

## Yiddish for the Very Young Child

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It is never too early to begin Yiddish programs for even toddlers. My experience with children from ages one to five is based on my three year pilot presentations.

A typical class would begin by first introducing myself, and any one else participating.

For example, "A gutn morgen, my nomen iz Zeyde Sova (or Eyleh)."

Then I would translate each word into English and show a toy owl that comes with the real song when you press its back. If it is not available, a photo of an owl would be OK.

Then, say, "Vos is dayn nomen?" and translate the words.

Ask the children this question. Usually, the response is low, so I ask them to repeat it again LOUDLY!! This works very well.

For the one year olds, the teachers can assist them. Teach them simple songs and have the children stand and perform the motions according to the words. This gives everyone an active role and is very effective!!!

Songs are "Az der rebbe lakht",  
"Head, Shoulders, Knees and Feet".

They sing in Yiddish after the words are introduced. This latter song is known to them in English. I play these two songs from a DVD called "Pripetshik Sings Yiddish" which is sung by a children's choir. This is available from:

Ergo Media, Inc.  
P.O. Box 2037 Teaneck, NJ 07666.  
Ph: 877-539-4748  
Website: [www.jewishvideo.com](http://www.jewishvideo.com).

I have recruited several people to begin this program in Phoenix preschool temples. My suggestion is to glean from the vast Yiddish available resources.

In the future, I shall provide a manual of my programs as a suggested guide. The results have been encouraging and energizing! As a suggested resource, teachers of Yiddish may wish to read my article in the March 2010 issue of *Der Bay*.

## My Mama's Translation

By Joan Braman

My mother, Mary Schulman, who passed away in 2002, had done a sensitive and faithful translation of the Yiddish poetry collection *Inheritance (Yerushe)* by the pre-eminent Russian-Jewish writer Peretz Markish (Tsar Publications, Toronto, 2007; bi-lingual edition). Published under the auspices of the Teitelboim Center for Yiddish Culture as part of its series of great Yiddish classics in translation. It is the first translation into English of a complete volume of Markish's poetry, and contains the incantatory long poems "To a Jewish Dancer" and "Caucasus" plus many shorter lyrics. There is a foreword by Elie Wiesel.

Markish was born in 1895 in Volhynia, Ukraine and fell victim to Stalin's 1952 purge of Jewish writers and intellectuals. He was a prolific writer in many genres. Revered in his day throughout Russia and the Yiddish-speaking world, and hailed as a poetic innovator, he was the central figure of a highly creative modernist Yiddish literary group, named the Khaliastre (Polish literary group). His style eludes classification; variously described as expressionist, naturalist, symbolist, and imagist, the poetry is strikingly unique and often enigmatic.

Written in the period 1947 - 1948, many of these poems deal with biblical and historical themes of Jewish suffering, wandering, homelessness, and the ravages of war; nevertheless, they convey an inextinguishable hopefulness for a brighter future for mankind. Markish's tragic consciousness of man's inhumanity to man does not prevent him from expressing, in his lyrics, an exuberant joy in living and a love of nature, from its smallest to its grandest manifestations. He can write movingly of such ordinary things as a broken off flower, a lover's teardrop, young girls sunning on the beach, or a wild ride in an old jalopy.

Both Yiddish speakers and non-Yiddish-literate readers can experience these remarkable poems, in the original Yiddish and in translations that capture their meaning and spirit. Printed with the original Yiddish text and English translations on facing pages, the book is also an excellent teaching tool for the advanced student of Yiddish.

The publisher is, Tsar Publications, PO Box 6996, Sta. A Toronto, ON Canada M5W 1X7 ([www.tsarbooks.com](http://www.tsarbooks.com) or call 416-483-7191) or the Teitelboim Center ([yiddishculture.com](http://yiddishculture.com)), 305-774-9244 or 828-692-8062