



יידיש-קענערס: בלעטערט אראפ צו לייענען אונזערע יידישע אַרטיקלען

Yiddish Brief



with Rukhl Schaechter



As many of you know, I have a special fondness for the *maykholim* (dishes) that are part of our Eastern Europe Jewish heritage.

This week, as I was googling my favorite old world delicacies, I came across a Forward article by cookbook author Leah Koenig, listing the results of an informal survey she conducted with Forward readers in 2011. Acknowledging that a number of these dishes have been nearly forgotten, she asked which of them they would love to bring back.

One of the most popular responses was *gribenes* (also known as *grivn*) – crisp chicken skin cracklings. It immediately brought back memories of coming home from school on Friday afternoons, smelling the *grivn* frying on the stove and running over for my pre-shabbes snack. I'd watch my mother stirring the glistening golden brown *grivn* in the frying pan, and wait for her to offer me some.

"*Du veyst, az s'iz nisht gezunt, yo?*" ("You know, they aren't healthy, right?") she'd say, and I'd say: "Yo", and then we'd both smile knowingly, as she slid about six of them onto a plate for me.

Knowing that this was all I'd get, I chewed them slowly, savoring their lovely texture – crunchy on the outside, soft on the inside. I don't think my sisters and brother were ever tempted by the *grivn* so I have no idea who ate the rest of them. I suspect my father would sneak over to get his share and I'm sure my mother couldn't resist them either. In any case, by the time I put on my shabbes clothes and returned to the kitchen, I'd be met by an empty, greasy frying pan.

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Schmaltz is strained from a bowl of gribenes. Courtesy of Tori Avey

Ten popular Jewish delicacies from Eastern Europe – plus their recipes. Back in 2011, the Forward asked its readers which foods they'd love to bring back to the contemporary table. "Not surprisingly, the feedback was abundant and passionate," writes cookbook author Leah Koenig. Nearly 100 readers cheered on their favorite Jewish dishes and, along the way, reminisced about family and childhood memories. [Read the story](#) ➤

A Yiddish book club in Manhattan is reading the stories of Blume Lempel. After writing about this engaging short story writer in our last Yiddish Brief, I discovered that a weekly Yiddish book club in the Upper West Side of Manhattan is now reading her stories. Organizer Florence (Feyge) Rubinfeld says that participants take turns reading the text in a friendly atmosphere and there is no cost. Both native Yiddish speakers and mid-level or advanced Yiddish students are invited to attend. To sign up and get the address, contact Florence (Feyge) Rubinfeld at FRubinfeld@gmail.com.

Sinners and saints in the stories of I. L. Peretz. In his best stories, the writer known as the father of Yiddish literature frequently presents a pair of opposites according to readers' expectations, and then pulls the rug out from under those expectations, writes Goldie Morgentaler in an article in Tablet. The saint ends up in hell and the woman who spent a lifetime lusting in her heart after non-Jewish men is revered for her virtue after her death. Read Morgentaler's provocative essay [here](#).



Chair of Rabbi Nahman of Bratslav (circa 1808), as it appears in the online Judaica catalogue. Photo: Avraham Hay

Browse this online Judaica catalogue in 15 languages — including Yiddish. The Judaica Index is an online resource of over 200 ritual objects from all over the world, open for the public to peruse. The colorful objects are accompanied by where they came from, and some have videos showing their origins. Yiddish, Ladino and Hebrew are among the 15 languages used on the site. The project is an initiative of the Rothschild Foundation Hanadiv Europe. View the website in English [here](#) and in Yiddish [here](#).

Listen to Golden Age *khazones* (cantorial music) sung by Hasidim today. A number of Hasidic singers have looked to the emotionally powerful and technically demanding music of the early 20th century as a means of self-expression. Scholar and musician Jeremiah Lockwood spent time singing and learning about these singers, and selected a handful to make an album, “Golden Ages: Brooklyn Chassidic Cantorial Revival Today,” showcasing their exceptional artistry. The singers are accompanied by organ and piano, giving it an old-school sound, but recorded with 21st-century fidelity. The album is available as a 10-track digital download and a vinyl record. Listen [here](#).

VIDEO OF THE DAY



A song in honor of Latvians who hid Jews fleeing the Holocaust. Yiddish Glory, a musical group created by Anna Shternish and Psoy Korolenko, performs the song “Riga” in this live performance, video-recorded here with English subtitles. Author Haim Kotliar wrote it based on his harrowing personal experience escaping the Latvian capital city in 1941 and fleeing east.

Read a new translation of a Yiddish short story about the mutual animosity between an artist and a patron. Wolf Wieviorka was a Yiddish short story writer who wrote about social class and power. One of his stories, “An Artist’s Revenge,” was recently published in Jewish Currents and translated by Yiddish Book Center fellow Sarah Biskowitz. It's a fast-paced interplay between an artist who resents the power the businessman has over his art, who in turn resents the power the artist has over his reputation. Read the story [here](#).

Have you played the Forverts version of Wordle yet? Vertl is fun and requires just a basic knowledge of Yiddish. Once you begin, make sure to bookmark the link so that you’ll be able to play whenever you like. [Play the game ►](#)

YIDDISH WORD OF THE DAY: **COMPLAINING**



Learn a proverb that tells you who's most likely to complain to God.

JOIN THE CONVERSATION

UPCOMING EVENTS

“Fear and Other Stories by Chana Blankshteyn, Translated by Anita Norich”

Wednesday July 6, 6:00 p.m. ET/ 3:00 p.m. PT

“Fear and Other Stories” is a collection of stories written from a modernist and feminist perspective. Chana Blankshteyn’s widely-admired short stories, many of them set in pre-World War II Vilna, were almost forgotten. Scholar Anita Norich found, translated and recently published them. Listen to a Zoom talk between Norich and Berkeley Jewish Studies Professor Chana Kronfeld, hosted by YIVO.

[*Register here*](#)

“The Art of the Yiddish Book with Roni Gross & Dr. Barbara Mann”

Monday July 11 - Thursday July 14, in Manhattan

Learn to print a Yiddish book yourself at this week-long New York City workshop. Each morning, students will visit YIVO's archives to learn about the history of Yiddish printing, and then go to the Center for Book Arts to learn actual printing techniques. The last day of the workshop will be a six-hour session at the printing press, creating a collaborative project.

[Register here](#)

IF YOU CAN READ YIDDISH...

גיט א קוק אויף די יידישע מאטעריאלן וואס מיר האבן די טעג אַרויפגעשטעלט:



ווידעא: א קורצע געשיכטע פֿונעם ביאליסטאָקער פלעצל און ווי מע מאכט עס

VIDEO: A short history of the bialy and how it's made

אין פוילן, ווו ס'איז עד־היום פאָפולער, רופט מען זיי צעבולארש.



קריטיק: די מעזינקע אויסגעגעבן:
די מעזינקע אויסגעגעבן!!!!



נייע פֿארשונג וועגן סאָוועטיש-ייִדישע קאַריקאַטורן פֿון די 1930ער

New research on Soviet-Jewish political cartoons of the 1930s

א צאָל שטודיעס וועגן ייִדן אין סיביר און וויסרוסלאַנד געפֿינען זיך אין נייעם נומער „יודאיק-סלאַווישן זשורנאַל“.



ווידעא: בער באַראַכאָוו — פּוועלי-ציון-גרינדער און יידישער שפראַכפֿאַרשער

VIDEO: Ber Borochov – Labor Zionist founder and Yiddish linguist

באַראַכאָוו האָט געהאַלפֿן שאַפֿן אַ קאָמיסיע פֿאַר יידישער גראַמאַטיק און אַרטאָגראַפֿיע.



א ניי בוך דערציילונגען וועגן די יידן אין ביראָבידזשאַן.

New book of short stories about the Jews of Birobidzhan

אלפסנדר דראַבקינס בוך, „אַך, יידן, יידן“, איז אויף רוסיש און יידיש.

QUOTE OF THE DAY

‘דער שלימזלניק האָט תמיד טענות צו גאָט.

‘The shlimazel is always complaining to God.’

—
Yiddish Proverb

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Thanks to Zach Golden for his assistance in putting together this newsletter.

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