

Mendele: Yiddish literature and language

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1)-----

Date: July 28

Subject: Folg mikh/mir a gang

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I am not fully convinced by Barnett Zumoff that the correct expression is Folg MIR a gang rather than Folg MIKH a gang.

As a Litvak, I know that colloquial Litvak Yiddish does not have the accusative forms mikh and dikh and uses the dative instead. It does not follow that Folg mir a gang is correct standard Yiddish.

1. In their dictionaries, both Uriel Weinreich and Yitskhok Niborski list Folg MIKH a gang. Alexander Harkavy does indeed list Folg MIR a gang, but he may have been following his Litvak heritage without considering what the standard Yiddish should be.

2. Yudl Mark in his Gramatik fun der yidisher klal-shprakh lists folgn as one of the verbs after which one should use the accusative (page 177).

3. If you search in Google Books for the two alternatives -- in Yiddish letters (omitting komets and pasekh) -- you get 3970 hits for Folg MIKH a gang and only 539 hits for Folg MIR a gang.

4. Stutchkoffs Oytser has Folg MIKH a gang (Entry 443).

5. Sholem Aleykhem, Yankl Yakir, and other writers use Folg MIKH a gang.

It is hard to believe that Weinreich, Niborski, Stutchkoff, Yudl Mark, etc. are all of them mistaken in this matter.

Norman Buder

2)-----

Date: August 9

Subject: nayer numer "Yidishe shprakh"

S'iz nor vos aroys a nayer numer Yidishe shprakh, der filologisher zhurnal funem YIVO. In dem numer geyen arayn artiklen fun Mordkhe Shekhter o"q;h vegn shprakhiker evolutsye ba yidishe filologn; fun Kalmen Vayzer vegn aroysred; fun Brukhe Kaplan vegn punktuatsye; fun Shimen Noyberg vegn mizrekhdike hashpoes inem bikhl "Simkhes-hanefesh"; fun Hershl Glezer vegn Imanuel Olshvanger; fun Khonen Kiel o"h vegn zayn tshenstekhever yidish; vi oykh notitsn vegn gramatik, shayles fun di leyeners, briv in redaktsye, Vi iz af yidish? Un nokh un nokh.

Oyb ir vilt koyfn an ekzemplar, shikt a tshek oysgeshtelt dem YIVO Institute, 15 W 16 St, New York NY 10011, oder a kredit-kartl af mayn adres (pglasser@yivo.org). Prayz, porto arayngerekhnt: \$25 (Fareynikte shtatn) oder \$30 (oysland).

Paul (Hershl) Glasser

3)-----

Date: August 14
Subject: mayofes-yid

I am in search for primary Yiddish texts that include the Yiddish term "MaYafis Yid" (or Mahyafisnik, MayufesYidl.) The term is an appellation for a Jew who panders to the Polish Landowner. I have heard the term recently as a kind of frum version of the "Uncle Tom" in the American racial context. Macy Nulman writes that the term originates in early modern Poland, where the Polish nobleman would hire Jews to entertain them at their parties and during their indiscretions. The Jew who flattered the Polish landlord (poritz), sang the Mah-Yafis niggun in his presence and flattered him was thus a "Ma Yafis Yid" who did not maintain his dignity and self-respect as a Jew. Could anyone recommend primary sources where this term is used in context?

Eli Rosenblatt

[Moderator's note: Chone Shmeruk's article "Majufes" may be helpful. It is published in English in Andrzej Paluch, ed. The Jews in Poland I (1992) 463-474 and re-published in Polin 10 (1997)]

4)-----

Date: August 18
Subject: Song lyrics sought "Moyshe moyroshe"

I would be grateful if anyone can supply me with the full text of the song that contains this couplet:

Moyshe moyroshe oyf yener velt

Varf mir arop a zekele gelt

Al Grand

5)-----

Date: July 30
Subject: a frage vegn shikh

1. Tsu shikh vintsht men nisht (meaning you don't wish the wearer "nuts gezunterheyt", etc.)
2. A family member is not allowed/supposed to wear shoes from a deceased loved one. I realized that these are superstitious beliefs/minhagim. I am interested to know their

origin, since even in a superstitious belief there in an underlying folklore or historic story or explanation. Thanks again and Shavua Tov!

These questions were asked of me by a friend, Rabbi Diana Siegal I pass on the questions to Mendele.

Susan Ganc

6)-----
Date: July 27
Subject: "A Yiddish Mama"

Does anyone have a transcription of the spoken words on Sophie Tucker's recording of "A Yiddish Mama"?

many thanks,
Jane Enkin

7)-----
Date: August 3
Subject: vi halt men shoyhn bay zey?

Thanks to Sulema for the very clear explanation. The only thing that still bothers me is that it is in the form of a question, not an exclamation.

My best hypothesis, if we keep the interrogative form, would be something like "Where are we now (how do we stand now) in regards to [finding a suitable match for] them?";

OTOH, if anyone can explain why a sentence beginning with "Vi halt men..." and ending with a question mark should be translated as a wish ("(h)alavai ... !", of "Zol ... !"), please let me know. The situation described by a question and by an exclamation may be essentially the same ("shoyhn" can of course add impatience to a question), but form matters also, and to me there is a difference in POV between impatience and a wish-statement.

Stanley F Levine

8)-----
Date: August 19
Subject: IB Singer's Noble Prize banquet speech

With apologies for the lateness of this response to Kalman Weiser's e-mail...

In addition to the lecture given at the actual Nobel dinner and printed in the *Nobel Lecture* book cited by Joshua Cappell, IB Singer also spoke the night before the dinner at a special event held in his honor and captured in a recording made available online here:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4d8yeL0oEwU&list=PL652DCD748C70110C>.

I tried my best about a year ago to transcribe that speech in both Hebrew and Latin characters and translate it into English for the Yiddish-interested public and recently posted the transcriptions and translation online here:

<http://yiddishwordoftheweek.tumblr.com/post/58702012433/isaac-bashevis-singers-nobel-prize-speeches-translated>.

As you can see, I wasn't able to make everything out, so there are still some gaps in the transcription and translation. If Mendelyaner who read it and listen to the recording find mistakes and/or have suggestions for improvement, I would love to hear from them. Thanks so much in advance!

Also, I should note that, unless your reactions to my work are relevant to the entire Mendele list, I would appreciate it if you sent them directly to my e-mail address: yiddishwordoftheweek_at_gmail.com.

A dank, nokh a mol,
in foroyes!

Best,
Shaul Seidler-Feller

9)-----

Date: July 31
Subject: Request for Translators for yizker-bukh

To Whom This May Concern:

I was given this email address by Ms.Yael Chaver, who is lending her translation services to this project. Since I am in need of additional translators, I asked Yael for help and she provided me with this email address.

The project is the translation of a Yizkor Book for the shetl Divenishok (south of Vilna) under the auspices of the JewishGen.org and funded by charitable contributions. The work in progress is being published incrementally here:
<http://www.jewishgen.org/Yizkor/dieveniskes/dieveniskes.html>.

The book contains articles in both Yiddish and Hebrew and I need translators for both languages. The original text is imaged and available online for translation purposes. Articles tend to be about 4-5 pages and are generally colloquial. Our going rate is \$0.05 per target word.

Please reply to adam@cherson.net for details.

I would appreciate if this request for translators could somehow be circulated to the scholarly community.

Cordially,
Adam Cherson
Project Coordinator

End of Mendele Vol. 23.008

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