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Innovation by Translation: Yiddish and Hasidic Hebrew in Literary History

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III.
CONVERSATIONS:
ACROSS CANONS AND BETWEEN TEXTS

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Arguing
the Modern
Jewish Canon

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Yiddish, like a dybbuk, haunted the evolution of modern Hebrew. The enlightened, or *maskilim*, tried to exorcise the Yiddish spirit by eliminating Yiddish words, phrases, and grammar that entered Hebrew. In doing this, they often drained the blood out of their Hebrew texts. It was inevitable, however, that Yiddish would become an integral part of modern Hebrew as it emerged in the nineteenth century.[1] Some linguists have accepted this view,[2] but Hebrew literary history has seldom acknowledged the role of Yiddish. Zionist ideology and an anti-hasidic bias contributed to a neglect of the Yiddish contribution.

During the Enlightenment *(Haskalah)*, most Hebrew authors emulated biblical models and strove to write in a supposedly "pure language" *(lashon tsaha)*. The result was a stiff, ornate style that worked better for poetry than for prose. In contrast, hasidic Hebrew narratives often sounded as if they had been translated from Yiddish. Although this was considered "barbaric" by many secular Hebrew authors,[3] hasidic Hebrew successfully tapped the

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1. One remarkable early study, a dissertation written in Berlin in the 1920s, touches on Yiddishisms in modern Hebrew. See Irene Chanoch, *Fremdsprachliche Einflüsse im modernen Hebräisch* (Berlin: n.p., 1930), especially 30–32 and 80–82, citing examples from Abramovitsh, Brenner, Bialik. For many examples of Yiddish in colloquial Hebrew speech, see Dan Ben-Amotz and Netiva Ben-Yehuda's *Milon 'olami le-'ivrit meduberet* (Jerusalem: Lewin-Epstein, 1972).

2. Paul Wexler refers to many pertinent articles in his book, *The Schizoid Nature of Modern Hebrew: A Slavic Language in Search of a Semitic Past* (Wiesbaden: Otto Harrassowitz, 1990). Wexler basically argues that there was no revival of Hebrew in the late nineteenth century. Instead, Yiddish speakers retained Yiddish grammar and substituted Hebrew words for the Germanic component of Yiddish. I am skeptical about Wexler's further argument that Yiddish is essentially a Slavic language. But I do think that his approach shows how hasidic Hebrew writing anticipated later developments that led to Israeli Hebrew.

3. For examples of this negative evaluation of hasidic Hebrew, see Nathan Gordon, "Joseph Perl's Megalleh Temirin," *Hebrew Union College Annual* (1904): 235, and Israel Davidson, *Parody in Jewish Literature* (New York: Columbia University, 1907), 61–62.

linguistic and cultural resources of Yiddish. With the help of Yiddish, hasid-
ic writers and anti-hasidic authors such as Joseph Perl and I. B. Levinsohn
created colloquial-style Hebrew writing. It was impossible to write Hebrew
in a conversational mode on the basis of Enlightenment principles alone and
without imitating any living language. As a result, Yiddish contributed to
some of the liveliest Hebrew writing in the nineteenth century.

In the twentieth century, a dominant view of Hebrew literary history
was established by H. N. Bialik's theory of "Mendele's *nusaḥ*."[4] According
to Bialik, S. Y. Abramovitsh (or Mendele Moykher Sforim) moved beyond
the *Haskalah* model after 1886 and became the "creator of the *nusaḥ*."[5]
Bialik argued in 1910–12 that Abramovitsh established the basis for a new
kind of Hebrew style by bringing together biblical, mishnaic, midrashic, and
later rabbinic layers. His synthetic style was an advance that superseded the
neo-biblical style of the *maskilim.* Embracing a diachronic, amalgamated
Hebrew, Abramovitsh helped to lay the foundation for the Hebrew of the
"revival" *(teḥiya)*. But Bialik left out two essential elements that played a
key role in modern Hebrew literature: Yiddish and hasidic writing.[6]

Abramovitsh's Hebrew fiction of the 1860s could not convey the vibran-
cy of his Yiddish work from the same period. He had not yet surpassed the
maskilic style of authors such as Avraham Mapu. While Abramovitsh's later
synthesis facilitated his advance beyond the one-dimensional Hebrew of
biblical epigones, this does not adequately explain his accomplishment.
One missing link was inspiration from his Yiddish novels written between
1864 and 1878. Abramovitsh innovated, in part, by embracing a model of
translation from Yiddish, rather than just by combining prior Hebrew styles.
In fact, the opening chapter of Abramovitsh's first Hebrew novel, *Limdu
heitev* (1862), shows his effort to emulate Yiddish speech. He uses many
calques—Hebrew phrases that are literal translations of Yiddish idioms—and
he draws attention to them by adding footnotes to indicate the underlying
Yiddish. If he could, Ephraim would bring his wife *ḥalav tzipor (feygl-*

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4. In English, the best study of this tradition is Robert Alter's *The Invention of
    Hebrew Prose: Modern Fiction and the Language of Realism* (Seattle: Univer-
    sity of Washington Press, 1988), especially chapter 1, "From Pastiche to
    Nusakh."

5. H. N. Bialik, "Yotzer ha-'nusaḥ'" in *Ha'olam* 5, no. 50 (23 Dec. 1910 / 5 Jan. 1911):
    6–8. See also Bialik's essay "Mendele u-shloshet ha-kerakhim," in *Kol kitvei
    Mendele Mokher-Sfarim*, vol. 3 (Odessa: Moriah, 1912), iii–xi.

6. Differences between the styles of Abramovitsh and Bialik became evident when
    Bialik translated the early chapters of *Fishke the Lame (Fishke der krumer)* into
    the Hebrew version, *Sefer ha-kabtzanim.* Abramovitsh purportedly commented
    that "the bride is too beautiful" because Bialik's style "is too rich, abounding in
    too many idioms, expressions, and words." See Moshe Ungergeld's *Bialik ve-
    sofrei doro* (Tel Aviv: Am ha-sefer, 1974), 169.

milkh) and *ka'arat shamayim (dos telerl funem himl).* His wife *noset ha-kov'a (geyt in spodek)* and *tolikheihu be-ḥotmo (firt im bay der noz).*[7] Because she is so dominant, locals call him *Ephraim ish Ma'aka (Ephraim Make's)*, and a well-off boy is called *ben-av (dem tatens a kind*; ibid., 10*).* All this indicates that colloquial Yiddish lies beneath the Hebrew text.

The connection to Yiddish is not usually so evident in Abramovitsh's later Hebrew writings, but in many ways it is present. In 1968, Menahem Perry convincingly showed the implicit Yiddish in Abramovitsh's Hebrew texts.[8] He wrote that Abramovitsh's Hebrew writing "depends in an essential way on meanings and phrases from the Yiddish language" (92). Perry enumerates several ways in which this occurs. First, "Mendele's Hebrew text holds many Hebrew words that penetrated into Yiddish and that in that language underwent a shift in their central meanings or received additional connotations"; the author "gave the words a 'Yiddish' meaning within the *Hebrew* text" (ibid.). Some examples of this phenomenon are *gazlan, goles, kabtzan.* Second, in other instances, the Hebrew meaning remains but is supplemented by a secondary meaning from Yiddish. For example, *l'hazi'a* means "to sweat," but a secondary meaning is linked to the Yiddish connotations of *shvitsn* (93). Third, Perry refers also to Yiddish expressions that, appearing in literal Hebrew translation, can be understood only by processing their meaning in Yiddish. Perry gives the example of the implicit saying *aynredn emitsn a kind in boykh* (93), and another is the literal and metaphorical *firn in bod arayn.* Perry's overall point is that Abramovitsh wrote in Hebrew for "a reader for whom Yiddish is the spoken language that echoes in the background of his reading" (ibid.).

One of the easiest ways to see the dependence of nineteenth-century Hebrew fiction on Yiddish is to look closely at the dialogue. As one might expect, represented speech is often most convincing as dialogue when it sounds like Yiddish. At one point in *Fishke the Lame*, for example, Reb Mendele asks Alter incredulously, "Ma ata saḥ?" corresponding to the Yiddish "Vos redt ir?"[9] On the other hand, Abramovitsh sometimes moves in the opposite direction, trying to suggest a colloquial register by using Ara-

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7. See the reprint edited by Dan Miron, *Limdu heitev fun Sholem-Yankev Abramovitsh* (New York: YIVO, 1969), facsimile 5–6.

8. "Ha-analogia u-mekoma be-mivne ha-roman shel Mendele Mokher-Sfarim: 'iyunim ba-poetika shel ha-proza," in *Ha-sifrut* 1 (1968): 65–100.

9. See *Kol kitvei Mendele Moykher-Sforim (S. Y. Abramovitsh)*, vol. 1 (Odessa: Bialik and Borishkin, 1911), 14, and *Ale verk fun Mendele Moykher Sforim (S. Y. Abramovitsh)*, vol. 11 (Cracow: Farlag Mendele, 1911), 29. Earlier in *Sefer ha-kabtzanim,* when Mendele meets Alter he asks him: "Le'an holekh yehudi?" (4). In the Yiddish original *Fishke der krumer*, Mendele asks "Fun vanen kumt es a yid?" (14). These phrases have different meanings; the Hebrew phrase seems to echo Pirkei Avot: "Da' mi-ayin ba'ta ve-le'an 'ata holekh" (3:1).

maic. I have argued elsewhere that the use of Aramaic in this way was an unsuccessful experiment.[10]

There are many examples that show how influential Hebrew works benefited from their connection to Yiddish. Aharon-Halle Wolfsohn's *Kalut da'at u-tzevi'ut* is the Hebrew version of his well-known Yiddish/German play *Laykhtzin un fremelay.* The Yiddish version dates to about 1796; it is not clear when the Hebrew translation was made.[11] The Hebrew translates, explicitly or implicitly, from Yiddish. For example, at the beginning of the play, the phrase " 'Ata nofel be-ra'yoni hamtza'a" translates from the Yiddish "mir falt do a hamtsokhe [sic] ayn*."*[12] Dan Miron notes this and other passages in which the Hebrew seems to calque the Yiddish. For example, Reb Henoch's impatient words, "gedenk hin, gedenk her" (Yiddish version, 41) becomes "zakhor heina ve-zakhor heina" (Hebrew version, 66).

Because he is trying to capture the liveliness of everyday speech, Wolfsohn cannot rely on the biblical style that was typical in his time. He anticipates some of the devices Perry noted in Abramovitsh's Hebrew, such as using Hebrew words with a meaning that had developed in Yiddish (e.g., *hamtsa'a*), in a Yiddishized form (e.g., *shtusim*), or in a direct translation of a Yiddish phrase (e.g., *tzei tomar lekha*, from the Yiddish *gey zog dir*). As Miron shows, Wolfsohn adapts his Hebrew dialogue to the social level of the speaker.

Almost no one reads the Haskalah Hebrew authors today. In contrast, the number of readers of hasidic works is increasing. There are religious and ideological reasons for the continuing spread of hasidic texts. But from a literary-historical perspective I would emphasize the power of the folk Hebrew in their texts. The hasidic authors anticipated Abramovitsh's use of Hebrew that in some ways echoed Yiddish. Bialik didn't want to validate this aspect of Abramovitsh's writing, but it continues to influence Israeli Hebrew.

The hasidic texts *Shivḥei ha-Besht* and Nahman's tales are in some ways the antithesis of Haskalah Hebrew writing. With the exception of the open-

10. "'Nusaḥ Mendele' be-mabat bikoreti" ["A Critical Look at 'Mendele's *nusaḥ*'"], *Dappim le-meḥkar be-sifrut* 14–15 (Haifa, 2006): 89–103.

11. The Hebrew text was first published by Bernard D. Weinryb in *Proceedings of the American Academy for Jewish Research* 24 (1955). Weinryb argues that the play "was originally written in Hebrew by Wolfsohn, apparently even before his Yiddish-German version" (ibid., 166). Dan Miron republished the work as *Kalut da'at u-tzevi'ut [R. Hanokh ve-R. Yosefkhe]* (Tel Aviv: Siman kri'ah, 1977). In *Antonio's Devils: Writers of the Jewish Enlightenment and the Birth of Modern Hebrew and Yiddish Literature* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2004), Jeremy Dauber accepts Weinryb's view (197). But even if this is correct, there is clearly an implicit Yiddish model behind the Hebrew.

12. *Laykhtzin un fremelay*, in Zalman Reyzen, *Fun Mendelssohn biz Mendele* (Warsaw: Kultur-lige, 1923), 38. Cp. Miron's discussion, ibid., 36.

ing section of *Shivḥei ha-Besht,* which uses biblical phrases, these narratives are the epitome of "low Hebrew." They are based on mishnaic grammar more than on biblical grammar and often use post-biblical vocabulary. Hasidic Hebrew writing is heavily influenced by Hebrew *as it appears within Yiddish*. A Yiddish-speaking Hebrew author could easily draw from thousands of Hebrew words that were used in Yiddish.

Rabbi Nahman of Bratslav told his tales in Yiddish, and his scribe Nathan Sternharz recorded Nahman's narrative writings by translating them into Hebrew. In translating from Yiddish, Nathan used a lively and straightforward Hebrew that was shaped by the Yiddish source. He was aware that his Hebrew style broke some conventions of the times. At the end of the posthumously published second preface to the *Tales* (*Sippurei mayses*, 1850), Nathan refers to the "coarse expressions" (*leshonot gasim*) that appear in some of the tales. A later editor elaborates on the reason Nathan gave for using them, explaining that he "lowered himself to simple language" (*horid et atzmo lelashon pashut*) to remain as close as possible to the original Yiddish. Nathan did this "so that the matter would not be changed for the person who reads them in the Holy Tongue."[13] In the interest of conveying Nahman's Yiddish words accurately, then, Nathan fashioned a Yiddishized Hebrew.[14] Nathan subsequently wrote biographical accounts and travel narratives using a simple and Yiddish-tinged Hebrew style. Maskilic contemporaries saw the result as corrupt Hebrew, but it was effective and reached a broad audience, although distribution was uneven because of mitnagdic opposition and Czarist censorship.

To understand how Yiddish pervades Nathan Sternharz's Hebrew writings, consider the beginning of his account of Nahman's journey to the Holy Land in 1798. First published following the *Sippurei mayses* in 1815, this account is Hebrew writing by a Yiddish speaker for other Yiddish speakers. The narrative uses simple sentences and the choice of words relies heavily on Hebrew that was present in everyday Yiddish. For example, it begins:

> Kodem she-nasʿa le-Eretz-Yisrael, haya be-Kaminetz. Ve-ha-nesiʿa shelo le-Kaminetz haita pliʾa gedola. Ki pitʾom nasʿa mi-veito, ve-amar she-yesh lo derekh lifanav linsoʿa.... Be-ʿerev ḥag ha-Pesaḥ (1798) yatza Admor zʾl mi-

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13. *Sefer sippurei mayses* (Jerusalem: Hasidei Breslav, 1979), second preface, 14. Mendel Piekarz attributes this final segment of the second preface to Rabbi Nahman of Tulchin. See his book *Hasidut Breslav: prakim be-ḥayei meḥolelah, be-ktaveiha u-ve-safiḥeiha*, second ed. (Jerusalem: Mossad Bialik, 1995), 178. Thanks to Zeev Gries for providing this reference.

14. Compare Lewis Glinert, "The Hasidic Tale and the Sociolinguistic Modernization of the Jews of Eastern Europe," in *Studies in Jewish Narrative: Ma'aseh Sippur (Presented to Yoav Elstein)*, ed. Avidov Lipsker and Rella Kushelevsky (Ramat Gan: Bar-Ilan University Press, 2006), especially 23–25.

ha-makom ve-amar le-zeh she-halakh 'imo she-be-zot ha-shana yehiyeh beva-
dai ba-Eretz ha-kadosha.[15]

If you listen closely, you can almost hear Nathan telling us in Yiddish:

> Far dem vos er iz geforn keyn Erets-Yisroel, iz er geven in Kaminetz. Zayn
> nesiye keyn Kaminetz iz geven a groyse pele. Vayl plutsling iz er avekgeforn
> fun der heym, un er hot gezogt, az er hot a veg tsu forn far zikh. Erev Peysekh
> (1798) iz Admor z"l aroys funem ort un hot gezogt tsu dem, vos iz gegangen
> mit im, az in dem yor vet er avade zayn in Eretz-Yisroel...

This is a rough guess at the implicit Yiddish original. In any event, Nathan's
Yiddishized Hebrew is very effective and, because of its simple grammar
and vocabulary, it was accessible to a wide readership.

Later writers such as Joseph Perl saw the Hebrew of the Hasidim as cor-
rupt, but Perl's greatest accomplishment was in mimicking their written
style. Their non-standard innovations enabled Perl to create the illusion of a
colloquial-style Hebrew. Hence Perl's parodic fiction was a conduit that
made hasidic Hebrew more acceptable to secular Hebrew authors. One way
to see this is to look at the evolution of oral-style narrative and dialogue in
nineteenth-century Hebrew fiction. In a recent article I emphasized the
importance of dialogue in Perl's *Boḥen tzadik* and in Levinsohn's *Divrei
tzadikim.*[16] Perl's and Levinsohn's parodies of the hasidic style they intend-
ed to mock were more effective than their writings in their own voices.

The hasidic writers were not constrained by the maskilic bias against
Yiddish. As a result, they had no qualms about incorporating Yiddish words
and syntax into their Hebrew texts. Moreover, they embraced the new
meanings of some Hebrew words that had developed in Yiddish. In this
way, they made significant contributions to the creation of a modern Heb-
rew style.

A phenomenon I would call "innovation by translation" helps to explain
the accomplishments of authors who diverged from the Haskalah style.
Instead of emulating the biblical prophets, they transferred the colloquial
quality from Yiddish to Hebrew. This involved creating Hebrew texts that
sounded like Yiddish—something that was at odds with Haskalah ideas. Yet
there are many instances of this in nineteenth- and early twentieth-century
fiction, extending far beyond scattered words and phrases. Most essential is
the development of a simpler, more European syntax that is distinct from
melitza as it was practiced by the *maskilim.*

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15. "Seder ha-nesi'a shelo le-Eretz-Yisrael," in *Shivḥei ha-Ran* (Jerusalem: Agudat
meshekh ha-naḥal, 1981), 19. This travel narrative was first published together
with the first edition of Nahman's *Sippurei mayses* (Ostrog, 1815), part two (new
numbering), 4b.

16. "Joseph Perl's Escape from Biblical Epigonism through Parody of Hasidic Writ-
ing," *AJS Review: The Journal of the Association for Jewish Studies* 29 (2005):
265–282.

The canon of "post-hasidic" Hebrew writers, following Perl and Levinsohn, includes authors such as I. L. Peretz, Ahad Ha-am, Berdichevsky, and even Y. H. Brenner. There are also elements of a post-hasidic style in some of Agnon's fiction. However, because of an inevitable mixing of styles, it is not always easy to distinguish clearly between the descendants of the *maskilim* and the Hasidim.

Bialik was part of the problem when it came to understanding what the modernist Hebrew authors were doing. His essays on "Mendele's *nusaḥ*" created a false impression that Abramovitsh's style was the only solid foundation for modern Hebrew literature. As a result, the modernist authors were sometimes misunderstood as writing anti-*nusaḥ*. But they were not only rejecting "Mendele's *nusaḥ*"; they were also continuing a counter-tradition that began with hasidic writing. While Abramovitsh superseded Haskalah Hebrew, some of the modernists innovated by drawing from hasidic Hebrew. Authors such as Peretz, Berdichevsky, and Brenner did not merely take Abramovitsh's Hebrew as the starting-point from which they deviated; instead, they based their alternate style on a transformation of hasidic Hebrew and an incorporation of Yiddish elements. For example, when Brenner translated the first of Sholem Aleichem's Tevye stories, he was open to calquing Yiddish expressions—later avoided by Berkovitz in his Hebrew translations.[17]

We need to supplement Bialik's theory of "Mendele's *nusaḥ*" with another model. It was not merely the diachronic layering that contributed to a new style, but also implicit or explicit translation from Yiddish. Ideological biases blocked recognition of the role of Yiddish and the Hasidim in contributing to modern Hebrew style.

Moving from literary history to historical linguistics, I offer some examples that show how Hebrew continues to be inhabited by Yiddish.[18] The evolution of spoken Hebrew in the twentieth century recapitulated some elements of hasidic Hebrew writing. Focusing on the lexicon, I want to sketch a few ways in which Yiddish is present in modern Hebrew. Linguists such as Paul Wexler have discussed some of the syntactical issues.

One of the most interesting categories is the case of ancient Hebrew words that were used in Yiddish, took on a new meaning, and then came to be used with the new meaning in modern Hebrew. For example, *ḥokhma* is a perfectly good classical Hebrew word, but when it returns as in the ironic

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17. See Yitzhak Bakon, "Be-shulei tirgumo shel Brenner le-perek mitokh 'Tuvya ha-ḥalvan," *Siman kri'a* 1 (1972): 211–222. Bakon writes that "Brenner's version is closer to a literal rendering of Sholem Aleichem's version. He allows himself to include things that Berkovitz would have seen as Yiddishisms" (218).

18. See Israel Rubin, "Vegn di virkung fun Yiddish afn geredtn Hebreyish in Erets-Yisroel," *YIVO Bleter* 25 (1945): 303–309, and Hillel Halkin, "Hebrew as She Is Spoke," *Commentary* 48:1 (July 1969): 55–60.

Yiddish reference to *khokhmes*, it has the opposite meaning. *Rogez* occurs in ancient texts, but *brogez* as an adjective is a modern usage taken from the Yiddish. Y-Ḥ-S (yod-ḥet-samekh) is a familiar Hebrew root, but the noun *yikhes*, meaning "pedigree," derives from Yiddish. *Klei-zemer* did not refer to a musician until the Yiddish *(klezmer)* initiated this usage. *Ba'al* was used in mishnaic Hebrew in expressions such as *ba'al ḥokhma*, but other expressions such as *ba'al guf* derived from Yiddish. *Simḥa* describes an emotional state in ancient Hebrew, but thanks to Yiddish it can now refer also to an event. The meaning of *'olam* extended from "world" to "people, audience, public." (Putting these two words together in his account of Nahman's travels, Nathan Sternharz writes: "*Ve-sham 'asu kol ha-olam simḥa gedola*").[19] There are also many cases of mishnaic Hebrew and Aramaic that, via Yiddish, reached modern Hebrew: *hefker, davka, 'am-ha-'arets,* and many constructions with *beit-*. In addition, dozens of Yiddish words have entered Hebrew vocabulary, ranging from *alte zakhn* to *kunts, frayer, nebekh, litvak, vayter*, and many other essential words like *glitsh, makher,* and *shlimazl* that have also entered English.

One might argue that these are just isolated words that did not have a significant influence on the language. But it would be hard to say that about grammatical borrowings such as suffixes and nominalized verbs. Many suffixes were introduced from Yiddish (and other European languages), including -ke, -nik, -lekh, -le, -ist, -te, and -tzia.[20] The Yiddish verbal form *me-XXX zayn* influenced a distinctive use of nouns such as *mitnaged, matmid,* and *maḥmir*.

A significant influence on nineteenth-century Hebrew style was a simple Yiddish sentence structure that was at odds with Enlightenment *melitza*.[21] The hasidic authors epitomized this and were often mocked for it, but contemporary Hebrew owes a debt to Yiddishized Hebrew style. In 1937, Z. Kalmanovitsh pointed out the connection:

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19. See "Seder ha-nesi'a shelo le-Eretz-Yisrael," section 18, in *Shivhei ha-Ran* (Jerusalem: Agudat meshekh ha-nahal, 1981), 35; in the first edition of Nahman's *Sippurei mayses* (Ostrog, 1815), part two (new numbering), 7b.

20. See Haim Blanc's discussion, "Some Yiddish Influences in Israeli Hebrew," in *The Field of Yiddish,* vol. 2, ed. Uriel Weinreich (The Hague: Mouton, 1965), 185–201; William Chomsky, *Hebrew: The Eternal Language* (Philadelphia: JPS, 1957), 193–198; Yudel Mark, "Yiddish-Hebreyishe un Hebreyish-Yiddishe nay-shafungen," *YIVO bleter* 41 (1958): 124–157. I am especially interested in the use of *et 'atzmo* to express the Yiddish reflexive *zikh*; see Shmuel Nobel, "Yiddish in a Hebreyishn levush," *YIVO bleter* 41 (1958), 158–175.

21. For an analysis of the Hebrew style in *Shivhei ha-Besht*, see Lewis Glinert, "The Hasidic Tale and the Sociolinguistic Modernization of the Jews of Eastern Europe," in *Studies in Jewish Narrative*, xx–xxiii. Glinert cites an unpublished Masters thesis by M. Grunzweig, *Behanim leshoniyim be-sefer Shivhei ha-Besht* (Jerusalem, 1974).

> If one may say that Hebrew also lived among the Jewish people before the recent attempt to revive it as a spoken language, it lived in exactly this form of a 'folkloristic' Hebrew, as one could characterize it. And it still [that is, in 1937] sounds this way in the Land of Israel, in the mouths of adults who come from among the Yiddish-speaking communities.[22]

Linguistic history repeated itself, though not necessarily by direct influence of hasidic writing. As the Yiddish speakers arrived in Palestine and expressed themselves in Hebrew, they naturally contributed more elements of a Yiddishized Hebrew. Hasidic Hebrew was a forerunner of this development, and it provided written precedents.

Following eighteenth-century ideas about language, the German *maskilim* rejected Yiddish as an illegitimate "jargon" and strove to recreate a "pure" Hebrew in emulation of biblical Hebrew. Yiddish was, in fact, a fusion language combining Germanic, Hebraic, and Slavic elements. Two centuries later, Yiddish-style Hebrew has defeated Haskalah Hebrew, and Israeli Hebrew has attained a multicultural quality, with the infusion of elements from Yiddish, Arabic, English, Russian, German, and French, to name only the most obvious influences. One could almost say that Israeli Hebrew is the new Yiddish.

The presence of Yiddish in other literatures is a neglected topic and the influence of Yiddish on modern Hebrew writing has been especially neglected. In spite of efforts to suppress it, Yiddish haunts much of the best Hebrew writing of the past two centuries. The Haskalah writers tried to exorcise the Yiddish spirit, but without success—their patient died. Hebrew during the period of the Haskalah was lifeless until hasidic and anti-hasidic authors revived it with the help of Yiddish. Hasidic and neo-hasidic authors brought Hebrew back to life, in part, by injecting Yiddish back into its bloodstream. For centuries, Hebrew lived as it was spoken within Yiddish. Now, in spite of the time-honored suppression of Yiddish in Palestine,[23] Yiddish is being spoken within Israeli Hebrew.

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22. *Yosef Perl's Yiddishe ksavim*, ed. Israel Vaynlez and Z. Kalmanovitsh (Vilna: YIVO, 1937), xcix.

23. See Yael Chaver, *What Must Be Forgotten: The Survival of Yiddish in Zionist Palestine* (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 2004).