

LONDON'S *HAREDI* PERIODICALS IN YIDDISH: LANGUAGE, LITERATURE AND ULTRA- ORTHODOX IDEOLOGY

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An analysis of Yiddish language periodicals destined for a *haredi* reading public is fraught with difficulty. First and foremost, the very existence of such reading material is paradoxical. On the one hand *haredim* strongly discourage wasting time reading anything not directly related to Torah, yet on the other hand Yiddish newspapers have a much stronger readership among *haredim* than among secular Jews. Even the *Forverts*, the most widely sold secular paper in Yiddish, has a distribution of 5,000 copies per week, which is far below that of most *haredi* papers. As one *hasid* explains, it's a waste of time to read secular papers, but it's a *mitsve* to read the *haredi* news publications.¹ While this attitude may explain the existence of a *haredi* readership, it does not completely counter arguments by other Ultra-Orthodox Jews who shun such material. One shopkeeper in Golders Green, for example, claims he will not

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sell Yiddish newspapers because there are already too many of them published in what he terms 'goyish' (non-Jewish language/s).² Despite the controversial nature of *haredi* periodicals in Yiddish, an analysis of their distribution, contents, and the attitudes which they convey is essential to understanding more fully the role of Yiddish among London's Ultra-Orthodox.

The Jewish Tribune, the only newspaper published in London itself to offer a section in Yiddish, has an overall circulation of 10,000 copies. Mr. Yitzhok Kraus, the editor of the paper's Yiddish section for the past twenty years, estimates 1,500 Yiddish readers, approximately 15 percent of the total readership.³ Containing anywhere from fourteen to twenty pages per issue, one to three pages are in Yiddish, appearing at the back under the title '*yiddishe tribune*'. From January to May 1998, three issues have had one page in Yiddish, while another twelve have had two. So far, only the 2 April issue has had three pages in Yiddish. For the most part, the Yiddish section reflects the headlines appearing in English, with about one half of each page covered with advertisements in Yiddish, Hebrew and English. Occasionally, however, there are articles which appear only in Yiddish, reflecting a different readership for the Yiddish section. One example is a series entitled '*dos eyropeyishe yudntum in di yorn farn khurbn*', consisting of articles in Yiddish covering prewar Jewish history in different countries of eastern Europe.⁴ There are generally no articles covering Yiddish literature or linguistics as such, which differentiates the *yiddishe tribune* substantially from similar Yiddish language publications distributed in London. The Yiddish readership of this publication consists primarily of Jews who would not easily understand the headlines in English and still feel a strong connection to central and eastern Europe. Ironically, the 'organ of Anglo-Jewish orthodoxy' caters to the least anglicised Jews in the country.

Der Yid, a Yiddish paper published by Satmar in New York, sends 500 copies to London every week. With a total circulation of nearly forty thousand, *Der Yid* is the largest Yiddish language paper in the world and the second most widely read Yiddish periodical in England.⁵ Each issue consists of approximately one hundred pages, almost entirely in Yiddish, covering secular as well as religious world events. The language used is consistent with the Satmar dialect of Yiddish, along with a rather old-fashioned, '*daytshmeyrish*' orthography according to YIVO standards. Another Yiddish paper published by Satmar, *Di Tsaytung*, has a worldwide circulation of thirty to forty thousand, and sells between one hundred and one hundred and forty copies in London every week.⁶ Its contents, language, and orthography are quite similar to *Der Yid*, the only real difference being its smaller size of approximately seventy-five pages on average.

Unlike the *Jewish Tribune*, the Satmar papers do publish articles dealing with the role of language among the Ultra-Orthodox as well as secular Jews.

Of particular interest for pious parents and educators in London's *haredi* schools is an article in *Der Yid* entitled 'vifl "english" meg ayer kind lern-nen?'⁷ The author criticises primarily the lack of fundamental English language skills imparted to Satmar children, but also points out deficiencies in other areas of secular studies. In some yeshivas, he claims, the boys are functionally illiterate in English, incapable of writing a simple cheque or doing the most basic mathematical calculations. Ten-year-olds sometimes do not know all of the names of the twelve months in English or cannot spell simple words such as 'hundred' or 'thousand'. One reason for such a poor academic performance is the contempt which *yeshiva bokherim* hold for the so-called '*goyishe limudim*', an attitude widely tolerated, if not shared by hasidic educators.⁸ This disdainful approach to English indicates the high priority level accorded languages associated with Torah study, namely *loshn koydesh* and Yiddish, as well as the low priority accorded secular studies in general.

In order to support his critique of a faulty secular education, the author quotes the former Satmar rebbe as saying: '*dos bisl english vos m' lernt bay undz mit di kinder muz men kenen!*'⁹ He explains the rebbe's comment by stressing the need to conduct business and fulfil all of one's civic duties in his country of exile. American-born children, for example, will have to know the *loshn hamedine*¹⁰ in order to earn a living and support a traditionally large hasidic family. This too is part of leading a Torah life, he claims. In order to encourage a greater respect for secular studies, supported by the Satmar rebbe and the Torah, the author proposes introducing more pious 'English' teachers. As for maths, he suggests making it part of the children's religious education. After all, maths is necessary for understanding certain parts of the Talmud. Despite the importance of learning English in America, Mr. I. Shrayber never suggests replacing Yiddish with the language of the host country, and thereby indicates the unassailability of Yiddish as the *lingua franca* of Satmar *hasidim*.

Shrayber's article is particularly interesting in that his concerns are shared by hasidic educators and parents on an international level, and certainly by the English studies teacher in London's Satmar boys' school. Yet while hasidic youth is immersed in Torah study, using Yiddish as an everyday vernacular, most secular Jews have become assimilated to such an extent that they view Yiddish as a dead, or at least a dying language. Just as pious families in London's Golders Green and Edgware are increasingly sending their children to schools which use Yiddish as the medium of religious instruction, secular Yiddish schools have been closing down at such a rate that they are virtually extinct.¹¹ For secular Jews, Yiddish language usage and instruction have been widely marginalised in favour of Hebrew and various host languages throughout the diaspora. There is, however, renewed interest in Yiddish among students and academics at secular institutions throughout the western world.¹²

But in spite of a common ancestral language, secular Yiddishists and Yiddish speakers tend to systematically dismiss Yiddish usage among the *haredim*, whereas the Ultra-Orthodox often gloat about their linguistic triumph over the secularists. Tobi M. Yitskovitsh, in an article entitled '*Tsurikblik fun "Forverts" – "Forverts" vuhin?*', effectively satirises the downfall of Yiddish and *yidishism* just as the secular Yiddish paper, the *Forverts*, celebrates its 100th anniversary.¹³ Yitskovitsh portrays the prevalent *haredi* attitude towards secular Yiddish speakers both in his sarcasm and in the very substance of his critique. Instead of nostalgically looking back at better times for the secular Yiddish press, he looks forward to its timely death. He accuses the secularists of having lured Jews away from Judaism into apostasy and godlessness, of publishing their papers and sending radio broadcasts on High Holidays such as *Yom Kippur*, of ridiculing the Orthodox, and of using the holy alphabet to print sinful material. He mocks them as a victor looking upon the vanquished, asking them where their twenty-four-hour radio station has gone, what has happened to their other Bundist publications, and asks if their children speak Yiddish, adding 'if they're even Jewish'. He claims the secularists have been stung by their own poison and are disappearing, while the Yiddish-speaking *hasidim* are flourishing and continuing the golden chain of Jewish tradition. Finally, he tauntingly tells the secularists: '*neyn, di yidishe shprakh iz nisht farshvundn, zi iz nor antlofn fun aykh*'.¹⁴ His assessment of the secular press reflects the classical cycle of sin, punishment, redemption and renewal in the *haredi* concept of Jewish history.¹⁵

Di Tsaytung, a less widely diffused Satmar paper, not only rejects the secular use of Yiddish but actually attempts to prove its sanctity. In a weekly series of articles dedicated to demonstrating how Yiddish is a holy language, columnist Shaol Kleyn cites expressions from the Torah which are frequently used in Yiddish. From *Devorim* (Deuteronomy) is the following quotation, for example '*ad bilti hasheyr loy sorid*' (until there would be no remnant).¹⁶ The author then illustrates how the quote, or words taken from it, could be used in the following Yiddish sentence '*zey hobn eyngenumen di shtot un es iz nisht geblibn fun zey a sorid*' (they captured the city and there remained of them no remnant). He follows with other citations from the sedra *Vaeytkhanan*, such as '*Shoymer es yom hashabbos lekodshoy*' (Keep the Sabbath day and sanctify it). Here the author explains that this particular quote is the original source for the expression *shabes koydesh* (Holy Sabbath) in Yiddish.¹⁷ Not only does the author demonstrate the usage of *loshn koydesh* in Yiddish, thereby establishing its sanctity, but also instructs his readers of how to incorporate biblical quotes into everyday language. The alleged frequency of these citations in the spoken Yiddish of Satmar *hasidim* would also serve to linguistically separate the pious from the more secular speakers.

By far the most interesting Satmar periodical available in England is *Der Yidisher Flam*, published by the *Beis Rokhel* girls school in London. Created specifically to encourage Satmar schoolgirls to read more in Yiddish, the monthly magazine appeared for a mere nine issues, from December of 1996 until August 1997. Although the total circulation of the publication remains unclear, the first four issues seem to have been distributed solely in England, while the last five were also sold in Belgium and the United States. A wider distribution in later issues did not affect content so much as orthography and the suppression of regional forms. Both locally and internationally, however, the readership remained young Satmar girls. The discontinuation of the periodical is largely attributed to the resignation of the general publication manager, although other factors may have played a role.

The primary goals of *Der Yidisher Flam* are briefly explained by 'the management of *Beis Rokhel*' in the introduction to the first issue. In accordance with the general pro-Yiddish policy in effect at the school, the administration intended to make simple Yiddish texts more available to the pupils. Previously, texts in Yiddish had come from the United States and Israel, where differences in dialect and orthography had unnecessarily complicated the reading for English pupils.¹⁸ The girls also wanted to read something that was printed in a more local Yiddish, so that they could more readily understand.

Shloyme Hertsog, the general editor, elaborates on purposes and goals of the monthly magazine in an article entitled '*shelo shinu es leshoynom*' (They did not change their language), published in two sections. Initially stressing the overall importance of education for the transmission of Judaism to later generations, he then points out the central role of female education in particular. Since women exert so much influence on the whole household, it is 'dangerous' for them to learn gentile languages lest they come under foreign influences which are hostile to Judaism. Hertsog cites immodest dress as well as gentile ways of speaking and acting as negative influences resulting from reading books in English or other foreign languages. The Satmar should preferably shun reading foreign books which can lead to assimilation, keeping to the well-beaten path of Yiddish language education.¹⁹ In the sequel, he continues his arguments against the use of English language books in a Satmar girl's schooling. He first claims that religious books in English will confuse young pupils who are used to the diglossia situation of secular studies conducted in English and religious studies conducted in Yiddish. Since children are generally raised not to read English books unless absolutely necessary, they are further confused when presented with religious material in English. Furthermore, the English books are threatening to replace time-honoured Yiddish texts, endangering traditional Jewish religious education. Finally, English books with religious content do not represent the path passed down from earlier generations of rabbis,

and therefore constitute a 'poison'.²⁰ The overall appeal to reject English language books has strong emotional and nostalgic overtones.

The contents of *Der Yidisher Flam* are understandably closely related to the Satmar 'Yiddish ideology' expounded by the general editor and the *Beis Rokhel* administration. Each issue usually contains (1) *halokes* for women, (2) narratives concerning great rebbes, (3) word games and puzzles, (4) memoirs, (5) historical accounts, particularly of *kiddush hashem*, (6) poetry, and (7) miscellaneous essays. The *halokes* deal with things such as the preparation of food or the care of infants on *shabes*, situations which usually pertain to a woman's traditional role in the home. The first issue explains various *halokes* relating to, while the next two editions select the following topics from the book '*tal brokhe*' (Blessing of the Dew): (a) *hilches shabes* (the laws of the Sabbath), (b) *hilkhes dash* (laws of grinding), (c) *moveyer* (lighting a fire), and (d) *molid* (giving birth). Issue number four discusses *halokes* dealing with combing, adjusting, and using spray on one's hair during *shabes*, while issue five instructs mothers how to use pampers on the holy day of rest. The next two copies both relate to the laws of food preparation either on *peysekh* (Passover) or *shabes*, and the eighth edition discusses how to make household items suitable for use. The very last issue selects various *halokes* pertaining to chores such as washing, ironing, and sewing.

Short narratives about different rebbes, a *lieu commun* of hasidic literature in Yiddish, are in no short supply in *Der Yidisher Flam*. In fact, each edition contains at least one text belonging to this genre. The first issue, for example, presents its readers with a narrative about the Magid of Mezritsh, the greatest of Besht's students. A sketchy biography is periodically interrupted by a long, tangential episode which serves the girls as a spiritual model. The most noteworthy of these anecdotes relates the magid's distress at his family's impoverishment. When his wife complains that their children are cold and hungry, the magid lets out a terrible *krekhts* (groan). At that very moment, a voice from on high informs him that he has just earned his entire portion in the world to come. The magid then decides to continue work at his apparently low-paying job as a schoolteacher, serving the Name in this world with joy. The poor *tsadik* who must face an impoverished starving family, a *topos* in Yiddish literature, is here an exalted, exemplary figure. Instead of turning a blind eye to his family's desperate financial situation, the magid lets out a *krekhts* to show his deep distress. This one moment of intense compassion is great enough to earn him his entire portion in the world to come, which encourages him to keep on the path of service to the Name, despite material hardships for him and his dependents in the here and now. The lesson for Satmar girls in Stamford Hill goes beyond the abstract ideal of sacrifice in this world for recompense in the next. In the *haredi* world of full-time Torah scholars and large

families, just such a desperate financial situation is not uncommon. Here the anecdote serves much more as a practical preparation for the near future.²¹

Memoirs, particularly concerning Holocaust experiences, are also used extensively to provide Satmar girls with suitable reading matter. In *'Sikhroynes fun an iberleber fun di krig'* (Memoirs of a Holocaust survivor), a Satmar survivor writes about her miraculous survival in order to show subsequent generations the wonders G-d worked during the war. Her *vignette* is set in Budapest shortly after the deportations had begun, four weeks after *Shavues* (Jewish holiday celebrating the giving of the Torah at Mount Sinai). Hiding with other Jews in Rov Groysman's apartment, the narrator tells of a Jewess in Hungarian garb who suddenly appears shortly before *shabes*. Unable to practice her Judaism in hiding, the young Jewish woman risks her cover in order to help other Jews prepare for the *shabes* meal. Although her job was simply to peel potatoes, the disguised Jewish woman was deeply moved at being able to contribute even minutely to the *shabes* preparations. The narrator concludes her story by stressing the sacrifices which were made for Judaism even under the most severe conditions. The importance of this particular story lies not only in the unswerving devotion to Jewish religious practice, but also in the fact that these survivors are the grandparents and great-grandparents of the readers. The narrator herself makes this point, implying that the young Satmar girls should be ready to follow such an example.²²

Historical accounts of martyrdom are also presented in *Der Yidisher Flam* as inspirational stories of religious devotion for pious young women. In *'Lomir gedenkn di kedoshim fun York'* (Let's Remember the Martyrs of York), the author gives a general background history of the Jewish presence in England, claiming they arrived in England shortly after the Roman invasion in 55 BCE. The Jews of York are first victimised in the year 740, when the Bishop created a law forbidding Christians to eat with them. Afterwards, Jews were periodically humiliated by similar decrees right up until Richard the First ascended the throne, shortly before the massacre in 1190. The new monarch was persuaded not to allow the Jewish delegation into his coronation ceremony or to accept their gifts, lest the Jews 'bewitch' him. Later, rumours spread that the king had ordered a massacre of the Jews, which effectively led to a pogrom in the Jewish quarter of London. Other pogroms eventually followed in various cities, including York. Fearing for their lives, the Jews of York asked the mayor to take them under his protection. He allowed the Jews to protect themselves in a small fortress, which was besieged for six days. Finally, the Jews were given the choice of apostasy or death. Rather than convert to Christianity, the majority of Jews chose martyrdom, while those who remained were killed by the mob.²³

This short account of the 1190 massacre in Yiddish has clearly been adapted to the needs of a pietistic girls' school. The historical background is limited to

the early establishment of a Jewish presence in England and subsequent humiliations. The brutality of gentile persecutors is repeatedly stressed by words such as *shekhtn* (to slaughter), *shekhite* (ritual slaughtering of kosher animals), and *blut* (blood), all of which evoke images of a slaughterhouse. During the London pogrom, Englishmen attacked hapless Jews with *hek* (hatchets), *mesers* (knives), and *shteyner* (stones), killing whomever they could lay their hands on. Such bestiality on the part of the persecutors is countered by the heroic nobility of their Jewish victims. Rabbi Yom Tov's speech at the besieged Clifford Tower in York is a classical tribute to the heroism of Jewish martyrs. Presenting the choice between conversion and martyrdom as a divine test of their faith, Yom Tov encourages the Jews of York to sanctify the Name by giving their lives for the Holy Torah. Salvation in this world through apostasy would entail eternal damnation in the world to come, while a brave act of martyrdom would ensure eternal life. Stressing that their persecutors would slay them in any case, or even worse, force them to convert to Christianity, the rabbi claims that martyrdom is the only feasible solution to their dilemma. Those who do martyr themselves and their families are presented as heroes, while those few who choose to throw themselves at the mercy of their assailants are presented as loathsome cowards. Finally, those who died in York are put on the same level of holiness as Jewish victims of the Holocaust.²⁴

Perhaps of even greater interest for Yiddishists is the pious poetry written for Satmar schoolgirls. Although centred around a life of strict religious observance, this poetry covers a wide array of themes, ranging from elegies of the Creator²⁵ to a sort of pastoral poetry.²⁶ In '*Nisht Fargesn*', B. Friedman deals with the theme of modest dress in a particularly original fashion. Divided into five rhymed stanzas of varying length, the poem begins with the fable of an anonymous criminal whose punishment is to wear a thick, heavy chain, for the rest of his life. Passed on from generation to generation, the sin of the father is revisited on his descendents who must also wear the chain. Eventually, the chain is no longer considered a burden, but rather a treasure with which to adorn oneself in a haughty fashion. The last two stanzas serve as a moralistic commentary on the preceding narrative. 'We' are similar to the criminal and his descendants by forgetting that our clothes symbolise the sin of Adam and Eve, using them to adorn ourselves ostentatiously. The closing lines remind readers that clothing is a divine punishment, not a present in which to take pride.²⁷

Form and themes work together to weave the moral lesson of the poem. Rhymed pairs continue throughout, in the pattern of AABBC for each stanza, and embody the key concepts both of the narrative and the commentary, as may be seen in the following excerpt.

*A groys farbrekhn iz inmitn shtot forgekumen.
Dem shuldikn hot men glaykh tsum mishpet genumen.*

*Der kenig hot im gevolt bashtrofn zeyer shver.
Tsu farshafn dem zindign boyshes on ufher.*

A great crime was committed in the middle of the city.
The guilty party was immediately brought for sentencing.
The king wanted to punish him very severely.
To create for the sinner eternal shame.²⁸

In the first stanza, '*a groys farbrekhn ... forgekumen*' (a great crime ... committed) rhymes with '*mishpet ... genumn*' (sentence ... was carried out), linking the crime with its punishment through end-rhyme. The sentence itself is '*shver*' (awkward) and without '*ufher*' (end). The criminal's misfortune due to such a hard punishment is transmitted through the end-rhymes in the second stanza where '*er*', (he) has been '*gegebn*' (given) a '*lebn*' (life) which is effectively '*shver*' (difficult) and without '*ufher*' (end), being carried on throughout succeeding generations. The changed attitude towards the chain is conveyed through rhymes in the third stanza, as may be seen in the following text.

*Far zayne kinder dos gemuzt shenkn.
kadey di kumendige doyres zoln zayn zind gedenkn.
Bay yede dor iz dos keyt gevorn diner un klener.
mit gold un diamantn hot men es basheynt.
'Dos iz gor a tayere oytser' hobn di eyniklekh gemeynt.
zey hobn dos gezogt, vayl zey hobn nisht farshtanen,
az dii keyt kumt nor, dem seydn's zind tsu dermonen.
Zey hobn dos genumn un gor sheyn batsirt.
mit zeyer zeydes shtrof hobn zey shtoltsirt.*

He had to pass it on to his children as a gift,
so that future generations would remember his sin.
For each generation the chain became more and more beautiful,
and its weight became lighter and lighter.
It was embellished with diamonds and jewels.
'This is such a precious treasure' thought his grandchildren.
They said this because they didn't understand
that the chain was only passed down in order to remember
grandfather's sin.
They took it and made it quite beautiful.
They took pride in their grandfather's sin.²⁹

In the third stanza, the chain is now considered a form of '*shenkn*' (gift) which one must '*gedenkn*' (remember). The chain's appearance subsequently becomes '*shener*' and '*shener*' (more and more beautiful), while its weight becomes '*diner*' and '*klener*' (lighter and lighter). Lost in how much the chain has been '*basheynt*' (embellished), later generations have forgotten what it had '*aygentlekh gemeynt*' (actually meant). The last two rhymes of the narrative, '*batsirt*' (adorned) and '*stoltsirt*' (proud), reflect the pride in which they now

wear the gem, formerly an object of shame and punishment.³⁰ The second part of the poem, a commentary in two stanzas, uses similar rhymes to discuss the same concepts. The moral of the story, however, is best summarised in the end-rhyme 'kleydn' (dress) and 'basheydn' (modest).³¹

While the analyses of these texts for Satmar girls are by no means exhaustive, they do provide an outline of the most popular genres in contemporary pietistic literature in Yiddish. Tales of the hasidic masters, memoirs, heroic stories of Jewish martyrdom, as well as poetry and other prose texts in Yiddish all serve the same ideological ends. Satmar girls, strongly discouraged from reading English language texts, are not only provided with more suitable literature in Yiddish, but they are also encouraged to produce it themselves. The first issue of *Der Yidisher Flam* is accompanied by a general request for literary submissions from the girls, a petition which reappears in the second issue with some success.³² Although it would be premature to speak of a pietistic literature written by women for women, these texts do imply that just such a development is strongly encouraged and would be most welcome for Satmar men and women alike.

The *Algemeyner Dshurnal*, published by a Lubavitch affiliated editor since 1972, enjoys a much wider distribution than secular Yiddish publications. With a worldwide circulation of about twenty thousand copies, two hundred papers are sent to England every week, making it the second most widely read Yiddish periodical in England.³³ Despite its relative popularity, the *Algemeyner* cannot be purchased at local newstands like *Der Yid* or *Di Tsaytung* and must be obtained by subscription only. Each issue of the *Algemeyner* contains approximately fifteen pages in Yiddish with a small English language insert of four or five pages in the middle, indicating a more diverse reading public than that of Satmar publications. Its smaller size, English language insert, and articles dealing with issues confined to the Jewish world imply that readers do not rely on the *Algemeyner* for news on a global level. Instead, the *Algemeyner* is intended as a Yiddish language supplement for a reading public not restricted to Lubavitch, or even to the observant, to conform with its mission of providing a service to all Jews. The mission of the *Algemeyner Dshurnal* has undergone an extensive re-evaluation in the wake of its twenty-fifth jubilee last year. In some ways, its original mission has been reaffirmed by reproducing past articles in which editors of the *Algemeyner* have defined its role as a Yiddish publication in the Jewish world. In the series 'Geklibene artikln un bilder fun di letste 25 yor' (selected articles and portraits from the last 25 years), an article from the very first edition was reproduced. Appearing for the first time on 25 February 1972, 'Der Algemeyner Dshurnal: undzer tsil un shtrebung' (The *Algemeyner Dshurnal*: our goals and intentions) is still relevant in July 1997. Gershon Jacobson, who has remained the paper's editor for the past twenty-five years, writes that the *Algemeyner*'s goal is '...tsu dinen

dem yidishn folk in amerike, erets-yisroel, un af der gantser vel (to serve the Jewish people in America, the land of Israel, and the whole world).³⁴ The international mission of the paper extends to the various sectors of the Jewish community, in accordance with the Lubavitch ideology of outreach espoused by its editor. When writing about the paper's proposed readership, Jacobson claims that *'mir hofn tsu gevinen dem tsutroy fun der yidisher bafelkerung...fun ale shikhtn un krayzn'* (We hope to win the trust of the Jewish population...in all classes and circles).³⁵ In fulfilment of the Lubavitch mission of outreach to all Jews, Jacobson adds that *'mir veln kemfn far a fuln yidishn khinukh far unzer yugnt'* (we will fight for a complete Jewish education for our youth).³⁶ But Jacobson does not only wish to fight for the education of all Jews, but also *'far der zikherheyt un voylzayn fun medines yisroel'* (for the security and welfare of the Jewish state).³⁷ Although Lubavitch is by no means Zionist, it differs from other hasidic sects in its unquestioned support of the Jewish state, particularly after the war of 1967. The rebbe's hard-line stance towards the Arabs and his opposition to relinquishing any land are still clearly reflected in the *Algemeyner's* headlines.³⁸

The Lubavitch movement's paradoxical attitude towards Zionism and a secular Israeli state also applies to its political stance concerning Yiddish. Even though the Yiddishism espoused by secular Bundists would be denounced by Habad *hasidim* as idolatry, the Lubavitch affiliated paper presents the Yiddish language as a treasure to be guarded for later generations. In numerous articles preceding the *Algemeyner's* 25th Jubilee on 14 September 1997, rabbis and laymen alike stress the importance of preserving and promoting a more extensive use of the Yiddish language. The main task of a special Jubilee planning committee was *'...gebn an opshatsung vegn der role fun Algemeynem Dshurnal in yidish lebn fun amerike un iber der gorert vel'* (to give an assessment of the role of the *Algemeyner Dshurnal* in the Jewish life of America and the entire world).³⁹ The committee, composed of prominent *hasidim* from different sects, businessmen and other personalities, effectively assumed a pro-active role in the world of Yiddish by establishing a foundation dedicated to the *'...prezer-vatsie un farshpraying fun yidish un yidishkayt...'* (preservation and promotion of Yiddish and Judaism).⁴⁰ One goal of the new foundation would be to ensure the future of the paper itself, an organ of spreading the Yiddish language and culture within the context of Orthodox Judaism.⁴¹

The means by which the *Algemeyner Dshurnal* effectively promotes the Yiddish language and culture constitute a tightrope balancing act between the secular and the strictly orthodox. The very creation of a foundation for the preservation of a language, at first glance a decidedly secular endeavour, is well woven into the Lubavitch ideology of outreach to nonobservant Jews. By encouraging the use of Yiddish among the non-religious, Habad is helping pre-

vent the assimilation of Jews into a wider gentile society on the one hand, and is giving them greater access to the Yiddish-speaking *frum* (pious) world on the other. The Lubavitch movement has accorded Yiddish a certain degree of *kedusha* (sanctity) primarily due to the rebbe's oral and written use of the language. Articles appearing in the *Algemeyner Dshurnal* itself, however, imply that Yiddish is considered a holy language also because it was the vernacular of six million Jewish martyrs in the Holocaust.⁴² Numerous volumes of hasidic literature have likewise been composed in Yiddish, thereby making a worthwhile endeavour to promote the language as a part of religious education.

Yet the *Algemeyner Dshurnal* fulfils its self-avowed mission to all Jews by publishing Yiddish-related articles of a more secular nature. Recent months have seen a surprising amount of articles concerning secular Yiddish writers, poets, actors, and even academics. In '*Lider fun maynem a khaver*' (One of my friend's poems), Moshe Loyev presents six poems written by the Kiev-born engineer, Asher Tsoyman. Not only are Tsoyman's poems not purely pietistic in content, but previous appearances in secular periodicals such as *Sovetish Heymland* and the Yiddish *Forverts* would render his poetry unsuitable for most *haredi* newspapers.⁴³ Nonetheless, Loyev has also an article about the former Yiddish writer Hershl Palianker. Like Tsoyman, Palianker enjoyed a decidedly secular career in the *Sovetn-Farband*, serving as the general editor for *Sovetish*, a literary almanac published in Kiev. Later he helped found the journal *Sovetish Heymland* and became an administrator for the Ukrainian Writer's Club.⁴⁴ Yet his death did not go unnoticed by a community which normally shuns the very publications he helped create and manage. Even the canonical authors of Yiddish literature, commonly rejected *en masse* as *apikorsim* (heretics) by many *haredim*, are worthy of mention in the *Algemeyner Dshurnal*. Moyshe Loyev writes an article about Mendeley Mokher Sfarim entitled, '*Der Zeyde fun der yidisher literatur*'.⁴⁵

The small English language insert likewise contains a limited number of articles dealing with a widely secular Yiddish culture. Rabbi Dr Seymour S. Hirschman, author of *Let Us Not Destroy Ourselves: The Survival Bible*, praises the *Algemeyner Journal* primarily for '...preserving our Jewish culture for these many years...'.⁴⁶ Any ambiguity concerning the word 'Jewish' is quickly clarified as he goes on to thank Gershon Jacobson's paper for 'Yiddish', a language which almost '...became a casualty of the Russian Communist Regime...' as well as '...the renaissance of our Hebrew language in Israel...'.⁴⁷ He further laments the decline of the dozen Yiddish theatre companies and five Yiddish newspapers which once flourished in America. Such a nostalgic reminiscence of Yiddish theatre, usually taboo for *haredim*, or even of secular Yiddish newspapers, which few *haredim* will ever read, is very surprising to find in a *haredi* publication. Finally, Rabbi Hirschman thanks Ger-

shon Jacobson not for his mission as a Lubavitcher, but rather for his effort to strengthen the Yiddish language.⁴⁸ The entire article is incredibly close to what one might find in the *Forverts*, indicating an increasing tendency for the *Algemeyner Dshurnal* to assume the functions once filled by the now defunct secular Yiddish papers.

Whereas other *haredi* papers, most notably *Der Yid*, systematically denounce the Yiddish theatre as leading away from religious Judaism, the *Algemeyner Dshurnal* does not hesitate to write about Yiddish actors who consciously rejected the Jewish faith. Shmuel Nemanov has written an article in the English section about the famous Yiddish actor Solomon Mikhoels. Although from a religious family, Mikhoels rejected Jewish observances to begin a career in the Yiddish theatre as an avowed Marxist. Such a talented and charismatic figure was fully exploited by Stalin as part of his program to replace traditional Judaism with communist ideology, using Yiddish theatre as a subversive tool. Stalin hoped that giving large amounts of funding to Yiddish theatre would undercut traditional Judaism to the point where all Jews would eventually become fully assimilated in the communist state. After Mikhoels had served his purpose, he was assassinated by Stalin's secret police during an anti-Jewish purge. The article is clearly slanted against the exchange of religious Judaism for secular ideologies which lead to a tragic end. The moral lesson of the story is clear; communism, Yiddishism, and other ideologies are vain and cannot replace traditional Judaism.⁴⁹ Although the content is apparently secular, the entire article fits into the context of Orthodox Judaism as expressed in the Lubavitch movement.

Finally, even secular Yiddish scholars and academic Yiddish conferences are suitable topics for the readers of the *Algemeyner Dshurnal*. The death of Chone Shmeruk, professor of Yiddish at Hebrew University in Jerusalem, was reported in Warsaw. Shmeruk's career and major contributions to Yiddish scholarship were outlined in a brief obituary.⁵⁰ Even court hearings against academic institutions made by secular academics are noteworthy, as in the case of Dovid Katz's industrial dismissal suit against the Oxford Institute for Yiddish Studies. Described as an American Jew with a patriarchal beard, but unfortunately 'not religious', Dr Katz is praised for his work in the field of Yiddish. The article finishes on a more neutral note, advertising the date of his hearing.⁵¹ Aside from obituaries and lawsuits, the *Algemeyner Dshurnal* is apparently committed to serving students and professional scholars of Yiddish by informing them of international conferences and other related events. The latest article in this category concerns the conference to take place in Israel on 8, 9, and 10 June 1998.⁵² Given the number of Lubavitch rabbis and Habad houses at university campuses throughout the world, such an interest in academic Yiddish is not as surprising as it might seem.

As a whole, Yiddish language periodicals in London mainly serve a reading public restricted to the Ultra-Orthodox in Stamford Hill. In fact, Yiddish papers besides the *Jewish Tribune's* small Yiddish language section are not to be found in businesses in Edgware or Golders Green. One reason for the lack of Yiddish periodicals in northwest London is that these communities use Yiddish primarily as a vernacular to discuss sacred Jewish texts. Ability to speak Yiddish in these areas is mostly limited to men, who may never have developed a high degree of proficiency in the written language. Another factor is the insularity of the Satmar *hasidim*, most of whom live in Stamford Hill and are not concerned about selling their newspapers to outsiders. The one remaining Yiddish publication is the *Algemeyner Dshurnal*, which may be purchased only by subscription. This paper differs from the others in length, content, mission, distribution, and a readership not limited to Ultra-Orthodox circles. In all cases, Yiddish periodicals are used to promote the ideological platform of the *haredi* editors.

Notes

1. Shmuel Heiley, personal interview, 29 January 1998.
2. Hasidic shopkeeper, personal interview, 23 March 1998.
3. Yitzhok Kraus, phone interview, 27 January 1998.
4. These articles include: '*das yidishe lebn in lite*' (Jewish Life in Lithuania), 19 February 1998; '*dos yidishe lebn in daytshland*' (Jewish Life in Germany), 26 February and 5 March 1998; '*yidish lebn in poylin un galitsie*' (Jewish Life in Poland and Galicia), 19 March and 2 April 1998; '*yidish lebn in ungarn*' (Jewish Life in Hungary), 7 May 1998.
5. *Der Yid* distribution office in New York, phone interview, 26 January 1998.
6. London distribution manager, phone interview, 27 January 1998.
7. I. Shrayber, '*vifl "english" meg ayer kind lernen?*', *Der Yid*, 2 May 1997, p. 23.
8. Ibid.
9. Ibid.
10. Language of the State.
11. For an analysis of Yiddish secular schools, consult Sandra Parker, 'An Educational Assessment of the Yiddish Secular School Movements in the United States' in Joshua Fishman, ed., *Never Say Die!*, The Hague, Paris, New York, Mouton Publishers, 1981, p. 495.
12. For a discussion of Yiddish at the university level, see Leonard Prager, 'Yiddish in the University' in Joshua Fishman, ed., *Never Say Die!*, The Hague, Paris, New York, Mouton Publishers, 1981, p. 529.
13. Tobi M. Yitskovitsh, '*Tsurikblik fun "Forverts" – "Forverts" vuhin?*' (The *Forward* in Retrospect – *Forward*, Where to?), *Der Yid*, 15 August 1997, pp. 46, 76.
14. Ibid.
15. For a discussion of the Satmar interpretation of classical sources consult Aviezer Ravitzky, *Messianism, Zionism, and Jewish Religious Radicalism*, Chicago and London, University of Chicago Press, 1996, pp. 64-65.

16. Shoaul Kleyn, 'yidish', *Di Tsaytung*, 23 January 1998, p. 42.
17. Ibid.
18. 'Hakadmo fin di yidishe flam' (The Antiquity of the Jewish Flame), *Der Yidisher Flam*, December 1996.
19. Shloyme Hertsog, 'shelo shinu es leshoynom' (They Didn't Change Their Language), *Der Yidisher Flam*, December 1996.
20. Shloyme Hertsog, 'shelo shinu es leshoynom' (They Didn't Change Their Language), *Der Yidisher Flam*, January 1997, no page number given.
21. 'Yoma de-hilula (Day of Celebration), 19 Kislev 1773', *Der Yidisher Flam*. For more stories belonging to this genre, see Borukh Jona Shnitzler, 'Fartribn in a frostige nakht' (Expelled on a Frosty Night), *Der Yidisher Flam*; Ben Tsion Frenkl, 'Der heyliker rebbe Zosha of Anypolie' (The Holy Rebbe Zosha of Anypolie), *Der Yidisher Flam* 3; various stories in issues 5, 6, 7, 8 and 9.
22. 'Sikhroynes fun an iberleber fun di krig' (Memoirs of a Holocaust Survivor), *Der Yidisher Flam*. For more memoirs, see M. Grosberger, 'A Refyudshi [Refugee] Dertseyln' (A Refugee Tells Her/His Story), *Der Yidisher Flam* 6; Rov Jonah Landau, 'Vos alte khasidim dertseyln' (Things that Old hasidim Tell), *Der Yidisher Flam* 7.
23. 'Lomir gedenken di kedoshim fun York' (Let's Remember the Martyrs of York), *Der Yidisher Flam*.
24. Ibid.
25. Nekhome Reyzl Babd, 'Niflaos hoboyrey' (Wonders of the Creator), *Der Yidisher Flam*.
26. D. Kind, 'Der Obshtam iz Eydes' (The Source is Testimony), *Der Yidisher Flam* 3.
27. B. Friedman, 'Nisht Fargesn' (Don't Forget), *Der Yidisher Flam* 3.
28. Ibid.
29. Ibid.
30. B. Friedman, 'Nisht Fargesn' (Don't Forget), *Der Yidisher Flam* 3.
31. Other pietistic poems in *Der Yidisher Flam* include 'Segula tsu Hatslokhe' (Good Luck Charm) by Shloyme Man in issue 6, 'Kabales Shabes' (Receiving the Sabbath) by Yakov Veynman in issue 8, as well as 'Di Dray Vokhn' (The Three Weeks) by Mara Grosberger, 'Tisha Bav' (The Ninth of Av) by Mara Grosberger, and another poem by Shloyme Man, all in issue 9.
32. Editor, *Der Yidisher Flam*.
33. *Algemeyner Dshurnal* distribution office, telephone interview, 27 January 1998.
34. Gershon Jacobson, 'Der Algemeyner Dshurnal: undzer tsil un shtraybung', *Der Algemeyner Dshurnal*, 25 February 1972.
35. Ibid.
36. Ibid.
37. Ibid.
38. For a full discussion of Lubavitch attitudes towards Zionism and the Jewish State, consult Aviezer Ravitzky, *Messianism, Zionism, and Jewish Religious Radicalism*, Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1996.
39. 'Perzenlekhkeytn fun farshidene krayzn shlisn zikh on in komitet vos greyt tsu banket tsum 25stn yubl fun "Algemeynem Dshurnal"', *Der Algemeyner Dshurnal*, 18 July 1997, p. 3.
40. 'Komitet obtsutsaykhenen 25stn yubileum fun "Algemeynem Dshurnal" bashlist tsu etanlirn fundatsie, vos zol arbetn far der farshpraytung fun yidish un yidishkayt', *Der Algemeyner Dshurnal*, 25 August 1997, p. 1.
41. Ibid.

42. Harov Dovid Dov Halpern, 'Yidish – di shprakh fun kedoshim' (Yiddish – The Language of Martyrs), *Der Algemeyner Dshurnal*, 12 September 1997, p. 5.
43. Moyshe Loyev, 'Lider fun maynem a khaver', *Der Algemeyner Dshurnal*, 19 September 1997, p.11.
44. Moyshe Loyev, 'An yizkor vort vegn a yidishn shrayber funem gevezenem sovetn-farband', *Der Algemeyner Dshurnal*, 7 November 1997.
45. Moyshe Loyev, 'Der Zeyde fun der yidisher literatur', *Der Algemeyner Dshurnal*, 27 December 1997.
46. Rabbi Dr Seymour S. Hirschman, 'At 25 the *Algemeyner Dshurnal* Keeps Holding on to a Precious Diamond – Yiddish', *Algemeyner Dshurnal*, 15 August 1997, p. B4.
47. Ibid.
48. Ibid.
49. Shmuel Nemanov, 'Artists Honour Legendary Yiddish Actor Killed by Communist Dream He Embraced', *Algemeyner Dshurnal*, 23 January 1998, pp. B1, B4.
50. 'Hoypt fun yidish katedra in yerushalaymer universitet geshtorbn in varshe', *Algemeyner Dshurnal*, 25 July 1997.
51. 'Doktor Hirshe Dovid Kats greyt zikh ontsuklogn oksford universitet', *Algemeyner Dshurnal*, 5 September 1997.
52. 'Velt-konferents far yidisher kultur vet obgehaltn vern in yisroel in khoydesh yuni', *Algemeyner Dshurnal*, 20 February 1998.

AGEING PATIENTS, PSYCHOTHERAPISTS AND HOLOCAUST SURVIVORS

*Irene Bloomfield**

Old age is not popular in western society. The former veneration of age and connection between age and wisdom has virtually ceased to exist, and reactions toward elderly people are frequently of pity, exasperation or even contempt, but the life expectancy of people today is ten years more than it was at the end of World War Two and twenty to thirty more than at the beginning of this century, so that there are a lot more of us around, and it has become necessary for psychotherapists to take notice of a hitherto much neglected part of the population.

It is a strange fact, that whilst psychotherapists have been reluctant to see older or ageing patients, they themselves rarely retire. Some continue to see patients well into their seventies and eighties, and a few have been known to see patients, supervise trainees, give talks and write papers in their nineties.

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