VOCABULARY

אליך on
ודי you (sg. infor.)
הוא he
first
Friend; Mr.
street
God
regards, greeting
home
to be called (as in "My name is...")
i
in, at
you (pl.; sg. for.)
can, to be acquainted with
small, little
person
we
not
hello
to think
and
world

6 Until you know all the Yiddish letters, the vocabulary will be arranged alphabetically, according to the English transliteration of the Yiddish word. Naturally, in the case of nouns preceded by articles, look to the first letter of the noun and not of the article for alphabetic placement.

7 Most common nouns are preceded by a definite article. It may be Der for a masculine noun, Di for a feminine noun, or Dos for a neuter noun. This is explained in Unit 2, p. 20. Memorize each noun with its appropriate article.

8 The plural of nouns or plural endings will be given in parentheses next to the noun. The plural article for all Yiddish nouns is always Di.
דיאן: דאום ערפש קאפפיטל

dos veltl(ekh) world (dim.)
vi how
voynen to live (as in to dwell)
vu where
zi she

Idioms and Expressions

A grus in der heym Regards [to the folks] at home
Aleykhem-sholom → see Sholem-Aleykhem
in der heym at home
Sholem-aleykhem, Sholem-Sholom
Aleykhem-sholom Hello, and the response
to “Hello”
Vli heyst ir? What’s your name? (Lit. “How
ro hitmes ar? are you called?”)
Zay gezunt! Good-bye (Lit. “Be well”) (sg.
Zayt gezunt! fam.)
Zayt gezunt! Good-bye (pl. or sg. for.)

V. GRAMMAR

1. The Present Tense

The present tense of verbs in Yiddish is quite simple. In English we can say “I talk, I do talk, I am talking.” In Yiddish, this is all rendered as ich red. The first person singular is formed by dropping the “n” or “en” from the infinitive. Thus redn, ich red, aher, heys, rov, trakhtn: ich trakht, rov, voynen: ich voyn.

This form is the base of the verb. The endings for the other persons: du red you (sg. & fam.), er red he, zi red she, mir red we, ir red you (pl. & sg. for.), zey red they, are formed by adding the appropriate endings to the base. Study the verbs on the next page. The endings are in a different font.

The infinitive of Yiddish verbs always ends in “n” as in redn, rov to talk,

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9 The infinitive is the verb form that names the action. As in English, it may or may not be preceded by “to.” For example, (to) sing, (to) dance, (to) hear.