

The Metamorphosis of a Melody

The LufTeater presents this novel of Yitskhok Leybush Peretz, who's considered the « father » of the Yiddish Literature. It is part of his khassidic stories.

A melody has a soul, it is the feeling of a human being that makes it alive.

To prove it, the story-teller will tell us a story about the Metamorphosis (or re-incarnation) of a Melody.

Khaiml, a poor musician has for mission to bring a new composition of an El Mole Rakhmim (a traditional Jewish requiem in the honor of a dead stingy rich man, Berl Katzner, in his daughter's wedding), by the great klezmer composer Pedhotser, living in Berditshev.

But arriving to Berditshev, Pedhotser is absent, and the poor Khaiml has the opportunity to hear the song of a young poor bride composed by him in order to help her to collect money for her wedding.

Khaiml converts this « Mazl Tov » into a real El Mole Rakhmim.

But when he plays it during the wedding of Katzner's daughter, the melody is whistled by one of the guests, and Khaiml enters with him in a competition in which the melody loses her soul.

Years after, the melody enters the Yiddish theater, and her goal is now to inflame the low sexual instincts of the public.

When the Yiddish theater is closed by an official decree, the melody is taken over by street acrobats and a stolen young girl, and the melody is played by a barrel organ.

The poor stolen young girl gets sick and the acrobats abandon her in a shtetl called Radziwil. There she lies in a hospital with a typhus, and becomes blind.

The young poor girl uses the melody now to beg, and the melody, through her suffering, begins to raise, since her goal now is to awaken the solidarity of the people.

But she's thrown away by a Talmud scholar who's disturbed in his study by her singing.

The melody now stays in the scholar's mind and soul and prevent him from learning and praying.

He gets mad almost.

And then, he decides to go and visit a Tsadik (a Just). He visits Reb Dovidl, the Tsadik, in a Shabat meal.

Reb Dovidl asks the scholar to sing something, and the scholar, trembling, sings the only melody he knows, the poor blind girl's melody.

He adds to the melody the knowledge and fervour of a Talmud scholar.

And so, the melody gets her reparation.

Reb Dovidl asks the scholar to help the blind poor girl to marry, and doing so, the melody gets back her first goal, that is to marry a young girl.

Years after, when the girl was already married to a scribe a widow, it was clarified where from the poor girl came.

She was the granddaughter of Berl Katzner, that was stolen from her parents an evening when they went to the theater.

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