

FOREWORD

My parents were born in the North Eastern part of Lithuania at the beginning of the 20th. Century. When they arrived in South Africa, decided that in order to totally integrate themselves into the culture of the country, should speak the languages of the country. As a result the only languages commonly heard in our home were English and Afrikaans. The only occasions on which they spoke Yiddish was when they wanted to tell secrets. This made my sister Miriam and I determined to understand what they were talking about, and so over the years taught ourselves the language. Besides keeping touch with my sister, who lives in Israel, I conduct a lively e-mail correspondence in Yiddish with friends overseas, and found that my Lexington of Yiddish words was severely limited. Added to this was the fact that even though I read Hebrew [badly] I found it almost impossible to read Yiddish using the Hebrew alphabet [all Yiddish dictionaries seem to be English – Yiddish].

I went to all the local book shops and was not able to find a transliterated dictionary. It occurred to me that there may be many others who have the same problem, and decided to compile one for my own use as well as for those who still have a love for Yiddish, and would find such a dictionary useful.

This dictionary was never intended as a scholastic exercise and contains almost no original translations. All such translations come from the sources mentioned in the bibliography. I am sure

that the authors of all the sources, being as I am, lovers of the language and wishing to perpetuate its usage will not be too put out by my modest effort. My intention is to foster and encourage the use of our Mother Tongue and to stimulate the use of this wonderfully expressive language. As far as possible the terms and pronunciations will suit people from Lithuanian background with terms most common in countries in the British sphere of influence.

NOTES FOR THE USER

These notes by en large come from Harry Coldoff's fine work, "A Yiddish Dictionary" but adapted to local usage.

There are no capitals in Yiddish, so none have been used in this transliterated work. The transliteration generally follows Coldoff's method, but has been adapted in order to make pronunciation easier for the uninitiated. I have broken the words into syllables in some cases, and in some cases into easily handlable phrases.

The letters j,q,w and x are not used. The following table of vowel and consonants should help in the pronunciation of those letters or combinations where they are not readily apparent.

a - as in father.

ch – as in loch.

e – as in pet.

ay – as in say.

i – as in pit.

i - as in ee of deer.

ei – as in pie

o – as in aw of dawn.

s – as in sit.

u – as in oo of look.

tsh – as in ch of chip.

g – as in get.

zh – as in measure.

When s'h appears, this indicates that the "s" and "h" should be pronounced separately. Words ending in "n" are pronounced as "en". All vowels are to be pronounced separately, eg. Toes as "too-ess" and mies as "mee-ess". The accent on syllables varies and I have tried to indicate these with apostrophes. Yiddish generally is a phonetic language and pronounced as it is spelt. Exceptions occur when Hebrew or Russian words are used.

**ENGLISH - YINGLISH
DICTIONARY.
A transliteration.**

Compiled by
Joe Davidovitz.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

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- 2] Yiddish for all. By Eli. Kellner.
- 3] The Yiddish Dictionary Source Book.
By Herman. Galvin & Stan. Tamarkin.
- 4] A Yiddish Dictionary by Harry Coldoff.
- 5] The Jewish Word Book by Sidney J Jacobs.
- 6] The Complete Idiots Guide to Yiddish
By Rabbi Benjamin Blech.
- 7] Yiddish Dictionary Online
By Raphael Finkel.

DEDICATION

This modest work is dedicated to all who love, and try to preserve the Yiddish language for future generations.

YINGLISH / ENGLISH

DICTIONARY
A transliteration

FIRST AND SECOND EDITION

Compiled by
Joe Davidovitz

INTRODUCTION TO THE FIRST EDITION

I am greatly honoured by Joe Davidovitz, who requested me to write an introduction to his mammoth undertaking of a transliterated Yiddish/ English Dictionary. The work required a tremendous amount of patience and perseverance and is astonishing because it was done by a descendant of Yiddish speakers and not a man whose mother-tongue was Yiddish.

In essence the Dictionary is a tribute to the very nature of the Jewish People, being a people of the book. By that I do not only mean the book as we know it – The Tanach, but also the fact that all Jews were taught to read the “ book” from an early age. This goes back to the time when we emerged from Egypt into Sinai at the same moment as the concept of alphabetic writing was created as against hieroglyphics. We were therefore able to transmit our heritage in literate form from one generation to another. This dictionary is an illustration of our people’s determination to transmit the Yiddish language, which was the literate form for hundreds of years of East European Jewry, from a generation who no longer speaks Yiddish to a generation attempting to discover their past culture.

I am certain that anybody who will use this dictionary will feel a kindred spirit with their forebears, who mostly came from Lithuania, as it is this pronunciation that is used in the Dictionary.

Mendel Kaplan

INTRODUCTION TO THE SECOUND EDITION