FRUMSPEAK

The First Dictionary of Yeshivish

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The Language of Sanctity:
The Phenomenon of a Jewish Language

The Midrash[1] asserts that the Jews in Egypt engaged in no fewer than four practices that could have ensured their worthiness to be saved from bondage: they practiced no promiscuity; they spoke no spiteful gossip (Heb. "lashon hara"); they used uniquely Jewish names; they spoke a language of their own. One scholar[2] ascribes these four practices to the Jews' distinction in Egypt. That the Jews refrained from both promiscuity and gossip and that they maintained their distinctive names and language meant that they would have been immediately ready for their redemption had they not simultaneously engaged in idolatrous practices (Heb. "avoda zara").

It is curious that the Midrash considers all four of these characteristic practices to be mitzvos. The Torah certainly dictates human activity surrounding promiscuity and gossip. There are, however, ostensibly no specific regulations regarding the use of traditional personal names or of a particular language. Surely, one result of generations of loyalty to tradition has been that Jews, even today, continue to use biblical names for their children. Nonetheless, this practice has undergone a number of changes over time. Names such as Chaim, Ze'ev, and Bruria have joined the ranks of names of biblical origin. Similarly, many names such as Feiga, Reizel, and Leibel have been translated into Yiddish and are used equally with their original Hebrew forms. If there were some imperative for Jews to use only those names found in the Torah, some mention of this mitzva would be expected.

Jews have always educated their children in the holy language of Hashem's communication with His people. Hebrew has, throughout that time, been the language of Jewish correspondence and authorship. However, history indicates that Jews have spoken almost all of the world's languages with greater profi-

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1. ‏מכילתא (בא, פרשה ה)‏
2. ‏שבלי הלקט: הגדה‏

ciency than that with which they have commanded the language of Scripture. Jews of Spanish origin distinguished themselves from their neighbors with their language just as the Jews of Egypt had done centuries earlier. Parallel to Sefardi Ladino, Ashkenazi Jews clothed their thoughts, dreams, and disappointments in the vestments afforded by their rich Yiddish language. Rashi[3] and others often employed gentile languages to render a Hebrew text more understandable to readers. In no instance is there evidence of the widespread use of Hebrew as a vernacular language in the great communities of the long Jewish Diaspora. Again, it is a cause for wonder that Jews seem historically to have neglected what the Midrash counts among the meritorious practices of the Jews of Egypt.

The same Midrash cites three biblical verses[4] as evidence that the Jews in Egypt never changed their language. Of these, two prove the point by using the word "Hebrew" as an adjective. The third simply reminds the reader that Joseph convinced his brothers of his identity by drawing attention to the fact that he spoke Hebrew, or "Lashon Kodesh." The Ramban[5] intimates that knowledge of this language could not have been sufficient proof of his identity and, by extrapolation, that knowledge of this language could not have been exclusive to Jews. Assuming this to be so, the question regarding the putative imperative to use this language is compounded by the realization that this language may not have been so distinctive as the commentator on the Midrash implies.

Several of the commentaries provide reasons that Lashon Kodesh is so named.[6] Among these, the Ramban suggests that the contextual fact that Hashem chose this language for discourse with His prophets indicates that it is indeed a holy tongue. Expressed otherwise, the language must be holy if it is the vehicle of holy communication. The Rambam,[7] however, posits that the language is intrinsically holy, and he presents as evidence Hebrew's dearth of words for the more inelegant facts of life. Lashon Kodesh, in the Rambam's system, is a pristine language of euphemism and is therefore most suitable to express the loftiest communication.

Common to both these trends is the notion that Lashon Kodesh is especially suited for description and discussion of that which is holy. The term highlights this notion grammatically. While some may translate the phrase offhand as "the holy language," closer attention to its structure would result in the more accurate rendering "the language of holiness." Even more to the point, the word "Lashon" itself may convey meanings other than "language." In several talmudic expressions, the word denotes a meaning closer in translation to "terminology" or "diction."[8]

When Isaac, in his blindness, found himself confused by the figure before him, he expressed the inconsistency of hearing the voice of Jacob emanating from the body of Esau with the memorable exclamation, "The voice is Jacob's voice, and the hands are Esau's hands."[9] According to Rashi, Isaac noticed a certain manner of speech more befitting the character of Isaac than of his less supplicatory, more pugnacious twin brother. Certainly both Jacob and Esau spoke the same language with their father, but their respective diction and terminology so differed that to combine the speech of one and the body of the other created for Isaac an inexorably enigmatic hybrid. This "diction of holiness" characterizes those whose chief involvement is with mitzvos. Such people earn the right to be called after the names of their worthy fathers. These are the names and the language that distinguished the Jews in Egypt.

The Satmar Rav[10] claims that it is possible to employ the vocabulary and syntax of Hebrew without speaking Lashon Kodesh.[11] The demands of "the language of sanctity" are different from the demands of learning a second language. When Jews become conversant in the various languages of the Diaspora, they invariably find those languages wanting. A gentile language must necessarily lack a word to convey both the genetic imperative and the inherent obligation of concepts such as Chesed and Tzedakka.[12] If Jews insist upon using such a language for the purposes of learning and Torah discourse, they must reshape it to conform to the demands of "the terminology of holiness." Such does Yiddish differ from German, and does Ladino differ from Spanish.

In America, Judaism has, thankfully, had the opportunity to flourish. Along the way, Jews have principally adopted English as their primary language. Of necessity, however, they have reformed the language to suit their needs more efficaciously. Some lament the prospect that children educated in yeshivos develop proficiency in no specific language, but are able only to string together a few words from several languages. Perhaps so, but the resulting Yeshivish

3. Rabbi Solomon b. Isaac of Troyes (1040–1105)
4. בראשית יד:יג; שם מה:יב; שמות ה:ג
5. Nachmanides (c. 1200–1270) commenting on בראשית (מה:יב)
6. The word לשון (Lashon) means "tongue," and קודש (Kodesh) means "holiness."
7. Maimonides (1135–1204)

8. Such as like לשון בני אדם and לשון נקיה.
9. (בראשית כז:כב) "הקול קול יעקב והידים ידי עשו"
10. Rabbi Yoel Teitelbaum, זצוק"ל (1885–1979)
11. דברי יואל: פ' ויגש
12. Kindness and Charity (חסד וצדקה)

language is the product of what is healthy about America's Jewry. The purpose of this work is neither to assess the value of the linguistic habits in American yeshivos nor to weigh them against the call for greater proficiency in English. This work merely observes a phenomenon and revels, just a little, in the latest method Jews have found to distinguish themselves as they await an end to this longest Exile.

Yeshivish, the Language:
A Linguistic Determination of Yeshivish

A number of years ago, I received a call from an independent filmmaker. He had been working on a documentary video for public television on the subject of the Talmud. A portion of the material had been filmed in Israel, and an acquaintance of mine had been helping him by writing the subtitles to translate from Hebrew into English. Another section of the film covered a class in an American yeshiva. The filmmaker called me on the advice of my acquaintance to write subtitles for the American footage. I asked him whether the class was in Yiddish. "No," he answered with some hesitation, "It's . . . well, it's English—sort of. Actually, I'm not quite certain what language it is. Why don't you come down and listen to it."

In fact, the teacher/rabbi spoke perfect, fluent Yeshivish. He was never at a loss for words or expressions to articulate with clarity and lucidity all of his deepest insights into the Talmud he was teaching. I then first realized that Yeshivish is truly unintelligible to the uninitiated and that just to translate the terminology specific to the text is insufficient when translating the Yeshivish phrases into plain English. If Yeshivish is not technically a language, it is undoubtedly a culturally based linguistic phenomenon worthy of examination. It was also then that, by writing the subtitles for that nationally broadcast documentary, I gained what I believe to be the only qualifying credential for the translation of Yeshivish.

American yeshiva students and teachers have always used the most convenient available word, regardless of its provenance, to facilitate effective learning. Perhaps inadvertently, they approximate the methods of the Amoraim.[1] The Aramaic of the Talmud is, like Yeshivish, a melange of languages including Western and Eastern Aramaic, Hebrew, Greek, Latin, and whatever other

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1. Latter writers of the Talmud (3rd to 6th century C.E.)

languages were needed to explain the Torah. Certainly, the goal of ensuring the successful transmission of ageless Torah outweighs any perceived advantage of maintaining the purity and integrity of a particular language. All who have some appreciation for learning recognize that to know what the "Nafka Mina" is overrides any concern about what an English speaker should call it.

The result of this task-oriented amalgam of languages is a mode of speech and communication known as Yeshivish. The casual observer recognizes Yeshivish as English laced with Hebrew, Yiddish, and Aramaic words. Examined a bit more closely, it becomes possible to discern several differences between the English elements of Yeshivish and standard American English. This fact raises the question of whether it is possible to define Yeshivish as a language unto itself or whether it is either a culturally influenced variation of standard English or a technical jargon specifically engineered to serve the needs of the limited, albeit worthy, pursuit of Torah learning.

It is not easy to classify any particular system of communication as a language, or, in linguistic terminology, as a *langue*, which the Swiss linguist Ferdinand de Saussure (1857–1914) defines as a complete and homogeneous grammatical system used and followed by a group or community. This definition is based on the rough assumption that a language grows in a limited geographical area among the people indigenous to it, who are known as a linguistic community. While the definition refers to grammar specifically, *"langue"* presumes a relative homogeneity of pronunciation as well. Yeshivish, on the other hand, is an institutional phenomenon rather than a geographical one. It is heard among people who share a common educational experience regardless of their particular regional accents. It is a language centered almost exclusively on its words and only tangentially connected to its geography and phonology.

Among the only consistent characteristics of languages is that they do not remain consistent. Languages change constantly and universally. It seems that the seeds of language change were planted at the time of the Tower of Babel, or even prior to it,[2] and ever since, the most effective vehicle of communication has simultaneously been the greatest obstacle to communication. The principle of language change is that speakers of a single language radiate geographically and begin to vary their speech habits. The result is that as the linguistic community spreads, communication among the more distant elements grows increasingly more difficult. Another effect of the standard process of language change is that because of the common provenance of the various changed dialects, the *langues* share a common store of original word roots. The ancestors of modern French and Spanish speakers were one nation bound by their use of

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2. Cf. חם פר׳ נח תורה תמימה,

Latin. As they moved into different lands, their language changed such that, today, Spanish and French are distinct *langues* related by a shared heritage. Yeshivish again differs from other comparable phenomena in that it is common to speakers in very distant communities and its store of words, or lexicon, draws from sources quite distant from its base language, English.

Linguists examine changes to language at three levels. The first noticeable changes to a language affect its sound, or phonemic, structure. Very shortly after a linguistic community begins to move, various groups develop distinct accents. While England and America differ linguistically principally by accent, only in purely scientific, linguistic literature would it be likely to find the two accents defined as separate *langues*. Ultimately, however, the phonemic system can change severely enough to render comfortable communication impossible among speakers with different accents. Chinese actually comprises a collection of mutually incomprehensible dialects all of which share almost identical grammatical systems. Yeshivish speakers generally pronounce words of non-English origin along whatever American regional phonemic system is comfortable to them. It can therefore be argued that these speakers have adopted the foreign words, that is, the speakers have disassociated them from the parent language and integrated them to the point that they sound like English words although they are not. Only a word using the unvoiced, velar, fricative (i.e., the Hebrew letters ח and כ) deviates from a sound system comfortable for any native speaker of American English.

The second level at which an adopted word changes is noticed at the word's definition, or meaning. This morphemic level controls the types or numbers of notions a word can represent. Discussing this level, linguists call a word the "symbol" and what it represents the "referent." For example, "noise" and "sound" may be responses to the same sensory stimulus, but the choice of one symbol over the other, say, to describe a new variety of music, conveys the speaker's opinion and changes the referent in the mind of a listener who has not yet heard the new music. When an adopted symbol has one referent in the parent language and a different one in the adoptive language, the word is said to have undergone a semantic shift. Each of the new combinations of symbol + referent is considered to be the exclusive property of each *langue*.

English began as an exclusively Germanic language, the lexicon of which stemmed from the same source as those of modern German and Dutch. When England was invaded by Scandinavians more than one thousand years ago, English adopted many Danish symbols and changed their referents to represent ideas and objects more suited to life on the British Isles. The Danish "skirt" was, in Danish, more of a shirt. A few hundred years later, the Norman French conquered England and imported many French words. The English adopted

these words and provided their own referents for them. The English symbols "beef" and "veal" have types of meat as referents, while in Norman French the same words refer only to the actual animals that provide the meat.

When Yeshivish speakers begin to change the meanings of the words they incorporate from their learning, they are on the road to creating a new language, albeit one limited to a small linguistic community. The preposition "keneged," when used in classical rabbinic literature, has no particularly negative connotation.[3] In confusion with the simple preposition "neged" (נגד, against), Yeshivish adds a negative meaning to the possible referents for this term. Thus, a Yeshivish sentence like "Rebbe's comment was keneged mine" may be translated either as "Rebbe commented on my comment" or as "Rebbe's comment discredited my comment."

The third, syntactical, level is the level at which one language differs unquestionably from another. A nineteenth-century commentator suggests that the seventy languages created at the Tower of Babel differed principally in grammar, or syntax.[4] Yeshivish affects the syntactic level of the words it borrows by its tendency to inflect them according to English grammar rules. For example, the Aramaic phrase "heicha timtza" introduces an explanatory circumstance. In Yeshivish, this circumstance is known as "a heicha timtza," where the phrase apparently functions as a noun and therefore requires an article. Once the grammar of this word has changed to behave as a noun, Yeshivish must provide it with a plural form, in this case "heicha timtzas," a grammatical construction completely impossible in Aramaic. Yeshivish effects such changes to the grammar of all parts of speech as well as to the word order of the same idea expressed in a pure English or a pure Aramaic sentence.

While this particular process of borrowing and integrating words is unique to English-speaking yeshivos, Yeshivish is not the only example of people accepting contributions from multiple linguistic sources to create a powerful tool for communication. Colonialism and expansionism have brought many nations speaking many languages into significant contact with one another. When, for trading or other practical reasons, these people have needed to communicate, they have developed linguistic combinations known as pidgins. The word "pidgin" first appeared in print in 1850, and since then philologists have suggested several theories to explain its etymology. Some claim that it is a corruption of the Portuguese word "pequeno," meaning "small child," because pidgins have simplified vocabularies and grammars similar to those of the lan-

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3. N.B. "כנגד ד' בנים דברה תורה"

4. הכתב הקבלה (בר' יא:א)

guage of children under two years of age. Another idea is that the word is a Chinese mispronunciation of the English word "business," trade being the principal use of a pidgin. An equally plausible explanation is that the word stems from the Hebrew word "pidyon," connoting the "bartering" for which pidgins have been so useful.

Despite its specific, utilitarian origins, Yeshivish is certainly not a pidgin. Its grammatical structure is no less sophisticated than that of any other language, including standard English. A Creole is a complete language that develops once a pidgin becomes the native language of the children of its developers. These speakers call upon their pidgin to perform all the necessary cognitive and communicative tasks of language, and they quickly add to the pidgin all the standard grammatical and lexical devices of all languages. While Yeshivish, like a Creole, is a complete language, it cannot be classified as a Creole, because it did not arise from a pidgin. To classify as a pidgin or a Creole, Yeshivish would have had to develop from two or more discernible spoken languages. Yeshivish is the result of an infusion of a limited lexicon, not of a complete language, into the vast vocabulary of spoken English. While Yeshivish words may stem from a number of various languages, they do not, independently of English, constitute an actual, spoken language that, upon meeting with English, developed into what could be determined to be a Creole or a pidgin. It would be hard to prove historically that Yeshivish arose to resolve difficulties of communication among exclusive Yiddish speakers and exclusive English speakers.

Neither is it so simple to classify Yeshivish as a technical jargon. Doctors, lawyers, plumbers, and others who practice particular trades invariably use the terminology specific to the circumstances they face in their professional lives. The words and expressions they integrate into their daily conversations are unintelligible to the uninitiated. Their speech habits constitute a jargon. The difference between a jargon and Yeshivish is that lawyers will rarely employ legal terms unless they are discussing the practice of law, whereas students, or "bochrim," in yeshivos may confound exclusive speakers of standard English by speaking Yeshivish even in the course of completely mundane conversations. Terms borrowed from the most esoteric topics of religious literature slip into descriptions of politics, shopping, sports, and whatever else Yeshivish people may discuss as they determine their place within the greater American experience. Even if it is true that Yeshivish people know English equivalents for Yeshivish words, it remains true as well that Yeshivish words replace the most common English ones, and they creep into the majority of utterances. Yeshivish is the preferred mode of communication for its linguistic community regardless of the subject of conversation.

That Yeshivish immigrants to America ultimately melded their lexicon with that of English was a fortuitous development. Those people generally spoke Yiddish, a principally Germanic language related to English. The grammatical structure of these two languages are sufficiently similar to have allowed one to invade the other relatively unobtrusively. As well, English has been a hospitable language since its early days. The Anglo-Saxons of England spoke pure Old English for centuries before the Scandinavians began to invade them throughout the eighth and ninth centuries. Young Anglo-Saxon children must have gazed in wonder at these strong, mysterious Vikings, and they undoubtedly began to imitate Nordic ways. It is not hard to imagine an Anglo-Saxon mother scolding her child for replacing truly English words with corrupt Danish ones. "Say thee not 'known,' 'taken,' or 'ask' if thou meanest 'bavust,' 'farnumen,' or 'freg,'" she may have said. Later, after the Norman Conquest of 1066, when peasant English children began to emulate the ways of the French nobility, whose lives must have seemed so much more desirable than their own, the admonishment may have been, "Speak not of 'separate,' 'direct,' 'figure,' and 'create' when thou thinkest 'bazunder,' 'fier,' 'rechen,' and 'shaf.'"

Parents of Yeshivish children often demand that their sons and daughters replace those same purely English words with the very terms once imported from France and Denmark. In fact, with the addition of Yiddish expressions and terminology, the users of Yeshivish may effect a virtual restoration of English to a more pristine form. By the way, the last sentence contains twenty-six words of which ten stem from French and two from Hebrew. The remaining, "English" words are: in, with, the, of, to, a, of, a, more.

Modern English and Yeshivish are both the result of a blend of standard English with words foreign to it. Here, too, however, there is a significant difference. English adopted Danish and French words because speakers of those languages controlled and subjugated native English speakers. Yeshivish borrows Semitic words because those words call to Yeshivish people from books. It borrows Yiddish words because its speakers respect their forebears. Yeshivish is less the result of linguistic diffusion than of cultural veneration.

Even if Yeshivish is a legitimate language, there remains a question of whether the yeshiva community should raise a generation of children competently conversant in no other language, such as standard English. Yeshivish faces no competition from English for its superiority as a language for learning, but it is less certain that Yeshivish can serve the full range of linguistic and cognitive needs of people who most likely consider themselves to be English speakers although they may employ Yeshivish terms repeatedly as a matter of habit and training.

There are no Yeshivish writers. The lack of Yeshivish literature means that Yeshivish speakers have no classical, masterful formulations to emulate in developing language competence. This fact severely challenges the legitimacy of counting Yeshivish as a viable language.

An even more serious challenge to Yeshivish is that it exists only in the ears of non-Yeshivish listeners who, like the filmmaker, find themselves unable to understand a Yeshivish speaker. Yeshivish speakers are generally convinced that they are speaking English and throwing in just a word or two to foster a sense of cultural unity. The clearest evidence that this perception is strong among Yeshivish speakers is that they employ Yeshivish for purposes of euphemism, that is, couching unpleasant thoughts in soft, innocuous language. Yeshivish speakers may use very graphic, non-English words to describe quite freely intricate, indelicate details of death, biology, and intimacy with no offense to a listener's sensibilities. A symbol is only vulgar if its referent conjures an offensive image in the listener's mind. The use of Yeshivish for euphemism indicates that speakers divorce a non-English symbol from its referent. In the mind of the Yeshivish speaker, Yeshivish remains a foreign language and should therefore not challenge the primacy of English as the language for all purposes other than learning.

To define Yeshivish in standard linguistic terms is difficult. Those who speak it most naturally generally begin as exclusive English speakers, but it seems not to be a jargon. While its speakers have competence in more English words than in Yeshivish ones, Yeshivish words feature in the majority of the sentences they generate in the course of conversation. It seems, therefore, not to be a Creole, although it is a hybrid of several languages. It does not fit comfortably into the categories of marginally similar phenomena of human communication. Like so much of what is truly Jewish, it is unique. In a treatment of Yeshivish, it is important not to speak of a "language" when one is discussing a "shprach."

The Grammar of Yeshivish:
Yeshivish's Grammatical Uniqueness

A mention of the study of grammar usually raises distasteful memories of dry high-school courses and eccentric high-school teachers. These teachers claim to want their students to express their ideas in writing, but they later mark the results in red ink, indicating that the words fail to express the author's intent. Thus, teachers imply that correct grammar is an impediment to clear expression. Students wonder why their manner of expression should require any remedy if they manage to be understood in the course of daily conversation. It seems reasonable that people should be allowed to speak as they please without concern over adherence to arcane, rigid rules.

In fact, there is no communication without the strict employment of shared, if unwritten, rules. A native English speaker may follow a standard English rule and say, "Today's weather is different from yesterday's." The same speaker may convey the same message just as successfully eschewing the accepted rule by more colloquially uttering, "Today's weather is different than yesterday." Nonetheless, the speaker realizes that some underlying sense of order prohibits a statement such as "Weather yesterday today than's different is."

In the language of the rabbis, "dikduk" is the term that most nearly conveys the notion of grammar. Its meaning is "specificity," and it implies that speakers achieve successful communication when the language they use most specifically agrees with the thoughts behind their messages. They must search the list of language rules for those that would best serve their needs. The listener, or reader, is responsible for matching each statement with an identical list of rules in order to retrieve the full message. During normal conversation this process of interpretation occurs naturally and easily, but it is certain that to ensure communication, both the speaker and the listener must share the same set of rules that they must use without radical variation. For communication to be effective, the rules must be both common and consistent.

The grammar of Yeshivish is essentially similar to that of colloquial Ameri-

can English. It does, however, differ in a number of significant ways. Below is a list of the familiar parts of speech, each with a brief explanation of how Yeshivish grammar deviates from English grammar relative to it.

YESHIVISH PARTS OF SPEECH

NOUN: As in English, Yeshivish nouns can be either abstract or concrete. The difference between these two classifications becomes apparent when an article is needed. For example, the concrete noun "telephone" may be expressed "a telephone." There is, however, no comparable form "a happiness," except in limited usage. The same is true of counting and noncounting nouns where "a glass" is possible, but "a water" is not. In all such cases, it occurs occasionally that the same noun may fall into a different classification from language to language. This book recognizes this fact and attempts to provide an English translation that accounts for the potential difference. However, the user is advised to realize that occasionally some interpretation is necessary.

Most Yeshivish nouns create their plural forms by affixing a terminal "s" as in English. When a noun deviates from this rule, we have provided the plural form. Thus, the plural form for "madreiga," for example, would be "madreigas," as we have not indicated a deviation from the standard rule. "Siman," however, has "simunnim" as its plural and is so indicated.

VERB: This work classifies verbs as transitive verbs (v.t.), intransitive verbs (v.i.), and, where applicable, copulae, or linking verbs (l.v.). A quick review of these terms with any high-school grammar text might be helpful. Yeshivish generally conjugates verbs as English does. The past tense and past participle are marked by the terminal -ed, unless the word is etymologically English and has its own forms. The present tense, third person, singular uses a terminal -s, and the present participle uses -ing.

Yeshivish has borrowed a separate classification of verbs from Hebrew through Yiddish. Hebrew verbs have a complicated system of inflection for tense and person that would be hard to carry over into another language. The solution has been to use the verb "to be" as an auxiliary verb and to treat the verb as a participle. For example, "He was machshiv," "They will be moide," and so on. The speaker considers these words to be verbs but uses them as adjectives. The lexicographer has the problem of providing for each word a translation that can both replace the Yeshivish word and render a grammatical English sentence. This work's solution was to create a new part of speech called Predicate Adjective (p.a.) with a parenthetical mark to indicate transitivity, (t)

for transitive, (i) for intransitive. If the provided translation is an English adjective, only the original Yeshivish word should be replaced. If, however, the translation is an English verb, the auxiliary "to be" should be removed in favor of the natural English inflection either with or without the auxiliary "to do," as English grammar requires.

The fifth entry for "makpid" classifies the word as p.a.(i) and translates it "careful." As "careful" is an adjective, the provided sentence, "You should be more makpid to keep your room clean," allows for the simple replacement of the original word with the translation. Hence, "You should be more careful to keep your room clean."

The third entry for "mashma" classifies the word as p.a.(t) and translates it with the English infinitive "intimate." The provided sentence is "He was mashma that he is going to the store." To translate this sentence, it is necessary to conjugate the infinitive "intimate" according to the tense of the auxiliary "was," i.e., past tense, and then to remove the auxiliary from the sentence, hence, "He intimated that he is going to the store." The interrogative phrase, "was he mashma," would be translated with the auxiliary "to do," i.e., "did he intimate." As is often the case, discussion of the phenomenon is more complicated than its practice.

ADJECTIVE: As in English, the adjective may precede the noun it modifies or complement the noun through a copula. Thus, it is possible to speak of "a tasty apple" or to proclaim, "The apple is tasty." Many of the adjectives that come to Yeshivish from Yiddish require the suffix -e to precede a noun, but require no affix as a predicate adjective, or noun complement. One therefore speaks of "a geshmake apple" but proclaims, "The apple is geshmak." To indicate that a particular adjective requires this inflection, the word will have a parenthetical "e" tacked on to its end. The word "geshmak" is, therefore, listed twice, once as a noun and once as an adverb. Its meaning as an adjective is listed under "geshmak(e)."

There are, as well, some adjectives that are etymologically past participles and can only complement a noun through a copula. These have a parenthetical note, "p.a. only," following the indication of the part of speech as adjective. As an example, see the entries for "mechuyav." There is a tendency to create standard adjectives from these participles by adding the suffix -dike, but this work includes only those that seem to be in current use.

ADVERB: Of all parts of speech, English allows its adverb the greatest freedom of movement. Both "He goes often" and "He often goes" are grammatical sentences. Yeshivish allows similar options. Occasionally, the placement

of the adverb in one language may not fit so snugly in the other language, but the problem for the translator is generally minimal.

PREPOSITION: Prepositions vary considerably among languages, and their use can seem arbitrary. Americans live in a house, at an address, on a street, in a state, of a country. Yeshivish usually borrows a word from another language along with the original preposition, although the English translation of the word may require a different preposition. For example, Yeshivish speaks of "being me'id on," while English speaks of "attesting to." Wherever possible, this work attempts to find an English translation that accounts for the natural environment of the word within a sentence, and notice is taken of the prepositions. Occasionally, the prepositions cause such a problem that they were either included as part of a phrase (see "mashpia on") or simply had to be left to the dictionary user to work out.

There are a few distinctly Yeshivish prepositions, and they are indicated for part of speech as "prep." Some, such as "by," are nonstandard uses of English prepositions. Others, such as "legabei," are borrowed from Hebrew or Yiddish.

Information about grammar can be pretty dry reading to many. It is, however, elemental to understanding and to communication. As with every language, to appreciate fully the uniqueness and richness of Yeshivish requires more than just a knowledge of its vocabulary and grammar. Language is the soul of a nation.[1] It is necessary to live in the language, to think in it, to rejoice in it.

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1. In קידוש for יו"ט, עמים and לשונות are synonymous.

About This Work:
An Overview of the Method
Used to Compile This Book

The idea for this dictionary began during a high-school English-language class in a large American yeshiva. The students in this yeshiva are representative of natural speakers of Yeshivish. They learn, eat, and sleep in the yeshiva, and their speech patterns have developed within the relative seclusion of their own community.

Once the decision was reached to write a dictionary of Yeshivish, the first necessary step was to collect the words. Each student carried a small notebook for a week or so and assembled a list of all the words representing nonstandard English encountered in the course of normal conversation. All the lists were then compiled into one.

Initially, we spelled all the words according to a consistent phonetic system. That is, we spelled the words as they are pronounced without regard to etymology or commonly used spellings. We found, however, that the words appeared awkward and that the phonetic system defied common assumptions about how a transliteration should look. As a result, we elected instead to spell each word according to its etymology or to how it appears commonly in print. We realize that there is no official, standard orthography for Yeshivish and that individuals may have spelled words differently from how we have spelled them.

A small group of "native" Yeshivish speakers worked on the definition of each word. We worked with the recognition that a word may have several definitions varying according to context. Note the various meanings of the word "for" in the following sentences: "I bought this for a dollar"; "I bought this for a friend"; "I bought this for Shabbos." The first task for each word was to contrive natural contexts serving to determine both the number of definitions it conveys and the part of speech of each definition. The parts of speech are:

noun: n.
transitive verb: vt.

intransitive verb: vi.
copula: l.v.
"transitive" predicate adjective: p.a.(t)
"intransitive" predicate adjective: p.a.(i)
adjective: adj.
adverb: adv.
preposition: prep.
conjunction: conj.
interjection: interj.
article: art.

We traced each word's etymology back to its language of provenance and listed the meaning of the most original source. For example, if we found that a word entered Yeshivish from Yiddish (Yid.), we traced it further to the source from which Yiddish borrowed it, usually either German (HG) or one of the Slavic languages. The purpose of indicating the word's original meaning is to provide a sense of the semantic changes a word undergoes as it serves the needs of different speakers.

Each definition of every word is provided in language as specific and simple as possible. Following the definition is a "synonym," or "translation," for the Yeshivish word when it is used to convey the definition it accompanies. We invested a lot of effort in these synonyms. The job of a translator is daunting, and we spent a good deal of time choosing our words. We attempted to find an English word that could replace a Yeshivish one in any context and render a natural English sentence. We tried to avoid English words that would sound overly technical or pedantic but would nonetheless convey the full intent of the original meaning.

For each distinct definition, we provide a sentence using the word. We have tried to compose sentences in which the word is used in a natural Yeshivish context. Any who learn or who have learned in a yeshiva will be familiar with the situations our sentences describe. Others may find that the sentences offer cultural information about the Yeshivish community. We have tried to write these sentences such that the definition of the word is evident from the context.

Each entry begins with the Yeshivish word in bold-faced type. If it is a Hebrew, Aramaic, or Yiddish word, the original Hebrew letter spelling will appear in parentheses following the bold type. An italicized abbreviation then indicates the part of speech. If more than one definition is provided for the word, each definition is listed with a bold-faced number. The definition is presented in normal type, followed by a colon and the synonym, which is written in all capital letters. The exemplary sentence follows, enclosed in quotation marks.

Within square brackets, the word's etymology follows the last definition. The etymology uses a number of abbreviations to indicate the original language of the word:

Heb.   Hebrew
Aram.   Aramaic
Yid.   Yiddish
HG   German
MHG   Middle High German
Eng.   English
MFr   Middle French
Fr.   French
Slav.   Slavic

If there are any variant forms or usage notes for the word, they are provided after the etymology.

We know that our work is not complete. We expect that the users of our dictionary will find lacunae as well as excesses. But we believe that this work is the first attempt to examine seriously the linguistic vehicle through which our community executes the loftiest of all discourse, that of learning Torah. We hope our work gives you "asach hanaa."

Literary Selections:
Translations from and into Yishivish

If Yeshivish is to take its place among the world's languages, it will undoubt-
edly develop a literary style all its own. Perhaps the selections that follow will
serve as the catalyst toward a Yeshivish literary explosion. We begin with sev-
eral translations into Yeshivish of famous English works. We then present what
may be the first essays actually written purposely in Yeshivish. The last piece
is a translation of a Torah work into Yeshivish and then into English using this
dictionary. We invite our readers to judge the quality of this writing and to draw
their own conclusions about the justifiable uses of Yeshivish.

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ANTONY'S EULOGY FROM SHAKESPEARE'S *JULIUS CAESAR*

Friends, Romans, countrymen, lend me your ears.
I come to bury Caesar, not to praise him.
The evil that men do lives after them,
The good is oft interred with their bones.
So let it be with Caesar. The noble Brutus
Hath told you Caesar was ambitious.
If it were so, it was a grievous fault.
And grievously hath Caesar answered it.
Here, under leave of Brutus and the rest—

For Brutus is an honorable man,
So are they all, all honorable men—
Come I to speak in Caesar's funeral.
He was my friend, faithful and just to me.

Yeshivish Translation

Raboisai, Roman oilam, heimishe chevra, herr zich ain.
I want to pater you from Caesar, not to give him shvach.
Rishus has a shtikl nitzchius,
The velt is keseder moineia your kavod.
By Caesar it's also azoi. The mechubadike Brutus
Tainahed that Caesar had big hasagos.
Oib azoi, it was a big avla.
And Caesar's oinesh was shreklich.
Bi'reshus Brutus and his gantze chevra—
Grahda Brutus is a chashuve guy,
And his whole chabura, the zelba—
I'll say over a hesped for Caesar.
I hold he was my chaver; by me he was a ne'eman and yashrusdik.

§

THE PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

I pledge allegiance to the flag of the United States of America and to the Re-
public, for which it stands; one nation, under God, indivisible, with liberty and
justice for all.

Yeshivish Translation

I am meshabed myself, bli neder, to hold shtark to the siman of the United States
of America and to the medina which is gufa its tachlis; one festa chevra, be'ezras
Hashem, echad ve'yuchid, with simcha and erlichkeit for the gantza oilam.

§

THE GETTYSBURG ADDRESS

Fourscore and seven years ago our fathers brought forth on this continent a
new nation, conceived in liberty, and dedicated to the proposition that all men
are created equal.

Now we are engaged in a great civil war, testing whether that nation, or any
nation so conceived and so dedicated, can long endure. We are met on a great
battlefield of that war. We have come to dedicate a portion of that field as a
final resting place for those who here gave their lives that that nation might
live. It is altogether fitting and proper that we should do this. . . .

The world will little note nor long remember what we say here, but it can
never forget what they did here. It is for us the living, rather, to be dedicated
here to the unfinished work which they who fought here have thus far so nobly
advanced. It is rather for us to be here dedicated to the great task remaining
before us—that from these honored dead we take increased devotion to that
cause for which they gave the last full measure of their devotion—that we here
highly resolve that these dead shall not have died in vain—that this nation, under
God, shall have a new birth of freedom—and that government of the people,
by the people, for the people, shall not perish from the earth.

Yeshivish Translation

Be'erech a yoivel and a half ago, the meyasdim shtelled avek on this makom a
naiya malchus with the kavana that no one should have bailus over their chaver,
and on this yesoid that everyone has the zelba zchusim.

We're holding by a geferliche machloikes being machria if this medina, or
an andere medina made in the same oifen and with the same machshovos, can
have a kiyum. We are all mitztaref on the daled amos where a chalois of that
machloikes happened in order to be mechabed the soldiers who dinged zich
with each other. We are here to be koiveia chotsh a chelek of that karka as a
kever for the bekavodike soldiers who were moiser nefesh and were niftar to
give a chiyus to our nation. Yashrus is mechayev us to do this. . . .

Lemaise, hagam the velt won't be goires or machshiv what we speak out
here, it's zicher not shayach for them to forget what they tued uf here. We are
mechuyav to be meshabed ourselves to the melocha in which these soldiers
made a haschala—that vibalt they were moiser nefesh for this eisek, we must
be mamash torud in it—that we are mekabel on ourselves to be moisif on their
peula so that their maisim should not be a bracha levatulla—that Hashem should
give the gantze oilam a naiya bren for cheirus—that a nation that shtams by
the oilam, by the oilam, by the oilam, will blaib fest ahd oilam.

HAMLET'S SOLILOQUY

To be, or not to be: that is the question;
Whether 'tis nobler in the mind to suffer
The slings and arrows of outrageous fortune,
Or to take arms against a sea of troubles,
And by opposing end them. To die; to sleep;
No more; and by a sleep to say we end
The heartache and the thousand natural shocks
That flesh is heir to—'tis a consummation
Devoutly to be wish'd. To die; to sleep;
To sleep? Perchance to dream! Ay, there's the rub;
For in that sleep of death what dreams may come
When we have shuffled off this mortal coil,
Must give us pause. There's the respect
That makes calamity of so long life.

Yeshivish Translation *by Shaya Eisen*

You can kleir azoi: to be, or, chalila, fahkert.
Whether it's eppis more chashuv to be soivel yisurim
That shrekliche mazel foders
Or if it's an eitzah to be moiche keneged a velt of tzoris
And al yedei zeh be meakev them; to be niftar; to chap a shluf;
Shoin; and pshat is we end
The agmas nefesh and the thousand natural klops
That gashmius is noite to—'Tis a tachlis
Someone might daven for. To die; to shluf;
To chap a shluf? Efsher to dream! Takeh, that's the stira;
For in that nitzchiyusdike shluf there's a shaila on
The teva of the chaloimos that would come
Once we have become potur from this tzudreita gashmius.
This shafs a chiyuv to be oimed on a chakira.
This sofek is the zach
That makes this kvetshed out life so ee-geshmak.

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by Mendy Stern

There are four ikar ta'amim why the Yeshivshe oilam speaks davka Yeshivish. The ershte ta'am is altz specificity. Lemushel, the sentence "He grahde went to the store" doesn't have the zelba mashma'us as "He actually went to the store."

There is a lomdishe pshat, too, dehainu that be'etzem the yeshivishe velt would prefer to speak Yiddish like the amolike doiros, but vibalt not all of the haintige oilam knows Yiddish, as a shvache substitute they shtupped a few Yiddishe words into English and shtelled it avek as a bazundere language.

For asach guys, however, the ta'am is more poshut. Roiv Yeshivishe bochrim try to be shtikky, and to have your eigene language that the rest of the velt doesn't chap is a riezige shtik.

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The Yeshivishe Menoira *by Michoel Y. Nadel*

Efsher the oilam has been noiheg azoi since the amolike European yeshivos. Or, efsher, stam a modernishe bochur was mechadesh it. Dacht zich, we'll never be zicher about the mekor. Al kol panim, there's a bavuste yeshivishe shtik not to chap that you bichlal don't have a menoira until mamash the zman that the oilam starts to light. Every yeshiva has aza bochur.

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The Yeshivishe Car Buyer's Guide

Model	Ha'aros	Price[1]
Caprice Wagon	Mamash a metzia for a mechanech who comes to the maskana that a van is not shayach yet.	$75–$300
Buick Skylark	For a Kollel guy whose wife needs to get to work.	$200–$900
Chrysler Aries	For an erliche Yid whose wife needs more room for the groceries.	$300–$800
Pontiac 6000	For a tut-zich with some Bar Mitzva money left.	$700–$1,600
Ford Econoline	A mechayeh. The whole family can go together.	$900–$2,000
Grand Marquis	If your shver gets a new one, try to chap the old one.	$8,000–$14,000
Dodge Caravan	Bavust als the most feste van to rent to go to NY for Pesach.	$14,000–$23,000
Crown Victoria	For a chashuve Rav with geshmake Balebatim.	$19,000–$22,000
Bonneville	For a shtikky guy with gelt to spare.	$20,000–$23,000
Mercury Grand Marquis	A riezige makom to keep your carphone.	$19,000–$23,000
Park Avenue	For a shtoltzy lawyer who can't shaf a Lexus because his neighbor has one.	$32,000–$36,000
Lincoln Town Car	The heimishe answer to winning the lottery.	$35,000–$40,000

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[1]All prices are be'erech and should not be meakev the buyer from trying to handl.

FROM THE INTRODUCTION TO *SEFER CHOFETZ CHAIM*

לבד זה ידוע הוא מה שהובא במדרש רבה פרשת נשא. וזה לשונו: אם יגעת הרבה
הקדוש ברוך הוא מסיר יצר הרע ממך. על כן אמרתי אל לבי. אפשר שעל ידי גם
שהוא מלוקט מכל דברי הראשונים בענין זה ויתבוננו בו. לא ישלוט כל בדבריהם.
וממילא כשימשוך מתחלה את עצמו מעון זה במקצת, בהמשך הזמן שיעיינו בספר הזה
בעון זה הרבה ממנו ההרגל עושה. והבא לטהר מסייעין אותו. כך היצר הרע בעון זה.
ובזכות זה ובא ציון גואל בימינו אמן. ימשוך את ידו ממנו לגמרי. כי

Yeshivish Translation

Zaitik to the bavuste inyan is also what is brought down in the Medrash, and
its loshon is azoi: if you're mamash zeiyar oisek in the chachomim's pshat,
Hashem is mesalek the yetzer hara from you. Mimeila, I had a svara that efsher
vibahlt the velt will be meayen in this sefer, which brings down asach verter
from the chachomim, and will tracht ois what it says, the yetzer hara won't
have aza shrekliche shlita over this aveira. Then, mimeila, if a person is moineia
himself from this aveira just a ki hu zeh, it's a hachana to being meakev him-
self in gantzen from it, because being noiheg in a certain oifen can shaf even
more gefeirliche aveiras, and if you have a tshuka to shtaig to higher madreigas,
Hashem will be mechazek you, and in this zchus, Moshiach should come, Amen.

English Translation[2]

Peripheral to the known topic is also what is mentioned in the Medrash, and its
diction is like this: if you are really extremely involved in the sages' method,
Hashem removes temptation from you. Therefore, I had a theory that, perhaps,
since the community will browse through this book, which cites a lot of les-
sons from the sages, and will contemplate what it says, the temptation will not
have such terrible control over this sin. Then, automatically, if a person keeps
himself from this sin just an iota, it is a prelude to hindering himself entirely
from it, because behaving in a certain manner can effect even more horrible
sins, and if you have a longing to advance to higher degrees, Hashem will en-
courage you, and with this virtue, Moshiach should come, Amen.

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2. Translated in strict, noninterpretive accordance with this dictionary.

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To be, or not to be: that is the question;
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The slings and arrows of outrageous fortune,
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FRUMSPEAK

A

ach-dus (אחדות) *n.* Sense of common purpose fostering harmony: UNITY, SOLIDARITY. "The bochrim in a shiur make more progress when they have A." [<Heb. אחד (one)]

ach-ra-i (אחראי) *adj. (p.a. only)* Charged with responsibility: AC-COUNTABLE. "I'm not A. for anyone else's learning; I have to worry about myself." [<Aram. <Heb. אחר (other)]

ach-rai-us (אחריות) *n., pl.* **achraiusen** **1.** Answerability or accountability: RESPONSIBILITY. "Bli neder, I'll learn some Mishnayos, but I can't take A. for anyone else." **2.** Reliability resulting from a sense of responsibility: DEPENDABILITY. "Ask him to prepare the leining; he has the most A." **3.** Obligation, financial or personal, to others: BURDEN. "With all his other A., I wonder how the Rosh Yeshiva finds time to prepare for shiur." [cf. achrai]

a-de-ra-ba (אדרבה) *interj.* **1.** To the counter or opposite effect: TO THE CONTRARY. "No, it's not a good idea to take your brother-in-law as a partner. A. You'll be out of business before you know it." **2.** Polite expression of permission or invitation: BY ALL MEANS, CERTAINLY. "If you want to learn, A., you can sit at my desk." [<Aram. (upon the greater)]

ad kahn (עד כאן) *interj.* **1.** Sufficient for the purpose: ENOUGH. "A. we're not going vaiter today." **2.** Expression used to induce cessation of activity or behavior: KNOCK IT OFF. "A. We could argue about this sugya forever and never agree." [<Aram./Heb. (until here)]

ad k-dei kach (עד כדי כך) *adv.* **1.** Sufficiently to allow: SO MUCH. "He learned halacha A. that even the rebbeim asked his opinion occasionally." *interj.* **2.** Expression of wonder regarding the extent or intensity of something: THAT MUCH. "A?! I never imagined that bochrim could be so mechutzaf." [<Heb. עד (until) + כדי (in order) + כך (thus)]

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a-gav (אגב) *adv.* **1.** By the way: INCIDENTALLY. "They learned in together in the afternoon, and, A., they decided to meet again later that evening." *prep.* **2.** Subordinate to: ALONG WITH. "I learned Hilchos Shabbos A. the sugyos." [<Aram. (on the back)]

ag-mas ne-fesh (עגמת נפש) *n.* Disappointment or sadness: HEARTACHE. "I had a lot of A. when the Rosh Yeshiva placed me in the lower shiur." [<Heb. עגם (swell) + נפש (soul)]

ain-fal (איינפאהל) *n.* An ingenious, intuitive idea or suggestion: INSPIRATION. "I couldn't figure out how to spend Bein HaZmanim in the country until I had an A. to work in a camp." [<Yid. <HG herein (within) + Fallen (fall)]

ai-zen(e) (אייזען) *adj.* **1.** Well-founded and firm, as in logic: INCONTROVERTIBLE. "He had an A. svara; even the liberal judge found in favor of the landlord." **2.** Perplexing and difficult to answer: UNRESOLVABLE. "I have to admit it; you're kashe on my pshat is A." [<Yid. <HG Eisen (iron)]

a-ki-tzur (א קיצור) *adv.* In summary; in other words: RESTATED. "I tried to find a heter, but, A., no, there's no way we can go during the Three Weeks." [<Heb. קצר (short)] **Var.** bekitzur.

al kol pa-nim (על כל פנים) *adv.* At any rate: NEVERTHELESS. "The yeshiva hasn't collected enough to complete the new building; A. there's enough to get started." [<Heb. (on every facet)]

als (אלס) *prep.* **1.** Because of: DUE TO. "A. what do you feel the Yeshiva is treating him specially?" *conj.* **2.** Due to the fact that: SINCE, BECAUSE. "I wasn't by Shachris A. I overslept." [<Yid. <HG als (as)] **Var.** altz.

al tnai (על תנאי) **Cf.** tnai.

altz *Var. of* als.

a-mol (אמאל) *adv.* **1.** In past times: FORMERLY, ONCE. "A., when I was younger, there weren't so many Yeshivos in America." **2.** With sporadic frequency: OCCASIONALLY, RARELY. "A. he has a chidush, but mostly he just speaks out achroinim." [<Yid. <HG einmal (one time)]

a-mol-i-ke (אמאליקע) *adj.* Foregone, of times past: OLDEN, OBSOLETE. "The A. gemaros used to fall apart because of their cheap bindings." [cf. amol + -ike]

an-shul-diks (אנשולדיקס) *polite expression.* Apology for trivial or unintentional interruption or indiscretion: PARDON. "A. I didn't mean to bother you while you're learning." [<Yid. <HG anschuldigen (accuse)]

a-rain ge-tun (העריין געטאן) *adj. (p.a. only)* Completely occupied or involved, as of the mind or attention: ENGROSSED. "He was so A. in his learning that he skipped lunch and dinner." [<Yid. <HG herein (within) + tun (do)]

a-sach (א סך) *adj.* Great in amount, degree, or number: A LOT OF. "In the back of his desk, I found A. interesting, old bills that would interest the IRS." [<Yid. א (indefinite article) + <Heb. סך (amount)] **Var.** a-zach.

a-ser (אסרן) *vt.* To effect a prohibition upon: PROHIBIT. "The Rosh Yeshivos A. having small appliances in the dorm." [<Yid. <Heb. cf. asur]

a-sur (אסור) *adj. (p.a. only)* Prohibited, especially by authority, from having or doing something: FORBIDDEN. "It's A. for bochrim to smoke while they are in the Yeshiva." [<Heb. אסר (tie)]

a-va-da *Var. of* vada.

av-la (עוולה) *n.* A wrong perpetrated intentionally: INJUSTICE. "It's an A. for a teacher to lower a grade for personal reasons." [<Heb. עול (iniquity)]

a-za (אזא) *adj. & art.* **1.** Being of a particular variety: A KIND OF, A CERTAIN. "The Doctor has A. machine to know your blood pressure even over the phone." **2.** Of considerable intensity: SUCH A(N). "He's A. masmid; he even learns on the bus." [<cf. azoi + Yid. א (indefinite article)]

a-zach *Var. of* asach.

a-zoi (אזוי) *adv.* **1.** With noteworthy intensity: SO. "The shmooze was A. boring; nobody could stay awake." **2.** As indicated: LIKE SO. "If you keep your shiur notes A., you'll be able to find things faster." [<Yid. <HG also (thus)]
— **N.B.** The phrase "azoi un azoi" intensifies the meaning of azoi def. 2 implying: EXACTLY SO.

B

ba-al dik-duk (בעל דקדוק) *Var. of* medakdek, def. 6.

ba-al gai-va (בעל גאוה) **Cf.** gaiva.

ba-al shi-ta (בעל שיטה) **Cf.** shitos.

bahlt (באלד) *adv.* **1.** Without undue lapse of time: SOON. "Run to the dining room, because B. they'll be out of meat." **2.** Almost or practically: JUST ABOUT. "Run to the dining room, because the meat's B. gone." [<Yid. <HG bald (soon)]

bai-lus (בעלות) *n.* Sovereignty or ownership: DOMINION. "My boss constantly creates new rules just to show his B." [<Emulative of Heb. בעל (master)]

ba-kant(e) (בעקאנט) *adj.* **1.** Versed or acquainted, or being so: FAMOUS, FAMILIAR. "That bochur is too B. with baseball stats to be very serious about his learning." [<Yid. <HG kennen (to know)]

ba-ko-sha (בקשה) *n.* An act desired of another person: REQUEST. "He made a B. for everyone to stay quiet while he said his vort." [<Heb. בקש (seek)]

bal-e-bat-ish(e) (בעל-הבתיש) *adj.* **1.** Contemporary with secular style or form: STYLISH. "His new Lincoln is too B. for a guy in Kollel." **2.** Characterized by doing that which is accepted in a specific situation: PROPER. "At least the Chassan was B. enough to remember to go around greeting the guests." **3.** Essentially basic, uncomplicated, and/or undeveloped: ELEMENTARY. "A real talmid chacham would be embarrassed to say such a B. chabura." [<Yid. <Heb. בעל (master) + הבית (the house)]

bal kish-ron (בעל כשרון) *n.* One with the potential to develop further: PRODIGY. "The Rosh Yeshiva had been known as a B. since his early years." [<Heb. בעל (master) + כשר (proper)]

5

bat-lan (בטלן) *n., pl.* **batlanim** One who consistently wastes time: BUM, FAINÉANT. "They didn't let him stay in the Yeshiva because he was, plain and poshut, a B." [cf. battel]

bat-tel (באטלען) *vt. & vi.* To waste time or to cause to waste time, especially regarding learning: IDLE. "I'm going to change my chavrusa if he doesn't stop trying to B. constantly." [<Yid. <Heb. בטל (null)]
— **N.B.** The transitive verb battel may assume the variant p.a.(t) form "mevattel."

ba-tul-la (בטלה) *n.* Wasted time: OTIOSITY, IDLENESS. "The class clown caused a lot of B. during seder." [cf. battel]

ba-vorn (באוואָרנען) *vt.* To realize the existence of and to resolve in advance: ANTICIPATE. "The Rebbe B. all the kashes by speaking out the major achroinim from the start." [<Yid. <HG warnen (warn)]

ba-vust(e) (בעוואוסט) *adj.* **1.** Widely known: FAMOUS. "The shiur was boring, just the usual, B. kashes." **2.** Widely recognized: KNOWN. "It's B. that the Earth is round." [<Yid. <HG wissen (know)]

ba-zun-der(e) (בעזונדער) *adj.* **1.** Unrelated or only marginally related: SEPARATE. "Whether to switch yeshivos is a B. question; I just want to finish the zman on good terms." **2.**

Consisting of different or unconnected elements: DISTINCT. "We were meyashev the shverkait by discovering that the sefer attempted to deal with several B. topics at the same time." [<Yid. <HG sondern (separate)]

be-dav-ka (בדווקא) *adv.* After careful consideration; with intention and purpose: DELIBERATELY. "He B. goes to the same run-down bungalow colony just to assure the owner's parnasa." [cf. davka]

be-de-rech klal (בדרך כלל) *adv.* As a general rule: USUALLY. "Unless there is a special shiur, we B. break for lunch at around 1:00." [<Heb. דרך (way) + כלל (include)]

be-di-e-ved (בדיעבד) *adv.* **1.** Under duress, or done when no options are available: AS A LAST RESORT. "If it's too loud in the Beis Medrash, B. you can learn in the Ezras Nashim." **2.** Resentfully; without enthusiasm: BEGRUDGINGLY. "I would prefer not to learn with him, but if I do so, I do it B." **3.** Done just well enough to fulfill a need or duty: PERFUNCTORILY. "It's best to learn Musar every day, but B. once a week is the minimum." *n.* **4.** That which just passes muster, but is not optimal: LAST RESORT. "I know this is not a very Shabbosdik hat, but I took it as a B." [<Aram. (having done)]

be-di-e-ved-ik(e) (בדיעבדיק) *adj.* **1.** Just passing muster: MEDIOCRE.

"It's a B. car, but it'll do for Bein HaZmanim." **2.** Just performing a task according to minimal requirements: EXPEDIENT. "To read straight from the Kitzur Shulchan Aruch is a B. way to learn halacha." [cf. bedieved]

be-doi-chek (בדוחק) *adv.* **1.** With reservations: RELUCTANTLY. "I knew he hadn't listened to me, but I accepted the Mashgiach's decision B." **2.** Only in order to pass muster and to proceed: PERFUNCTORILY, IN A PINCH. "Let's just use his pshat for now and go vaiter in the gemara." [cf. doichek(e)]
—**N.B.** The variant form "bedoichek gadol" is more emphatic.

be-e-mes (באמת) *adv.* **1.** As a matter of fact (implying the subjunctive mood): ACTUALLY. "B. I would go with you, but I have to wait for my brother." **2** Truly or genuinely: REALLY. "There's B. no need for you to take me with you." [cf. emes] **Var.** be'emesen.

be-e-mes-en *Var. of* beemes.

be-e-rech (בערך) *adv.* Nearly correct or precise: APPROXIMATELY. "There are B. 1,000 seforim in the Beis Medrash." [<Heb. ערך (arrange)]

be-e-tzem (בעצם) *adv.* **1.** Really or truly: IN FACT. "B. the Mashgiach wasn't looking, but I decided to put the radio away, anyhow." **2.** Being an inherent part of something: INTRIN-

SICALLY. "It wasn't until he went to learn in Eretz Yisroel that he realized that he is B. an American." [cf. etzem]

be-fei-rush (בפירוש) *adv.* Exactly as written, spoken, or intended: EXPLICITLY. "The Rosh Yeshiva said B. that no one can stay in the Beis Medrash past midnight." [<Heb. פרש (interpret)]

be-fei-rush(e) (בפירוש) *adj.* Written, expressed, or clearly intended: EXPLICIT. "There is a B. ban on smoking in the yeshiva." [cf. befeirush]

be-hech-rach (בהכרח) *adv.* **1.** As a logical, inevitable conclusion: NECESSARILY. "A yeshiva doesn't B. have enough dorm space; sometimes there are three and four bochrim to a room." **2.** Proven undeniably: INCONTROVERTIBLY. "You can interpret your father's words as you please, but it was B. a demand that you spend more time learning." [cf. hechrach]

be-i-kar (בעיקר) *adv.* Chiefly or mainly: PRINCIPALLY. "There are B. five common ways to get parking on 13th Ave., but none of them will work unless you're aggressive." [cf. ikar]

bein ha-sdo-rim (בין הסדרים) **Cf.** seder.

be-in-yan (בענין) *prep.* Regarding the topic of: ABOUT. "I wanted to talk with my B. a shtikl bonus before Pesach." [cf. inyan]