

IN MIDBER (1920)

O. Prelude: Each night there's an opening in heaven & whoever wants to can ascend, there to see a Holy Assembly sitting around Kavyokhl. Once the Very Old Man told the following:

Kavyokhl got up one morning & was met by the Holy Spirit in the form of a white dove who told him about the Hermit down below. They all went down to the DESERT & found him there completely alone and lost in prayer. God commands him to look up. Will stay there as long as it is the wish of heaven. Having seen him they all rise up, the heavens close & the real story begins:

I. FIRST TRIAL OF THE HOLY MAN.

At the very moment of heaven's closing, Satan descended. Remained all alone in the desert under the sun's merciless rays. Finally, strengthened by the sun, rose up in the form of a HUNCHBACK to find the lodging of the HOLY ONE. Dressed like a hermit (groy-arbldik, poledik un breyt-nezirish) he finds him deep in a cave in front of a lamp. Uneasy at the sight of him, the Holy One invites him in. Hunchback tells him to look into the vessel from he drank & this is what he sees:

Same image as before. Sun about to set. In the midst of angelic circle there's a dove who tells about the earth below & the man who kneels there in prayer.

Q: So what do you want here?

A: I was eaten up by jealousy. And this is my story:

Lived as an oucast all my life. Until I sought out a healer; fell in with sorcerers who sold me to Satan who raped & defiled me (145). Took out my heart, then let me go. So I wandered till I came to you.

Insists the Holy Man exchange his purity for Hunchbak's impurity. But Holy Man is suspicious. Meanwhile, Hunchback starts sprouting wings. Then fled out of the cave & leaves the Holy Man alone, as before.

II. SECOND TRIAL. The Holy Man's Daily Routine

- A. Going down to the brook to draw water
- B. Preparing the kraytekhtser
- C. Tending the fire
- D. Visit to the ancient grave-like sandy place on the mountain
- E. Visit by the LION. Their quiet communion. Running his hand thru lion's mane