Yiddish Language, Culture, and History Part 2

Facilitated by Avi Hoffman, Tuesdays 11:00am

Course Description: Explore the rich language, history, and traditions of Yiddish culture. Participants will learn common Yiddish expressions while discovering the people, communities, and historical events that shaped Yiddish-speaking life. Through stories and cultural insights, students will gain a deeper appreciation of Yiddish's lasting influence on Jewish identity.

Week 1: Der Ershter Klass
Litvak or Galitzyaner? We start with that friendly feud, sing the alef-beys to "Do-Re-Mi," and end with Molly Picon's "Abi Gezunt." As long as you're healthy, you can be happy.

Week 2: Der Tzvayter Klass
Learn how the letter Bet got from Bethlehem to "bedlam." Then a shtetl tavern-keeper outsmarts a hungry nobleman, Talila sings "Belz," and we share a plate of Yiddish food words.

Week 3: Der Driter Klass
Gimel brings us to Gott, and Moyshe Nadir explains what Jews and nails have in common. The Berlin klezmer band KlezFez asks "Vu Bistu Geven?" and Steve Lawrence sings "Vu Ahin Zol Ikh Geyn," a song whose lyricist died in Auschwitz.

Week 4: Der Ferter Klass
"Bay Mir Bistu Sheyn," Yiddish theater's most famous song, played by the Budapest Klezmer Band. A widow is happier in the afterlife than she ever was married, and the wise men of Chelm work out why people need heads: to wear hats.

Week 5: Der Fufter Klass
A rebbe teaches that pride can starve you faster than hunger. Paul Robeson sings how the Czar drinks his tea, a giraffe and a turtle argue about the world, and the trip ends in Crimea with "Djankoye."

Week 6: Der Zekster Klass
"Dona Dona" mixes heartbreak with hope, a rich man has ten daughters with rhyming names, and Efim Alexandrov sings "Chiribim Chiribom." We finish crunchy and a little meshuge with gribenes.