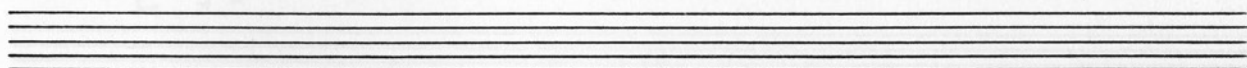
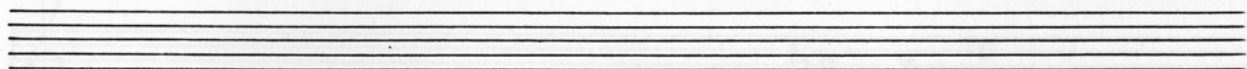
Around the fire, we sing our songs  
 How lovely the night, we grow not weary,  
 And when the fire's glow departs  
 The heavens produce their twinkling stars.

So crown your heads with wreaths of flowers  
 And joyously dance around the fire,  
 For dancing and singing is our life  
 And our sleep sublime dreams inspire.

15

BAY DEM SHTETL

בַּיטוֹט אֵיךְ



16

OYFN PRIPETSHIK  
 At the fireplace

אופֿן פֿריפֿעטשֿיק

Handwritten musical score for "At the fireplace" (OYFN PRIPETSHIK). The score is written in treble clef and consists of five staves. The first staff begins with two chords:  $[E\flat]$  and  $[F\sharp]$ . The music is written in a simple, folk-like style with quarter and eighth notes. The second staff has a repeat sign at the end. The third staff has a first ending bracket with a "2" above it. The fourth staff has a first ending bracket with a "1" above it. The fifth staff has a second ending bracket with a "2" above it. The piece concludes with a double bar line.

## 16

## OYFN PRIPETSHIK

## At the Fireplace

Moderate tempo

Dm A Dm  
 Oy - fn pri - pe - tshik brent a fay - e - rl,  
 Bb A D Gm  
 Un in shtud iz heys. Un der re - be le - rnt  
 [Gm] Dm 1. Bb C7 F  
 kley - ne kin - der - lekh Dem a - lef - beyz;  
 1. A7 Dm Dm A  
 Dem a - lef - beyz. Zet zhe, kin - der - lekh, ge -  
 [A] Dm Bb C7 F  
 denkt zhe, tay - e - re, Vos ir le - rnt do,  
 D7 Gm [Gm] Dm  
 Zogt zhe nokh a mol un ta - ke nokh a mol:  
 1. Bb C7 F 2. Gm A7 Dm  
 Ko - mets - a - lef: o! Ko - mets - a - lef: o!

## 16 (i)

Oyfn pripetshik brent a fayerl,  
Un in shtub iz heys.  
Un der rebe lernt kleyne kinderlekh  
Dem alef-beyz.

**Refrain:**

Zet zhe, kinderlekh, gedenkt zhe, tayere,  
Vos ir lernt do,  
Zogt zhe nokh a mol un take nokh a mol:  
Komets-alef: o!

Lernt, kinder, mit groys kheyshek,  
Azoy zog ikh aykh on,  
Ver s'vet gikher fun aykh kenen ivre,  
Der bakumt a fon.

Az ir vet, kinder, elter vern,  
Vet ir aleyn farshteyn,  
Vifl in di oysyes lign trern,  
Un vi fil geveyn.

Az ir vet, kinder, dem goles shlepn,  
Oysgemutshet zayn,  
Zolt ir fun di oysyes koyekh shepn,  
Kukt in zey arayn!

*A flame burns in the fireplace,  
The room warms up,  
As the teacher drills the children  
In the alef-beyz:*

*"Remember dear children,  
What you are learning here.  
Repeat it again and again:  
Komets-alef is pronounced o.*

*When you grow older  
You will understand  
That this alphabet contains  
The tears and the weeping of our people.*

*When you grow weary  
And burdened with exile,  
You will find comfort and strength  
Within this Jewish alphabet."*

**אויפן פריפעמשיק**

אויפן פריפעמשיק ברענט א פֿײַערל,  
און אין שטוב איז הייס.  
און דער רבי לערנט קליינע קינדערלעך  
דעם אַלֶף־בֵּיט.

**רעפֿריין:**

זעט זיך, קינדערלעך, געדענקט זשע, טײַערע,  
װאָס איר לערנט דאָ,  
זאָגט זשע נאָך אַ מאל און מאַקע נאָך אַ מאל:  
קױמֶט־אַלֶף: אָ!

לערנט, קינדער, מיט גרויס חֵשֶׁק,  
אַזױ זאָג איר איך איך אָן,  
װער סױעמס נײַכער פֿון איך קענען עבֿרן,  
דער באַקומט אַ פֿון.

אַז איר װעמ, קינדער, עלמער װערן,  
װעמ איר אַליין פֿאַרשטיין,  
װײַסל איר די אותיות ליגן טרערן,  
און װי פֿיל געװיין.

אַז איר װעמ, קינדער, דעם גלות שלעפֿן,  
אױסגעמושעמ זײַן,  
זאָלט איר פֿון די אותיות פֿוח שעפֿן,  
קוקט אין זײ אַרײַן



17

A KLEYN MEYDELE  
A little girl

א קליין מיידעלע



16 Oyfn pripetshik

'In the tiny grate'

This favourite song has been fairly well 'covered' in the introduction to this section, in the general remarks concerning the songs. A full text follows, and one verse is sung on the accompanying cassette.

17 A kleyn meidele klapt

'A little girl taps'

This song tells of a little girl who taps at the door of her grandmother's house, to be let in, .....

'Dear grandma / let me in/  
tra-la-la-la  
All day I have been busy (a gantsn tog geven  
farnumen) / and now I have returned home/  
tra-la-la-la! '

## SONGS OF FAMILY AND LIFESTYLE

FAMILYE-UN-SHTEYGER-LIDER

sung by both men & women

18 Hobn mir a nigundl

'We have a little tune'

The text and melody of Undzer nigundl is by Nokhem Sternheim (b. 1879 - killed during World War II), a folk poet from Galicia, whose songs, like those of Warshawsky and Gebirtig, are often regarded as anonymous folksongs. Mlotek (1986 : 152) has published 3 verses, and the ANTHOLOGY OF YIDDISH FOLKSONGS Vol. 2 (pp 66 - 69) gives 4 verses in Yiddish, and oddly enough, 6 verses in a Hebrew version. Both editions supply an inadequate English translation, which belies the 'folklore' content e.g. the family seated around the Sabbath table.

19 A brivele der mamen

'A letter to Mother'

The text and music of this song are by S. Shmulewitz (1868-1943). According to Mlotek (1986: 141) this song was '...one of the most beloved songs of the immigration era on both sides of the Atlantic.' A universal sentiment, of a mother asking her son not to forget her when he leaves home (i.e. the home-town in Eastern Europe) for a new life, A brivele der mamen is also a heart-rending plea: 'Mayn kind, mayn trayst, du forst avek ...'/'My child, my comfort, you are going across distant seas. Arrive in good health and write each week to ease your mother's worries.' Heylst ir shmarts, ir biter harts: /'Ease her pain, her bitter heart'/ Derkvikst ir di neshome. 'Refresh her spirit'.

20 Moyshеле mayn fraynd

Moyshеле, my friend

Gebirtig (who wrote the text and music of Moyshеле) harks back here, almost like Warshawsky's Oyfn pripetshik to fond memories of heder days or yeshiva\* (see Glossary) especially in the Refrain which can loosely be translated as 'Oh, how can one bring back those years? Those good years? We are far now from those good years of our youth! My heart still longs for those times, even when the rabbi was angry and used to scold us!'. I have always known this song with only two verses, but it was sung to me by Mr Lozer Karabelnik of Cape Town, with a poignant third verse, and when the ANTHOLOGY OF YIDDISH FOLKSONGS was published in 1984 (Vol.II) seven verses were given.

# UNDZER NIGNDL

Our Tune

18

HOBN MIR A NIGNDL  
Our tune

הָאָבן מִיר אַ נִיגוּנְדֶל

The musical score is written on ten staves. The first staff begins with a treble clef and a key signature of one sharp (F#). Below the first few notes are handwritten symbols: (̄) (̄) (b) (d) (F#). The melody is primarily composed of eighth and sixteenth notes, with some quarter notes. The accompaniment consists of chords, mostly dyads and triads, written below the main staff. The piece concludes with a double bar line and a fermata over the final note.

# UNDZER NIGNDL

## Our Tune

With Spirit

Ho - bn mir a ni - gn - dl In na - khes un in frey - dn, In  
 na - khes un in frey - dn, Zin - gen mir es, zin - gen mir es  
 klingt es a - zoy sheyn. Dos hot nokh ge - zun - gen Di  
 do - be mi - tn zey - de, Ven zey zay - nen kin - der nokh ge, - Ven  
 Oy - oy - oy, ot a zoy zhe Vi der ni - gn  
 klingt a - tsin - der, A - za frey - lrkhs, a - za frey - lekhs  
 Zingt zhe, kin - der; ot a zoy, zhe, vi der ni - gn  
 klingt a - tsin - der, A - za frey - lekhs lo - mir a - le geyn.

Chords: Dm, A, A, A, E, A7, Dm, Dm, D7, Gm, Gm, A7, A7, Dm, Bb, A, Gm, A, A7, Dm, Bb, A, Gm, A, A

## 18(i)

Hobn mir a nigndl,  
In nakhes un in freydn,  
Zingen mir es, zingen mir es,  
Klingt es azoy sheyn!  
Dos hot nokh gezungen  
Di bobe mitn zeydn,  
Ven zey zaynen kinder nokh geven.

**CHORUS:**

Oy, oy, oy, ot azoy zhe  
Vi der nign klingt atsinder,  
Aza freylekhs, aza freylekhs  
Zingt zhe, kinder,  
Ot azoy zhe, vi der nign klingt atsinder  
Aza freylekhs lomir ale geyn.

Hobn mir a nigndl,  
Zingen mir tsuzamen,  
Zingen mir es, zingen mir es,  
Klingt es azoy sheyn!  
Dos hot nokh gezungen  
Der tate mit der mamen,  
Ven zey zaynen kinder nokh geven.

Hobn mir a nigndl,  
In mazl un in brokhe,  
Zingen mir es, zingen mir es,  
Klingt es azoy sheyn!  
Dos hot nokh gezungen  
Di gantse mishpokhe,  
Ven zey zaynen kinder nokh geven.

*We have a little tune  
We sing with pleasure and joy.  
This tune was sung by grandfather and  
grandmother,  
Father and mother —  
The whole family,  
When all were still young.*

**אונדזער ניגונדל**

האָבן מיר אַ ניגונדל  
אין נחת און אין פֿריידן,  
זינגען מיר עס, זינגען מיר עס,  
קלינגט עס אזוי שיין.  
דאָס האָט נאָך געזונגען  
די באַבע מיטן זיידן,  
ווען זיי זיינען קינדער נאָך געווען.

**רעפֿריין:**

אוי אוי אוי, אָם אזוי וועט  
ווי דער ניגון קלינגט אַצינדער,  
אַזאַ פֿריילעכס, אַזאַ פֿריילעכס  
זינגט וועט, קינדער.  
אַם אזוי וועט ווי דער ניגון קלינגט אַצינדער,  
אַזאַ פֿריילעכס לאַסיר אַלע גיין.

האָבן מיר אַ ניגונדל,  
זינגען מיר צוזאַמען,  
זינגען מיר עס, זינגען מיר עס,  
קלינגט עס אזוי שיין.  
דאָס האָט נאָך געזונגען  
דער טאַטע מיט דער מאַמען,  
ווען זיי זיינען קינדער נאָך געווען.

האָבן מיר אַ ניגונדל  
אין מזל און אין ברכה,  
זינגען מיר עס, זינגען מיר עס,  
קלינגט עס אזוי שיין.  
דאָס האָט נאָך געזונגען  
די גאַנצע משפּחה,  
ווען זיי זיינען קינדער נאָך געווען.



19

A BRIVELE DER MAMEN  
A letter to Mother

א בריוועלע דער מאמען



## MOYSHELE, MAYN FRAYND

Moyshele, My Friend

20

MOYSHELE, MAYN FRAYND

Moyshele, my friend

משהלע

Handwritten musical score for "Moyshele, My Friend" (משהלע). The score is written in G major (one sharp) and 2/4 time. It consists of six staves of music. The first staff is a single melodic line. The second, third, and fourth staves are a three-part vocal harmony. The fifth staff is labeled "Refrain" and features a more rhythmic melody. The sixth staff continues the melody. The piece ends with a double bar line.

# MOYSHELE, MAYN FRAYND

## Moyshela, My Friend

Lyricaly

Vos makh - stu e - pes, Moy - she - le? kh'der -  
 ken dikh nokh on blik, Du bist ge - ven mayn kha - ve - ri Mit  
 yo - rn fil tsu - rik, Un oykh in khey - der ho - bn mir Ge  
 le - rnt lang ba - nand, Ot shteyt far mir der re - be nokh, Der  
 kan - tshik in zayn hant.  
 Refrain:  
 Oy, vu nemt men tsu - rik di yo - rn,  
 Ye - ne shey - ne tsayt? Oy, dos yun - ge, shey - ne le - bn  
 Iz fun undz shoy n vayt. Oy, vu nemtmen tsu - rik di yo - rn,

## 20(i)

Text and music by M. Gebirtig (see note to Yankele on page 8).

Moy - she - le, mayn fraynd? Oy, nokh ye - men bey - zn re - bn  
Benkt dos harts nokh haynt.

Vos makhstu epes, Moyshel?  
Kh'derken dikh nokh on blik,  
Du bist geven mayn khaver!  
Mit yorn fil tsurik,  
Un oykh in kheyder hobn mir  
Gelernt lang banand,  
Ot shteyt far mir der rebe nokh,  
Der kantshik in zayn hant.

**Refrain:**

Oy, vu nemt men tsurik di yorn,  
Yene sheyne tsayt?  
Oy, dos yunge sheyne lebn  
Iz fun undz shoyt vayt;  
Oy, vu nemt men tsurik di yorn,  
Moyshel, mayn fraynd?  
Oy, nokh yene beyzn rebn  
Benkt dos harts nokh haynt.

Vi geyt es epes Berelen,  
Avremele vos makht?  
Un Zalmele un Yosele?  
Zeyer oft fun aykh getrakht,  
Gekholemt fun aykh, kinderlekh,  
Gezen zikh in der mit,  
Gevorn alte yidelekh —  
Vi shnel dos lebn flit.

**Refrain:**

Oy, vu nemt men tsurik di yorn ...  
Oy, nokh yene yunge laydn  
Benkt dos harts nokh haynt.

*How are you, Moyshel?  
You were my best friend once.  
Remember our pranks in kheyder  
And the teacher's anger?*

*And how are all our other friends?  
How often I think of them.  
Oh, if we could only  
recapture our youth  
And relive those sad  
but wonderful years.*

**משהלע, מיין פריינד**

וואס מאכסטו עפעס, משהלע  
כידערקען דיר נאך אן בליק,  
דו ביסט געווען מיין חברל  
מיט יארן פיל צוריק,  
און אויך אין חדר האבן מיר  
געלערנט לאנג כאנאנד,  
אט שטייט פאר מיר דער רבי נאך,  
דער קאנטשיק אין זיין האנט.

**רעפריין:**

אוי, ווו נעמט מען צוריק די יארן,  
יענע שיינע צייטן,  
אוי, דאס יונגע שיינע לעבן  
איז פון אונדז שוין ווייט;  
אוי, ווו נעמט מען צוריק די יארן,  
משהלע, מיין פריינד  
אוי, נאך יענעם ביזן רבין  
כענקט דאס הארץ נאך היינט.

ווי גייט עס עפעס בערעלען,  
אברהמעלע וואס מאכט  
און זאלמעלע און יאסעלע  
ווייטער אפס פון אייך נעמראכט;  
געחלומט פון אייך, קינדערלעך,  
געזען זיך אין דער מיט,  
געווארן אלטע יידעלעך —  
ווי שנעל דאס לעבן פלייס.

**רעפריין:**

אוי, ווו נעמט מען צוריק די יארן ...  
אוי, נאך יענע יונגע ליידן  
כענקט דאס הארץ נאך היינט.



21

# KINDER-YORN

*Childhood Years*

קינדער-יאָרן

A handwritten musical score for the song 'KINDER-YORN' (Childhood Years). The score is written on five staves in G-clef (treble clef) with a key signature of one flat (B-flat). The first staff begins with a treble clef and a key signature change to one flat, followed by a series of quarter notes: G4, A4, Bb4, C5, D5, E5, F5, G5. The second staff contains a melody of eighth and quarter notes. The third staff continues the melody with eighth notes and quarter notes. The fourth staff features a similar melodic line. The fifth staff concludes the piece with a double bar line. The handwriting is clear and legible.

22

## OYFN VEG SHEYT A BOYM

*The Bent Tree*

אויפן יעג שטייט א בוים

Musical score for "The Bent Tree" (אויפן יעג שטייט א בוים). The score is written in treble clef and includes a key signature of one sharp (F#). The melody is written in a simple, folk-like style. The first staff contains a single note with a sharp sign and a circled plus sign, followed by several whole notes. The subsequent staves contain a continuous melody of eighth and quarter notes. The final staff includes first and second endings marked with '1' and '2' above the notes.

22(i)

# OYFN VEG SHTEYT A BOYM

The Bent Tree

Text: Itsik Manger

The musical score is written in treble clef with a 3/4 time signature. It consists of six staves of music with lyrics in Yiddish. Chord symbols are placed above the notes. The lyrics are: Oy - fn veg shteyt a boym, Shteyt er ayn - ge - boy - gn, A - le fey - gl fu - nem boym Zay - nen zik tse - floy - gn. Dray keyn may - rev, dray keyn miz - rekh, Un der resht - keyn do - rem, Un dem boym ge - lozt a - leyn Hef - ker - far dem shtu - rem. Zog ikh tsu der ma - men : her, Zolst mir nor nit shte - rn, Vel ikh, ma - me, eyns un tsvey

Am Am Am  
Oy - fn veg shteyt a boym, Shteyt er ayn - ge - boy - gn,

Am Dm Am Dm E Am  
A - le fey - gl fu - nem boym Zay - nen zik tse - floy - gn.

Am Dm Am Dm E  
Dray keyn may - rev, dray keyn miz - rekh, Un der resht - keyn

Am Am Dm Am  
do - rem, Un dem boym ge - lozt a - leyn

Dm E Am C F C  
Hef - ker - far dem shtu - rem. Zog ikh tsu der ma - men : her,

G C C F Am F  
Zolst mir nor nit shte - rn, Vel ikh, ma - me, eyns un tsvey

## 22(ii)

G C C Dm

Bald a foy-gl ve-rn... ikh vel zi - tsn oy - fn boym

Am G Am 3 Dm

Un vel im far - vi - gn i - be - rn vin - ter mit a treyst,

E7 Am Am

Mit a shey - nem ni - gn. Yam - ta - ri, ra - ram,

Dm E7

Hay - ta - ri ra - ram Hay - ta - ri ra - ram,

1. Am E Am 2. Am

hay - ta - ri rem; rem.



## 22 (iii)



### אויפן וועג שטייט אַ בוים

אויפן וועג שטייט אַ בוים,  
שטייט ער אינגעבוין,  
אלע פֿייגל פֿונעם בוים  
זיינען זיך צעפֿלויגן.

דריי קיין מערב, דריי קיין מזרח,  
און דער רעשט — קיין דרום,  
און דעם בוים געלאָזט אַליין  
הפֿקר פֿאַר דעם שטורעם.

זאָג איך צו דער מאַמען: — הער,  
זאָלסט מיר נאָר ניט שטערן,  
וועל איך, מאַמע, איינס און צוויי  
באַלד אַ פֿויגל ווערן ...

איך וועל זיצן אויפֿן בוים  
און וועל אים פֿאַרוויגן  
איבערן ווינטער מיט אַ טרייסט,  
מיט אַ שיינעם ניגון.

זאָגט די מאַמע: — ניטע, קינד, —  
און זי וויינט מיט טרערן —  
— וועסט חלילה אויפֿן בוים  
מיר פֿאַרפֿרוירן ווערן.

זאָך איך: — מאַמע, ס׳איז אַ שאַד  
דיינע שיינע אויגן, —  
און איידער וואָס און איידער ווען,  
בין איך מיר אַ פֿויגל.

וויינט די מאַמע: — איציק, קרוין,  
זע, אום גאַמעס ווילן,  
נעם זיך מיט אַ שאַליקל,  
קענסט זיך נאָך פֿאַרקילן.

— די קאלאַשן טו זיך אָן,  
ס׳נייט אַ שאַרפֿער ווינטער,  
און די קוששע נעם אויך מיט —  
וויי איז מיר און ווינד מיר ...

— און דאָס ווינטער־לייבל נעם,  
טו עס אָן, דו שוטה,  
אויב דו ווילסט ניט זיין קיין גאַסט  
צווישן אלע טויטע ...

כ׳הייב די פֿליגל, ס׳איז מיר שווער,  
צו פֿיל, צו פֿיל זאָכן  
האַט די מאַמע אָנגעטאָן  
איר פֿייגעלע, דעם שוואַכן.

קוק איך טרויעריק מיר אַריין  
אין מיין מאַמעס אויגן,  
ס׳האַט איר ליבשאַפֿט ניט געלאָזט  
ווערן מיר אַ פֿויגל ...

אויפֿן וועג שטייט אַ בוים,  
שטייט ער אינגעבוין,  
אלע פֿייגל פֿונעם בוים  
זיינען זיך צעפֿלויגן ...

## 22(iv)

## OYFN VEG SHTEYT A BOYM

The Bent 'Lice

Text by Itzik Manger.

Oyfn veg shteyt a boym,  
Shteyt er ayngeboyn,  
Ale feygl funem boym  
Zaynen zikh tsefloygn.

Dray keyn mayrev, dray keyn mizrekh,  
Un der resht — keyn dorem,  
Un dem boym gelozt aleyn  
Hefker far dem shturem.

Zog ikh tsu der mamen: — her,  
Zolst mir nor nit shtern,  
Vel ikh, mame, eyns un tsvey  
Bald a foygl vern . . .

Ikh vel zitsn oyfn boym  
Un vel im farvign  
Ibern vinter mit a treyst,  
Mit a sheynem nign.

Zogt di mame: — nite, kind —  
Un zi veynt mit trenn —  
Vest kholile oyfn boym  
Mir farfroyrn vern.

Zog ikh: — mame, s'iz a shod  
Dayne sheyne oygn,  
Un eyder vos un eyder ven,  
Bin ikh mir a foygl.

Veynt di mame: — Itsik, kroyn,  
Ze, um gotes viln,  
Nem zikh mit a shalikh,  
Kenst zikh nokh farkiln.

Di kaloshn tu zikh on,  
S'geyt a sharfer vinter  
Un di kutshme nem oykh mit —  
Vey iz mir un vind mir . . .

— Un dos vinter-laybl nem,  
Tu es on, du shoyte,  
Oyb du vilst nit zayn keyn gast  
Tsvishn ale toyte . . .

Kh'heyb di fligl, s'iz mir shver,  
Tsu fil, tsu fil zakhn,  
Hot di mame ongeton  
Ir feygele, dem shvakhn.

Kuk ikh troyerik mir arayn  
In mayn mames oygn,  
S'hot ir libshaft nit gelozt  
Vern mir a foygl . . .

Oyfn veg shteyt a boym,  
Shteyt er ayngeboyn,  
Ale feygl funem boym  
Zaynen zikh tsefloygn . . .

*By the wayside stands a tree,  
Bent against the storm.  
All the birds have deserted it,  
Leaving it alone and unprotected.*

*"I will become a bird  
And sit in the tree  
To comfort it with my song  
During the winter."*

*"No, my child,"  
Mother weeps,  
"You will freeze to death,  
Sitting in the tree."*

*But if you must,  
Put on your scarf and galoshes;  
Wear your fur hat  
And your warm underwear."*

*I lift up my wings  
But I cannot fly.  
The clothes mother puts on her weak nestling  
Are too heavy.*

*Sadly I gaze  
Into my mother's eyes,  
Knowing that it was her love  
That kept me from soaring like a bird.*



21 Kinderyorn  
'Childhood'

From the six verses in Yiddish, here is a shortened translation in English, of Kinderyorn, text and music by

G. Gebirtig: 'The sweet years of my childhood/ Remain forever imprinted in my memory/ How rapidly the years have passed by/ And I have so quickly aged.'

**23**

*Az me fort keyn Sevastopol*  
*When you go to Sevastopol*

אז מע פֿאַרט קיין סעװאַסטאָפּאָל

The musical score consists of four staves. The first staff is a single melodic line starting with a treble clef and a common time signature. The second and third staves are a piano accompaniment in 2/4 time, with the left hand in bass clef and the right hand in treble clef. The fourth staff is another melodic line in treble clef. The music features a mix of eighth and quarter notes, with some rests and dynamic markings.

21 Kinderyorn

'Childhood'

From the six verses in Yiddish, here is a shortened translation in English, of Kinderyorn, text and music by

M. Gebirtig. 'The sweet years of my childhood/ Remain forever imprinted in my memory/ How rapidly the years have passed by/ And I have so quickly aged.'

The singer reminisces about the house in which he was born, his 'sweet' mother (and how he loved her despite her sternness and her pinches!); his home and his mother have now vanished and only memories are left.

23 Az me fort keyn Sevastopol

'When you go to Sebastopol'

It was not easy to trace the background to this song. One assumed it came from Russia, because of the mention of Sevastopol, Simeferopol and the 'station' of a place named Zhankoye. I later discovered that this is a farm song from Jewish settlements in the Crimea of the middle 1920s. The Refrain (for which there is no translation), is sung fairly 'fast' and the words are: 'Hey, zhan, hey Zhankoye, Hey Zhanvili, hey Zhankoye, Hey Zhankoye, zhan zhan zhan.' In Vol.II of the ANTHOLOGY OF YIDDISH FOLKSONGS (p.117) in the section of the book which is written in English, there is no indication of the origin of the song. But, at the back, in tiny Yiddish footnotes, I found out that the source for the version which they print, was obtained from Beregovski-Feffers Yidishe folkslider, Kiev 1938. The text tells of tractors, mowers, threshers: 'who says that Jews cannot be workingmen?'

## WEDDING, CELEBRATION AND HOLIDAY SONGS

LIDER OYF

CHASSENES, SIMCHASUN YOMTOYVIM24 Mazl-tov!

'Mazel tov!'

Mazl-tov is a short but spirited song, asking wedding guests to be happy and rejoice, as the bride is coming. The Chuppa (traditional Jewish bridal canopy) is ready, the relatives are coming. It is expected that Uncle Yosye (diminutive for Joseph) and his wife, Auntie Zisele will 'put out a foot' and dance the 'hopke' ( I have no suitable translation for this dance) - in order to make the young couple happy.

25 Di mizhinke oysgegebn

'The youngest daughter about to wed'

This is another delightful example of a wedding song in which all the customs of the marriage ceremony are mentioned - there will be musicians e.g. 'Play, fiddlers, play!', there will be circle dances, and rejoicing and celebration the 'whole night' through. The bride's father calls out: '... I am about to marry off my youngest daughter .. no one can know the joy I feel. With my own eyes I behold G-d's kindness.' The musicians referred to would of course be the klezmer\* (see Glossary), and it is quite amusing to note that the language used to ask them to play is almost a 'pop' way of saying 'hit it, boys': In the Yiddish the words are 'Shlogt, klezmer, in di tatsn' (the word shlogt means 'hit'). The poor, too, are all invited.

26 Der zayde mit der bobbe

or Achtsik er un zibetsik zi

'Grandfather and Grandmother'

or 'The Golden Anniversary' / or 'Eighty he and  
Seventy she'

It is exactly fifty years that the 'alte por' (the 'old couple') have been living together, i.e. it is the Golden Anniversary of their marriage. This song (again text and music by Mark Warshawsky) celebrates the grand occasion, and describes how the guests have taken a little wine (Jews generally drink in moderation), and formed a circle, into which Zayde and bobbe (grandfather & grannie) are drawn, and they have danced '... a halbe nacht' (half the night). Bobbe begins to dream a little (i.e. she is tiring) so, with great affection, the singer of the song asks the company to leave the old people to go quietly to bed: 'Lomir' (let us) 'zey beydn lozn tsu ru' (leave the both of them alone now), ending with the line 'Eighty he and seventy she'.

27 Chatzkele

'Chatzkele'

An 'explanation' of this song is given on the transcription. Chatzkele is the name of a fiddler at the wedding - and a poor guest asks Chatzkele to play tunes for her to dance to (dances named are: kazatske / dume / and semele). This guest is poor but proud, and full of spirit, and brings a humble drayerl ( a three-kopek coin ) to give to the bride, to help the bride to establish herself in a stall (kremele) in the marketplace.

28 Lomir ale in eynem

'Let us all together'

Lomir ale in eynem, in eynem, dem rebn mekabel-ponim zayn! This translates loosely as: 'Let us all together, together, make the Rabbi welcome! ...' This is a happy song, generally sung when wine is passed around, not necessarily at a wedding; it could be sung at any sort of celebration. Mr Majer Bogdanski of London sang this song with much 'gusto' at a party for participants in the Yiddish course at Oxford, August 1987.

29 Machuteneste mayne

'My dear in-law'

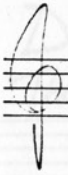
There is no exact English equivalent of machuteneste (fem. form, as the masculine is machuten). The word 'in-law' is an approximation. The text and music of this song was first published in 1938 by Beregovski and I. Feffer; (a textual variant had been published in 1923 by S. Bastomski). When sung by someone who is a 'native' Yiddish-speaker, the song is most amusing, pointing attitudes to daughters-in-law, and warning the 'machuteneste' that if she is a shrewish and nasty mother-in-law, 'why, then' (RUTH RUBIN: 1964 p. 113) '... my daughter, too, can be a shrew! ' One verse of this is sung on the accompanying cassette, but in order to interpret Machuteneste mayne well, one needs the attributes of a good actress. Full text for all four verses is supplied. An explanation is perhaps required for 'wig'. Orthodox brides of the shtetl had their heads shaved, and wore a wig or always a scarf.

24

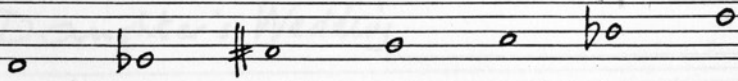
# MAZL-TOV!

Mazel-tov!

מזל-טוב!



MIZHINKE OYSGEGERN



The musical score consists of six staves of handwritten notation. The first staff begins with a treble clef and a key signature of one sharp (F#). The notes are: G4, B4, C#5, D5, E5, F#5, G5. The subsequent staves contain more complex rhythmic patterns, including eighth and sixteenth notes, rests, and accidentals. The piece concludes with a double bar line.

by Warshawsky (1849) is both author  
 the text as well as composer of the  
 Verse 1 asks the wedding-guests to  
 are the 'dance-ring' bigger, and dance! / '...I've given  
 youngest daughter away tonight!'  
 Verse 2 instructs Moll and Shlomo (presumably family members  
 guests) to serve the 'best' of every dish to the 'best  
 fish' (Di orizl'oyt) ... mostly wine & delicious fish.

26

DER ZATZE MIT DER BOBBE  
 Achtzig Er in Zibetuk ai  
 The Golden Anniversary

25

# DI MIZHINKE OYSGEGEBN

The Youngest Daughter's Wedding

די מיזינקע אויסגעגעבן

Mark Warshawsky (1848-1907) is both author of the text as well as composer of the tune. Verse 1 asks the wedding guests to make the 'dance-ring' bigger, and dance! / "...I've given my youngest daughter away tonight! "

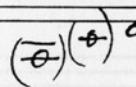
Verse 2 instructs Motl and Shimen (presumably family members or guests) to serve the 'best' of every dish to the 'poor folk' (Di orimelayt) ... costly wines & delicious fish.

26

DER ZAYDE MIT DER BOBBE  
 Achtsik Er un Zibetsik zi  
 The Golden Anniversary

אַכציק ער און זיבעציק זי

זען זיין און זיין זעכציק



ACHTSIK ER UN ZIBETSIK ZI  
 ("Di-Bobe un der Zeyde")

Today it is exactly fifty years that the old couple are married. Look how well they aged; G-d blessed them with honour and riches. Never once in their lifetime did they quarrel; it was always "Nottele, dear" and "Bobbele, dear". Eighty, he - and seventy - she.

27

## CHATZKELE

כאַצקעלע

## CHATZKELE

This is a song about poor relations who were not invited to the wedding of their wealthier kinsmen. Nevertheless, they come to the wedding, and while they bemoan their poverty, they still join happily in the wedding festivities.

28

LOMIR ALE IN EYNEM  
LET US ALTOGETHER

לְאָמִיר אֱלֹעַ אִין אֵינֶעם

Handwritten musical score for "Lomir Ale in Eynem" (Let us Altogether). The score is written in G major (one sharp) and 4/4 time. It consists of four staves of music. The first staff shows a treble clef, a key signature of one sharp (F#), and a common time signature (C). The melody begins with a whole note G4, followed by a half note A4, a quarter note B4, and a quarter note C5. The second staff continues the melody with eighth notes: G4-A4-B4-C5, G4-A4-B4-C5, G4-A4-B4-C5, G4-A4-B4-C5. The third staff features a first ending bracket over a quarter note G4, followed by a double bar line and a second ending bracket over a quarter note G4. The fourth staff continues with eighth notes: G4-A4-B4-C5, G4-A4-B4-C5, G4-A4-B4-C5, G4-A4-B4-C5, and concludes with a first ending bracket over a quarter note G4, followed by a double bar line and a second ending bracket over a quarter note G4.

## 28

LOMIR ALE IN EYNEM  
LET US ALL TOGETHER

לאָמיר אַלע אין איינעם

Moderato ♩ = 100

Lo - mir a - le in ey - nem, in ey - nem dem re - bn me - ka - bel

po - nim zayn! Dem po - nim zayn! Lo - mir a - le in ey - nem

lo - mir a - le in ey - nem trin - ken a gle - ze - le vayn!  
lo - mir a - le in ey - nem lus - tik un frey - lekh zayn!

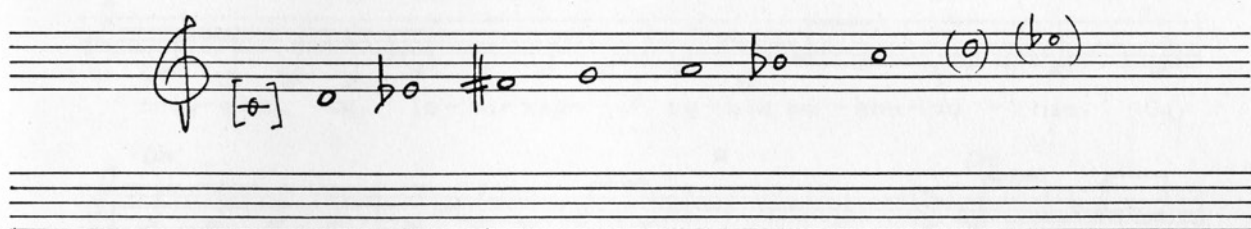
Lomir ale in eynem, in eynem  
Dem rebn mekabel-ponem zayn!  
Dem rebn mekabel-ponem zayn!  
Lomir ale in eynem  
Trinken a glezele vayn!  
Lomir ale in eynem,  
Lomir ale in eynem  
Lustik un freylekh zayn!

לאָמיר אַלע אין איינעם, אין איינעם  
דעם רבין מקבל-פנים זיין!  
דעם רבין מקבל-פנים זיין!  
לאָמיר אַלע אין איינעם  
טרינקען אַ גלעזעלע וויין!  
לאָמיר אַלע אין איינעם,  
לאָמיר אַלע אין איינעם  
לוסטיק און פֿריילעך זיין!

Let us all together welcome the Rabbi  
And drink a glass of wine.  
Let us together be merry and sing this happy refrain.

29

MACHUTENESTE MAYNE  
My dear in-law



Handwritten musical notation for the second system of the song. It consists of four staves of music in treble clef with a key signature of one sharp. The first staff contains a melody of eighth and quarter notes. The second staff continues the melody with a fermata over the seventh measure. The third and fourth staves provide a harmonic accompaniment with chords and moving lines. The piece concludes with a double bar line and repeat dots.

29

# MEKHUTENESTE MAYNE

## My Dear In-Law

Brightly

Me-khu-te-nes-te may-ne, Me-khu-te-nes-te ge-

tray-e, Oy, lo-mir zayn oyf ey-bik me-khu-to-nim, Oy,

lo-mir zayn oyf ey-bik me-khu-to-nim, Ikh gib aykh a-

vek mayn tokh-ter far a shnur Zi zol day aykh nit

on-ve-rrn dos po-nim po-nim.



## 29(i)

Folk song, text and music published in 1938 by M. Beregovski and I. Feffer.  
Textual variant published in 1923 by S. Bastomski.

Mekhuteneste mayne, mekhuteneste getraye,  
Oy, lomir zayn oyf eybik mekhutonim,  
lkh gib aykh avek mayn tokhter far a shnur,  
Zi zol bay aykh nit onvern dos ponim.

Mekhuteneste mayne, mekhuteneste getraye,  
Mayn kind zolt ir in der fri nit vewn,  
Un tomer vet ir zen an avle oyf mayn kind,  
Vi an eygene mame zolt ir dos fardekn.

Mekhuteneste mayne, mekhuteneste getraye,  
Oyf kinder hobn tut men blut fargisn,  
Un tomer vet ir zen az der zun hot lib di shnur,  
Zol es aykh kholile nit fardisn.

Mekhuteneste mayne, mekhuteneste getraye,  
Mayn tokhter fort tsu aykh in a parikl,  
Un tomer vet ir zayn a shlak, a beyze shviger,  
Iz mayn tokhter oykhet an antikl!

*"Mekhuteneste, my dear,  
Let's always be good in-laws.  
I'm giving you my daughter as a daughter-in-law.  
May she not lose her looks with you!*

*Mekhuteneste, my dear,  
Don't wake my daughter too early!  
And if you notice any faults in my child,  
Like a mother you should overlook them.*

*Mekhuteneste, my dear,  
It takes plenty of suffering to raise children.  
And if you notice that your son loves my daughter,  
Don't get upset.*

*Mekhuteneste, my dear,  
My daughter comes to you with a wig.  
And if you should be a shrewish, nasty  
mother-in-law,  
Let me warn you that my daughter will be your  
match!*



### מחותנתמע מינע

מחותנתמע מינע, מחותנתמע געטרייע,  
אוי, לאַמיר זײַן אויף אייביק מחותנים,  
איך גיב אייך אַוועק מיין מאַכטער פֿאַר אַ שנור,  
זי זאָל בײַ אייך נישט אָנווערן דאָס פנים.

מחותנתמע מינע, מחותנתמע געטרייע,  
מיין קינד זאָלט איר אין דער פֿרי נישט וועקן,  
און מאַכטער וועט איר זען אַן עוולה אויף מיין קינד,  
ווי אַן אייגענע מאַמע זאָלט איר דאָס פֿאַרדעקן.

מחותנתמע מינע, מחותנתמע געטרייע,  
אויף קינדער האָבן טוט מען בלוט פֿאַרגיסן,  
און מאַכטער וועט איר זען אַז דער זון האָט ליב די שנור,  
זאָל עס אייך חלילה נישט פֿאַרדריסן.

מחותנתמע מינע, מחותנתמע געטרייע,  
מיין מאַכטער פֿאַרט צו אייך אין אַ פֿאַריקל,  
און מאַכטער וועט איר זיין אַ שלאַק, אַ בייזע שוויגער,  
איז מיין מאַכטער אויכעט אַן אַנטיקל!

30

MIR ZAYNEN ALE BRIDER  
WE ALL ARE BROTHERS

גיר זינען אלע ברידער



30

## ALE BRIDER

All Brothers

Dm Gm  
 Un mir zay - nen a - le bri - der Oy, oy  
 A7 Dm Dm Gm  
 a - le bri - der! Un mir zin - gen frey - le - khe li - der  
 A7 Dm  
 Oy, oy, oy! Un mir hal - tn zikh in ey - nem  
 F Bb F F  
 Oy, oy zikh in ey - nem! A - zel - khes iz ni -  
 G Gm A7 Dm  
 to bay key - nem, Oy, oy, oy!

## 30(i)

Un mir zaynen ale brider  
Oy, oy, ale brider!  
Un mir zingen freylekhe lider  
Oy, oy, oy!

Un mir haltn zikh in eynem,  
Oy, oy, zikh in eynem!  
Azelkhes iz nito bay keynem,  
Oy, oy, oy!

Un mir zaynen ale eynik,  
Oy, oy, ale eynik!  
Tsi mir zaynen fil tsi veynik,  
Oy, oy, oy!

Un mir libn zikh dokh ale,  
Oy, oy, zikh dokh ale!  
Vi a khosn mit a kale,  
Oy, oy, oy!

Un mir zaynen freylekh, munter,  
Oy, oy freylekh, munter!  
Zingen lider, tantsn unter,  
Oy, oy, oy!

*For we are all brothers  
And sing happy songs.*

*We stay together,  
Always united,  
Caring for one another;*

*We are happy and lively,  
Always singing and dancing.*

## אלע ברידער

און מיר זיינען אלע ברידער,  
אוי, אוי, אלע ברידער!  
און מיר זיינען פריילעכע לידער,  
אוי, אוי, אוי!

און מיר האלטן זיך אין איינעם,  
אוי, אוי, זיך אין איינעם!  
אזעלכעס איז נישטא ביי קיינעם,  
אוי, אוי, אוי!

און מיר זיינען אלע אייניק,  
אוי, אוי, אלע אייניקן  
צו מיר זיינען פיל צו ווייניק,  
אוי, אוי, אוי!

און מיר ליבן זיך דאך אלע,  
אוי, אוי, זיך דאך אלע!  
ווי א חסן מיט א בלה,  
אוי, אוי, אוי!

און מיר זיינען פריילעך, מונטער,  
אוי, אוי, פריילעך, מונטער!  
זיינען לידער, טאנצן אונטער,  
אוי, אוי, אוי!



30 Mir zaynen ale brider

'We are all brothers' / or 'All brothers'

A full text is provided on the accompanying pages to this section. This song is an adaptation of a poem by Morris Winchevsky ( 1856-1932 ) entitled 'Akhdes' (Unity) in Di Kalotke (The Rattle) published in Arbeter Fraynd (Working Friends) August 29, 1890. Part of the original text expressed the following sentiments: 'Yes, we are all as one/ whether we have much or little/ And we are all brothers and pray from one prayerbook ... devout and leftist, united all, like the bridegroom and the bride, like the Pentateuch and the Commentary/ like pudding with porridge.' In the 1920s, this song was published as a 'folksong' by the Yiddish folklorist and writer A. Litvin. Litvin noted that the song was '... the most popular folksong that was sung in the Old Country, mostly at Bundist parties\* (see Glossary) .... Each time it was sung something was added by each singer extemporaneously.'

HUMOROUS AND SATIRICAL SONGS

LIDER FUN HUMOR UN SATIRA

sung by men or women

31 A chazan oyf Shabbes

'A cantor for the Sabbath'

I have stated my viewpoint in the general introduction to this section, that this song is, for me, a song to be sung by men. In the Orthodox tradition, no woman would be allowed to perform any cantorial items and this song is 'cantorial' in style, while telling an amusing story. The full text and score are provided.

31

A CHAZAN OYF SHABBES  
A CANTOR FOR THE SABBATH*A CHAZAN OYF SHABBES**A cantor for the Sabbath*

א חזן אויף שבת

A CHAZAN OYF SHABBES  
A Cantor for the Sabbath

It was customary for a congregation to invite different cantors to officiate "on trial" as a preliminary to a permanent engagement. This song describes in humorous fashion the reaction of three of the leading congregants who came to listen to the new cantor and express their opinions. One of these was a blacksmith who described the cantor's voice as that of a hammer's blow. The second was a tailor who likened the voice to the smooth ironing of a garment and the third was a coachman who compared the cantor's voice to the sound of a whip in the air.


## (31) ii

A KHAZN OYF SHABES  
A CANTOR FOR THE SABBATH

א חזן אויף שבת


Recitativo ♩ = 80

G



Iz ge-ku-inen a kha-zn in a kleyn shte-te-le da-ve-nen a sha-bes, oy

D Bm D7



da-ve-nen a sha-bes. Zay-nen im ge-ku-men he-rn di dray shen-ste ba-le

G



ba-tim fun dem shte-tl, di dray shen-ste ba-le ba-tim fun dem shte-tl:

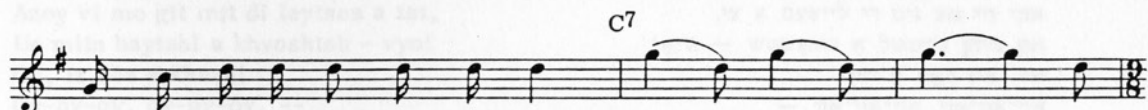


ey-ner a shnay-de-rl, der an-der-rer a ko-val-tshi-kl, un



der dri-ter a ba-le-gol-tshi-kl. Ruft zich o-pet dos shnay-de-rl:

C7



ruft zich o-pet dos shnay-de-rl: Oy, oy, oy, Hot

G




er ge-da-vnt hot er ge-da-vnt A-zoy-vi me git, mit der

D C Am



no-dl a-shtokh, un mitn ay-zn a press oy, iz dos a kha-zn,

Bm Em A7 D7 G Am D7 G



oy-oy, oy-oy-oy-oy-oy Oy, hot er ge-da-vnt

## 31(iii)

Iz gekumen a khazn in a kleyn shtetele  
Davenen a shabes,  
Oy, davenen a shabes.

איז געקומען א חזן אין א קליין שטעטלע  
דאווענען א שבת,  
אוי, דאווענען א שבת.

Zaynen im gekumen hern  
Di dray shenste balebatim fun dem shtetl,  
Di dray shenste balebatim funem shtetl:  
Eyner — a shnayderl,  
Der anderer — a kovaltshikl,  
Un der dritter — a balegoltshikl...

זיינען אים געקומען הערן  
די דריי שענסטע באלעבאטיס פֿון דעם שטעטל,  
די דריי שענסטע באלעבאטיס פֿונעם שטעטל:  
איינער — א שניידערל,  
דער אנדערער — א קאוואלטשיקל,  
און דער דריטער — א באלעגאָלטשיקל...

Ruft zikh opet dos shnayderl:  
Oy-oy-oy! Hot er gedavnt,  
Hot er gedavnt!  
Azoy vi me git mit der nodl a shtokh  
Un mitn ayzn a pres -  
Oy, iz dos a khazn,  
Oy-oy-oy, oy-oy-oy, oy-oy --  
Hot er gedavnt!

רוֹפֿט זיך אָפּעט דאָס שניידערל: -  
אוי, אוי-אוי! האָט ער געדאוונט,  
האָט ער געדאוונט!  
אַזוי ווי מע גיט מיט דער נאָדל אַ שטאָך.  
און מיטן אייזן אַ פרעס -  
אוי, איז דאָס אַ חזן.  
אוי-אוי-אוי, אוי-אוי-אוי, אוי-אוי -  
האָט ער געדאוונט!

Ruft zikh opet dos kovaltshikl:  
Oy-oy-oy, hot er gedavnt!  
Hot er gedavnt!  
Azoy vi me git mitn hamer a zets,  
Un mit di klyeshtshes a kvetsh -  
Oy, iz dos a khazn!  
Oy-oy-oy, oy-oy-oy, oy-oy --  
Oy, hot er gedavnt!

רוֹפֿט זיך אָפּעט דאָס קאוואלטשיקל: -  
אוי-אוי-אוי, האָט ער געדאוונט,  
האָט ער געדאוונט!  
אַזוי ווי מע גיט מיטן האַמער אַ זעץ,  
און מיט די קליעשטשעס אַ קוועטש -  
אוי, איז דאָס אַ חזן!  
אוי-אוי-אוי, אוי-אוי-אוי, אוי-אוי -  
האָט ער געדאוונט!

Ruft zikh opet dos balegoltshikl:  
Oy-oy-oy! Hot er gedavnt,  
Hot er gedavnt!  
Azoy vi me git mit di leytses a tsi,  
Un mitn baytshl a khvoshtsh - vyo!  
Oy, iz dos a khazn!  
Oy-oy-oy, oy-oy-oy, --  
Oy, hot er gedavnt!

רוֹפֿט זיך אָפּעט דאָס באלעגאָלטשיקל:  
אוי-אוי-אוי! האָט ער געדאוונט,  
האָט ער געדאוונט!  
אַזוי ווי מע גיט די לייצעס אַ צי,  
און מיטן בייטשל אַ כוואַשטש - וויאַ!  
אוי, איז דאָס אַ חזן!  
אוי-אוי-אוי, אוי-אוי-אוי -  
האָט ער געדאוונט!

1. צוואַנג / אינסטרומענט.

32 A ganeyve

'A theft'

As explained on the given transcription, a burglar has chanced to steal from the 'poor' home of the local town Rabbi, where, although there were seven shirts, three are patched and four have holes! Out of seven candlesticks, three have no 'sticks' and four have 'no sockets'. Of the Rabbi's seven rooster-hens, three have 'no heads' and four have 'no wings'. Of the Rabbi's seven daughters, three have 'no teeth' and four have no gums! Each verse end with the refrain: Bay mayn rebn iz gevezn - a ganeyve! ('In my rabbi's house there was - a robbery!')

33 Dire-gelt

'Rent' or 'Money for rent'

A short explanation for Dire-gelt has been given at the foot of the transcription of this song. The song ends with: 'Why should we pay you rent, when the stove is broken and we have nothing to cook on?' 'Farvos zol ikh aykh gebn dire-gelt / Az ikh hob nisht oyf vos tsu kokhn?'

34 Der Rebbe Elimelekh

'Rabbi Elimelekh'

It is significant that world-renowned virtuoso violinist Itzhak Perlman chose Elimelekh as one of the Yiddish melodies in his programme in Tel Aviv, Israel, on the 50th Anniversary of the Israel Philharmonic Orchestra under the baton of Zubin Mehta. There were few dry eyes in the audience afterwards. Together with a group of music-

lovers and professional musicians who attended several of these Jubilee Concerts, in December 1986 (\*see note after Song 35, just before the next category of songs is discussed), a group from Cape Town, including myself, were very taken up by the attitude of the audience. These were sophisticated, cultured people, who 'melted' at the sound of Perlman's violin and this entrancing melody. I asked Prof. Lamar Crowson, who was in the audience, whether he found it too sentimental, and his quick answer was '... well, whats the matter with a little syrup?' Later, at home in Cape Town, when I talked to an audience at a public function, and sang Rebbe Elimelekh to illustrate the point of the Perlman performance, there was again an immediate and very warm response to this tune.

35 Rabeynu Tam

'Rabbi Tam'

In this humorous song, (text by Itzik Manger, music by Herz Rubin 1911-1958) a fantastical 'love-letter' from the 'Queen of Turkey' has arrived for Rabbi Tam, being delivered to him by a golden peacock. Coming down to earth with a 'bang', the rabbi's wife 'beats him with the rolling pin; and says:/'Zi klapt im mitn valgerholts/un zogt tsu im azoy: ....'/ - Shikses lign dir in zin 'You have non-Jewish girls on your mind, And what about me, your dear devoted wife?' The text continues: 'A tailor lad wrote the song to spite Rabbi Tam' ... this would refer to Itzik Manger himself, who, in his youth in the shtetl was apprenticed to a tailor, and this is one of the strong themes dominating his poetry and fiction.

32

## A GENEYVE

A theft

א גנבה

DI GENEYVE  
The Theft

This is a nonsense song which laughs at poverty, but there is a wryness to the fun. "Di Geneyve" satirizes the "haul" of a burglar whose ill luck it was to choose the poverty-stricken home of the town rabbi.

The triple rhymes in the Yiddish lyrics add to the humour of this song.

33

DIRE-GELT  
Rent

דירה-געלט

DIRE-GELT  
Rent

Folk song published in 1912 by Y.L. Cahan. Paying rent and the threat of eviction were always problems, as described in the words of this song:

The landlord comes with his cane:  
If we don't pay rent, he takes away our beds.

"Kunt arayn der balabos,  
Mit dem grobn shtekn  
Un az me git im keyn dire-gelt  
Shtelt er aroys di betn".

Words in text, not Yiddish:

Bozhe moy = my G-d  
Gradavoy = policeman

Finding money to pay the rent was a major problem in the shtetl. Rent had often to be paid for accommodation which was unfit for habitation.

34

DER REBBE ELIMELECH  
Rabbi Elimelech

דער רבי אלימלך

The musical score is written on five staves. The first staff shows a sequence of notes: a whole note with a sharp sign, followed by four quarter notes, and a final whole note. The subsequent four staves contain a melody in treble clef, with various rhythmic values and accidentals. The fifth staff concludes with a double bar line.

DER REBBE ELIMELECH

A Yiddish version of the  
English song Old King Cole.

Poem and music by Moshe Nadir (1885-1943). Nadir published the text and music in 1927. a translation of the original last stanza reads:

'He yawned, said it was enough, and sent his musicians home. The drunken band of Rabbi Melech-Elye danced and cavorted merrily, exchanging instruments. They caroused until dawn.'

34

# DER REBE ELIMEYLEKH

## Rabbi Elimeylekh

A Yiddish version of the English song, Old King Cole. Poem and music by Moshe Nadir (1885-1943). One folklorized version was published anonymously by S. Bastomski in 1923. The Text and music were published by M. Nadir in 1927, as well as in the author's book *A Lomp Oyn Fenster* in 1929.

Ad lib.- lively

The musical score is written in G major, 4/4 time, and consists of seven staves of music. The lyrics are written below the notes, and guitar chords are indicated above the staff lines. The melody is simple and rhythmic, with a lively feel. The lyrics are in Yiddish and describe a scene of a rebe (rabbi) and his children.

Chords: A7, Dm, A, Dm, Bb, F, D7, Gm, A7, Dm, Bb, A7, Dm, E7, A7, Dm, Bb, F, D, Gm.

Lyrics:

Az der Re - be E - li - mey - lekh Iz ge -  
 vo - rn zey - er frey - lekh, Iz ge - vo - rn zey - er frey - lekh E - li -  
 mey - lekh. Hot er oys - ge - ton di tfi - ln Un hot  
 on - ge - ton di bri - ln Un ge - shokt nokh di fid - lers di  
 tsvey. Un di fi - dl - di - ke fid - lers Ho - bn  
 fi - dl - dik ge - fi - dlt, Ho - bn fi - dl - dik ge - fi - dlt, ho - bn  
 zey; Un di fi - dl di - ke fid - lers Ho - bn

34 (i)

RABEINU TAM

fi - dl - dik ge - fi - dlt, Ho - bn  
 fi - dl - dik ge - fi - dlt, Ho bn zey.

דער רבי אלימלך

Az der Rebe Elimeylekh  
 Iz gevorn zeyer freylekh,  
 Is gevorn zeyer freylekh, Elimeylekh,  
 Hot er oysgeton di tfiln  
 Un hot ongeton di briln  
 Un geshikt nokh di fidlers di tsvey.

*When Rabbi Elimeylekh  
 Was merry,  
 He took off his phylacteries,  
 Put on his glasses,  
 And summoned  
 His two fiddlers.*

אז דער רבי אלימלך  
 איז געוואָרן זייער פֿריילעך,  
 איז געוואָרן זייער פֿריילעך אלימלך,  
 האָט ער אויסגעטאָן די תּפּילין  
 און האָט אָנגעטאָן די ברילן  
 און געשיקט נאָך די פּידלערס די צוויי.

Un di fidldike fidlers  
 Hobn fidldik gefidlt,  
 Hobn fidldik gefidlt, hobn zey.

*When he grew merrier,  
 He took off his robe,  
 Donned his cap  
 And summoned  
 His two cymbalists.*

און די פּידלדיקע פּידלערס  
 האָבן פּידלדיק געפּידלט,  
 האָבן פּידלדיק געפּידלט, האָבן זיי.

Un az der Rebe Elimeylekh  
 Iz gevorn nokh mer freylekh,  
 Iz gevorn nokh mer freylekh, Elimeylekh.  
 Hot er opgemakht havdole  
 Mitn shames Reb Naftole  
 Un geshikt nokh di payklers di tsvey.

*And when Rabbi Elimeylekh  
 Became ecstatic,  
 He recited  
 His Sabbath prayer  
 And summoned  
 His two drummers.*

און אז דער רבי אלימלך  
 איז געוואָרן נאָך מער פֿריילעך,  
 איז געוואָרן נאָך מער פֿריילעך אלימלך,  
 האָט ער אָפּגעמאַכט הַבּדּוּלָה  
 מיטן שמש ר' נפתלי  
 און געשיקט נאָך די פּינקלערס די צוויי.

Un di paykldike payklers  
 Hobn paykldik gepayklt,  
 Hobn paykldik gepayklt, hobn zey.

און די פּינקלדיקע פּינקלערס  
 האָבן פּינקלדיק געפּינקלט,  
 האָבן פּינקלדיק געפּינקלט, האָבן זיי.

Un az der Rebe Elimeylekh  
 Iz gevorn gor shtark freylekh,  
 Iz gevorn gor shtark freylekh, Elimeylekh.  
 Hot er oysgeton dos kitl  
 Un hot ongeton dos hitl,  
 Un geshikt nokh di tsimblers di tsvey.



Un di tsimblidike tsimblers  
 Hobn tsimblidik getsimblt,  
 Hobn tsimblidik getsimblt, hobn zey.

און אז דער רבי אלימלך  
 איז געוואָרן נאָך שטאַרק פֿריילעך,  
 איז געוואָרן נאָך שטאַרק פֿריילעך אלימלך.  
 האָט ער אויסגעטאָן דאָס קיטל  
 און האָט אָנגעטאָן דאָס היטל  
 און געשיקט נאָך די צימבלערס די צוויי.

און די צימבלדיקע צימבלערס  
 האָבן צימבלדיק געצימבלט,  
 האָבן צימבלדיק געצימבלט, האָבן זיי.

350) RABEINU TAM  
RABBI TAM

35

# RABEINU TAM

RABBI TAM

רבנו תם

The musical score consists of six staves. The first staff is a vocal line starting with a treble clef and a key signature of one flat. It begins with four notes in parentheses: (̄̄), (̄̄), (̄̄), (̄̄), followed by a series of quarter notes. The remaining five staves are piano accompaniment, each starting with a treble clef. The accompaniment features a rhythmic pattern of eighth and sixteenth notes, with some chords and rests. The piece concludes with a double bar line on the sixth staff.

Rabeinu Tam, Rabbi Tam  
Rabbi Tam was a  
known, he was the  
scholar Rabbi. The

# 35(i) RABEINU TAM

## RABBI TAM

Let's sing about the golden peacock,  
Flying across the Black Sea,  
Bearing a love letter  
For Rabeynu Tam.

The Queen of Turkey wrote the letter  
In red ink and sealed it  
With three ardent tears.

The letter said: "Rabbi Tam, I love you;  
Why then, are you silent?  
I cannot eat or drink.  
I burst with longing. I have no peace."

And Rabbi Tam? He strokes his sidelocks and his beard  
And mutters three times: "Fie!"  
While in the barn the little white kid  
Joins him and bleats "ma-a-a."

And the rabbi's wife? She beats him with the rolling pin  
And says: "You have 'shiks'es' on your mind.  
And what about me,  
Your dear devoted wife?"

Who wrote the song?  
A tailor lad wrote the song to honor Rabbi Tam,  
But during the Sabbath some prankster laughingly  
Inserted his own lines in perfect rhyme instead.

Rabeinu Tam: This is the name by which Rabbi Jacob ben Meir (1100-1171) was known. He was the grandson of the great scholar Rashi. (For Rashi, see \*Glossary)

\* Note: The Zubin Mehta concert with the Israel Philharmonic Orchestra, with Itzhak Perlman as one of the soloists, referred to in regard to the song Der Rebbe Elimelekh (see preceding page) took place on New Years' Eve, 31 December 1986. Perlman subsequently recorded nine 'popular' Jewish melodies (EMI records 1987) with the I.P.O. conducted by Dov Seltzer. I list the nine melodies:

1. A Yiddishe Mamme (A Jewish Mother)
2. Az Der Rebbe Elimelekh iz gevorn azoi freylakh  
(When the Rebbe Elimelekh becomes so very merry)
3. Reyzele Music: M. Gebirtig
4. Oyfn Pripetshik (At the Fireplace)
5. Doyna (anonymous Rumanian melody)
6. Rozhinkes mit Mandlen (Raisins and Almonds)
7. Oyfn Veg Shteyt a Boym (By the Wayside Stands A Tree)
8. A dudele Music: Rebbe Levi Yitzhak of Berditchev
9. Vu ahin zoll ikh geyn? (Where Shall I Go?)

Dov Seltzer is also the arranger. The album is marketed under the title: 'TRADITION: Itzhak Perlman plays popular Jewish Melodies.'

#### RELIGIOUS FOLKSONGS

#### RELIGIEZER-LIDER

sung by both men and  
women

#### 36 Eliyohu ha'novi

'Elijah the Prophet'

There are many instances in Jewish custom and folklore when great significance is attached to Elijah. For instance, at the Passover meal ('seder') a special silver wine goblet is always laid for Elijah, and there is a part in the reading of the Haggadah (the unique 'book' which is read at home by family and guests on Passover) where one is obliged to open the door for Elijah. These customs are still current. The prophet Elijah, who

lived in the ninth century B.C.E. during the reign of Ahab, king of Israel, has been described as the most romantic and enigmatic character in the whole range of Jewish history. Elijah is frequently referred to in Jewish literature not only as the promised precursor of the Messiah, but also as a dynamic helper in distress and guiding teacher of the sages. The song Eliyohu ha'novi was taught to me in early childhood by the local Hebrew teacher, and this is the version which I recorded on the accompanying cassette. Printed scores and texts vary, however, and the version printed here on yellow paper has been taken from the Vol. 4 of ANTHOLOGY OF YIDDISH FOLKSONGS. The English translation of the text is self-explanatory. (Vol.4 : 191) The text is in Hebrew.

37 Avinu Malkeinu

'Our Father Our King'

Avinu malkeinu has become a universally-known folksong. I cannot describe it as a Yiddish folksong exclusively, as it is in the Hebrew language. The many verses of Avinu Malkeinu which are found in the Daily Prayerbooks (Siddurim) and the prayerbooks for Festivals ('machzorim') are often the highlight of the Service, for instance on the holiest day of the year, Yom Kippur (The Day of Atonement) a long list of verses - each ending in 'Avinu Malkeinu' - culminate in the fervent singing of both chazan and congregation of the last verse, the text and words of which are demonstrated on the accompanying cassette. This is a stirring and fervent melody.

36

# ELIYOHU HANOVI

Elijah the Prophet

אליהו  
הנביא

The musical score is written on seven staves. The first staff begins with a treble clef and contains two measures of music with notes marked with a flat and a sharp sign. The subsequent staves contain a melodic line with various rhythmic values, including eighth and sixteenth notes, and rests. The notation is handwritten and includes some accidentals and dynamic markings.

Four empty musical staves are provided at the bottom of the page for additional notation or practice.

## 36

ELIYAHU HANAVI  
ELIYAHU THE PROPHET

## אלהיו הנביא

Andante ♩ = 72

E - li - yo - hu ha - no - vi, E - li - yo - hu ha - tish - bi,  
E - li - yo - hu, E - li - yo - hu, E - li - yo - hu ha - gil - o - di!  
A - le var - tn, yung un alt, breng der - ley - zung, kum zhe bald.  
Mit Mo - shl - akh ben Do - vid, mit Mo - shl - akh ben Do - vid!

Eliyohu hanovi,  
Eliyohu hatishbi,  
Eliyohu, Eliyohu,  
Eliyohu hagilodi!

Ale vartn, yung un alt,  
Brenge derleyzung, kum zhe bald,

Mit Moshiakh ben-Dovid, mit Moshiakh ben-Dovid!

אלהיו הנביא,  
אלהיו התשבי,  
אלהיו, אלהיו,  
אלהיו הגלעדי!

אלע ווארטן, יונג און אלט,  
ברענג דערלויזונג, קום זשע באַלד,

מיט משיח בן דוד, מיט משיח בן דוד!

Young and old await the coming of Elijah the Prophet.  
Come speedily and bring redemption.  
Come together with Messiah, the son of David.

37

# AVINU MALKEINU

אֲבוֹתֵינוּ מַלְכֵנוּ יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ  
 יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ

Our Father, our King, be gracious to us and answer us, though we have no merits; deal charitably and kindly with us and save us.

## CHASSIDIC SONGS

CHASSIDISHE-LIDER

For men, but there are instances  
of women singing them as well

38 A dudele

'A Dudele'

The text and music of A dudele is by Rebbe Levi Yitzchak of Berditchev. All of the songs of this Rebbe are simple and straightforward expressions of the faith in G-d the Almighty, and of the great inner joy which may be derived from this faith: 'Oh, mighty G-d! O mighty G-d! I shall sing you a song:/ You are in the North, and You are in the South/ You are in the East/ and You are in the West! You, You, You You .... '

39 Sha, shtil!

'Hush, quiet'

In the introduction to this section, the importance of Chassidic song has been noted. Here is an example of how the people revere and admire their Chassidic rabbi, and stand in awe while he dances with religious fervour. 'Sha, shtil!' is the opening of the Refrain: 'Hush, be quiet!/ Make no commotion/ the Rabbi is going to dance!/. 'And when the rabbi dances, the very walls do leap.' In verse two, '..when the Rabbi dances, the very table reels', and when the Rabbi 'chants' (verse three) '... His holy melody, he sends the Devil to his misery!' or, to be more literal, Un az der Rebe zingt ('And when the Rabbi sings') dem heiligen nign ('the holy melody) blaybt der Sotn a toyter lign (' the Devil/Satan remains lying dead.').

**A DUDELE**  
**A DUDELE**

**א דודעלע**

Andante con moto ♩ = 66

רבי לוי יצחק בארדיטשעווער  
Rabbi Lévi Yitzchak Barditchever

Ri - boy - noy shel oy - lom, ri - boy - noy shel oy - lom, ri - boy - noy shel oy - lom, ri -  
 - boy noy shel oy - lom. Ri - boy - noy shel oy - lom. Kh'vel dir a  
 du de - le zln - gen. Du, du, du, du, du.  
 Moderato  
 A - yey em - tso - e - kho ve - a - yey loy em - tso - e - kho?  
 Vu kon ikh dikh yo ge - fi - nen, un vu kon ikh dikh nit ge - fi - nen?  
 Du, du, du, du, du. Az vu ikh gey, Du. Un  
 Vu ikh shtey, Du. Rak du, nor du, vi - der du, o - ber du,  
 Allegretto  
 du, du, du, du, du. Iz e - mí - tsn gut, du; kho -

## (38) ii

- li - le shlekht, ay du Oy, du, du, du, du, du, du  
 du, du, du, du, du, du, du. Miz-rekh du, may-rev du, tso-fn du, do-rem du.  
 du, du, du, du, du, du, du, du. Sho - ma - yim du, e - rets du,  
 may-le du, ma-to du, du, du, du, du, du, du. Du, du, du, du,  
 du, du, du, du, du. Vu ikh ker mikh, vu ikh vend mikh Du, Du...

Riboynoy shel oylom, riboynoy shel oylom,  
 Riboynoy shel oylom, riboynoy shel oylom,  
 Riboynoy shel oylom!  
 Kh'vel dir a dudele zingen:  
 Du, du, du, du, du!

Ayey emtsoekho veayey loy emtsoekho?  
 Vu kon ikh dikh yo gefinen,  
 Un vu kon ikh dikh nit gefinen?  
 Du, du, du, du, du!

Az vu ikh gey - Du!  
 Un vu ikh shtey - Du!  
 Rak du, nor du, vider du, ober du -  
 Du, du, du, du, du!

Iz emitsn gut - du!  
 Kholile shlekht - ay, du!  
 Oy, du, du, du, du, du - du!

Mizrekh - du, mayrev - du,  
 Tsofn - du, dorem - du,  
 Du, du, du, du, du!

Shomayim - du, erets - du,  
 Mayle - du, mato - du,  
 Du, du, du, du, du!

Vu ikh ker mikh  
 Un vu ikh vend mikh -  
 Du, du!

רבונו של עולם, רבונו של עולם,  
 רבונו של עולם, רבונו של עולם,  
 רבונו של עולם!  
 כיועל דיר א דודעלע זינגען:  
 דו, דו, דו, דו, דו!

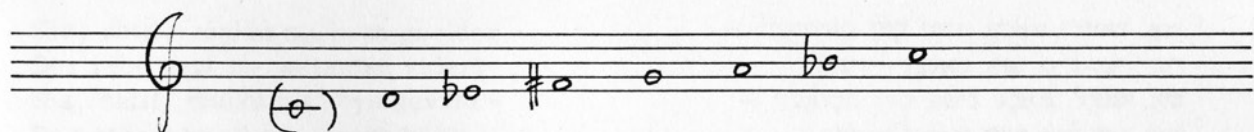
איה אמצאך, ואיה לא אמצאך?  
 ווו קאן איך דיר יא געפינען,  
 און ווו קאן איך דיר נישט געפינען?  
 דו, דו, דו, דו, דו!

אָ ווו איך גיי - דו!  
 און ווו איך שטיי - דו!  
 רק דו, נאָר דו, ווידער דו, אָבער דו!  
 דו, דו, דו, דו, דו!

39

SHA, SHTIL!  
Hush, be quiet

שאַ שטיל מאַכט ניט  
קיין גערײדעדרער



Chorus:

D.C. al Fine

## 39

SHA, SHTIL!  
HUSH! QUIET!

שאַ, שטיל, מאַכט ניט קיין גערירער  
הַס, דום!

Andante ♩ = 62

The musical score consists of three staves of music in G major, 4/4 time. The first staff has a tempo marking of Andante (♩ = 62) and a key signature of one sharp (F#). The first line of music is marked with a chord of A7. The second line is marked with Gm6 and Edim7. The third line is marked with A7, Gm6, Edim7, and A Fine. The lyrics are written below the notes.

Sha, shtil, makht nit keyn ge - ri - der, der re - be geyt shoy'n tan - tsn vi - der.

Sha, shtil, makht nit keyn ge - vald, der re - be geyt shoy'n tan - tsn bald.

Un az der re - be tantst, tan - tsn mit di vent, lo - mir a - le ples - kn mit di hent. D.C. al Fine

Sha, shtil, makht nit keyn gerider -  
Der rebe geyt shoy'n tantsn vider!  
Sha, shtil, makht nit keyn gevald -  
Der rebe geyt shoy'n tantsn bald!

— שאַ, שטיל! מאַכט נישט קיין גערירער!  
דער רבי גייט שוין טאַנצן ווידער!  
— שאַ, שטיל, מאַכט נישט קיין געוואַלד -  
דער רבי גייט שוין טאַנצן באַלד!

Un az der rebe tantst,  
Tantsn mit di vent -  
Lomir ale pleyesken mit di hent!

און אַז דער רבי טאַנצט,  
טאַנצן מיט די ווענט -  
לאַמיר אַלע פליעסקען מיט די הענט!

Refren: Sha, shtil ...

רעפֿרען: שאַ, שטיל...

Un az der rebe zingt,  
Iz dokh azoy zis -  
Lomir ale tupen mit di fis!

און אַז דער רבי זינגט,  
איז דאָך אַזוי זיס -  
לאַמיר אַלע טופען מיט די פֿיס!

Refren: Sha, shtil ;; ...

רעפֿרען: שאַ, שטיל...

Un az der rebe tantst,  
Tantst dokh mit der tish -  
Lomir ale klapn mit di fis!

און אַז דער רבי טאַנצט,  
טאַנצט דאָך מיט דער טיש -  
לאַמיר אַלע קלאפן מיט די פֿיס!

Refren: Sha, shtil ...

רעפֿרען: שאַ, שטיל...

Un az der rebe zingt  
Dem heylikn nign,  
Blaybt der sotn a toyter lign!

און אַז דער רבי זינגט  
דעם הייליקן ניגון,  
בלייבט דער שטן אַ טויטער ליגן!

Refren: Sha, shtil ...

רעפֿרען: שאַ, שטיל...

Hush, silence, the rebbe is about to sing!  
His melodies are so tuneful and so sweet  
And all the chassidim beat time with their feet.

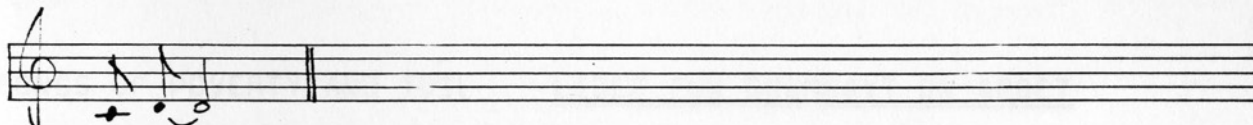
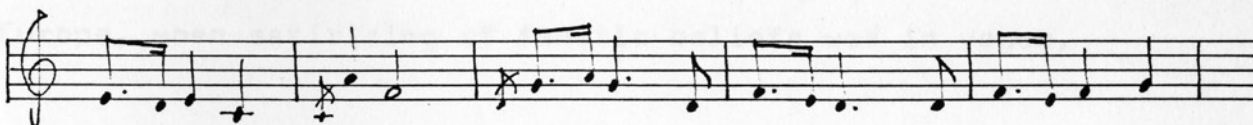
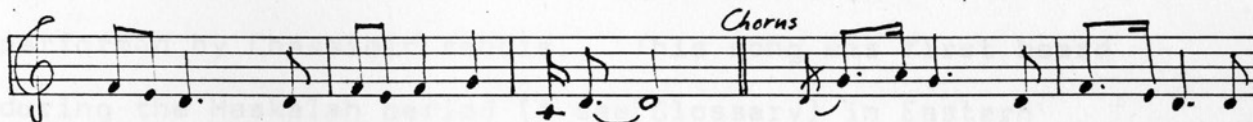
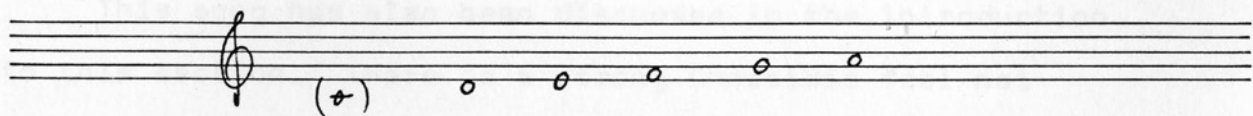
Hush, silence, when the rebbe dances,  
The walls and the table seem to dance along with him  
And all the Chassidim clap their hands in rhythm.

## 40

VOS FARSHTEYSTU, FILOZOF? וואס פֿאַרשטײסטו, פֿילאָזאָף?  
 What Do you know, philosopher? פֿילאָזאָף?

KUM AHER, DU FILOZOF

Come, my fine philosopher



1. Come, my fine philosopher, you're a trifle dense;  
 Come to rabbi's table here, and get a little sense.
2. You thought up the steamship & you think it quite a notion,  
 Our rabbi spreads her kerchief out and floats across the ocean!
3. So now you've dreamed up the balloon and think you're very spry;  
 Our rabbi scoffs, our rabbi laughs, who needs things to fly?
4. For when our rabbi's all alone and tight-shut doors exclude us,  
 At once he flies up to the sky and there eats "Sholesh-sudes".\*

\* sholesh-sudes: Whether or not the Jew of the Pale ate at all during the week, on the Sabbath it was his duty to eat thrice. Shalosh-S'udot (Hebrew) was the third meal.

Yiddish text for verse 2: (transliteration)

A damf-shif hostu oysgetracht  
 Un nemst zich mit dem iber.  
 Der Rebe shpreyt zayn tichl oys  
 Un shpant dem yam ariber!

40 Vos farshteystu, filozof?

or

Kum aher, du filozof!

'What do you know philosopher?'

or

'Come, my fine philosopher'

This song has also been discussed in the introduction to this section. There is a strong Chassidic feel not only in the sentiments expressed in the text, but also in the refrain which is built on the sounds Ba-bim. ba-bam, ba-bim, ba-bam. The accent is placed each time on the second syllable, thus: ba-bím, ba-bám, in a dotted rhythm. This humorous song is a satire upon the alleged miracles performed by Chassidic rabbis. This song was first heard during the Haskalah period (\* see Glossary) in Eastern Europe, when satirizing of fanatic beliefs was in vogue.

SONGS OF POVERTY AND TOIL

LIDER FUN OREMKAYT UN ARBET

sung by both men and women

41 Ot azoy neyt a shneider

'Thus sews a tailor'

This wellknown tailor song was first heard about mid-nineteenth-century. The first two verses belong to the period '... of the independent handicraftsmen' (RUTH RUBIN 1964 : 86). The third verse was added in the 1880s during the struggle for the ten-hour day. ('A year ago, we all worked late. Never again! - now from eight to eight!'). The fourth verse indicates a successful strike, 'we work no more fun acht biz acht!/ from eight to eight'.

42 Mashines klapn

'Machines clatter'

Machines clatter, roar, and ring .... 'a new song to you I'll sing ...' The text continues: 'With a needle or without, I do my sewing with great pride. A song (A lidl) sings the new tailor, a tailor song about the conveyor.' One presumes that this refers to a conveyor belt in a factory. 'Sew, then, women, sew with spirit,/ Jackets, jackets, more and more'.

43 Zuntik bulves

'Potatoes'

Potatoes were the staple diet of poor homes in Russia and Eastern Europe. This song, with humour, bemoans the monotony of the daily meals which invariably consisted of potatoes. The text and music of Bulves was published in 1911 by S. Kisselgof. Meir Noy, a folklorist of Israel, published an interesting and unknown version of this song which was apparently popular among Jewish soldiers in the Austro-hungarian Army during World War I. One stanza in addition to the bulves-refrain, is: 'Must one only eat meat and have a fat belly? In times of poverty potatoes are also a delicacy.'

44 Hemerl, hemerl

'The hammer'

Hemerl, hemerl, klap ('Strike, little hammer, strike!')

was unknown to me until I heard it sung by Dr Percy Gersholowitz of Cape Town. It is the song of a poor cobbler. His meagre

existence is dependent on the work he is able to find, and he is desperate to complete a job on the shoes of the rich man's daughter, which have to be ready without fail the next day. This song attained popularity as a worker's song in Europe and the U S A.

45 Ikh bin a balagole

'I am a wagon-driver'

In this song of a wagoner ('balagole'), the driver travels alone, and lets his imagination run wild. First he imagines that a band of thieves are chasing his wagon, then he imagines a wagon load of women cackling like hens .... One can almost feel him coaxing on the horses with the cry 'vyo-vyo-vyo! 'Vyo-vyo ....'

46 Mayn yingele

'My little boy'

The text is based on the poem by Morris Rosenfeld (1862-1923) the poet of the immigrant "sweatshops"\* of New York. This is one of the most popular songs about Jewish immigrants to America. Masses of Jews had come over from Eastern Europe to seek their fortunes, and were daily becoming more and more disillusioned with the stark reality of the sweatshops. Rosenfeld, who himself was a worker in a sweatshop, was distressed at how seldom he could manage to see his own child: '... at night when I come home from work, he is already asleep.' This song is full of anguish and frustration. The poet and his wife are depressed. The child opens his eyes: 'Where is Papa?'

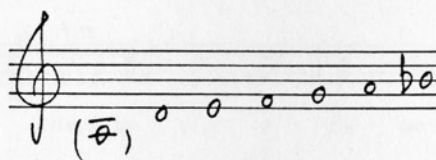
(\* "sweatshops": overcrowded, underventilated clothing factories)

41

OT AZOY NEXT  
A SHNAYDER

Thus sews a tailor

טוֹרְמַן אַ שְׂרַיִט צוֹרֵךְ



*Fine*

*D.C.*

## 41

OT AZOY NEYT A SHNAYDER  
THUS SEWS A TAILOR

אַט אַזוי נייט אַ שניידער

Con moto ♩ = 72

Am

Ot a - zoy neyt a shnay - der, ot a - zoy neyt er dokh,

D<sup>7</sup> Fine

ot a - zoy neyt a shnay - der, ot a - zoy neyt er dokh.

Am

Neyt un neyt a gan - tse vokh, far - dint a gil - dn mit a lokh...

Da Capo al Fine

Ot azoy neyt a shnayder,  
Ot azoy neyt er dokh:  
Neyt un neyt a gantse vokh -  
Fardint a gildn mit a lokh...

אַט אַזוי נייט אַ שניידער,  
אַט אַזוי נייט ער דאָך:  
נייט און נייט אַ גאַנצע וואָך -  
פאַרדינט אַ גילדן מיט אַ לאָך...

Ot azoy neyt a shnayder,  
Ot azoy neyt er git;  
Ven di mame volt es visn,  
Vi ikh lig do on a kishn.

אַט אַזוי נייט אַ שניידער,  
אַט אַזוי נייט ער גיט!<sup>1</sup>  
ווען די מאַמע וואַלט עס וויסן,  
ווי איך ליג דאָ אָן אַ קישן.

Ot azoy neyt a shnayder,  
Ot azoy varft er shtekh;  
A shnayder neyt, un neyt, un neyt,  
Un hot kadokhes, nit keyn breyt;

אַט אַזוי נייט אַ שניידער,  
אַט אַזוי וואַרפט ער שטעך;  
אַ שניידער נייט, און נייט און נייט,  
און האָט קדחת ניט קיין ברייט.<sup>2</sup>

This is the way a tailor sews, this  
is how he really sews! He sews and  
sews the whole week long, /and earns  
a penny and a song. A tailor sews to  
earn his bread/ but gets misery instead!

42

MASHINES KLAPN  
Machines clatter

קלאפן מאשינעס

The musical score is handwritten and consists of three systems of staves. The first system features a treble clef, a key signature of one flat (B-flat), and a single note on the staff. The second system contains two staves of rhythmic notation, primarily using eighth and sixteenth notes. The third system also contains two staves of rhythmic notation, including first and second endings marked with '1.' and '2.'.

43

# BULVES

POTATOES

בולבעס

The musical score is handwritten and consists of three systems of staves. The first system features a treble clef, a key signature of one flat (B-flat), and a 2/4 time signature. The melody is written on a single staff with notes and rests. The second system contains three staves of music, likely for different instruments or voices, showing a more complex rhythmic pattern with eighth and sixteenth notes. The third system continues the three-staff arrangement with further melodic and rhythmic development.

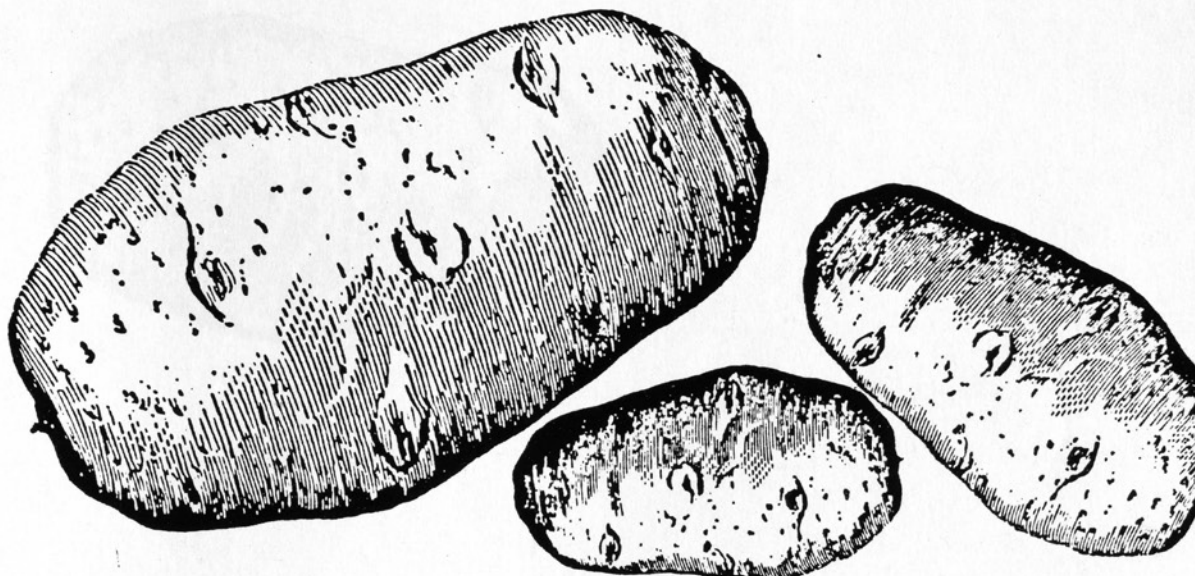
43

## BULBES

Potatoes

Lively

Dm Dm Dm A  
 Zun - tik - bul - bes, Mon - tik - bul - bes, Din - stik un mit - vokh  
 Dm F C F  
 bul - bes, Do - ner - shtik un fray - tik - - bul - bes,  
 A7 Dm Bb  
 Sha - bes in a no - ve - ne - a bul - be - ku - ge - le,  
 Dm A7 Dm  
 Zun - tik — vay - ter — bul - bes!



## 43 (i)

Zuntik — bulbes,  
 Montik — bulbes,  
 Dinstik un mitvokh — bulbes,  
 Donershtik un fraytik — bulbes,  
 Shabes in a novene — a bulbe-kugele,  
 Zuntik — vayter bulbes!

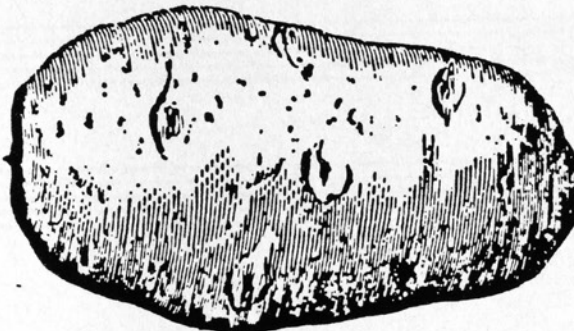
Broyt mit bulbes,  
 Fleysh mit bulbes,  
 Varemes un vetshere — bulbes,  
 Ober un vider — bulbes.  
 Eyn mol in a novene — a bulbe-kugele,  
 Zuntik — vayter bulbes!

*Sunday — potatoes,  
 Monday — potatoes,  
 Tuesday and Wednesday — potatoes,  
 Thursday and Friday — potatoes.  
 But on Saturday for a change — a potato pudding!  
 Sunday — potatoes again.*

**בולבעס**

זונטיק — בולבעס,  
 מאַנטיק — בולבעס,  
 דינסטיק און מיטוואַך — בולבעס,  
 דאָנערשטיק און פֿרייטיק — בולבעס,  
 שבת אין אַ נאָווענע — אַ בולבע־קוגעלע,  
 זונטיק — ווייטער בולבעס!

ברויט מיט בולבעס,  
 פֿלייש מיט בולבעס,  
 וואַרעמעס און וועמשיערע — בולבעס,  
 אָבער און ווידער — בולבעס,  
 איין מאל אין אַ נאָווענע — אַ בולבע־קוגעלע,  
 זונטיק — ווייטער בולבעס!



44

HEMERL, HEMERL  
Oh, little hammer

אָ קלענער האַמער

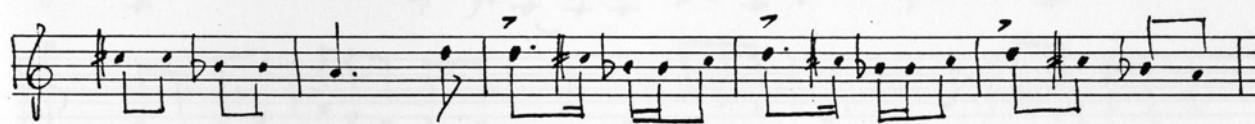
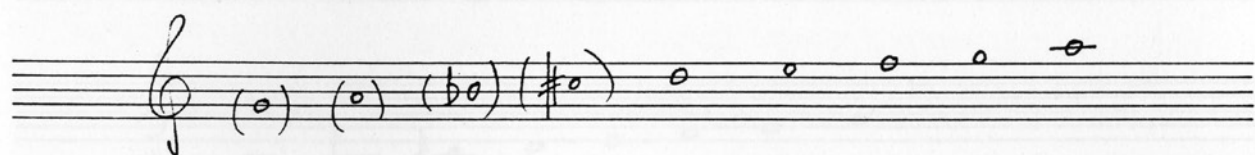
The musical score is written on a grand staff consisting of three five-line staves. The top staff is empty. The middle staff begins with a treble clef and contains a melodic line with a key signature of one sharp (F#) and a common time signature (C). The notes are: C4 (quarter), D4 (quarter), E4 (quarter), F#4 (quarter), G4 (quarter), A4 (quarter), B4 (quarter), C5 (quarter), B4 (quarter), A4 (quarter), G4 (quarter), F#4 (quarter), E4 (quarter), D4 (quarter), C4 (quarter). A fermata is placed over the final C4. The bottom staff contains a bass line with notes: C3 (quarter), D3 (quarter), E3 (quarter), F#3 (quarter), G3 (quarter), A3 (quarter), B3 (quarter), C4 (quarter), B3 (quarter), A3 (quarter), G3 (quarter), F#3 (quarter), E3 (quarter), D3 (quarter), C3 (quarter). A fermata is placed over the final C3. The piece concludes with a double bar line and a '7' time signature. There are several empty staves below the main score.

45

# ICH BIN A BALEGOLE

I am a wagon-driver

איך בין א בעלעגולה



46

## MAYN YINGELE

My little boy

מֵינְיֵגֶלֶךְ מִיָּד

Handwritten musical score for "Mayn Yingle" (My little boy). The score is written on four staves. The first staff shows a treble clef and a key signature of one sharp (F#). The second staff contains a sequence of notes with some handwritten annotations: a note with a bar over it and a circled '6' below it, followed by notes with flats and sharps. The third and fourth staves contain a more complex melodic line with various note values, rests, and accidentals. The piece concludes with a double bar line on the fourth staff.

46

## MAYN YINGELE

## My Little Boy

Lyrically

Dm A Gm  
 Ikh hob a kley-nem yin-ge-le, zu-he-le gor  
 A Dm Dm  
 fayn! Ven ikh der-ze im, dakht zikh mir, Di  
 Bb A A7  
 gan-tse velt iz mayn. Nor zel-tn, zel tn  
 Dm A  
 ze ikh im, Mayn shey-nem, ven er vakht, Ikh  
 A7 Dm Gm A  
 tref im i-mer shlo-fn-dik, Ikh ze im nor bay nakht.



## 46 (i)

Ikh hob a kleynem yingele,  
A zunele gor fayn!  
Ven ikh derze im, dakht zikh mir,  
Di gantse velt iz mayn.

Nor zeltn, zeltn ze ikh im,  
Mayn sheynem, ven er vakht,  
Ikh tref im imer shlofnidik,  
Ikh ze im nor bay nakht.

Di arbet traybt mikh fri aroys,  
Un lozt mikh shpet tsurik;  
O, fremd iz mir mayn eygn layb,  
O, fremd mayn kinds a blik!

Ikh kum tseklemterheyt aheym.  
In fintsternish gehilt —  
Mayn bleykhe froy dertseylt mir bald  
Vi fayn dos kind zikh shpilt.

Vi zis es redt, vi klug es fregt:  
— O mame, gute ma,  
Ven kumt un brengt a peni mir,  
Mayn guter, guter pa?

Ikh shtey bay zayn gelegerl  
Un ze, un her, un sha!  
A troym bavegt di lipelkh:  
— O, vu iz, vu iz pa?

Ikh kush di bloye eygelekh,  
Zey efenen zikh — o, kind!  
Zey zeen mikh, zey zeen mikh  
Un shlisn zikh geshvind.

Ikh blayb tseyvtogt un tseklemt,  
Farbitert un ikh kler:  
Ven du dervakhst a mol, mayn kind,  
Gefinstu mikh nit mer...

*I have a little boy,  
Such a fine son!  
When I look at him, it seems to me  
That the whole world is mine.*

*It's seldom though  
That I see my boy awake,  
For I always find him sleeping  
And see him only at night.*

*My job drives me from home at dawn  
And lets me return only late,  
So that I hardly know  
My own child's looks.*

*My pale wife tell me  
How nicely the child plays,*

*How sweetly he speaks,  
How cleverly he asks:  
Oh, Mama, when will dear Papa  
Come and bring me a penny?*

*I stand beside his little bed  
And hear him ask sleepily:  
"Oh where, oh where  
Is my papa?"*

*I kiss the little blue eyes.  
They open,  
Look at me  
And quickly close again.*

*Depressed and embittered,  
I think to myself:  
One day, when you awake, my child,  
You will not find me anymore.*

## מיין יינגעלע

איך האָב אַ קליינעם יינגעלע,  
אַ זונעלע גאָר פֿיין  
ווען איך דערזע אים, דאַכט זיך מיר,  
די גאַנצע וועלט איז מיין.

נאָר זעלטן, זעלטן זע איך אים,  
מיין שיינעם, ווען ער וואַכט,  
איך טרעף אים אימער שלאָפֿנדיק,  
איך זע אים נאָר בני נאָכט.

די אַרבעט טרייבט מיך פֿרי אַרויס  
און לאָזט מיך שפּעט צוריק;  
אַ פֿרעמד איז מיר מיין אייגן לייב,  
אַ פֿרעמד מיין קינדס אַ בליק.

איך קום צעקלעמטערהייט אַהיים,  
אין פֿינצטערניש געהילט —  
מיין בלייכע פֿרוי דערציילט מיר באַלד  
ווי פֿיין דאָס קינד זיך שפּילט.

ווי זיס עס רעדט, ווי קלוג עס פֿרעגט:  
— אַ מאַמע, גוטע מאַ,  
ווען קומט און ברענגט אַ פעני מיר,  
מיין גוטער, גוטער פֿאָ?

איך שטיי בני זיין געלעגערל  
און זע, און הער און שאַן  
אַ טרוים באַוועגט די ליפּעלעך:  
— אַ וווּ איז, וווּ איז פֿאָ?

איך קוש די בלויע אייגעלעך;  
זיי עפֿענען זיך — אַ, קינדו  
זיי זעען מיך, זיי זעען מיך  
און שליסן זיך געשווינד.

איך בלייב צעווייטאַגט און צעקלעמט,  
פֿאַרביטערט און איך קלער:  
ווען דו דערוואַכסט אַ מאָל, מיין קינד,  
געפֿינסטו מיך ניט מער ...

## CONSCRIPT AND SOLDIERS' SONGS

REKRUTN UN SOLDATN-LIDER

sung by men or women

47 Az Nikolay iz keyzer gevorn

This song is about military service in the Czar's army, sung by a young Jew who was snatched away and pressed into army service for twenty-five years. As explained in the introduction to this section, young boys were often taken by force, in order to make up the 'quota' for the district. Heartbroken parents would, without warning, lose all contact with their sons. This fifteen-verse song, describing the czar's cruel edict and how it was carried out, ends with the following words:

Zayt zhe mir gezunt, mayn foter un miter/'Goodbye, my father and mother'/ Ikh gey shoy n avek far a moskviter/'I am going away with a Russian'/ Gott zol aykh gebn gezunt/G-d should keep you well/ Un mir a gliklekhn veg!/'And to me a fortunate path'/ Vos zhe vet aykh helfen ayer geveyn/'What will it help to cry ...'/ Ikh gey zikh nit aleyn/'I am not going alone'.

48 Yoske fort avek

'Yoske departs'

This is a dialogue between Yoske and his young lady. She is making sure that he has a strong pair of boots; the train is about to come, they snatch a kiss and another kiss. He tells her not to cry, he will prove himself to be the finest soldier. It begins to snow, a zaverukhe ('snowstorm') is threatening, and 'Oy,oy. Oy-oy'- Yoske fort avek: Yoske will depart very soon.

48

YOSKE FORT AVEK יאסקע פֿארט אַוועק

47

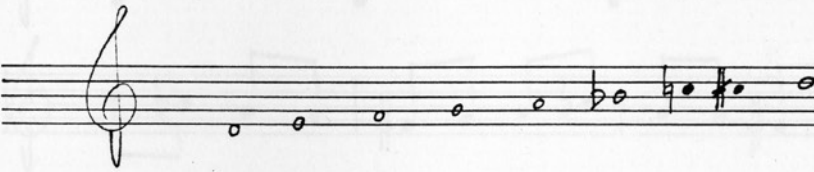
*Yoske departs*

*אָנעק*

*Az Nikolay iz Keyser  
gevorn*

*אַז ניקאָלאַי אַז  
קיסר געוואָרן*

WHEN NIKOLAI BECAME CZAR



*(Ich will sehr bald forsen, der arische in der  
sotel)  
\* (snyz/forser) - a nickname by which Jews  
called the Russians.  
Ich will, Yoske departs.  
Soon, quite soon, the truth will leave.*

48

# YOSKE FORT AVEK

Yoske departs

יֹאסְקֵי  
אָוועק  
פֿאָר  
דער  
אַרעב

The musical score consists of four staves. The first staff shows a key signature change from one flat (B-flat) to one sharp (F-sharp). The second and third staves contain vocal lines with lyrics written below the notes. The fourth staff continues the melody. The lyrics are: 'oy. oy. oy. oy.' and 'oy. oy.'.

## YOSKE FORT AVEK

She: Don't buy me presents  
Get yourself good boots.  
The train is here already  
Oy, oy, oy Yoske is going away

He: Don't cry, don't weep, my beloved  
I will long for you!  
You will still see me as the best soldier  
in the brigade

(Ich vel zayn bay fonyen\* der ershte in der rote!)

\*fonye/fonyen = a nickname by which Jews  
called the Russians

Oh! oh! Yoske departs.  
Soon, quite soon, the train will leave.

49

## FONYE GANEV

פֿוֹנְיֶה גאַנעװ

In the Czarist army

FONYE GANEV  
In the Czarist army

Folk song, published by M. Beregovski & I. Feffer in 1938. It is a song of the Jewish soldier, contrasting the bitter life in the Czarist army with home.

Outside it is raining/ and muddy/ and today they recruited me/ for the army.  
My mother used to feed me/ milk and butter/ And now I must serve the Czar - how bitter is my lot!  
My teacher taught me Khumesh and Rashi\*  
And now I must serve/ for borscht and kashe.\*

\* Khumesh (Chumash) & Rashi: 5 Books of Moses, and commentaries by Rabbi Solomon Yitzchaki (11th cent) who was known as Rashi.

49 Fonye Ganev

'In the Czarist Army'

This folksong was published by M. Beregovski and I. Feffer in 1938. As has been explained earlier, the word Fonye is the name given to 'a Russian soldier'. The word ganev, however, means thief, and the Refrain of this song - Fonye, fonye ganev, fonye, fonye, ganev - serves to explain the attitude of this recruit to his army service. He, who has been brought up on 'milkh mit puter' ('milk and butter') is dreading the thought of harsh army discipline.

## SONGS OF WORLD WAR II:

GHETTO AND PARTISAN SONGS, GETO UN PARTIZANEN-LIDER

STRUGGLE AND RESISTANCE SONGS KAMF UN VIDERSHTAND-LIDER

50 Ani Ma'amin

'I believe'

The transcription which follows bears a short explanation of the Hebrew text of this song. This shining declaration of faith, and of affirmation in the belief of the coming of the Messiah, was sung by Jewish people in the most extreme situations of deprivation and torture during the years of the Holocaust. Victims sang these words even when being led to their deaths.

51 Es brent

'It is burning'

Mordecai Gebirtig wrote Es brent one year before the outbreak of World War II. It was his re-action to the series of riots against Polish Jews that culminated in a pogrom in

Przytik, a little Polish town. Es brent was a dramatic warning of disaster. Scarcely noticed at the time, the 'visionary' character of the song was only realised after the German invasion in 1939, when the world around the Jews of Europe was literally burning. Already in pre-war Poland, Gebirtig had achieved renown for his poems and songs. He was 'the gentle harp of the Polish Jew'. 'It burns, brothers dear, it burns'/ 'Our poor little shtetl is on fire'/. Shtetl meant much more than just 'small town'; it represented a unique way of life centred around family, synagogue and marketplace, focused on Yiddishkeit ('Jewishness') and menshlikhkeit ('humaneness'). Gebirtig sensed the end of the shtetl era. His song was, and still is, a warning of the dangers of passivity in the face of oppression.

## 52 Rivke di Shabesdike

'Rivke'

Rivke di Shabesdike is a song from the Bialystok ghetto. It refers to events of June and July 1941, when the Germans marched into Bialystok, a city in northeast Poland. On a particular Thursday, July 3rd 1941, three hundred Jewish men were taken by trucks to an unknown destination. Two days later on July 5th, a Saturday, a further three thousand were rounded up. They were shot at nearby Pietrasze immediately after being taken from the ghetto. They came to be called the Thursday and Saturday victims, their wives and mothers the Thursday and Saturday widows. The Bialystok ghetto was burned to the ground in 1943. The ghetto inmates fought to the last bullet.

53 Yisrolik

'Yisrolik'

The text of Yisrolik was written by the poet and playwright Lev Rosenthal, and the music by pianist Misha Veksler. It was first performed by Chayele Rosenthal, Lev Rosenthal's sister, at a memorable concert right inside the Vilna ghetto on 18 January 1942. These three - the composer, poet and performer - were important figures in the ghetto's cultural life. Lev Rosenthal died at Dutmergen concentration camp. Veksler, a cripple, who spent the ghetto years in hiding, was eventually shot at the infamous Ponar. Chayele Rosenthal, who survived the war, emigrated to Cape Town after release from the concentration camps. Chayele Rosenthal had a very successful career as an actress. In her later years, she appeared on stage as 'Golda' in 'Fiddler on the Roof' in Cape Town, showing great courage, as she knew she was terminally ill. The story of Chayele and the Vilna ghetto theatre troupe was movingly portrayed in a stage production at the Nico Malan Theatre, Cape Town, in September 1987 entitled "GHETTO" - in which Aviva Pelham played the rôle of Chayele. The song 'Yisrolik' was one of the songs sung, as well as Song 54 (Shtiler, shtiler) and Song 55 (Mir Lebn Eybik).

54 Shtiler, shtiler

'Quiet, quiet'

Although one verse of Shtiler, shtiler is sung on the accompanying cassette, my performance can only approximate

to the interpretation, as one needs a good vocal range to imbue the upper notes with pathos and feeling. It has subsequently come to my notice, in searching through the Weinreich Yiddish/English dictionary, that the word payn which, on the recording, is pronounced pain as in English 'pain', should in fact have been pronounced with 'ay' as in English 'fire'. Yiddish payn means 'anguish'.

Alec Volkoviski wrote the music for Shtiler, shtiler. (He survived the war and internment in a concentration camp, eventually settling in Israel.) At the time he wrote this song, April 1943, the Literary Artistic Circle of the Ghetto in Vilna had launched a 'musical competition' with prizes. Alec Volkoviski, then only eleven years old, won the first prize. Shmuel (or, Shmerke) Kaczerginski later wrote the words. The song begins with 'Quiet, quiet, lets be silent/ Graves are growing here/...' and then the tragedy of Ponar is recounted. Ponar was a wooded area nearby Vilna, which in peaceful times had been a favourite place for relaxation and weekend outings. During the Nazi occupation it became a place of death. It was used as an execution and burial site. Close to eighty thousand people were massacred in the pits of Ponar between 1941 and 1944. Kaczerginski (sometimes 'Katcherginski' in other transliterations) - inspired by the sad melody of child composer Volkoviski - gives voice, in this song, to the anguish of a woman whose husband had been taken to Ponar. The poem also expresses love for a once peaceful Vilna, with its beautiful river Vilya, now enslaved by winter's ice, just as its people are enslaved by oppression of the enemy. In the third and last verse of the song, the mother

sees freedom's reflection in her child's face. Normally, it would take a long time before a 'composed' song would become part of a folklore heritage. But in the ghettos, folklore was created instantly with songs like Shtiler, shtiler. Since the Germans forbade any mention of Ponar in the ghetto, the text of Shtiler, shtiler had to be changed whenever it was sung aloud, but everyone knew the true meaning of the song. Shoshana Kalisch, herself a Holocaust survivor testifies to the popularity of this song (YES, WE SANG!: Songs of the Ghettos and Concentration Camps : Shoshana Kalisch 1985 : p.115).

55 Mir lebn eybik

'We are an eternal people'

The text of this song is by Lev Rosenthal, and the phrase 'mir lebn eybik' became a 'slogan' meaning that even the greatest suffering would not blight the spirit and courage of the people. I have not been able to trace the composer of this song. In a recent edition of Holocaust songs, in Hebrew, published in Israel (1987) by Ghetto Fighters' House, Lev Rosenthal is mentioned as writer of the text, and 'music' is 'unknown' (MIN HAMEITSAR:\* Songs of the Ghettos, Camps and Songs of Revolt : Ghetto Fighters' House, Haifa 1987. In Hebrew) p.68.

56 Zog nit keynmol

'Hymn of the Partisans'

In 1943, when news of the Warsaw ghetto uprising reached the Vilna ghetto, Hirsh Glick wrote 'Zog nit keynmol'

(\*MIN HAMEITSAR: 'Out of The Depths')

50

Ani ma'amin

אני מאמין

(From the prayerbook)

The musical score is written on six staves. The first staff begins with a treble clef, a key signature of one sharp (F#), and a common time signature (C). The melody starts with a whole note G4, followed by quarter notes A4, B4, C5, and D5. A square box containing a Hebrew letter 'א' is placed below the first note. The subsequent staves continue the melody with various rhythmic values, including eighth and sixteenth notes, and rests. The piece concludes with a double bar line.

ANI MA'AMINI believe with perfect faith

(Hebrew text, taken from prayerbook)\*

Ani ma'amin, ani ma'amin, ani ma'a-amin  
 be'emuna shleima beviat ha'moshiach  
 ve af al pi sheyitmameha im kol ze ani  
 ma'amin/ achake lo, bechol yom sheya'vo.

I believe with perfect faith in the  
 coming of the Messiah, and, though he  
 tarry, I wait daily for his coming.

\*The Thirteen Principles  
 of Faith, as formulated by Moses  
 Maimonides in 12th century C.E.

## 50 (i)

Ani ma'amin

אני מאמין

A - NI MA' A-MIN A - NI MA' A-MIN A - NI MA - A  
 - MIN A - NI MA - A MIN BE - E-MU-NA SHE-LE -  
 -MA BE-VI - AT HA-MA - SHI - ACH VE - AF AL PI SHE -  
 -YIT-MA-ME - HA IM KOL ZE A - NI MA - A-MIN IM KOL ZE  
 A-CHA-KE LO BE - CHOL YOM SHE - YA - VO

51

ES BRENT

It burns! Our town is burning.

אונדזער שטעטל  
ברענט

The musical score is written on four staves of treble clef notation. The first staff contains a key signature change from one sharp (F#) to two sharps (F# and C#), indicated by the notes (F#) (C#) (F#) and a common time signature. The second staff begins with a triplet of eighth notes. The third staff features a fermata over a note. The fourth staff concludes with a fermata and a final chord marked with a '7' and a double bar line. The score is surrounded by empty staff lines above and below.

## 51

## UNDZER SHTETL BRENT

Our Town is Burning!

S'-brent! bri-der-lekh, s'-brent! Oy,  
 un-dzer o-rem shte-tl ne-bekh brent.  
 Bey-ze vin-tn mit yir-go-zn Ray-sn, bre-khn un tse-blo-zn  
 Shtar-ker nokh di vil-de fla-men. Alts a-rum shoyn brent.  
 Un ir shteyt un kukt a-zoy zikh. Mit far-leyg-te hent,  
 Un ir shteyt un kukt a-zoy zikh. Un-dzer shte-tl brent...

Chords: Em, B, Am, C, B7, Em, C, B, Em, Am, C, rit. Em, B7, Em.

Tempo: Moderato, rit.

## 51(i)

S'brent! briderlekh, s'brent!  
Oy, undzer orem shtetl nebekh brent!  
Beyze vintn mit yirgozn  
Raysn, brekhn un tseblozn  
Shtarker nokh di vilde flamen,  
Alts arum shoyn brent.

Un ir shteyt un kukt azoy zikh  
Mit farleygte hent  
Un ir shteyt un kukt azoy zikh —  
Undzer shtetl brent . . .

S'brent! briderlekh, s'brent!  
Oy, undzer orem shtetl nebekh brent,  
S'hobn shoyn di fayertsungen  
Dos gantse shtetl ayngeshlungen —  
Un di beyze vintn hudzhen —  
Undzer shtetl brent!

Un ir shteyt un kukt azoy zikh . . .

S'brent! briderlekh, s'brent!  
Oy, es ken kholile kumen der moment:  
Undzer shtot mit undz tsuzamen  
Zol oyf ash avek in flamen,  
Blaybn zol — vi nokh a shlakht,  
Nor puste, shvartse vent!

Un ir shteyt un kukt azoy zikh . . .

S'brent! briderlekh, s'brent!  
Di hilf iz nor in aykh aleyn gevendt.  
Oyb dos shtetl iz aykh tayer,  
Nemt di keylim, lesht dos fayer.  
Lesht mit ayer eygn blut,  
Bavayzt, az ir dos kent.

Shteyt nit, brider, ot azoy zikh  
Mit farleygte hent.  
Shteyt nit, brider, lesht dos fayer —  
Undzer shtetl brent!

*Brothers, our poor town is burning!  
Raging winds are fanning the wild flames  
And furiously tearing,  
Destroying and scattering everything.  
Everything is burning.*

*And you stand by and look on  
With folded arms.  
You stand and look passively on  
While our town is burning.*

*Our town is burning!  
Tongues of flames have almost  
Consumed the whole town.  
And the raging winds howl.*

*The moment is at hand when, God forbid,  
Our town, along with all of us,  
Will be turned to ashes by the flames,  
And only bare, black walls will remain,  
As after a battle.*

*Our town is burning,  
And only you can save it!  
Extinguish the fire with your very blood,  
If you must!*

*Don't just stand there, brothers,  
With folded arms.  
Don't stand, put out the fire!  
Our little town is burning!*



52

## RIFKELE DI SHABESDIKE

Rifkele the Sabbath widow

רִיפֶקֶל

RIFKELE DI SHABESDIKE  
Rifkele, the Sabbath widow

This song is from the Bialystok ghetto, created at a time when circumstances in the ghetto became so oppressive that normal feelings were overshadowed by the daily struggle just to keep alive. There were daily arrests, periodic round-ups, beatings, torture, starvation. This song, imbued with sadness, is a tender expression of a woman's longing for her beloved husband, who had been taken away from her, and her fear for his fate. Rifkele di Shabesdike is about a "Saturday" widow who still hoped for the release of her husband. This song was written by Peysakh Kaplan (1870-1943) who was a Jewish writer and social activist in Bialystok before the war. He was also the chronicler of the Ghetto. His diary was found after the war in the ghetto ruins. During the last years of the ghetto's existence, Peysakh Kaplan lived in hiding under cramped conditions. He witnessed but escaped the February slaughters & deportations. Last entry of his diary: "We go to our death. Avenge us!"

53

## YISROLIK

*Song from the Vilna ghetto*

The musical score is written on a grand staff with three systems of three staves each. The first system includes a vocal line with lyrics in parentheses: (ā) (hō) (♯ō). The music is in a key with one flat (B-flat) and a 7/8 time signature. The second system is labeled 'Refrain:' and continues the melody with similar rhythmic patterns. The score concludes with a double bar line and repeat dots.

YISROLIK

Yisrolik, the hero of this song, is a child peddler from the Vilna ghetto. A boy of eleven, or twelve, he risks his life daily, sneaking outside the walls to gather food and cigarettes in the city, smuggling the goods back inside the ghetto to give to his family and to sell on the ghetto streets. Yisrolik and many other such Yisroliks, roamed the heavily guarded ghetto, they skirted fortified walls, barbed-wire fences, sneaked through sewer pipes and mingled audaciously with spies, Gestapo agents and hostile citizens of the Polish/Lithuanian streets. Many of them were caught and paid with their lives, but they had no alternative, for there was little chance of survival in the ghetto without contraband food, and these undersized children were more likely to succeed in their attempts at smuggling in supplies.

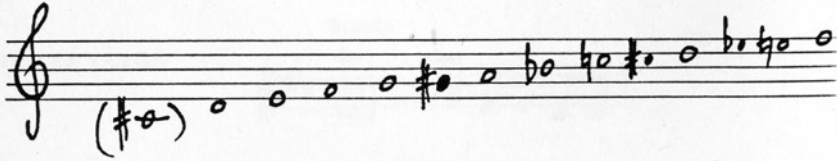
54

## SHTILER SHTILER

שטילער  
שטילער

QUIET QUIET

\* Music: Alec Volkoviski



\* Alec Volkoviski -  
now Alexander Tamir (Jerusalem)  
well known concert pianist

## 54

lyrics – Sh. Katcherginsky  
music – A. Tamir

מלים – שמרקה קוצ'רינסקי  
לחן – אלכסנדר תמיר

SHTILER, SHTILER, LOMIR SHVAYGN  
HUSH, HUSH!

Rubato



## 54 (i)

Shtiler, shtiler, lomir shvaygn -  
 Kvorim vaksn do;  
 S'hobn zey farflantst di sonim.  
 Grinen zey tsum blo...  
 S'firm vegn tsu Ponar tsu,  
 S'firt keyn veg tsurik;  
 Iz der tate vu farshvundn,  
 Un mit im dos glik...  
 Shtiler, kind mayns, veyn nit, oytser,  
 S'helft nit keyn geveyn;  
 Undzer umglik veln sonim  
 Say vi nit farshteyn.  
 S'hobn breges oykh di yamen,  
 S'hobn tfises hoykhe tsamen, -  
 Nor tsu undzer payn  
 Keyn bisl shayn, keyn bisl shayn...

Friling oyfn land gekumen -  
 Un undz harbst gebrakht...  
 Iz der tog haynt ful mit blumen -  
 Undz zet nor di nakht...  
 Goldikt shoyn der harbst oyf shtamen,  
 Blit in undz der tsaar;  
 Blaybt faryosemt vu a mame -  
 S'kind geyt oyf Ponar...  
 Vi di Vilie a geshmidte -  
 T'oykh geyokht in payn -  
 Tsien kries ayz durkh Lite  
 Itst in yam arayn.  
 S'vert der khoyshekh vu tserunen,  
 Fun der fintster laykhtn zunen, -  
 Rayter, kum geshvind,  
 Dikh ruft dayn kind, dikh ruft dayn kind!...

Shtiler, shtiler, s'kveln kvaln  
 Undz in harts arum -  
 Biz der toyer vet nit faln,  
 Zayn mir muzn shtum...  
 Frey nit, kind, zikh, s'iz dayn shmeykhl  
 Itst far undz farrat!  
 Zen dem friling zol der soyne,  
 Vi in harbst a blat!

שטילער, שטילער, לאָמיר שוויגן -  
 קבֿרים וואַקסן דאָ;  
 ס'האָבן זיי פֿאַרפֿלאַנצט די שונאים.  
 גרינען זיי צום בלאָ...  
 ס'פֿירן וועגן צו פּאָנאַר' צו,  
 ס'פֿירט קיין וועג צוריק;  
 איז דער טאַטע וווּ פֿאַרשוונדן  
 און מיט אים דאָס גליק...  
 שטילער, קינד מינס, וויין ניט, אוצר,  
 ס'העלפֿט ניט קיין געוויין;  
 אונדזער אומגליק וועלן שונאים  
 סיי ווי ניט פֿאַרשטיין.  
 ס'האָבן ברעגעס אויך די ימען,  
 ס'האָבן תּפֿיסות אויכעט צאַמען, -  
 נאָר צו אונדזער פּיין  
 קיין ביסל שיינ, קיין ביסל שיינ...

פֿרילינג אויפֿן לאַנד געקומען -  
 און אונדז האַרבסט געבראַכט...  
 איז דער טאָג היינט פֿול מיט בלומען -  
 אונדז זעט נאָר די נאַכט...  
 גאָלדיקט שוין דער האַרבסט אויף שטאַמען,  
 בליט אין אונדז דער צער;  
 בליבט פֿאַריתומט וווּ אַ מאַמע -  
 ס'קינד גייט אויף פּאָנאַר...  
 ווי די וויליע' אַ געשמידטע -  
 ט'אויך געיאָכט אין פּיין -  
 ציען קריעס אייז דורך ליטע  
 איצט אין ים אַרביין.  
 ס'ווערט דער חושך וווּ צערונען,  
 פֿון דער פֿינצטער ליכטען זונען, -  
 רייטער, קום געשווינד,  
 דיך רופֿט דיין קינד, דיך רופֿט דיין קינד!...

שטילער, שטילער, ס'קוועלן קוואַלן  
 אונדז אין האַרץ אַרום -  
 ביז דער טויער וועט ניט פֿאַלן,  
 זיין מיר מוזן שטום...  
 פֿריי ניט, קינד, זיך, ס'איז דיין שמייכל  
 איצט פֿאַר אונדז פֿאַרראַט;  
 זען דעם פֿרילינג זאָל דער שונא,  
 ווי אין האַרבסט אַ בלאַט!

Hush, let us be silent  
 There are graves that grow here,  
 Graves that our foes have planted.  
 There are paths that lead towards them  
 But none that lead away.  
 Somewhere your father has perished  
 And with him our joy.  
 Hush my child, weep not my treasure  
 For tears are of no avail -  
 Our pain is beyond the senses of our foes.  
 The sea has its shore  
 Prisons also have their limits  
 But our anguish perceives no gleam of hope.

55

MIR LEBN EYBIK  
WE ARE AN ETERNAL PEOPLE

מיר לעבן אייביק

The musical score is written on seven staves. The first staff begins with a treble clef and a key signature of one sharp (F#). The melody is written in a simple, rhythmic style. The first line of music consists of a series of quarter notes: F#4, G4, A4, B4, C5, B4, A4, G4, F#4. The subsequent staves contain more complex rhythmic patterns, including eighth and sixteenth notes, and rests. The score concludes with a double bar line on the seventh staff.

The world may smolder, but we will endure  
Despite our foes who crave our destruction.  
We will endure!

Text: L. Rosenthal

We are an eternal people.  
No matter how wretched the season, the hour,  
We will endure!

## 55 (i)

MIR LEBN EYBIK  
WE ARE AN ETERNAL PEOPLE

מיר לעבן אייביק

Allegretto ♩ = 120

Text: L. Rosenthal ל. ראזענטאל טעקסט:

Cm G

Mir le - bn ey - bik. Es brent a velt.

Cm

Mir le - bn ey - bik on a gro - shn gelt.

Fm Cm

Un oyf tse - pi - ke - nish, di a - le so - nim,

Fm

vos vi - ln undz far - shvar - tsn und - zer po - nim;

G

mir le - bn ey - bik, mir zay - nen do.

Cm

Mir le - bn ey - bik, in ye - der sho.

F Cm

Mir vi - ln le - bn un der - le - bn, shlekh - te

Fm G Db<sup>7</sup> Cm

tsay - tn a - ri - ber le - bn, mir le - bn ey - bik, mir zay - nen do.

---

 We will endure!

56

ZOG NIT KEYN MOL! זאג ניט קײן מױל  
 Hymn of the Partisans

The image shows a handwritten musical score for the hymn 'Zog Nit Keyn Mol!'. It consists of four staves of music. The first staff is a treble clef with a key signature of one sharp (F#) and a common time signature (C). The melody begins with a whole note G4, followed by a half note A4, and then a quarter note B4. The second staff continues the melody with eighth notes. The third staff features a more complex rhythmic pattern with eighth and sixteenth notes. The fourth staff concludes the piece with a double bar line and a repeat sign, indicating two endings (1. and 2.).

ZOG · NIT · KEYNMOL ·

Hirsh Glik, poet and partisan, was born in Vilna in 1920. During the German occupation, while confined to a concentration camp, he wrote several poems which won him a prize in the Vilna ghetto. In 1943, all the Jews from that camp were brought to Vilna, and Glik joined the Partisans. At that time, inspired by the Warsaw ghetto uprising, he wrote this song; it was immediately chosen as the official hymn of the Jewish underground partisan brigades. When the ghetto was liquidated, Glik was caught by the Gestapo and sent to a concentration camp in Estonia. During the Red Army's offensive in the Baltic area, Glik escaped from the camp to nearby woods, where he died fighting the Germans.

This song had an instant, immense impact and spread rapidly through the ghetto. People sang it in attics, cellars and underground hideouts. They hummed its tune in the presence of German guards, and during slave labour work. The song spread from Vilna to other ghettos and then to concentration camps; it became a source of new hope. Many of Hirsh Glik's poems were written to well-known Jewish tunes of Russia and Poland. Such is the case of "Zog nit keyn mol" which is set to a Russian melody written by the Pokras brothers.

56

# ZOG NIT KEYN MOL!

## Hymn of the Partisans

With spirit

A Dm  
 Zog nit keyn mol az du geyst dem lets-tn veg, Khotsh him-len  
 C F D7  
 blay - e - ne far-shte - In bloy - e teg, ku - men  
 Cm D7 Gm  
 vet nokh un - dzer oys - ge - benk - te sho — S'vet a  
 Dm A7 1. Dm D7 2. Dm  
 poyk ton un - dzer trot-mir zay - nen do! Ku - men do!



## 56 (i)

Poem by Hirsh Glik (1922-1944), music by Dmitri Pokrass. The song became the hymn of the United Partisan Organization in 1943. It spread to all the camps in Eastern Europe and later to all Jewish communities the world over. It was translated into several languages. Today it is sung at memorial meetings for martyred Jews. Published by Yehude Ayzman in 1945.

Zog nit keyn mol az du geyst dem letstn veg,  
Khotsh himlen blayene farshteln bloye teg.  
Kumen vet nokh undzer oysgebenkte sho —  
S'vet a poyk ton undzer trot — mir zaynen do!

Fun grinem palmenland biz vaysn land fun shney,  
Mir kumen on mit undzer payn, mit undzer vey,  
Un vu gefaln s'iz a shprits fun undzer blut,  
Shprotsn vet dort undzer gvure, undzer mut.

S'vet di morgnzun bagildn undz dem haynt,  
Un der nekhtn vet farshvindn mitn faynd,  
Nor oyb farzamen vet di zun in dem kayor —  
Vi a parol zol geyn dos lid fun dor tsu dor.

Dos lid geshribn iz mit blut un nit mit blay,  
S'iz nit keyn lidl fun a foygl af der fray,  
Dos hot a folk tsvishn falndike vent  
Dos lid gezungen mit naganes in di hent!

To zog nit keyn mol az du geyst dem letstn veg,  
Khotsh himlen blayene farshteln bloye teg.  
Kumen vet nokh undzer oysgebenkte sho —  
S'vet a poyk ton undzer trot — mir zaynen do!

Never say that you are going your last way,  
Though lead-filled skies above blot out the blue  
of day.  
The hour for which we long will certainly appear,  
The earth shall thunder 'neath our tread that we  
are here!

From lands of green palm trees to lands all white  
with snow,  
We are coming with our pain and with our woe,  
And where'er a spurt of our blood did drop,  
Our courage will again sprout from that spot.

For us the morning sun will radiate the day,  
And the enemy and past will fade away,  
But should the dawn delay or sunrise wait too  
long,  
Then let all future generations sing this song.

This song was written with our blood and not with  
lead,  
This is no song of free birds flying overhead,  
But a people amid crumbling walls did stand,  
They stood and sang this song with rifles held in  
hand.

### זאָג ניט קיין מאָל!

זאָג ניט קיין מאָל אָז דו גייסט דעם לעצטן וועג,  
כאַטש הימלען בליענע פאַרשמעלן בלויע טעג,  
קומען וועט נאָך אונדזער אויסגעבענקטע שעה —  
ס'וועט אַ פּויק טאָן אונדזער טראַט — מיר זיינען דאָ!

פֿון גרינעם פאַלמענלאַנד ביז ווייסן לאַנד פֿון שניי,  
מיר קומען אָן מיט אונדזער פֿיין, מיט אונדזער וויי,  
און וווּ געפֿאַלן ס'איז אַ שפּריץ פֿון אונדזער בלוט,  
שפּראַצן וועט דאָרט אונדזער גבורה, אונדזער מוט.

ס'וועט די מאָרגנוון באַגילדן אונדז דעם היינט,  
און דער נעכטן וועט פאַרשווינדן מיטן פֿיינד,  
נאָך אויב פאַרזאַמען וועט די זון אין דעם קאַיאָר —  
ווי אַ פאַראַל זאָל גיין דאָס ליד פֿון דור צו דור.

דאָס ליד געשריבן איז מיט בלוט און ניט מיט בליי,  
ס'איז ניט קיין לידל פֿון אַ פֿויגל אויף דער פֿריי,  
דאָס האָט אַ פֿאַלק צווישן פֿאַלנדיקע ווענט  
דאָס ליד געזונגען מיט נאַנאַנעס אין די הענט!

סאָ זאָג ניט קיין מאָל אָז דו גייסט דעם לעצטן וועג,  
כאַטש הימלען בליענע פאַרשמעלן בלויע טעג,  
קומען וועט נאָך אונדזער אויסגעבענקטע שעה —  
ס'וועט אַ פּויק טאָן אונדזער טראַט — מיר זיינען דאָ!

(Never say you've come to the end of the way...) . Through this song he became not only a legend, but a symbol of faith and spiritual defiance. Even in his early poetry, when he was only eighteen years old, e.g. in Amol ('Once Upon a Time') which he wrote in 1940, when Vilna was not yet under German occupation, he foresaw impending tragedy. Hirsh Glick was extremely courageous, having been imprisoned, as well as interned (in 1943) in several concentration camps, all with appalling conditions - Nara, Kiviali, Azari and finally Goldpilz. He also served in a 'turf' camp (in a swamp) about fourteen kilometres from Vilna. Friends have told how, while cutting and carrying heavy loads of turf, ordinarily carried by horses, Hirsh Glick would search for a dry place, sit for a minute, and begin to improvise words for a song. He perished in 1944 at the age of twenty-four.

Each year in April, at the Jewish Cemetery in Cape Town, a solemn ceremony is held to mark Yom Ha'shoa v'Hagvura (Day of Remembrance for the Holocaust and Resistance). This public meeting is always well-attended, and usually closes with the communal singing of Zog nit keynmol.

\* \* \* \* \*

PART TWO  
CHAPTER 2

STRUCTURAL AND ANALYTIC ASPECTS OF AFRICAN MUSICAL

**PART 2**

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The nature and content of ethnomusicological research depends upon the individual researcher's personal background, and the nature of the subject of study. The vast amount of ethnomusicological and ethnological literature available on African and Asian musical traditions in particular, demonstrates that researchers have concentrated on one or more of several areas of study. These have been summarized and discussed by cultural scientist Claude Lévi-Strauss in a relatively recent publication (1967) in which he proposes what he calls 'an integrated approach...' that '... establishes a framework for analysis dominated ... through simple studies of the Malawian musical genres' (1967, p. 10).

Although Lévi-Strauss is essentially an Africanist (and not all of his research work has been on African music), his proposed analytical framework is both valid and useful for research in any music culture and would seem. The study areas are:

- (a) Musicology:- the study of genres and styles of music, formal and structural features, and the social contexts used in musical performance.
- (b) Sociology/Anthropology:- the study of the socio-cultural contexts of music, i.e. the relationships

## PART TWO

### CHAPTER 2

#### STRUCTURAL AND STYLISTIC ASPECTS OF YIDDISH FOLKSONGS

The nature and content of any cultural/musical research depends upon the individual researcher's personal background, and interest in his/her chosen subject of study. The vast amount of ethnomusicological and ethnological literature available on African and Asian musical traditions in particular, demonstrates that researchers have concentrated on one or more of several areas of study. These have been summarized and discussed by cultural scientist Gerhard Kubik in a relatively recent publication (1987)<sup>1</sup> in which he proposes what he calls (and has himself adopted) an '...integrated study approach...' that '... establishes a framework for analysis demonstrated ... through sample studies of five Malawian musical genres' (1987: 1).

Although Kubik is essentially an Africanist (most, but not all of his research work has been on African musics), his proposed analytical framework is both valid and useful for research in any music culture the world over. The study areas are:

- (a) Musicology:- the study of genres and styles of music; formal and structural traits, and the sound instruments used in musical performances;
- (b) Sociology/Anthropology:- the study of the socio-cultural contexts of music i.e. the relationship

- between musical structures and social ones, and the uses and functions of music within the chosen music area;
- (c) History:- a survey of the music history of a chosen culture, including the invention and development of sound instruments, performance styles, and techniques, from where they possibly came, and how they have changed;
- (d) Psychology:- the study of the learning and understanding processes of music-making ('the cognitive dimensions of music') and 'the meaning music has for individuals';
- (e) Linguistics:- the study of music/language inter-relationships, and linguistic aspects of technical terminology and nomenclature associated with genres, styles, instruments and diverse forms of musical behaviour);
- (f) Literature Science:- the study of the literary aspects of music-making e.g. song texts, epic poetry, praise poetry (as a non-musical category in certain African societies), genealogies \*<sup>2</sup> etc.
- (g) Choreography and theatre science:- the interrelationship between musical performance, dance and theatre (i.e. 'studying music as part of a wider range of the performing arts').

In defining these study areas, Kubik is careful to point out that '... a researcher may at one time or another, focus upon, or move away from, any of these areas of study and change his methods accordingly.'

With the exception of study areas (c) and (d) \*<sup>3</sup> most of the major studies in African musics are based on one or other, or combinations of the aforementioned areas of study.

Basic to Kubik's outline of a framework for the study and analysis of music is what he himself has described as an 'intracultural' or 'emic' approach, denoting the study of a people and their music, on the basis of concepts, categories and evaluations and descriptions found in THEIR language. This approach has been adopted by a number of ethnomusicologists who have either known the language of the people concerned in their research, or else have made the effort to learn the language. In summing up his proposed general analytical framework, Kubik states that it '..really accommodates any kind of methodology i.e. any kind of angle from which to look as research material. A flexible researcher will avoid getting into a "methodological fixation" by creating self-imposing barriers. He will, instead, opt for exchanges with his colleagues, sometimes totally reversing his/her standpoint and generally welcome the virtues of an interdisciplinary approach'. Finally, Kubik makes the following observation: 'No matter what methodology one employs, one thing is commendable at any stage of one's research effort: it is necessary to declare what one is doing. Such honesty pays in the end and also facilitates the evaluation of sources by future generations' (op. cit.: 84; underlinings mine).

The purpose of this study is to make an ethnomusicological study of Yiddish folksong styles. I believe that the description 'ethnomusicological study' is justified, since I have concentrated on the historical, sociological and literary aspects of my subject. I have also chosen to examine the songs I selected by groups or genres -

which is generally accepted in ethnomusicological scholarship because it is in accordance with 'emic' or 'folk' classifications. I have provided the songs with regional, historical and sociological aspects of data that I have been able to research. It is the genre principle that allows an examination of song types in close association with their original social and cultural function - an examination that shows their textual content and/or allusions, and certain structural musical elements at the same time.

All the songs I have selected for this study, have appeared in some of the many collections that have been made. Most of them are in the form of anthologies, but they are largely incomplete, and as yet a large quantity of the songs have not been published, and those that have, do not have a wide distribution. What is more, most of the music has not been systematized on a modern, scholarly level. The result is - as I have found out during my research - that there is an insufficient amount of song material with which to work, and from which one may attempt to identify particular traits of genres, let alone links and relations between them, and ultimately arrive at some conclusions about the predominant musical features of Yiddish folksong.

There are to date no 'synthesizing' studies, as a whole, of Yiddish folksong; because of this, and also because of the non-availability AND non-accessibility of adequate and reliable data and song material (which I discuss shortly)

I have been forced to realise the limits of my study, as far as musicological aspects are concerned. Rather than make generalizations on the basis of insufficient and imperfect material, I feel that it is important to state the main reasons why this study is inevitably deficient in the amount of technical musical data it contains, and that I am unable to do anything about the situation.

Early attempts to collect Jewish folksongs have been referred to in Chapter 1, Part One. \*<sup>4</sup> Several collections were made by Cahan, Idelsohn, Engel and others; these are collections which deserve attention in that they were pioneering efforts, although the collected material was provided with a limited amount of information that is largely descriptive.

The first scholarly collection of Eastern European folksongs was made by Moshe Beregovski (1892-1961), whose work as a pioneer ethnomusicologist is acknowledged by American ethnomusicologist Mark Slobin (who rightly states that Beregovski '... must stand before us as a significant but neglected ethnomusicologist of his day whose subject was the folk music of the Eastern European Jews' (Slobin ed. 1982: page 8). Moshe Beregovski's writings, which were collated and translated by Slobin, constitute my main source of reference on Eastern European folksong musicology.

In presenting these songs for analyses of their structural and stylistic aspects, I transposed all the melodies into the same tone range, in order to identify, compare and contrast the different scales in which the melodies are set. The original song "scores" which I collected appear in a variety of keys by different arrangers and transcribers, complete with key-signatures and chord symbols indicating the harmonic progressions to be played on an accompanying instrument: ( e.g. piano, and also the guitar).

I have also provided this study with a tape-recording of my own renderings of twenty-seven songs. I did so for two main reasons:

- (1) Yiddish folksongs are originally oral traditions, and have been so for centuries. In selecting the songs for this study, I chose those which are best representative of the Yiddish folksong traditions, and my performances are based on my experience of their performance style, which would be acceptable to Ashkenazi Jews who have heard me sing these songs.
- (2) I wish to discuss and demonstrate a very important aspect of Yiddish folksong: they have specific and characteristic manners of performance and expression. The material, form and content of the songs (which were 'fixed' when they were transcribed into staff notation) have been passed down several successive generations, but HOW the individual songs are sung, i.e. their manner of expression, has remained distinctive and in conformity with popular taste.

Collectors and investigators of Yiddish folksongs are in agreement that melodically, these songs incorporated many elements of Jewish religious song, being customarily sung monophonically (or in unison); and without an instrumental accompaniment. There was originally no system of musical notation for the folksongs, until the collection and transcription into the standard western system of staff notation. \*<sup>5</sup>

According to Idelsohn (Part One, Chapter 1: page 8) and other investigators who made comparative surveys of some of the earliest surviving Jewish synagogal melodies, and those in existence in these times, in antiquity the Jewish people sang melodies in scales, or rather, 'modes' that resembled the Greek and Ecclesiastical modes. It is impossible to speculate on the possible relationship between the old Jewish/Hebrew modes and the scalar patterns of Eastern European/ Yiddish folksongs, because a reliable evaluation of the vast amount of orally transmitted melodies now available in both written and recorded form, has yet to be made. However, given the fact that there was no '... dividing line between secular and the religious in Jewish folksong', especially in earlier times, it seems reasonable to assume that, when the Ashkenazi Jews settled in Eastern Europe over several centuries, they brought with them traditions of music that reflected a mixture of south-eastern European structural and stylistic features, which were akin to those of the musics of the Middle East (the original homeland of the

Jews) as well as certain Mediterranean and German musical traits. Thus the transformation of an older tonal system (heavily modal), evident in some of the oldest Yiddish songs, (some of which are set in a kind of penta mode), into newer ones resembling the Western major and minor scales with some modifications, was inevitable.

Like all peoples the world over, the Jews borrowed culturally and developed repertoires of Yiddish songs which reveal cultural/musical influences assimilated from the people among whom they resided. 'This is perhaps one of the most striking characteristics of Jewish folk music, in particular Ashkenazi forms, which represent a mixture of elements from folk music and from historical sources of "foreign music" ....' \*<sup>6</sup>

The absorption of non-Jewish musical traits was intensified to the extent that Ashkenazi musical traditions generally, and folksongs specifically, became highly heterogeneous traditions.

Today Yiddish folksong comprises a huge body of essentially vocal music, ranging from (a) real folk song (by which I mean songs that were sung for domestic purposes, and for pleasure and not for public exhibitions) whose words and melodies originated in the distant past (the composers being anonymous), and (b) more recent songs deliberately composed in a 'folk song style' and which have become accepted as part of the Jewish national heritage, so that many people believe them to be real

folk songs. Many of the songs in (a) and (b) have become modified, simplified, or conversely, embellished, by those who perform them. They have also been 'arranged' and given instrumental accompaniments which are written out in full, or else indicated by chord symbols, as stated earlier. Thus in a comparatively short time there was established a repertory of written Yiddish folk music, in a notational system that is not fully representative of the older folksongs. In many cases, these arrangements are very unsatisfactory - they are perhaps too 'contrived' - because the melodies are simply not suited to Western European 'classical' chord progressions. I would go so far as to say that I consider some of them to be 'maltreatments' rather than arrangements. This is particularly evident in old folk songs whose scale systems are neither major or minor, but nearer a modal system. For example, the cradle song Unter dem kind's vigele ('Beneath baby's cradle' Song No.1) has a melody that is based on a typical Jewish scale (see 'altered Phrygian' later, p. ff) that is totally incompatible with the standard western cadential/harmonic progressions. - If one were forced to provide an instrumental accompaniment to this song (and I have occasionally done so in concert situations because public taste expects it), I would restrict the chord progressions to two chords Dm and E. The chordal progressions given in one published version of this song are

Dm / E / Dm / E / F7 / E7 / Dm6/ E7 / Dm6 / B7 / Dm6/ E  
 a harmonic sequence involving twelve chord changes in as many bars.

At the risk of being labelled a 'purist', I must admit that I reject this type of contrived accompaniment, and would opt for a much simpler one. This is but one example of many songs in which the melodies and tonal-harmonic progressions are just not reconcilable. A certain naiveté that was found in these older songs has given way to more sophisticated arrangements.

In the cradle song (Song No.1) especially, the over-elaborate accompaniment has caused the song's original essence to disappear. In a sound recording of a variant

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UNTER YUDELE'S BETELE

SIDE I, Band 9: UNTER YUDELE'S BETELE  
Minsk, Koydanov

The image shows a musical score for the song 'Unter Yudele's Betele'. It consists of four systems of music, each with a treble and bass staff. The first system has a key signature of one sharp (F#) and a 2/4 time signature. The melody is written in the treble staff, and the accompaniment is in the bass staff. Chord symbols are written above the treble staff: D, Cm, D, D, Cm, D, Cm, D. The second system has chord symbols: Cm, D, F#, D, Bb, D. The third system has chord symbols: Cm, D, Cm, D, Bb, D, and a 'CODA' section with a Bb chord. The fourth system has chord symbols: Eb, D, Cm, D. The score ends with a double bar line.

of Song No.1 sung by 'RAASCHE' (1960)\*<sup>7</sup> and issued with a booklet giving her own 'scores', the accompaniment is far more acceptable. The singer is described as having a '...penchant for authenticity in styling, text and instrumentation' and has performed widely in Europe, Canada and the United States.

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Formal harmonizations of Yiddish folk melodies have been cultivated for a long time. While there is nothing 'wrong' in 'arranging' songs, or even composing NEW songs in a folksong style, what IS questionable is maintaining the continuity of a pseudo-folksong style of composition in which the melody and harmonies are incongruous. New songs have been created by people

.../whose

whose knowledge and techniques of older Yiddish folksong are inferior, and whose published music is at times grossly sentimental.\*<sup>8</sup> The motives behind such creations have not always been artistic, but commercial. Some very fine old folksongs have now become set performances, recorded from musical transcriptions - their music a travesty of the original songs.

A considerable amount of Yiddish folksong is now performed to a rigid, quasi-vamped chordal accompaniment - including guitar and band ensemble arrangements. Many of these items have become 'commercial potboilers', literally 'churned' out to satisfy the demands of a big public, who want to hear a big sound - a 'big Yiddish music' - in a theatre or concert hall. The demand seems to be particularly strong in the United States, and it is encouraged and stimulated - and facilitated by all the machinery of modern publicity - high tech sound systems and the mass media.

Following Romantic trends in musical fashion in the nineteenth century, which influenced composers to evoke either 'exotic' atmospheres and ancient mysteries in music, or 'the state of nature' as expressed in 'folk' music, composers began to draw on Yiddish folksongs and other folksongs as thematic material in their writing of 'free' compositions e.g. piano arrangements of songs with flamboyant harmonies; pieces for violin and piano; or, pieces for small chamber ensembles with folk songs as thematic material. The growth of national enthusiasm stimulated such practices. Composers, both amateur and

professional, attempted to transform the basic folk-material into something new, and likely to meet the demands of public taste. Numerous compositions based on Yiddish folksongs, entitled 'rhapsodies', 'stücke', 'sketches' and so on, appeared, as did many similar compositions based on 'folk' scales and scalar patterns.\*<sup>6</sup>

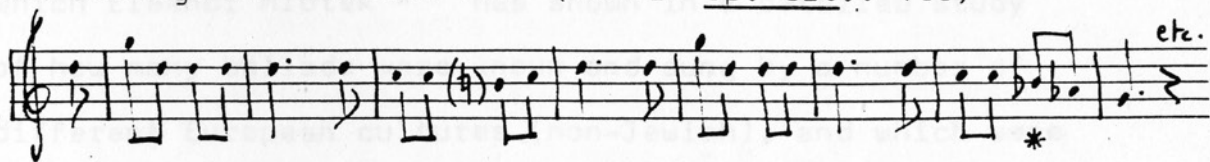
The great majority of Yiddish folksong melodies are set in a minor scale and its 'variants', and this characteristic provided further stimulus to composers and their stereotypical notions about the 'Jewish national character', the many vicissitudes suffered by Jews during centuries of oppression and extensive wanderings, notions which are reflected in the ostensibly 'sad' folksongs and their melancholy melodies in a minor scale or mode.

Mark Slobin, Beregovski's biographer, has commented on what he calls the 'tired truism' that all Eastern European folksongs are 'sad', and does not accept the 'myth of melancholy' perpetuated in the minor scales of Jewish folk music. As he points out, in Eastern Europe the minor scale/mode was never automatically considered sad. A good deal of Russian, Ukrainian, Rumanian and other folk musics happen to be in 'minor', while the bulk of Polish, Czech, Austrian and other Central European music was constructed in other scales, principally major ones.

The happy/sad dichotomy attached to major and minor scales reflects a projection of Western culture-specific attitudes on to a people's music. (As Kubik and others have shown

in their cross-cultural studies, projection is inevitable in any kind of 'cross-cultural encounter'. In spite of greater awareness of such culturally stereotyped attitudes and reactions, however, popular notions like this persist.<sup>9\*</sup>

There are numerous examples of Jewish/Yiddish music set in minor scales, both old and new, including also many pseudo-Jewish folksongs, and larger compositions which are intended to reflect a world of vanished Eastern European Jewry, e.g. 'Fiddler on the Roof' (1964) which was in many respects a '...landmark for both Jewish-American history and Broadway history'. As Slobin aptly puts it: '... it tends to be "traditional", and yet appeals to Jews and non-Jews alike. The musical has the old Jewish world as its setting, but the music is a very sophisticated blending of ethnic and Broadway sounds'. Slobin rightly repudiates the way in which the myth of the Old World is Americanized in this musical - in which many of the song melodies are liberally sprinkled with a minor second interval-motif, and augmented second, both of which are characteristic of the 'frigish' (the altered Phrygian). The first music heard in Fiddler, is, suitably, the solo violin. '... It enters with a tune which seems to call for the frigish sound, but instead the tune avoids the augmented second and makes the bare, final half-step send the message of exotica. ...' (Slobin op. cit.: 196)



Ex.1 Opening theme  
FIDDLER ON THE ROOF (Jerry Bock) 1964.

'As this tune is repeated, a counter-theme sneaks in. This curious melody insinuates itself around the augmented second, and finally takes the plunge.' (Slobin op.cit.)

'... Our melody-type does eventually find a home in Broadway's shtetl.' \*<sup>10</sup>



Ex. 2 Counter-melody opening theme  
Fiddler on the Roof (Jerry Bock)

In summing up such contrived attempts to present a fictionalized portrayal of European Jewish life, Slobin makes some important observations. Before the Second World War, one could sympathise with Jewish emigrés who yearned for their home country. But after the horrors of the Holocaust, there was no more Old World, and feelings of nostalgia were replaced by nightmare visions of Europe. Thus, for American Jews, the older communal tie that was Eastern Europe was replaced by an Americanized fiction of European life, as enacted in Fiddler on the Roof, and '... its best-selling pseudo-ethnographic counterpart, Life is with People.' \*<sup>11</sup>

The 'yiddishization' of non-Jewish forms of music was another manifestation of cross-cultural influences, \*<sup>12</sup> which Eleanor Mlotek \*<sup>13</sup> has shown in a detailed study of how many ballads were known and sung by a number of different European cultures (non-Jewish), and which were also in widespread use among Ashkenazi Jews. Most of these ballads had texts which were concerned with

characters clearly outside Jewish cultural life e.g. Lords and ladies, a wicked queen, who, in the 'yiddishized' versions of the ballads, were transformed into ordinary people found in Jewish communities - and the social context changed accordingly from court and palace, to the Jewish family hearth, against which more personal, domestic scenes were enacted.

Stereotyping of ethnic groups had been part and parcel of American popular culture since the 1820s, and reached its 'apogee' (Slobin op. cit. : 194) in the early years of the record and film industries. An interesting 'case' is the soundtrack of the first successful 'talkie' motion picture: The Jazz Singer (1927). In examining its stylistic content, Slobin finds The Jazz Singer to be important in several aspects. This very successful film, which made a great deal of money for the film-makers (Warner Brothers), and straddled the mixture of 'media' (the old silent film format etc.) and 'emotional content' (e.g. Lower East Side 'boy' who makes 'good' in the mainstream entertainment world) has a simple formula for success: namely, stereotyping. Emotions are marked by themes (e.g. Tchaikovsky's "Romeo and Juliet" indicates the love between mother and son), and, for example, ragtime music is used in all the show-business scenes. But this is a story of the son of a Jewish immigrant to America, who is expected to become a cantor ('chazan') in the traditional way, but who wants a career instead as a jazz singer: the producers therefore wanted an easily-identifiable 'ethnic' music, since Jewishness (or 'lack' of it) is what the film

is about. For non-Jewish audiences, the soundtrack of the film is saturated with 'Jewish' music, but there is in fact only one item of Hebrew music in the film, the Kol Nidre (the holiest chant of the Jewish liturgical year, the eve of the Day of Atonement), which is only rendered in synagogue on the Day of Atonement. The other 'Jewish' items consist of specially composed music in Chassidic style, and set in the altered Phrygian ('frigish'). A revealing moment, in terms of stereotyping, comes with the entrance of a family friend and 'kibitzer' (one who offers unasked-for advice, one who comments from the sidelines). His 'tune' is a mock-Chassidic tune in frigish. (See Example 3.)



Example 3. "Kibitzer's Theme", The Jazz Singer (1927).

This chapter would be incomplete without discussion of another popular song, namely My Yiddishe Momma ('My Yiddishe Momme/ Mama' in other transliterations), <sup>[\* see following five pages]</sup> a favourite song of Jewish America. This is composed in a folksong style. It is commonly associated with the late Sophie Tucker, an almost legendary show-business figure in American popular music, although the song is also sung by many other performers, both Jewish and non-Jewish. Miss Tucker introduced this song to the American public in 1925, some two years before The Jazz Singer opened on Broadway. Yiddish and English versions were issued on two sides of a 78 rpm disc (Decca 23902), and in a relatively

Text of song: My Yiddishe Momme

"MY YIDISHE MOMME": English version

Of things I should be thankful for I've had a goodly share  
 And as I sit here in the comfort of a cozy chair  
 My fancy takes me to a humble East Side tenement  
 Three flights up in the rear to where my childhood days were  
 spent.

It wasn't much like Paradise, but 'mid the dirt and all  
 There sat the sweetest angel, one that I fondly call:  
 My yidishe momme, I need her more than ever now,  
 My yidishe momme, I'd love to kiss that wrinkled brow.  
 I long to hold her hands once more as in days gone by  
 And ask her to forgive me for things I did that made her cry.  
 How few were her pleasures, she never cared for fashion's  
 styles.

Her jewels and her treasures, she found them in her baby's  
 smiles.

Oh, I know that I owe what I am today to that dear little lady  
 so old and gray,

To that wonderful yidishe momme of mine.

I see her at her daily task in morning's early light  
 Her willing hands forever toiling far into the night.  
 I hear the quaint old lullabies that haunt my memory,  
 Each plaintive note, each tender word, a Mother's prayer for  
 me.

What have I that I would not give to cross the trails of Time  
 Back to those childhood bygones, back to you, Momme mine.

Translation of Yiddish version

As I stand here and think my old mother comes to mind.

No made-up, well-dressed lady, just a mother,  
 Bent over from great sorrow, with a pure Jewish heart  
 And with cried-out eyes.

In the same little room where she's gotten old and gray  
 She sits and cries and dreams of long-gone days  
 When the house was full with the sound of children's voices  
 And the kitchen smelled of roast and dumplings.

You can be sure our house did not lack poverty,  
 But there was always enough for the children.

She used to voluntarily give us bread from her mouth  
 And she would have given up her life for her children as well.  
 Millions of dollars, diamonds, big beautiful houses—

But one thing in the world you get only one of from God:

A yidishe mama, she makes the world sweet

A yidishe mama, oh how bitter when she's missing.

You should thank God that you still have her with you—

You don't know how you'll grieve when she passes away.

She would have leaped into fire and water for her children.

Not cherishing her is certainly the greatest sin.

Oh, how lucky and rich is the person who has such a beautiful  
 gift from God:

Just an old little yidishe mama, my mama.

# YIDDISHE MA-ME

## A JEWISH MOTHER

Music: J. Yellen & L. Pollack  
Vocal arr.: Sol Zim

Moderate 4

**Introduction**

Musical notation for the introduction, starting with a Gm chord and a 4/4 time signature. The melody consists of eighth and quarter notes.

**A**

Very free, no tempo

Musical notation for the first line of the song, starting with a Gm chord and a 7/8 time signature. It includes a triplet of eighth notes.

My Yid - di - she ma - me I need her more than ev - er

Musical notation for the second line of the song, starting with a D chord and a 7/8 time signature. It includes a triplet of eighth notes.

now My Yid - di - she ma - me I'd like to

Musical notation for the third line of the song, starting with a D7 chord and a 7/8 time signature. It includes a triplet of eighth notes.

kiss her wrin - led brow I long to hold her hand once

Musical notation for the fourth line of the song, starting with an F7 chord and a 7/8 time signature. It includes a triplet of eighth notes.

more as in days gone by and ask her

Musical notation for the fifth line of the song, starting with a Cm6 chord and a 7/8 time signature. It includes a triplet of eighth notes.

to for - give me for things I did that made her cry How

Musical notation for the sixth line of the song, starting with a Gm chord and a 7/8 time signature. It includes a triplet of eighth notes.

few were her plea - sures she nev - er cared for fash - ion

Musical notation for the seventh line of the song, starting with a Cm6/D chord and a 7/8 time signature. It includes a triplet of eighth notes.

styles Her jew'ls - and her trea - sures she found them in her baby's

*Gm* *Cm* *G7-9* *Cm* *Cm/Eb*  
 smiles O I know that I owe what I am to-day to that

*Gm* *Gm7* *Gm6*  
 dear lit - tle la - dy who's young yet gray

*Cm6* *C#dim* *Cm6/A* *D7* **Use tremolo in bass**  
 to that won - der - ful Yid - di - she ma - me oy ma - me —

*D7* *Gm*  
 oy — oy — oy — ma - me - nyu mine

**Use tremolo in bass** *Gm*  
 Oy — oy — ma - me - nyu shē - ne oy

*Gm7* *Gdim* *Gm*  
 ma - me tai - re oy ma - me zi - se oy —

**Tempo** *D* *Gm* *Cm* *C#dim*  
 ma - me My Yid - di - she ma - me

**Play melody in mod. 4 tempo** *Piano* *Gm* *Cm* *C#dim*

Voice *D7* *Cm6/D* *D7* *Cm6/A*

I need her more than ev - er now My yid - di - she

Piano **Keep tempo** *D7* *Cm6/D* *D7* *Cm6/A*

Voice *D7-9* *Gm*

ma - me I'd love to kiss her wrink - led brow Vi shên vi

Piano *D7-9* *Gm*

**Keep mod. ♩ tempo** *Cm Cm/Bb Cm/A F7* *piano frill* *Bb*

lich - tig iz in hoiz ven di ma - me iz du

*Bb6* *Am7-5* *F#dim* *D7*

vi troi - rig bit - er vert ven Gott nemt ir oif

*Gm* *Gm* *Eb7*

o - lom ha - bo In vas - er in fai - er

*Gm* *D7-9*

volt zi ge - lof - en far ir kind Nit halt - en ir

*D7-9* *D7* *Gm* **Stop tempo** **Freely** *mf*

tai - er dos volt ge - ven di gres - te zind Oy vi

glick - lich vi raich iz der mentsh vus hot a za  
 shē - ne ma - to - ne ge - shenkt fun Gott Such a  
 won - der - ful Yid - di - she ma - me  
 oy ma - me  
 of mine

Gm My Yiddishe ma-me I need her more than ever now  
 D7 My Yiddishe ma-me I'd like to kiss her wrinkled brow  
 Cm I long to hold her hand once more as in days gone by  
 Cm And ask her to forgive me for things I did that made her cry  
 Cm How few were her pleasures, she never cared for fashion styles  
 D7 Her jewels and her treasures she found in her baby's smiles  
 Cm O I know that I owe what I am today  
 Gm To that dear little lady who's young yet gray  
 Cm To that wonderful Yiddishe ma-me, oy ma-me, oy mamenyu mine

The "JEWISH MOTHER" self-sacrificing and never caring for her own pleasures. A quality typical of the "BOBE" of yesteryear.

Gm My Yiddishe ma-me I need her more than ever now  
 D7 My Yiddishe ma-me I'd love to kiss her wrinkled brow  
 Cm Vi shen vi lichtig iz in hoiz ven di ma-me iz du  
 Cm Vi troyrig biter vert ven Gott nemt ir oif olom habo  
 Gm In vaser in faier volt zi gelofen far ir kind  
 D7 Nit halten ir taier dos volt geven di greste zind  
 Cm Oy vi glicklich, vi raich iz der mentsh vos hot  
 Gm A za shene ma-to-ne geshenkt fun Gott  
 Cm Such a wonderful Yiddishe ma-me oy ma-me of mine

short time the song became very popular in the U S A and Europe, and also in South Africa. Many Jews assumed that this song was a true folk song, and it became almost routine to give it various 'arrangements' (e.g. for solo trumpet, or solo saxophone, for bands of musicians who specialised in playing Jewish-style band music) for performance at various social events - weddings, barmitzvah celebrations and the like.

The song is set in a minor scale and does not incur the augmented second of the altered Phrygian scale. It has an implied tango rhythm, and its text alludes to different aspects of 'nostalgia' for 'mother' (momma/mám-me) and for what are called 'childhood bygones'. \*<sup>14</sup>

The writers of this song, Yellen and Pollack (Slobin op. cit.: 205) drew skilfully on sentiment. The song is meant to be sung with great pathos. However, the English translation does not do justice to the Yiddish, and in fact conveys little of the meaning and emotional content of the text. Miss Tucker herself said that the aim of her renderings of the song was to reach Jewish audiences, and to 'touch the earth' for them (i.e. to transport them to the vanished world of Eastern European Jewry). \*<sup>15</sup>

When one transcribes a Yiddish folk song, one 'fixes its form' but 'loses its substance', which becomes apparent only when one brings it to life, i.e. in performance. In orally transmitted songs, especially, musical expression is inextricably bound to a strong and verbal tradition AND

social value system. For every song there is a musical style and text, but the performance style is never a final, unequivocal one. Each song permits a certain amount of variation, and these variations in turn depend upon factors (such as the emotional content of a song) which have to be conveyed by performers with a true understanding of the strength and degree of their expressiveness, and effectiveness. By this I mean that certain components of Jewish 'feeling' are absorbed along with the Yiddish songs that carry them, and singers must express them in their individual ways. This applies to HOW the songs are interpreted, and to the technical musical material as well. For example, different persons will render the same melody very differently, with varying amounts of ornamentation on individual notes - melismas, inflected notes, onglides and offglides to and from certain notes within phrases, and the use of a specific vocal quality may also occur.

Other variables are descending glissandi (likely to occur between notes/ or during abrupt or gradual changes of register), fluctuations of tempo by means of rubato and unmeasured rests, and alternating melodic phrases with phrases rendered non-melodically. On the whole, the notated versions of Yiddish folksongs represent the pitches of the notes and durational value and rhythmic organization only to some extent. The time-signatures denote metricity, but in the course of performance, many of the songs become 'unmetric'. What is more, the overall character of expression may, and often does, vary considerably from verse to verse in the same song, consequently the variable

elements will undergo further transformation. Although Yiddish folksongs express the feeling and experiences of an entire people, they are also linked to specific social experiences and have social functions. When performed by individual singers, each will bring something personal and new to its form and content, and to its interpretation, to the extent that the transcriptions of the songs are really schematic. This is the main reason why I have included tape-recorded performances of some of the songs. I know from experience, from having heard countless performances of these songs by friends, relatives, as well as by internationally-acclaimed singers, that each of us will perform the same song with intricate 'extempore' variations, their style, quality and extent being a reflection of the singer's personality, age, experience and mood. No two performances of the same song are ever identical within their 'fixed' (notated) versions.

In my opinion, individual 'extempore' variation or 'recreation' is something that happens spontaneously. It is sudden and dynamic. \*<sup>16</sup> This personal recreative process which involves sometimes radical alterations of music elements - pitch, duration, timbre and dynamics - is also to a great extent unconsciously controlled. It is extremely interesting to observe how two Jewish singers 'rework' transcribed folksongs in their individual performances.

Looking at the current performance practice of folksongs, it would seem that, although extempore variation is

an old tradition - as old as the folksongs themselves - historical and socio-cultural factors have somehow channeled the tradition into a fixed course, from which some singers are trying to free it while others are not.

At the Oxford Yiddish Programme in August 1987, when spontaneous folksong-sessions took place in the evenings, when lectures were over, most of the participants were following scores or songbooks, and two or three of the students had guitars, and enjoyed themselves adding a 'vamped' guitar accompaniment. At no stage did these guitar-players pay any attention to the shifts of meaning in the text; with the result that they would play on relentlessly, and distort the beauty of some of the songs. The songs often needed a little rubato, and a much more 'sensitive' accompaniment. On one occasion, when I asked lecturer Yitzkhok Niborski (who has a rare gift for interpreting Yiddish songs) to sing us a lullaby, and asked the 'accompanists' to allow him to sing it alone, I think then, that they realised the poetry and the pathos of the unaccompanied song. Nevertheless, the younger students (mainly American participants) were still content to sing the Yiddish songs to their own guitar chordal accompaniment, which I find inappropriate and musically unacceptable. In all fairness, I must add that their youthful exuberance added greatly to the pleasant atmosphere of these folksong sessions. (They were, after all, singing in a language which is not their home 'tongue', and some were still struggling with the words of the texts.)

SCALE STRUCTURES IN YIDDISH FOLKSONG

As there are no authoritative reference works which one can use for information regarding scale structure of Yiddish folksongs, this section of the work presented difficulties.

In identifying scale structures in my sampling of songs, I was initially confronted with the problem of having to decide what term to use, to describe the number of pitches and their intervallic arrangement as patterns of notes, in which the Yiddish folk melodies are set. Early folksong collections and scholarship on folksong traditions of the Jews (and other peoples) have used the term 'mode' - in each study with some subtle differences in meaning. '... To musicians in the early nineteenth century, mode meant chiefly the major or minor scale: otherwise 'mode' could designate a "Greek mode" which meant one of Glarean's authentically or plagally mediated octave species' (Groves: 418).

Even before that time, 'mode' in European language meant '... a collection of degrees of a scale (and its aggregate intervallic content) being governed by a single chief degree; a mode was a scale with a tonic, which was the last note of a melody or the root of a final triad' (ibid). This is the sense in which the major and minor scales as well as the so-called 'church modes' are still deemed modes, and it is with this meaning that the application of the term 'mode' to phenomena and practice in music cultures outside Europe first emerged. During the late nineteenth-

and early twentieth century, the concept of mode expanded, and it was used in a number of studies of non-western musics.

Idelsohn, who devoted his whole life to the collection and study of Jewish music in several different cultural environments (and he included Arab-Islamic music at the time when he himself resided in Jerusalem), made clear distinction between the 'non-western modes' and the church modes (1913; 1929). Different meanings of the term depended on the cultural contexts in which it was used; thus one finds associations of 'mode' with technical terms in a variety of music areas which are generally accepted within their specific cultural contexts.

Mantle Hood, who did so much for the science of ethnomusicology, defined 'mode' as:

(1) a gapped scale ... (2) with a hierarchy of principal pitches; ... (3) employing ornamental pitches, and (4) having extra musical associations. (Mantle Hood: *The Ethnomusicologist*, 1971, cited in Groves.) However, the term 'mode' is still a contentious one, and the controversy between 'mode' and 'scale' continues. It seems Beregovski did not use the term 'mode' - however, as one is reading his work in translation (Slobin is both editor and translator of Beregovski's writings), I hesitated to accept the terminology of the translator without question. Slobin has translated from the Russian, and uses the term 'scale', but Johanna Spector (writing a review of Slobin's book on Beregovski in *ETHNOMUSICOLOGY* : Winter 1987)

posits that '.... the translation should read mode instead of scale' (Ethnomusicology: Winter 1987 page 168).

Beregovski pointed out that the patterns of pitches used in Jewish folksongs '... have more in common with contemporary scales than with ancient scales' (Beregovski 1946: 551). I have therefore also used the term 'scale' in this study, '.... when referring to the number of different notes or recurrent pitches in a folksong, without implying that any one of these notes is necessarily the tonic .... unless cited as such' (Hansen 1982: 38)<sup>17</sup>. I have followed Deirdre Hansen's procedure in her studies on Xhosa music, in which she also regards the terms 'scale' and 'mode' as synonymous, a procedure that is acceptable in ethnomusicological studies.

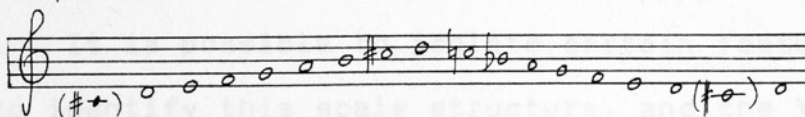
In his investigation of scale structures in Jewish (Eastern European) folksongs, Moshe Beregovski identified and discussed four types of scale structure on which the folksong melodies are constructed. These are (using his terminology):

- (a) The 'natural minor' scale (i.e. a scale resembling the melodic minor scale of Western music);
- (b) the 'altered Dorian' scale;
- (c) the 'altered Phrygian' scale;
- (d) the major scale i.e. the major scale of Western music.

According to Beregovski, '.... the natural minor occupies an important place in Jewish folksong', and it has been in use among the Jews for many centuries.\*<sup>18</sup> It is traceable to Jewish liturgical music where it was (and is) in

prominent use, and had a special name (given by cantors who used it in synagogue music) - jištabaxgust<sup>18a</sup>, according to the 'first word of a prayer to which the tune is set.' (ibid). In his discussion of the natural minor scale, Beregovski observed that it was also used in the composition of German folksongs, especially during the fourteenth to sixteenth centuries. It was also the basis of many folk songs of eastern Slavic peoples among whom Jews had resided for a long period of time. The predominance of this scale in Jewish folksongs may thus be attributed to two main factors: (1) an age-old tradition of its usage in folksongs, and (2) more extensive use made of it in many different song genres, when the Jews lived among peoples who also had such a scale; the Jews used it extensively because it closely resembled a scale structure that they themselves had long possessed in their music.

More than half the songs in this study of fifty-six songs, are set in the 'natural minor' scale, the pitches of which may be represented as follows:



Ex. 1  
NATURAL MINOR

I have retained Beregovski's description of this scale, because of its distinctive use in Yiddish folksong, and its resemblance to other types of scale structure on which many folk melodies are based, and which Beregovski appropriately labelled, in order to pinpoint the differences between them. Of my selection of 56 songs, 33 are set in this minor scale type. Twenty-four use all the tones, three use only 6 tones (but these songs are

obviously natural-minor-based), and seven songs have melodies that use only 5 tones (the first five degrees of the natural minor scale) e.g.

Songs No. 11 12 13 15 35 40 and 43

With regard to the range and contour of the melodies, with few exceptions (12, 13, 15 and 40), the melodies encompass an octave and more. Examples of this are

Songs No. 10 20 22 26 27 31 34 42 43 47

All the melodies of these songs employ the seven tones of the scale, but, as we shall see, they are arranged in scalar patterns which are important melodic 'nuclei' in the music. Songs using only 6 tones of the scale have a melodic range that rarely exceeds an octave, while songs using 5 tones of the scale have either expanded, or limited melodic ranges.

The chief distinction of these songs lies within their common scale structure, and its specific use in individual songs. It is possible to isolate certain features which help to identify this scale structure, and the Yiddish songs in which it is used.

- (i) The melodies have a strong triadic basis (minor triad D-F-A ) which is also a prominent melodic 'nucleus', particularly in the opening phrases of the majority of songs.
- (ii) Most of the melodies are articulated in complimentary ascending and descending phrase-patterns. This arrangement occurs in so many songs as to

constitute a stylistic characteristic of Yiddish folksongs generally. While I recognised this factor when transposing all the songs into the same tone range, I would not have been able to understand the phrase patterns fully at the time. I am indebted to Deirdre Hansen for her guidance in this regard.

Ascending phrase-patterns most commonly comprise 'gapped' scalar structures (accompanying one or two lines of a text), in which the tonic triad forms the main melodic nucleus. Descending phrase-patterns usually have step-wise melodic progressions (which may be repeated sequentially) and a conventional treatment of the tonic (D) at the end of the stanza. The articulation of melodies along these lines is so common (there are only a few exceptions in this collection of songs) as to be regarded as a general 'rule' for setting words to music in Yiddish songs.

As the transcriptions demonstrate, the phrase structures within the song forms are usually not complex. Song No.23 is an exception to this other general feature: the internal phrase structure is irregular, comprising two 7-bar phrases (the repetition of an initial phrase with minimal variation), and a refrain of 7 bars that is repeated to accompany the rest of the stanza. Apart from this unusual internal structure and arrangement of phrases, the song displays the same type of melodic phrase patterning already described: an ascending phrase, triad-based, spanning a 5th interval from the highest, to the

lowest tone in the phrase-pattern, balanced by a descending melodic pattern incurring a predominantly stepwise tonal sequence.

(iii) In a few songs, one finds both fore- and after-phrases comprising a descending melodic sequence employing a limited number of pitches. (See Song No.24): in this song, the melody consists of a number of phrases which gradually descend within the compass of the interval of a 5th (again, from highest to lowest tone). Nowhere does the range of melody broaden, and phrase structures consist of short, sequential phrases, rhythmically similar, on different degrees of the scale. Song No.49 follows the same procedure - balanced descending phrases in the first part of the song (which is strophically constructed). In the second half of the song the melodic phrase-pattern descends sequentially over 3 bars, but the final bar of the song incurs the standard melodic descent which, as usual, ends on tonic D.

In the context of all these songs, Song No.35 (Rabeinu Tam) stands out because it has a very complex and uncommon phrase structure. The conventional 4-bar phrase (repeated), spanning a range of a 4th (A - D) is followed by a further 4 bar phrase, and yet another 2 bar phrase. This irregular phrase-structure is extended by a further 5 bar phrase and a final 6 bar phrase. Thus the form of the song is schematically:

$$4 + 4 + 6 + (3 + 2) + (4 + 2) = 25 \text{ bars.}$$

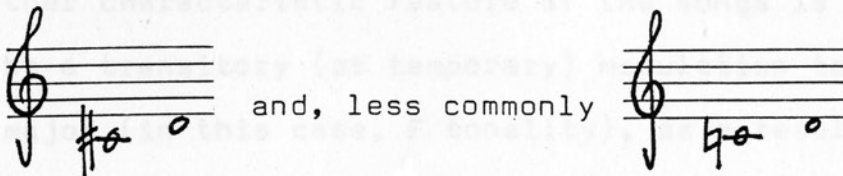
The melody utilises 5 tones of the minor scale, (6th tone

omitted) and the 7th occurs twice only, in the lower octave, and leads on to the tonic. To reiterate, this irregular phrase structure is unusual as most of the folksongs in this sampling exhibit regular phrase structures. (But irregular phrase structures may be more common than one would suppose on the basis of the few songs randomly selected for study.) On the other hand, Song No.35 (Rabeinu Tam) is a humorous (and very 'clever') song with six verses, and the unusual number of bars (i.e. 25) adds a distinctive 'note'/'character' to the interpretation of the text.

The texts are commonly divided into stanzas rather than lines, each stanza consisting of two, and sometimes three lines; these lines may be repeated as the logic of the text and the performers' preferences dictate.

- (iv) With regard to the progression of pitches in ascending and descending phrases which characterize these songs, there is another important aspect to be considered: the SELECTIVE use of pitches within these respective phrases, which seems to be another general trait of Yiddish folksongs.

In ascending phrases the 7th degree of the scale (i.e. C# or C#) usually occurs BELOW the tonic and in the lower octave:



In the hepta-based penta songs in this collection, the 7th degree is absent. In descending phrases, however, there is a preference for either omitting the seventh degree (less common) or else retaining it as a lowered 7th, when it tends to be the highest note in a descending phrase pattern. When this occurs, the lowered 7th is almost always followed by the lowered 6th (B flat). The following diagram will demonstrate the most common arrangement of tones in melodies based upon the natural minor.

Ex. 2

NATURAL MINOR

- 1 Sharpened 7th degree on to tonic - most commonly at the end of the melodies and end of a stanza
- 2 Gapped scale structure in ascending phrase-patterns,
- 3 centred round the tonic triad and melodic nucleus prominent in ascending phrase patterns;
- 4 6th degree of the ascending scale, usually omitted in songs;
- 5 Raised 7th degree, rarely used in the higher stave
- 6a Lowered 7th degree, regularly followed by lowered 6th degree (7) in a descending melodic, stepwise progression, accompanying the second half of a stanza;
- 6b Tetrachordal nucleus very common in descending after-phrase
- 8 Lowered 7th in lower octave, occurs rarely.

(v) Yet another characteristic feature of the songs is what seems to be a transitory (or temporary) modulation to the relative major (in this case, F tonality), as a result of which F acts as a temporary tonic:

(For songs in which F acts as a temporary tonic, cf Songs

Nos. 2 4 6 9 10 12 13 14 15 17 20 22 24 26 27  
30 40 43 and 49

This feature was noted by Beregovski who observed that

'... There are elements of modulation in some tunes. More frequently one finds the juxtaposition of an initial minor phrase with a subsequent phrase in the relative major'

(op. cit.: 294). Songs Nos. 2 4 6 9 10 12 15  
17 20 22 24 26 27 30 33 40 43 49 and 56

corroborate Beregovski's observations.

Such 'modulations' occur in so many folksongs that they are virtually predictable, and are therefore an intrinsic structural feature of Yiddish folksong melodies generally.

The epic song tradition of the Ukraine, comprising poems and laments in the vernacular, are sung in this scale, as are a significant number of other Ukrainian song types. Slobin (1982) uses the term 'domy' which he translates (op. cit.: 9:251) as 'Ukrainian epic songs'.

The scale type is also found in Romanian and Moldavian folksong styles. Beregovski informs us that '... in the Jewish songs created in the Soviet period' (meaning when the Jews lived under Soviet rule) '... this scale ... completely disappeared', a statement which suggests that

## 2. The 'altered Dorian' scale

In his essay on this scale (1946 : 549 ff), Beregovski states that this scale is '... not specific to Jewish music, being less widely distributed ... in Jewish folklore'.<sup>18b.\*</sup>

His statement is endorsed by my collection of songs, of which only 6 songs have been composed in this scale, or contain elements of it. The songs are:

Nos. 

36	44	50	51	54	and	55
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Of these, two are religious folksongs (No.36 Eliyohu Hanovi 'Elijah the Prophet' and Song No. 50 Ani Ma'amin 'I Believe').

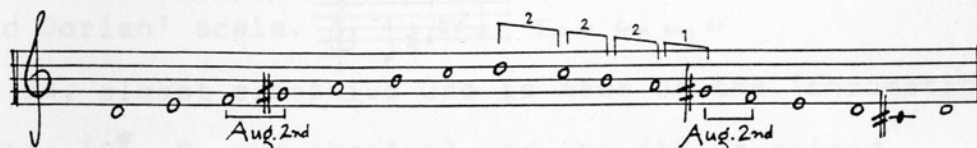
Although this scale type is found in different categories of folksong, as well as in instrumental works, and text-less songs (e.g. the Chassidic nigun \*<sup>19</sup>), it is highly probable that its limited use in Jewish folksong is due to its being 'borrowed' from neighbouring music cultures.

The epic song tradition of the Ukraine, comprising psalms and laments in the vernacular, are sung in this scale, as are a significant number of other Ukrainian song types. Slobin (1982) uses the term 'dumy' \*<sup>20</sup> which he translates (op.cit. : p.551) as 'Ukrainian epic songs'.

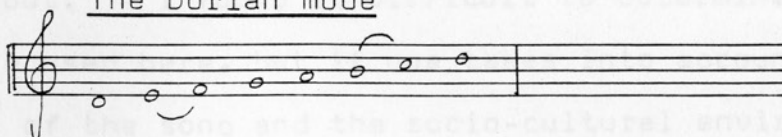
The scale type is also found in Rumanian and Moldavian folksong styles; Beregovski informs us that '... in the Jewish songs created in the Soviet period' (meaning when the Jews lived under Soviet rule) '... this scale ... completely disappeared', a statement which suggests that

it WAS in use at one time (loc. cit.). Example 3 below shows the structure of the 'altered Dorian' scale, a description possibly deriving from the scale's strong resemblance to the Dorian mode of western music. (Ex.3a)

Ex.3      The 'altered Dorian'



Ex.3a      The Dorian mode



Distinctive features of this scale are:

- (i) A minor triad ( D - F - A ) as a tonal basis:
- (ii) The 4th above the tonic is raised ( G sharp)
- (iii) The 6th degree is major in relation to tonic D
- (iv) The seventh degree is minor in relation to the tonic; However, the seventh degree is usually raised when located below the tonic, otherwise it remains in minor when it occurs in the upper octave.
- (v) The 4th degree (raised G) is sometimes replaced by a lowered G, and then raised again in the latter part of the song (commonly in the third line of a stanza).

Concerning the minor triad (i) as a tonal basis:

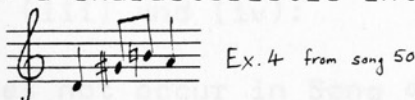
Five of the six songs in the 'altered Dorian' demonstrate this feature, especially in the initial phrase-patterns of the song. (Songs Nos. 36 44 50 51 and 54).

In regard to the 4th degree (ii) and (v):

In song No.36 it recurs throughout as a lowered G (natural G), in both ascending and descending melodic phrase. In

song No.44, however, a raised 4th alternates with a lowered 4th, in ascending and descending passages respectively.

In Song 50, the 4th is lowered in every recurrence until the third line of the stanza, when it appears after the tonic in raised form, (Ex. 4 below) thus creating an augmented 4th interval - a characteristic interval in the 'altered Dorian' scale.



In Song 54, almost excessive use is made of the 'chromatic' intervals (C#- D progression) and the 4th is raised throughout. I found it difficult to determine the type of scale used here, but if one takes into account the context of the song and the socio-cultural environment of the composer (a young boy, writing an emotionally-laden song during the harsh years of World War II, in the Vilna ghetto) one could suggest that the 'chromaticism' is deliberately cultivated. It is more than likely that the young composer (Alec Volkoviski - now an Israeli pianist whose professional name is Alexander Tamir) instinctively lavished the semitone intervals to evoke an atmosphere, and sentiments, of the terrible plight of the Jewish people of the ghetto. The scale seems to demonstrate a combination of altered Dorian and natural minor elements, and this supports Beregovski's observations in his research: '.... Many tunes built completely on another scale (usually the natural minor) include the altered Dorian as an episode. Sometimes, having begun a song in natural minor, the performer changes over to the altered Dorian as early as the second half of the first line, maintaining it for all the succeeding lines' (ibid). (Page 552). This song (Song 54) is through-composed, and the raised 4th is introduced

at the end of the first half of the song (in bar 13), corresponding to line 4 in the verse, and it is retained virtually throughout, with one exception (bar 26). In the composition of the song, then, young Alec Volkoviski was merely following a procedure that is traditional.

In regard to features (iii) and (iv):

The seventh degree does not occur in Song 44, although clearly the melody is structured on the altered Dorian. Song 36 presents an anomaly. (This is the religious song, Elijah the Prophet 'Eliyohu ha'novi'). According to its notation, it appears to be in the natural minor. However, in most performances there is a preference for raising the 4th degree, to an extent that changes the whole 'colour' of the song. It is for this reason that I have included this song with the other five which represent examples of altered Dorian tonality.

Commenting on the nature of scale structures in Jewish folksong (meaning Eastern European music), Beregovski pointed out that, although '... melodic lines and melody types typify each scale ...' in songs which are based on the altered Dorian, and the 'altered Phrygian' (discussed shortly), a performer '... can easily 'tune himself up, and often move from a melody in one scale to another' (loc.cit : 296) (FOLK SONGS AND INSTRUMENT TUNES - Mark Slobin ed/Trans.) The resemblance between all three scale structures would make it easy to do this. A performer may do so for reasons of interpretation, and for conveying the meaning of a text, and its emotional contents,

effectively. This does not mean that the different scale types are endowed with any special affective qualities. It means, for example, that a certain scale type e.g. the 'altered Dorian' may more effectively convey or evoke an appropriate feeling e.g. lamentation, within a song that is concerned mainly with the expression of other kinds of emotion e.g. joy, hope etc. In Song 50 (Ani Ma'amin) (From the prayerbook), there is a transition from a natural minor tonality, to that of the altered Dorian. This occurs in the latter half of the stanza, and co-incides with the text-phrase '...Ani ma'amin' ( I believe) at a particularly devout moment in bar 14, affirming faith in the coming of the Messiah. The smooth transition from one tonality to another suits the textual content, at this point. As noted by Beregovski, there is no doubt that it is these highly expressive songs especially, which reveal that Jewish folksingers were '... well aware of the expressive qualities of melodies..! in their scales. (ibid).

Song 55 is another highly expressive piece of music, of an unknown composer, with text added by L. Rosenthal at the time of the Vilna ghetto (World War II) - with a rhythm not very different to the modern Israeli folksong 'Hava nagila'<sup>21</sup>. The raised 7th degree occurs in both lower and upper octaves, and the 4th (G) occurs mainly in lowered form. The altered Dorian scale is most evident in the second stanza, where it is highly appropriate in a melody which has in the text a declaration of faith in one's people, who have suffered cruel and terrible hardships, but who will nevertheless endure and survive them.

The whole question of the meanings of scale structures, and their use in different genres of folksong, was a main focus of Beregovski's research, but he continually stressed the lack of sufficient comparative material which he was able to assemble. However, his conclusions regarding the altered Dorian scale are well worth quoting here:

'First it must be said that the altered Dorian scale is used in Jewish folk music only to correspond to the semantic cominanta found in folk art, principally as a means of expressing various degrees of lamentations and complaints.

However, a certain number of songs and musical works of a non-lamenting character indicate that the semantic characteristics of this scale in folklore are not limited to those just cited.

Finally, it is worth nothing that this scale can enrich the palette both of the folk artist and the contemporary composer' (1946: 566)

3. The 'altered' Phrygian scale, also known as 'frigish' in the Vernacular.

To my knowledge, the altered Dorian scale had no emic or 'folk' label, or if it did, it has not been documented. The term frigish, however, seems to have been long in use. Beregovski claims that cantors and klezmorim (\*see Glossary) named this scale frigish. I am inclined to go along with this for the following reason: Being female, I would not

have ever been taught, or received instruction, in Biblical cantillation, in the age-old traditional way that a young Jewish male is taught to sing the prayers (and read from the Torah) on his Barmitzvah \* (see Glossary). It is therefore quite possible that no female would ever hear the term frigish, but that a cantor or religious teacher teaching the cantillation to a musical pupil, might explain 'frigish' to him.

I myself first heard this term in 1986 from informant Joel Lichterman, himself a part-time cantor, but son of a famous cantor (of blessed memory) - the late Jakub Lichterman of Cape Town. It was pronounced for me, as 'fraygish' and explained to me as being 'the superimposition of major on minor ...'. However, in researching the question of frigish, and especially after studying Beregovski's writings, it would appear that the term frigish is named after the Mediaeval Phrygian mode, which it resembles to some extent. Cantors used this scale structure as a basis for melodic formulae which they used to establish a common pitch and vocal range before rehearsals of liturgical music. An example of such a formula appears in Beregovski's essay<sup>\*22</sup> on 'Jewish Instrumental Folk Music', and it is appropriate to reproduce it here, in transposition:



Note: Present D = original G

Formulae like these were also used as scalar models for the creation of new compositions. (This was a known vocal practice in Mediaeval times.) Slobin has also commented on the resemblance between the altered Dorian and frigish

scales, and two very important synagogal modes, the

- (i) Mi sheberakh mode, and the
- (ii) Ahabah rabah mode. \*<sup>23</sup>

The Jewish frigish also contains a melodic unit that is characteristic of the Hijaz mode (or Arabic Hijazi maqam\*<sup>24</sup>: mode/or melody type), which is characterized by a minor 2nd, (between first and second degrees), and an augmented 2nd between the 2nd and 3rd degree of the maqam.



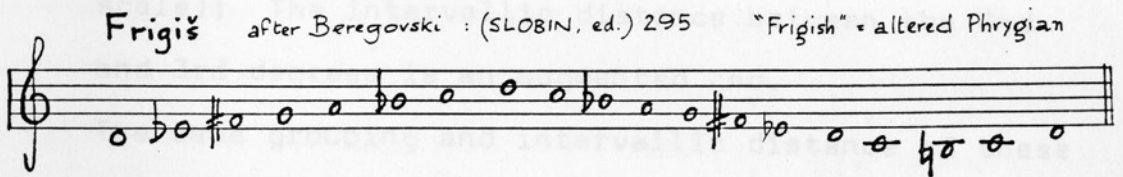
(See note\*<sup>24</sup> for the nagriz (Hisar) jins)

The intervals between degrees are given in multiples of a quarter tone.

Because the frigish contains the same melodic unit, and because both Jews and Arabs had homelands in the Middle East, there is a popular notion that '... the Jews, as "Orientals", brought this sound with them from their ancestral homeland, ... during 2,000 years of migration'. Rather, merely living among southeastern Europeans probably helped the Jews to become used to the sound of the augmented 2nd. Even leading scholars of Jewish music do not attempt to pinpoint how the frigish infiltrated European folk music.

Although Jewish and Arab-Islamic music may share a number of similar if not identical structural components and even stylistic features, the theory that the Jewish frigish scale derived from the Arab Hijazi mode is purely conjectural: there is no evidence to support it.

Ethnomusicological studies in many different parts of the world have demonstrated that musical traits are never confined to musical practices in politically defined areas - in fact they almost always transgress such boundaries. It seems more plausible to assume that, in their many centuries of wanderings and dispersal, and co-existence with non-Jewish peoples ( e.g. Arabs, and southeastern Europeans), it is more likely that the Jews favoured certain traits in their host countries' musics which sounded very familiar - because they were akin to features in their own, centuries-old musical traditions.



Ex.6 The 'frigish' scale of Yiddish folksong

Beregovski's research revealed that this scale formed the basis of approximately 25% of the instrumental folk music which he collected, while a proportionately smaller number of vocal songs (including 'textless' songs sung with denotative vocables) were also constructed in it (ibid.). The number of frigish songs in this study amounts to 14, in which the characteristic melodic unit occurs in ascending and descending forms. Examples are

Songs Nos.

1	7	11	18	25	28	29	37	38
39	45	46	48	and 52				

Distinctive features of this scale structure i.e. the 'minimal units' (tones) within it, and their grouping and order of occurrence in the songs may be identified as follows:

frigish scale:

- (i) The basis of this scale is a major triad ( D - F<sup>#</sup> - A );  
 In Songs Nos. 45 & 46, the tonic triad is A - C - E.  
 After transposing all the songs into the same pitch  
 range, I found that the tonic in these two songs is  
 A. Thus, in relation to all the other songs in  
 this study, the melodies of these two songs are in  
 a transposition i.e. frigish with tonic A.
- (ii) The 2nd degree above the tonic is lowered;
- (iii) The 3rd degree above the tonic is raised (in  
 contrast to the 3rd degree in the altered Dorian  
 scale); The intervallic distance between the 2nd  
 and 3rd degrees is an augmented 2nd.
- The same grouping and intervallic distance of these  
 three degrees (i) (ii) and (iii) of the scale,  
 occurs in both ascending and descending phrases.
- (iv) the 4th and 5th degrees are 'perfect' intervals  
 in relation to the tonic;
- (v) The 6th degree above the tonic is usually minor  
 (C) in relation to tonic D; See songs

1	11	25	28	29	37	39	48	and	52
---	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	-----	----

- (vi) The 7th degree usually proceeds by a whole-tone  
 step to the tonic in both lower and upper octaves.  
 Furthermore, when it occurs in the lower octave,  
 the stepwise progression on to the tonic is within  
 a melodic ascent; a step-wise progression in the  
 upper octave occurs within a melodic descent, in  
 which the 7th is followed by the lowered 6th, e.g.

Songs Nos. 

37	39	48	and	52
----	----	----	-----	----

The last-mentioned song (Song 52) demonstrates an exception to what seems to be an unspoken rule about music units and their combinations in Yiddish folksongs: and also about melodic progression: the 7th degree, in the upper octave, may resolve on to the upper tonic in a whole-tone progression (Song 52), OR it may occur within a descending melodic progression as a raised 7th succeeded by the lowered 6th (see bars 5 - 7, and especially bar 6 where C sharp occurs in a descending melody-motiv, followed by its re-appearance as a lowered 7th in the very next bar.

Beregovski has drawn attention to what he has described as modulations from '.... altered Phrygian to the minor a fifth below, and the reverse; this way both scales can be accommodated in one piece' (in Slobin 1982 : 295). An analysis of the melodic progression in this song (Song 52), and particularly in the very 'chromatic' bars 5 - 7 (the music of which accompanies a very poignant text /'Since that dreadful Saturday, /That hour so filled with fear' (verse 2) ...) suggests a transitory modulation to G natural minor, the tonic of which is now located a 5th below original tonic D. But the G tonality is never affirmed, but only implied (in bar 8), and it is retained (but remains illusive) over the following 3 bars, after which there is a return to the frigish tonality with tonic D, being firmly established by the frigish melodic unit with augmented 2nd.

In Song 7 and Song 18, the 7th degree never occurs in the upper octave but only in the lower octave, where it is as

usual, raised. In the two songs which represent the frigish scale in transposition (Songs 45 and 46) - the 7th degree is minor throughout, whether it occurs only in the lower octave (Song 45) or in both lower and upper octaves (Song 46). Song 38 is the only song which I have not transposed to the common pitch range. It comprises two sections of differing tempo, each section based on a specific scale structure; section one, with tempo indication *Andante con moto*, is set in the natural minor, while the second section / *Tempo allegretto* - is set in the frigish scale.

As all these scores show, melodic phrases in frigish-based songs comprise mainly stepwise progressions; 'gapped' scalar structures characteristic of ascending phrases in altered Dorian and natural minor-based melodies are not prominent in these songs, as a whole. Song 38 differs in this respect, and this difference may possibly be explained by the tonality of the melody, which, in the first section, is based on the natural minor scale. It is only in the second part of the song (the 'faster' section), that stepwise melodic patterns predominate; this second section is obviously set in the frigish scale.

I have included this 'composed' Yiddish folksong, because it demonstrates many aspects of Yiddish folksong which have been elucidated earlier on, and which I recapitulate briefly:

.... / (a)

- (a) the use of melodic structures and units of Jewish music, when composing music in a 'folksong' style;
- (b) the compatibility of Jewish scale structures, as demonstrated in the episodic modulations from one type of scale structure (and its tonality) to another: (e.g. First section in the natural minor, the second in frigish);
- (c) the incompatibility of the chordal progressions (which have been supplied in the edition used \*<sup>25</sup> to provide an instrumental accompaniment to the song;
- (d) The song is, in many respects, representative of the performance style of Chassidic melodies: e.g. use of the mystic syllable Du ('Thou'), and elements of chazzanut ('cantorial singing'/ cantorial 'art') - cantillatory singing - in the melody, achieved by intricate rhythmical groupings of melodic units, as in liturgical music of the synagogue. In spite of tempo indications \*<sup>25</sup> this musical 'score' gives little indication as to how the song should be performed. An outsider (i.e. a non-Jew) who is not acquainted with Yiddish folksong styles, would have difficulty in performing such a song. Jewish singers however, would have no doubts whatsoever about appropriate performance style and interpretation; they would each of them contribute a highly personal and contrasting rendering (within the parameters of musical 'recreation'), all of which would be acceptable to Jewish listeners. While on the subject of Song 38 ('A Dudele') I should like to give an example of an over-elaborate 'arrangement' (See next page).

Excerpt from Song 38 A Dudele from a 1921 'voice'  
& 'piano' arrangement (Leo Low): published by Metro Music,  
Second Ave. New York.

*Recitando*

*f* Ri - boi - noischel oi-lom Ri-

*rit.* *f* *ff*

boi - noischel oi-lom Ri - boi - no schel oi-lom Ri-boi - noi - schel oi -

*p*

lom *misterioso* Ri - boi - noischel oi-lom ch' vel dir a Du - - - de-le-zin-

*f* *pp* *misterioso*

gen Du - du - du du

A - Dudeles

Another excerpt from Song 38 . A Dudele  
 (the Leo Low 'arrangement' for voice and  
 piano). Note the accompaniment after change of key.

*Pariando*

e - mitzen gut du cho - li - le schlecht

ay du - ay du du du du du du du du du du du

*Allegretto*

du Miz-roeh du, Ma-row du tzofoyn du, Doroym du,

du du du du du du du du du, Scho - ma - yim du, o - retz du,

The melodies of the frigish-based songs are articulated in balanced 2- and 4-bar phrases, grouped within predominantly strophic songs with relatively simple, and well-defined rhythms. Examples are:

Song 1 the form and structure of which may be represented diagrammatically as:

Bars:	4 + 4 + 4	
Duple rhythm:	A B A'	Total length: 12 bars

Song 28

Bars:	1 : 4 : 1 + 1 : 4 : 1	
Quadruple rhythm: (could be represented in Duple rhythm)	A + B B' + C	Total length: 16 bars

Songs Nos. 39 and 48 are similarly constructed, with total lengths of 16 bars and duple rhythms. Likewise Song 37.

There is only one frigish song in this study which has a triple rhythm ( Song 52 ); but otherwise it conforms with the standard features described above; groupings of 4-bar phrases, totalling 16 bars in all, and strophic in form.

Song 18 (with tonic A) has an irregular structure. It comprises two sections which are essentially contrasting.

The scheme of the song may be represented as follows:

Bars:	(4 + 6) + (4 + 4) + (4 repeated sequentially 3) + 4
	A + A ..... C + C' + C + B
Total length: 34 bars	
SECTION 1	SECTION 2

In the majority of these strophic songs, the two sections are almost always contrasting, and equally important even though they may differ in length. In Song 18 the strophic form is retained, but phrase expansion occurs with the first section, thus the two sections are not the same length.

Both the altered Dorian and frigish scales were used selectively in different genres of Jewish/Yiddish folksong, to create melodic phrases and patterns which perfectly expressed the emotional content of the texts they accompanied, and to which they gave meaning.\*<sup>26</sup>

#### 4. The major scale in Yiddish music:

In this sampling, there are only two songs which have a major scale basis - Song 5 and Song 8. Song 8 exhibits a regular strophic form, with arrangements of 4-bar phrases within. Schematically the form is:

Bars:	4 + 4 + 4 + 4 + 8
Harmonic progression:	I → $\bar{V}$ + $\bar{V}$ → I + I

The triple time and general style of this song suggests the influence of popular dance styles in triple time.

In contrast, Song 5 is structurally more interesting. The major scale tonality predominates, but at the end of the eight-bar phrase there is the conventional move to a frigish tonality, which is basic to this song. As Beregovski pointed out in his research work, '...the major

scale plays an insignificant part in Jewish folk music. It is unevenly represented in the various branches and genres and is most often found in the textless tunes, and quite rarely in song.<sup>1</sup> My own research and collection of Yiddish folksongs endorse this observation.

1. Kurtzweil : 'From Generation to Generation' (publ. MORROW New York, 1980) has provided me with much material. Kurtzweil is a young American genealogist.

\* \* \* \* \*

2. Re study area (c): Research on music change has not received much attention, possibly because of misconceptions about 'traditional' and 'modern' music, and because such a study requires years of continuous research, which is likely to incur considerable financing.

Re study area (d): This also has received little attention. Cook is the author of a major publication which focuses on this area : MUSIKGESCHICHTE IN BILDERN : Gesetze, 1982a).

3. See Chapter 1 Part One of this study, pp.3 - 4.

4. Unlike Jewish liturgical music, for which a system of written cantillation symbols was introduced from the sixth century onward (cf. Gruber : 32a). This was superseded by a second system of symbols, which remained in use until approximately 900 C.E. when the present system of accents (ts'va / ts'va / ts'va) was introduced at Iberia and was eventually adopted by all Jewish peoples, who adjusted their existing cantillation traditions to it.

These symbols are a type of neumes which are written above or below the Biblical text, and function as a necessary 'aid' for the rendering of certain melodic formulas in synagogue cantillation.

The accents (ts'va, or ts'va) serve a threefold purpose:

- 1) as musical notes
- 2) as marks of the low-high notes, and
- 3) as marks of punctuation, or directly the logical relationship of words to one another.

This same system is still in vogue in...

## NOTES

NOTES TO PART TWO: CHAPTER TWO

- 1 Malawian Music: a framework for analysis by Gerhard Kubik, assisted by Moya Aliya, Lidiya Malamusi and Donald Kachamba ( Mitchel Strump, ed. ); Jointly published by The Centre for Social Research, University of Malawi, Zambia, and the Department of Fine and Performing Arts, Chancellor College, University of Malawi; (1987).
- 2 I. Kurzweil : 'From Generation to Generation' (publ. MORROW New York, 1980) has provided me with much material. Kurzweil is a young American genealogist.
- 3 Re study area (c): Research on music change has not received much attention, possibly because of misconceptions about 'traditional' and 'modern' music, and because such a study requires years of continuous research, which is likely to incur considerable financing;
- Re study area (d): This also has received little attention. Kubik is the author of a major publication which focuses on this area : MUSIKGESCHICHTE IM BILDERN : OstAfrika, 1982a).
- 4 See Chapter 1 Part One of this study, pp.3 - 4.
- 5 Unlike Jewish liturgical music, for which a system of written cantillation symbols was introduced from the sixth century onward (cf. Groves : 624). This was superseded by a second system of symbols, which remained in use until approximately 900 C.E. when the present system of accents (te'amim /or/ neqinoth) was introduced at Tiberias and was eventually adopted by all Jewish peoples, who adjusted their existing cantillation traditions to it.
- These symbols are a type of neumes which are written above or below the Biblical text, and function as a memory 'aid' for the rendering of certain melodic formulae in synagogal cantillation.
- The accents (te'amim, or neqinoth) serve a threefold purpose:
- 1) as musical notes
  - 2) as marks of the tone-syllables, and
  - 3) as marks of punctuation, to indicate the logical relations of words to one another.
- This same system is still in current use.

6 Even Jewish religious music was not immune to non-Jewish influences. The formal category of nigunim (\* See Glossary), cultivated by members of the Chassidic sect (\* See also, Glossary), emerged in eighteenth and nineteenth century Poland as a set type of improvisatory song, with a nevertheless self-defined rhythm, the melodies of which were '... a strange fusion of Ukrainian and Polish dances and marches, and recitatives from synagogal prayer modes, all often couched in syncopated Slavic rhythms. Most Hassidic rabbis, holy men (tzadikim) and cantors composed their own nigunim; these were songs sung exclusively by men, both in the synagogue and also at home, especially during or after a Sabbath meal'. (Groves : 629).

7 I can find no other information concerning Raasche, other than that on the cover of her LP record. No surname is given; she is known as 'Raasche'. The album has been issued by Folkways Records (New York, 1960) and Raasche sings a selection of Yiddish and Chassidic songs, as well as two songs in Ladino. (\*Ladino = Judeo/Spanish). She is accompanied by the following instrumentation: mandolin, balalaika, and two guitars. Raasche notes that her interpretation of the songs is strictly in keeping with the way in which they were taught to her, and the way in which she has always sung them.

8 An example is given on p. 254 of this Chapter, namely a 'commercialized' version of 'My Yiddishe Momme' combining English words and Yiddish words, and pandering to the sentiment and emotion of 'nostalgia' for the exemplary life (with 'morals' and the 'traditions') of the Old Country (i.e. eastern Europe).

Examples of compositions based on Jewish folksongs, include:

'Das Shaifele' : a 'Jewish' operetta in 4 acts, by Boris Thomashefsky / 'At My Cradle' for String Orchestra (Violin I & II, Viola, Cello and Bass) by Pinchos Jassinowsky / 'The Orphan's Prayer', a 'Characteristique' for the Piano by Emmanuel Kass.

9 Irving Berlin's first biographer, Alexander Woolcott, attributed the composer's penchant for lugubrious melodies to his Jewishness:  
'Back of him ... are generations of wailing cantors to tinge all his work with an enjoyable melancholy.'  
Alexander Woolcott, "THE STORY OF IRVING BERLIN"  
(New York ; Putnam, 1925) p. 86

- 10 The main theme, which one would expect to have been introduced by the fiddler (after whom the 'show' is named), is not introduced by this central character: instead, it is introduced by the full orchestra (the Broadway 'pit' orchestra). It is as if '... the mainstream wanted to force the musical stereotype on an unwilling, captive Old World klezmer - who knows he is merely one of the stage props. Indeed, in the final scene of the show, the fiddler packs up and takes his instrument to America.' (Slobin 1982 : 197).
- 11 Zborowski and Herzog's book Life is With People (1952) was an immediate success, an interesting depiction of the culture of the 'shtetl'. Slobin finds this rather artificial, and uses the word 'pseudo-ethnographic' to describe his attitude to the book. (It was a best-seller). In later editions of the book, according to Slobin, the publishers tried to 'capitalize' on the book's affinity with the stage production of 'Fiddler on the Roof', and said '.... if you like Fiddler on the Roof, you'll love Life is With People.' (op.cit.)
- 12 Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett of the YIVO Institute (New York) describes this process with reference to the 'Serenade' by Franz Schubert.  
Originally a through-composed song, its structure was adapted to suit the characteristic strophic form of Yiddish folksong, while a minor key was retained throughout without any typically Schubertian modulations. Kirshenblatt-Gimblett's documentation of this process was obtained from a folksinger involved in a YIVO research project, who had learned the song from a sister, and then modified it to make it conform with Yiddish-Jewish musical requirements and taste. The whole performance style was changed, to permit appropriate vocal ornamentation as well as the proper vocal 'quality'. Although it is not possible to tell whether the adaptation process was the singer's own effort, or whether it was already an established procedure, what IS known is that the process itself was nothing new.
- 13 Eleanor Gordon Mlotek: 'International Motifs in the Yiddish Ballad' For Max Weinreich On His Seventieth Birthday; (The Hague: Mouton, 1964) pp 209 - 28. as cited in Slobin 1982 : page 31.
- 14 See text provided, the words in English, and the Yiddish version translated into English.

15 Sophie Tucker: Some of These Days: The Autobiography of Sophie Tucker (Garden City: Doubleday Doran, 1945).

16 I have tested this via recordings over the past two years.

17 'The categories of Xhosa music' in Papers presented at the Symposium on Ethnomusicology, Rhodes University, Grahamstown, 1981 (A. Tracey ed. 1982).

18 M. Beregovski : Essay: 'The Altered Dorian Scale in Jewish Folk Music (on the question of semantic characteristics of scales)', 1946, in Old Jewish Folk Music: The Collections and Writings of Moshe Beregovski (Mark Slobin ed. trans. : 1982).

18a. 'Jištābxgust' : Beregovski 1946: 294 Folk Music & Instrumental tunes (Slobin, ed.)

I am unable to decipher exactly what this word may be, as the Russian 'orthography' for Yiddish is somewhat different (even when in Latin characters) than what I am used to. Using a "table" in the Beregovski book Jidišer Muzik-Folklor (Moscow, 1934) - which has only very recently been given to me - I was able to ascertain an approximation of what this word might mean, being the first word of a prayer and prayers would all be in Hebrew, not Yiddish. The š is pronounced 'sh' and the 'j' = 'y'

'Yishta-bakh-gust' is therefore presumed to be a term wellknown to cantors, in the repertoire of liturgical music.

(Hebr.) Yishtabach = יִשְׁתַּבַּח  
translated as "praised be"

18b. The 'altered Dorian' scale: It is not clear whether this description originated with Beregovski, but his reference to this scale type as '... the so-called altered Dorian scale' suggests that it did not. I was unable to obtain further information and clarification about the derivation of this name.

19 Speaking of nigunim (pl.) (\* See Glossary nigun/nigunim), the Russian folklorist Sussman Kisselhof had the following to say: '... They are the most original in form and character of all the Jewish songs ...' 'In executing the song, the most important thing (for a Hasid) is the sincerity of the feelings'. - cited in Birnbaum 'ENCYCLOPAEDIA OF JEWISH CONCEPTS' 1979 : 406.

20 DUMKA (pl. dumky): According to Encyclopaedia Britannica, Vol.7 : p.731, dumka is a Russian term signifying a lament, and employed by Dvořák, in his chamber works, to designate movements of a mournful, melancholy character.

21 One of the curious ironies of music history is that much of what passes for a "Jewish sound" in contemporary times, adapted from Jewish music of Palestine (later, Israel) is in fact derived from Eastern Europe

due to the stylistic affinity between the two adjacent regions. Perhaps the best known international Jewish music symbol is the dance tune Hava nagila, which, like the dance called the hora\* is associated with Israel. Yet both the tune and the dance have roots in Eastern Europe, having been brought to Palestine by E. European musicians.

(hora\* = a circle dance)

Here is part of the tune: (see below)

### HAVA NAGILA

Ha- va ha-gi-la ha va na-gi-la ha-va na-gi-la  
 ve- nis-me-kha Ha va na-gi-la ha-va na-gi-la ha va  
 na-gi-la ve-ni-s me-kha U- ru u- ru a-khim  
 Uru akhim be lev someyakh Uru akhim belev someyakh U-ru..... etc.

Come let us rejoice  
 Come let us rejoice  
 Come let us rejoice  
 And be merry  
 And be merry.

Hava nagila  
 Hava nagila  
 Hava nagila  
 Venismekha  
 Venismekha.

הבה נגילה

Come let us sing  
 Come let us sing  
 Come let us sing  
 And be merry  
 And be merry.

Hava neranena  
 Hava neranena  
 Hava neranena  
 Venismekha  
 Venismekha.

הבה נגילה, הבה נגילה, הבה נגילה,  
 ונשמחה.

הבה נרננה, הבה נרננה, הבה נרננה,  
 ונשמחה,

Awaken, awaken brothers  
 with a joyous heart  
 Awaken brothers  
 With a joyous heart.  
 Awaken brothers  
 with a joyous heart

Uru, uru akhim  
 Uru akhim belev someyakh  
 Uru akhim belev someyakh  
 Uru akhim belev someyakh.  
 Uru akhim belev someyakh  
 Uru akhim  
 Uru akhim

עורו, עורו, אחים,  
 עורו אחים בלב שמח —  
 עורו אחים —  
 עורו אחים —  
 בלב שמח.

- 22 The second book by Moshe Beregovski, 'Jewish folksongs, (1962) was originally published in Yiddish, as 'Yidishe instrumentale folks-muzik' (1937). It was published in Russian after the composer's death.

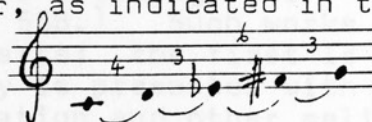
In the English translation by Mark Slobin, it forms Part II of his total work, and contains three essays. Johanna Spector, who reviewed Slobin's edited and translated version, writes that she considers it '.... the most valuable of the publications we have before us, not only as far as content, analysis, rare musical material, and ethnological and historical information are concerned, but also because of its moderate tone. In this work, Beregovski ... seems ... a more thoughtful scholar ...' (Ethnomusicology Vol.21 (1) 1987: 167).

- 23 Eric Werner has observed that, in the 18th century, the Ahabah rabah mode was supposed to be '..the perfect expression of penitential contrition and deep lament'.

Jewish cantors maintained that this mode - which resembled the frigish scale - was exclusive to Jewish music. As Werner points out, 'In spite of musicologists, the East European chazanim (cantors) are still firmly convinced that the Ahabah rabah is theirs, and that all other appearances are borrowings from the world of Eastern Jewish chant'.

Werner also draws attention to the fact that 85% of Chassidic songs use this scale structure, and he concludes that '... the diffusion of the Ahabah rabah, particularly its exorbitant popularity with the singers and their listeners, deserves a special study'. (Eric Werner: A Voice Still Heard, The Sacred Songs of the Ashkenazi Jews, Pennsylvania State University Press, 1976: 56 ).

- 24 The nagrīz (Hisār) jins also features this melodic grouping, but the intervals between the degrees differ, as indicated in the following diagram:



the nagrīz (Hisār) jins

Ref. Groves: 523

The scale of any Arab maqam (pl. maqamat) is divided into melodic units called ajnas (pl. form of jins, meaning 'genre' or melodic unit, a concept similar to that of a tetrachord or pentachord).

There are 17 ajnas now in use in Arab art music, each with a different intervallic structure between the

24  
contd.

degrees within it. It is important to note that the Arab scale type (melody mode) employs quarter-tones, thus an Arab scale comprises an octave that is divided into 24 intervals of APPROXIMATELY a quarter-tone (approximately measuring 50 cents).

A calculation of the exact sizes of the quarter-tones as they occur in practice, is problematic. Attempts at calculations have failed to provide an accurate description of actual musical practice. However, the quarter-tone system is still used in describing the tonal material of Arabic melodies.

The system has no application to Yiddish folksong.

(New Groves, 1980 : 513. Entry by Josef Pacholczyk).

25 On the question of tempi, a word of explanation is necessary here. I have intentionally NOT given indications of tempo to any of the 56 songs which I 'transposed' for purposes of determining the scale structures. Where I have re-produced song texts from existing anthologies, e.g. the pages in 'yellow' which match the songs on the cassette, there will be indications of tempo/ and/or style:

Song 1	<u>Andantino</u>	♩ = 69
Song 6	<u>Moderato</u>	♩ = 90
Song 12	<u>brightly</u>	
Song 14	<u>Animato</u>	♩ = 124

26 The altered Dorian scale was associated with grief, sorrow, and was used principally '... as a means of expressing various degrees of lamentations and complaint ....' (SLOBIN 1982 : 556).

In instrumental music (klezmer music), the altered Dorian scale is most often found in works built in the form of the Moldavian and Rumanian doina. The doina is an instrumental piece, performed at weddings, principally at the table of the 'wedding feast'. (Beregovski : 1946 cited in Slobin 1982: 558.) Such works as the doina consist of two parts; the first is in a slow tempo, and the melody is presented with much passage-work, decoration and other melismatic ornamentation, while the second part is in duple meter, built on the musical material of the first part.

Why, then, the use of the altered Dorian, which was generally associated with laments and tears? Beregovski (1946) gives an example of a doina in the altered Dorian, where it was played at a wedding at which the bride was an orphan. The meeting of relatives with the bride evoked memories

26  
contd.

of her deceased parents, and the musicians played works - in such a situation - of a sad and lamenting character. At the same time, Beregovski (1946) also noted a "new" occurrence, namely that a jolly dance (a freilachs) was also set in the altered Dorian scale. The 'character' of a freilachs might be described as '... laughter through tears'. The 'deep sorrow' brought on by the doina is, in this example of Beregovski's, somewhat cleared up.

There is a certain irony in the 'readiness' to make a 'transition' to a lighter mood - to take part in merriment after having been 'deeply moved' by a tale of sorrow.

Informant Clara Gersholowitz (of Cape Town) has often referred to the fact that the sudden shift from 'happy' to 'sad' is '... from the Slavic influence'.

The frigish scale featured prominently in the instrumental music; Jewish musicians frequently employed two scales in one-and-the-same item of music, to achieve tonal contrast and musical variation. Two examples demonstrate this practice:

Fig.1 is an extract from a Yiddish folk melody called 'Shloflid' - which is based on the frigish scale.

Shlof mayn Kind, in a glik likhen shlof... Shlof... un.ter a  
lid. Du... bist nokh tsu yung... tsi erfiln... dayn shtru..... f,  
der. far vos du bist ..... a yid

Fig.1 : 'Shloflid'

The melody commences in the natural minor scale, and it is only towards the end of the song that the frigish tonality is established and affirmed. Note that this example has been represented 'unmetrically', leaving the performer to render

26  
contd.

the song in an appropriate manner. 'Shloflid' means 'cradle song' / 'sleep song' (lit.) This is a Yiddish melody.

Fig.2 is an extract from a Moldavian song, played on a fiddle. In this example, "Florichika", the 4 + 4 bar phrase is divisible into two sections. In the 5th bar (marked \*) there is an abrupt change into the frigish scale. (Slobin 1982 : 186)



Fig.2      "Florichika"      (Moldavian)

\* \* \* \* \*

## SUMMARY

In this dissertation I have attempted an ethnomusicological study of Yiddish folksongs, with respect to the historical, sociological, literary, linguistic and musicological areas of my subject.

The beginnings of Eastern European (Yiddish) folksong have been traced to that period in their history when Jews were forced to reside in restricted areas and in the 'Pale of Settlement'. (\* see Glossary). Before that, cultural inter-action with non-Jewish neighbours brought about exposure to, and participation in, non-Jewish secular musical styles. It has been suggested that this is one reason why a truly national Yiddish folksong tradition did not emerge and develop earlier: the Jews did not feel a need for a culture-specific folksong tradition of their own (Spector 1987 : 164). It was only when they had to live in ghetto conditions that they felt such a need, hence the emergence of a folksong tradition under institutionalized repression, a tradition which soon flourished within the ghettos, because it served to strengthen and intensify bonds of Jewish consciousness, of national identity and kinship groups.

(The history of music has shown that music flourishes under all kinds of conditions. The South African situation is highly relevant in this regard. A remarkable diversity of old and new traditions of African music has emerged in spite of growing oppressive political measures.)

Beregovski traced the beginnings of Yiddish folksong to the fourteenth century. By some two hundred years later, a tradition had been established; it had acquired some very distinctive features, having absorbed some 'foreign' musical elements from non-Jewish music into its own 'mainstream' musical tradition.

A cultural/historical survey of Eastern European Jewry in the sixteenth century has revealed that, despite the assimilation of non-Jewish elements into folksong styles (combined with essentially Jewish-Semitic musical elements), Jewish musicians were essentially singers.

Thus Yiddish folksong became basically an orally transmitted VOCAL tradition - a tradition of 'voice music' - for which Jews never devised a system of notation. It was not until the end of the nineteenth century that a substantial collection of folksongs - sixty-six in all - was transcribed into staff notation by Joel (Yuli) Engel (1868 - 1927).

Engel was not the first to do this: the composer Mussorgsky notated a folk melody which he heard in the 1860s, and used it as a thematic basis for two works: a choral work entitled 'Isus Navin!' and a choral song in his opera, Salambo. Mussorgsky also obtained some melodies from the sculptor Mark Amokolski, who sang them for him on occasion. Rimsky-Korsakov was another composer who was interested in Jewish music. He constantly urged

Jewish musicians to incorporate their own melodies into their own compositions).

From the sixteenth century onward, Jews continued to assimilate musical stylistic elements from many different sources, and in time, traditions of instrumental music - (folk-based) - were established.

It was Moshe Aron Yakovlevich Beregovski (1892-1962) who made the first, and most significant, contribution to the collection and serious study of Yiddish folksongs. Beregovski was indeed '.... a major ethnomusicologist of our century who devoted his life to the study of Jewish folk music in the Soviet Union' (ibid.) His framework for analysis was a broad and flexible one, incorporating the sociological, historical, musicological and literary aspects of Eastern European music, and included both vocal and instrumental (klezmer) traditions. He undertook an enormous task - a study of genres of folk music which was to be a five-volume series. Only Vol.1 was published during his lifetime, and three more were published posthumously (1962). As far as can be determined, the other two may still be in Russia. (A copy of Vol.1 has very recently come into my possession - it was published in Moscow in 1934.). It was Mark Slobin, an American ethnomusicologist, who translated Beregovski's work from Russian and Yiddish into English. He assembled, edited, and annotated it all, and produced a 579-page book on Old Jewish Music: Collections and Writings of Moshe Beregovski (Philadelphia, University of Pennsylvania Press

1982.) Today Beregovski stands alone in the history of Jewish folksong studies as '... a great and almost unknown researcher, and the main source of Yiddish music that was active long ago, which flourished under Soviet rule.'

It is largely through Slobin's work that Beregovski's remarkable achievements have been made known to the Western world, and reached a wide public. I think it is worthwhile to provide a list of Beregovski's published work, in its English translations:

His first book: Jewish Folk Music ('Jidišer Muzik-Folklor')  
Vol.1 1934 Moscow

His second book: Jewish Folksongs ('Yevreiskie Narodnye Pesni') was published in 1962 in Russia, after the author's death the previous year.

Excerpts from both these books are contained in Part I of Slobin's work. Part II of his work contains 3 essays:

(i) 'The interaction of Ukrainian and Jewish Folkmusic' (originally published in Yiddish as Kegnzaytike Virkungen tsvishn dem ukraynishn un yidishn Muzik-Folklor' (Kiev, 1935);

(ii) 'Jewish Instrumental Folk Music': originally published in Yiddish as 'Yidishe instrumentale folk-muzik' (Kiev, 1937);

(This essay discusses the klezmer, and klezmer bands, their repertoire, dances, and also amateur musicians.)

(iii) 'The altered Dorian scale in Jewish Folk Music (on the question of semantic characteristics of scale)' - originally published in Russian as 'Izmenennyi-doriiskii lad v evreiskom muzykal'nom fol'klore (k voprosu o semanticheskikh svoistvakh lada' (1946)

This was published in Moscow in 1973, having been edited by I.I. Zemtsovskii. \* (See Note 1)

The carriers of Yiddish folksong traditions are a people who have experienced many centuries of almost continuous dispersal, great suffering and near-annihilation, and who today are living in many far-flung parts of the world. Their songs reflect their socio-political history and way of life that have been expressed in a language which was ultimately established as a literary language with a standardized orthography, and also a subject worthy of academic study. Unfortunately the same cannot be said for Yiddish folkmusic, the formal analysis of which is one of the least developed aspects. Apart from Beregovski's ethnomusicological research, there exists no other (at least, to my knowledge), although 'anthology collections' have been published, an area in which Ruth Rubin has done pioneering work.

The songs on which I have based this study (56 in number) are indeed representative of some of the bestknown Yiddish folksongs, but they are too small in number to permit the definite establishment of stylistic characteristics. But they do at least provide some evidence concerning characteristics, e.g. the identification of certain stable elements of scale structures, and some unspoken rules about melodic units and their groupings within such structures; and what I have found endorses Beregovski's findings of almost half a century ago.

The selective use and combination of scale structures within a song, and the characteristic arrangements of melodic units within them seem to be basic features of Yiddish folksong styles, and the selection seems to have

been done according to textual content and meaning of the individual songs. Even today, melodic units and their groupings continue to have an impact on Jewish composers, and musicians (both amateur and professional), who compose or 'recreate' their music along these lines. The melodic units are much borrowed for new compositions in which they are variedly arranged, quoted, and blended in a wide range of Jewish compositions.

In most of the songs' melodies, the western European influence is felt e.g. the preference for the natural minor scale, but often juxtaposed with more 'Jewish' scales (the altered Dorian and the frigish), and their dominant melodic intervals. The major scale is not in common use.

Rhythmically, most of the songs are relatively simple, and in a duple metre, with very few in triple time. But more subtle rhythmic complexities are to be found in a number of songs : complexities with regard to phrase-structures and groupings within them. Most of the songs are strophic in form, through-composed songs being comparatively rare. There are always two contrasting sections in the first-mentioned type, and these two sections are of equal importance (in terms of the functional 'load' they carry, even though they may differ in actual length).

Oral transmission encourages personal extemporization, and because of this, it is difficult to ascertain to what degree a kind of balance is retained between what is permanent

and wellknown, and what may be anticipated in any performance. That is to say, what traits are accepted, and transmitted in Yiddish folksongs of Ashkenazi Jews, and what new, unexpected, individual contributions are likely to occur in actual performance.

This is an area which requires much more extensive, and detailed research. Nevertheless, on the basis of my own experience of Yiddish folksong performance styles, I have been able to isolate a number of accepted traits:

Although the scales have much to do with western European ones (as Beregovski himself pointed out), in actual performances the intonated tones at times suggest a quasi- non-tempered scale, due to ornamentation, and a special 'voice' (vocal quality and style) which Jewish singers use when performing the songs. A very common pattern of ornamentation is a melisma which occurs on a glottal ornamental tone just before a tone of longer duration. This generally occurs in the second part of a song, and is usually notated in the transcription as an acciaciatura. (See Song 31 ). But such glottal ornaments are an accepted practice within extempore variations, and singers introduce them, even though they are not represented in actual transcriptions. Some singers are better than others in executing appropriate ornaments. Similar embellishments may also be introduced ad. lib. by individual singers in their renderings of songs. The latter are never 'static' i.e. with 'fixed' structures.

Like many forms of oriental modal music (e.g. qawwali music of North India), rather, their structures are 'flexible' and derive '... from their function to serve diverse and changing audience needs' (R. Qureshi 1987: 67).<sup>\* See Note 2</sup> The individual contribution may consist of lavish ornamentation, and the use of devices such as rubato, glissandi, and unmeasured rests, thus providing songs with a relatively 'free' rhythm. Examples are Chassidic songs, and the liturgical melodies sung by cantors, which are full of embellishments, and tend to be 'bar-less' i.e. non-metrical, in performance. The use of these stylistic devices is dictated by the words and phrases of the song texts, and their meanings, and emotional content, which should be expressed in the melodies which accompany them, indeed, which are intimately related to them.

The dynamic is generally strong in the songs, depending on the genre, but it is not possible to dogmatize about this. Singers are expected to be able to change their voice register - (often quite abruptly) - with ease, and give subjective performances i.e. to be 'involved' with the subject matter of the song, and to 'characterize' it accordingly. Yiddish folksongs evoke deep emotional feelings among performers and listeners alike, most of whom share a common geographical and socio-cultural environment. This is to be expected - 'the strongest influence on the listeners' state of mind is their cultural identity', which is very strong among Jewish people. They have songs which are happy, and move them to laughter, just as they have many songs

which are satirical or humorous, while others are sad songs, in which the prevailing emotions are longing and grief. Whatever the mood, all the folksongs express and at the same time, evoke, feelings of loyalty, love, and pride in a common cultural identity.

Although Ashkenazi Jews have brought together a vast repertoire of folksongs, at this stage I am unable to say much more about them.

Yiddish folksongs are not items of music which a researcher must 're-integrate' into their original performance context (or some idealized semblance of this context). This aspect surfaced time and again during the almost three years in which I was studying the songs.

I have realised that the songs should be studied on a scholarly level, as they are performed today. What one needs now are strategic studies of their current performances in specific localities - U S A, South Africa, Australia, Israel etc. - so that these Yiddish folksongs may be reviewed in a much wider geographical and musical context. It would be of prime importance to 'catch' as many 'live' performances as possible from older people who are 'native' Yiddish speakers, in order to record the 'authentic' sound of the Yiddish words themselves, as well as the spontaneous ornamentation which these older people deliver, without any apparent effort. The older people, too, never seem to need to consult pieces of paper (i.e. with words/texts/ of songs) when performing; on many

occasions, I have admired their prodigious memories in singing long narrative songs, verse after verse, entirely by memory. The ease with which they can perform a variety of songs, is a factor to be taken into consideration as regards performance styles.

A logical beginning would be the study of musical performances within the same area, by a team of researchers who would adopt a synchronic approach (i.e. in their research, they would establish the co-existence of performances of individual songs within the same areas, and compare and contrast them with performance styles in other areas). This is a 'context-sensitive approach to the study of the current performance practice of Yiddish folksong', using a methodology put forward and explained in great detail by Regula Qureshi (ibid.). The problems to be considered in such a study have to do with the songs' performance contexts. The original ones no longer exist - or, if they do, they have changed considerably - and the songs are now commonly performed under 'controlled conditions' - in concert halls, recording studios, in popular music venues, and for certain occasions and events e.g. weddings, barmitzvah celebrations and the like. It is in these circumstances that the concept of Yiddish performance context, and performer(s), need to be investigated. Formal musical analyses - based on transcriptions or video-taped/ video-recorded performances - would be part of the investigation.

All music the world over consists of culturally prescribed sound-systems (e.g. preferred scale structures, melodic groupings, ornamentation, rhythmic patterning etc.) - and Yiddish folksong is no exception. But within this sound-system there are certain variables which are governed by contextual as well as musical meaning.

It would be of great value to Jewish ethnomusicology - and interesting for the researchers - to compare Yiddish folksongs in the various localities referred to earlier on, and then to analyse one's material, and try to assess the accepted parameters of variability and non-variability in their performance styles, which do exist, as I am able to establish from the small amount of material I have at my disposal.

In sum:

The folksongs in this study refer to periods of history that have vanished. Yet these songs continue to be sung in modern settings, which to some extent 'program' their performance in accordance with the demands of public taste as well as the performance contexts. The variable and non-variable aspects of Yiddish folksong styles cannot be isolated and identified with any accuracy unless their performance contexts are taken into account, and the 'social dynamics that motivate such a performance' are understood (ibid). It is my sincere wish that such a 'program of action' will be implemented in the not too distant future.

Note 1: Beregovski's essay, 'The altered Dorian scale in Jewish folk music (on the question of the semantic characteristics of scales)' 1946, was originally published as: 'Izmenennyi doriiskii lad v evreiskom muzykal'nom fol'klоре (k voprosu o semanticheskikh svoistvakh lada'

in I.I. ZEMTSOVSKII, ed. 'Problemy muzykal'nogo folklора naradov SSSR (Moscow: Muzyka, 1973) pp. 367 - 82.

Zemtsovskii, however, edited the article without giving precise information of how he did so.

Note 2: Ref. 'Music Sound and Contextual Input: A Performance Model for Musical Analysis' - Regula Burckhardt Qureshi in ETHNOMUSICOLOGY Vol.1 no.1 Winter 1987 (K.P. Etzkorn ed.); 56 - 86.

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SINGER, S.F. JEWISH FOLKSONG: An overview of representative examples of folksong styles which were an integral part of Jewish life in Eastern Europe. (Submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Bachelor of Music (Hons.) Cape Town October 1986).

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DISCOGRAPHY

\* There will be several discrepancies where detailed information was not available

## (A) Cassettes

TITLE	ARTIST	RECORD CO. & No.	YEAR of issue
The Yiddish Dream: A Heritage of Jewish Song	Shoshana Damari; Netania Davvath; Leon Lishner; Jan Peerce; Martha Schlamme	Vanguard Recording Society, Inc. New York No.CVSD 715/16	<u>1982</u>
Chava Alberstein Sings Yiddish Folk Songs	Chava Alberstein	CBS Records CBS 62929	year <u>unstated</u>
4 cassettes of Ruth Rubin lecturing on Yiddish Folksong in Oxford, England	Ruth Rubin	Recorded by Mrs. Lilian Dubb of Cape Town, at Manchester College Oxford	<u>1983</u>
Favorite Yiddish Songs	Various artists	Adama Books New York	year <u>unstated</u>
The Magic of the Klezmer	Giora Feidman (clarinet)	Recorded at Rutgers Presbyterian Church, New York	<u>1986</u>
Klezmer Music 1910-1942	unnamed artists (Compiled by Henry Sapoznik )	from sound archives YIVO Institute New York	<u>1985</u>

## (B) RECORDS

<u>TRADITION</u> : Itzhak Perlman plays familiar Jewish melodies	Itzhak Perlman (violin) and Israel Philharmonic Orches. (conductor: Dov Seltzer)	EMI, South Africa EMCJ (L) 2705721	<u>1987</u>
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TITLE	ARTIST	RECORD CO. & No.	YEAR of issue
SHOLOSH REGOLIM: Chassidic Melodies of the Three Festivals by the Rabbis of Modzitz	Modzitzer Choral Ensemble with Benzion Shenker, soloist, Elliott Birnbaum director	F.H.M.M. No. 080	----
CHAVA ALBERSTEIN SINGS YIDDISH	Chava Alberstein	C.B.S. Records, TEL AVIV, No.CBS 83347	<u>1979</u>
THE MEGILLA OF ITZIK MANGER	Pesach Burstein, Lilian Lux, Mike Burstein (arranged & conducted by Dov Seltzer)	C.B.S. Records, New York BSF 9146	<u>1969</u>
JEWISH FOLKSONGS OF EUROPE : sung with Mandolin, Balalaika and Guitar accomp.	Raasche	Folkways Records, New York No. FW 8712	<u>1960</u>
MIRA AND HER GUITAR : Presenting Jewish Folk Songs	Mira	ABC Recording Corp. New York No.342	---
JEWISH FOLK SONGS SUNG IN YIDDISH BY MARK OLF	Mark Olf	Folkways Records, N.Y. No.FP 26B	<u>1951</u>
SEPHARDIC SONGS AND ROMANCES	Etty Kan (soprano) Dany Akiva (classical guitar)	HED-ARZI Ltd. Tel Aviv No.BAN 15101	<u>1984</u>

Title	ARTIST	RECORD Co. & No.	YEAR of issue
JEWISH LIFE: 'The Old Country' Ethnic Recordings	Various artists Collected & edited by Ruth Rubin	Folkways Records, FS 3801 New York	<u>1963</u>
SONGS FROM THE WALL: Ghetto, Partisan, Folk and Love songs; Songs in Yiddish	Rita Karin (Karpinowicz), Norbert Horowitz, Rochelle Horowitz with accordion accomp. by Alan Atlas	Folkways Records, FG 3558 New York	<u>1961</u>
CHASSIDIC DANCES	un-named	Tikva Studio Recordings, Tel Aviv. T/62	---
PROKOFIEFF: Overture on Hebrew Themes	Orchestra National de l'Opéra de Monte Carlo (conductor: Louis Frémaux)	Deutsche Grammophon No. 2538232	<u>1973</u>
SONGS OF THE HEART	Yehiel Burgin (conductor & arranger: Alexander Tarsky)	Israphon, Ltd. Israel No.808862	<u>1982</u>
JEWISH FOLK SONGS	Simon Ossovitzky with the Emil Brueh Trio	Arzi Records, New York No.PL 207	---
THE 2nd ALBUM	Fay Nicoll	Unstated No.FRN 81564, U.S.A.	<u>1983</u>
SARAH SCHNEIDERMAN: Radio's Folkzingerin in a Recital of Jewish Folk Songs	Sarah Schneiderman	ABC Recording Corp. New York No.348	---

TITLE	ARTIST	RECORD Co.. & No.	YEAR of issue
NETANYA DAVRATH SINGS YIDDISH FOLK SONGS	Netanya Davrath (with orchestra conducted by Robert de Cormier)	VANGUARD RECORDINGS, New York No.VRS 9117	-----
CHAVA ALBERSTEIN: YIDDISH FOLK SONGS	Chava Alberstein	CBS RECORDS, Tel Aviv No.CBS S 63603	-----
JEWISH FOLK SONGS Vol.III	Ruth Rubin Musical settings by Richard Newmann	ORIOLE RECORDS New York  No.XTV 20577 & XTV 20578	1954

Old 78 rpm recordings:

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|--|----------------------------|--------------------|
| 1. DER FERGINIGN FIN TATTA MAMMA<br>A NACHT IN GAN ADEN                        | Kandel Orchestra           | Brunswick          |
| 2. MY YIDDISHE MOMMA   | Sophie Tucker              | Columbia           |
| 3. ELIYOHU HA'NOVI from Der Golem<br>(Habima/ Rovina)                          | -----                      | Columbia           |
| 4. WLO N'SATO and TAL  | Cantor Savel<br>Kwartin    | Brunswick          |
| 5. MAMELE S'IZ GEVEN A<br>.DREMELE / and /TZIRELE MIRELE                       | Aaron Lebedeff             | Brunswick          |
| 6. Palestinian dancing songs<br>and Hebrew Yemenite folksong                   | Solomon Kugel<br>(tenor)   | Columbia           |
| 7. Yiddish Square Dance<br>Home On the Range                                   | Mickey Katz<br>Mickey Katz | HMV B 9707         |
| 8. HEBREW FOLKSONGS (with orches.)   | Solomon Kugel              | Columbia<br>D 256  |
| 9. HEBREW: Hamechadesh b'Tubo<br>and/ Tzur Yisrael (Tenor,<br>choir and organ) | Cantor Sirota<br>(Warsaw)  | Zonophone<br>654   |
| 10. Pancakes: Childrens' Chanuka<br>Song/ and / "In Galilee"                   | Bracha Z'firah             | Columbia<br>DC 319 |