

Dedication by Rabbi Mendel Lipskar

My friendship with Joe Davidovitz goes back nearly half a century, in which time I learned that he is not one to take the road well travelled. Joe has an enquiring mind and free spirit that takes him on interesting journeys of discovery. On two occasions we had the great privilege of travelling together to New York to visit the Lubavitcher Rebbe and Joe's quest for deeper insight into Yiddishkeit remains a constant feature in his life.

It was in his home that the famous Thursday night Shiur was founded which resulted in making profound and pioneering change in the Yiddishkeit landscape of South Africa. The first Chabad House was born there and it was from there that authentic Jewish revival flourished. By nature a creative soul and an architect by training, he was always driven to greater endeavor.

His passion in Hebrew calligraphy and original Ktuba art reveal a sensitive awareness to traditional and mystical dimensions in Judaism. When Joe decided to turn his creative drive to a compiling a 'Yinglish' dictionary, one instinctively knew that it would be a work of note. Although language purists might disagree, Yiddish is a lingua franca, a language of the people, Ah Mamma Loshon.

Of course, it has its grammatical rules and structures but at the same time Yiddish is distinctly flexible and colourful. Yiddish shamelessly borrows words and terms from every one of its host societies. While rooted in some ancient Germanic dialect, you have Polish Yiddish, Russian Yiddish, Litvak Yiddish, American Yiddish, not to mention, of course, the abundance of Hebrew within the Yiddish lexicon. Yiddish is dynamic and alive-a joyful conglomerate of expressive words, phrases, people and cultures. 'Yinglish' then, is an important contribution to the rich fabric of Yiddish.

Joe Davidovitz brings this precious treasure to those who might otherwise not have access to it. He brings Yiddish, the rich heritage of the Jewish people to the people. Joe's labour of love, brings to life a beloved language making it accessible to a far wider audience.