Chad Gadya [One Kid]

Aramaic, "One Kid"; circa 15th-16th century, Central Eastern Europe

ARA MAIC / GERMAN / YIDDISH / GREEK / LADINO / JUDEO-PROVENÇAL / ITALIAN / ARABIC / RUSSIAN

Edited from field and archive recordings by
ABRAHAM A. SCHWADRON

Cover design by RONALD CLYNE
Chad Gadya
[One Kid]

Aramaic, "One Kid"; circa 15th-16th century, Central Eastern Europe
ARAMAIC / GERMAN / YIDDISH / GREEK / LADINO / JUDEO-PROVENÇAL / ITALIAN / ARABIC / RUSSIAN / KURDISTAN / YEMEN

Edited from field and archive recordings by ABRAHAM A. SCHWADRON

SIDE 1
Band 1—ARAMAIC
Band 2—e) ARAMAIC, f) ARAMAIC, g) ARAMAIC
Band 3—d) LADINO, e) LADINO

SIDE 2
Band 4—a) RUSSIAN, b) JUDEO-PROVENÇAL
Band 5—a) ARAMAIC and ITALIAN, b) ITALIAN, c) ARAMAIC
Band 6—a) LADINO, b) LADINO
Band 7—a) ARAMAIC and ARABIC, b) ARAMAIC, c) ARAMAIC, d) ARAMAIC and LADINO, e) ARAMAIC

Chad Gadya (Aramaic, "One Kid"; circa 15th-16th c., Central Eastern Europe) is the last of four semi-liturgical songs added to the traditional Passover sedar—a domestic service celebrating the ancient Hebrew exodus from Egyptian bondage. The text is cumulative in form, allegorical in meaning, and didactic in function.

On this recording there are 25 different, yet traditionally representative examples of the Chad Gadya. They demonstrate various characteristics of: languages and dialects; interpretations in melody, tempi, styles, ornamentation, Western scales and Near Eastern maqamat; regional practices and migratory paths. Apart from the first version, which puts forth the complete ten stanzas according to the editor's family tradition, all others are edited excerpts.

© © 1982 FOLKWAYS RECORDS & SERVICE CORP.
43 W. 61st ST., N.Y.C., 10023 N.Y., U.S.A.

Chad Gadya [One Kid]
Edited from field and archive recordings by ABRAHAM A. SCHWADRON

DESCRIPTIVE NOTES ARE INSIDE POCKET

FOLKWAYS RECORDS FR 8920
Chad Gadya [One Kid]
Aramaic, "One Kid"; circa 15th-16th century, Central Eastern Europe

ARAMAIC / GERMAN / YIDDISH / GREEK / LADINO / JUDEO-PROVENCAL / ITALIAN / ARABIC / RUSSIAN

Edited from field and archive recordings by ABRAHAM A. SCHWADRON

Chad Gadya (Aramaic, "One Kid"; circa 15th-16th c., Central Eastern Europe) is the last of four semi-liturgical songs added to the traditional Passover seder—a domestic service celebrating the ancient Hebrew exodus from Egyptian bondage. The text is cumulative in form, allegorical in meaning, and didactic in function. It first appeared in print, 1590, in a Prague Haggadah (the book of the seder procedure); the first published music, in Leipzig, 1677 in a work by F.A. Christian--Zevah Pesah, das ist: Kürzeste doch voelliche Beschreibung des Oster-Festes (The Passover Order, that is: A Short but Complete Description of the Easter Festival).

Whatever the initial prototype song setting, it is clear that, given the socio-cultural complexities of Jewish migrations, both texts and melodies inevitably became open-ended, and among specific groups (notably Western Sephardim), omitted on grounds still conjectural. Today, Jews world-wide still tend to conclude the Passover seder with the singing of some version of the Chad gadya. Texts vary in language from the original, doggerel Aramaic to versions in various tongues inclusive of regional hybrids--Yiddish, Ladino, Judeo-Italian, Greek-Aramaic, etc. Textual interpolation, paraphrasing, free textual interpretation, as well as Haggadah-centered translocations are evident in contemporary settings. Similarly, the melodies have been transformed, modified, freely-borrowed; also composed, adapted and fixed in both regional and familial traditions. While the texts have a more stable history of preservation, the melodies—surely of greater diversity—remain open for more extensive compilation and intensive categorical study. Suffice it to state that no singular collection of the host of published musical settings, in notation or sound, is currently available; hence, the uniqueness of this recording is recognized.

The particular examples of the Chad Gadya contained here were selected from an extensive collection compiled by the editor—researcher, ABRAHAM A. SCHWADRON, Professor of Music and Chairman of the Music Department, University of California at Los Angeles.

Research centering on this song began in 1975-76. Information and recorded materials were gathered from universities, seminaries, archive centers; clergy and professional singers; laymen in community centers, homes for the aged, synagogue congregations and other references. The principal objective of the research was to preserve in sound (and notation) those versions still 'living' in recall and function, with special emphasis on unpublished ones.

Six years later, following considerable field recording and interviewing on location in the United States and Europe over 180 versions, published and unpublished, have been compiled and studied.

Chad Gadya is a domestic table song, best categorized with the Hebrew genre, Zemirot. It is sung at the end of the Passover seder by all participants, sometimes in a leader-response format. Most often it is the family elder who carries the tradition of the tune and sets the interpretation of the text. While the cumulative form of the latter is not unknown in many cultures, it is this structural, repetitive factor that strengthens the didactic function of Chad Gadya and makes it educationally appropriate for the table setting at Passover. Polegies aside, the textual meaning is far from childish. Rather, it assumes allegorical significance, symbolic of periods of oppression and retribution in Jewish history from ancient days to the present. The mode of sensitivity associated with the text tends to parallel the kind of musical treatment. In brief, since the given interpretation usually follows familial predilections and regional influences, there is no one traditional version for universal Jewry. However, it is this very idea, of variety within unity, that allows for an unusual and fascinating way of examining the rich plurality of traditional Chad Gadya settings as rendered by Jewish people in global Diaspora.

On this recording there are 25 different, yet traditionally representative examples of the Chad Gadya. (Currently popular versions, e.g., the one adapted from the German folk song, Ein Männlein steht in Walde, are not included.) They demonstrate various characteristics of: languages and dialects; interpretations in melody, tempi, styles, ornamentation, Western scales and Near Eastern maqānāt; regional practices and migratory paths. Apart from the first version, which puts forth the complete ten stanzas according to the editor's family tradition, all others are edited excerpts. (The repetitive nature of the song suggested that, wherever feasible, the opening and final stanzas would suffice. The latter allows for a full review of the text; and, because of the initial divine reference—the "Holy One, Blessed be He"—it is often set off in some distinctive manner of musical treatment.)

A capsule description of primary data accompanies each item. This information is intended as introductory; and, in no sense, exhaustive. For example, the geographical sources of familial versions appear as cited by the field informant, map changes via political history notwithstanding.

The source data for each example are derived from information provided by the informant (or archive center). In most cases traditions can not be confirmed beyond the generation of grandparents. The classic exceptions to this generalization are to be found in Italy. There are many cities in Italy where Jewish communities have been located with remarkable stability--Rome, since Pompeii; Verona, since the twelfth century and others. The indigenous musical tradition, to include Un Cappretto (Chad Gadya), is not only the same for the entire local community but also has long, well-established roots. Indeed, the version sung will immediately identify the region (city).
Ashkonazic, Sephardic, Oriental and other regional dialects are represented by the different pronunciations of the text. Since the Sephardic pronunciation was officially accepted in Israel, there has been an unofficial international effort by some, to adapt. No such "adaptations" are contained in this recorded collection.

In a few examples there is some pitch loss between the opening stanzas and the last. This is not uncommon among untrained singers and, indeed, given the length of the unaccompanied song, quite understandable. Similarly, since the versions were recorded in the field under diverse conditions of control, the ultimate sound quality of this composite recording reflects the admixture.

Finally, sincere thanks are proffered to all those who warmly granted permissions so that a recording of this nature could be realized. Also to be acknowledged is Warren Jaynes, UCLA sound engineer, who was most helpful in the preparation of the collection of examples; and Prof. Jihad A. Racy, UCLA Music Department, for his confirmation of the maqamat.

For an extended discussion on the topic, see the editor's article, "Chad Gadya: A Passover Song," Selected Reports in Ethnomusicology, Vol. 4, Special Issue, 1981-82, Department of Music, UCLA, in preparation.

Chad Gadya
Aramaic-Hebrew

Transliteration*  

Chad gadya, chad gadya.
1 (1) D'zabin abba bitrey zuwey
Chad gadya, chad gadya.
2 V'ata (2) shunra v'achal l'gadya (1)
Chad gadya, chad gadya.
3 ** V'ata (3) chaiha v'nashach l' (2, 1)
Chad gadya, chad gadya.
4 V'ata (4) chutra v'hiikka l' (3, 2, 1)
Chad gadya, chad gadya.
5 V'ata (5) shunra v'saraf l' (4, 3, 2, 1)
Chad gadya, chad gadya.
6 V'ata (6) maiya v'chava l' (5, 4, 3, etc.)
Chad gadya, chad gadya.
7 V'ata (7) tora v'shata l' (6, 5, 4, etc.)
Chad gadya, chad gadya.
8 V'ata ha (8) shochet v'ashchat l' (7, 6, 5, etc.)
Chad gadya, chad gadya.
1. Then came a cat and devoured the kid, which my father bought for two zuzeem.

2. Then came a dog and bit the cat, which my father bought for two zuzeem.

3. Then came a staff and beat the dog, which bit the cat, which devoured the kid, which my father bought for two zuzeem.

4. Then came a fire and burned the ox, which drank the water, which extinguished the fire, which burned the staff, which beat the dog, which bit the cat, which devoured the kid, which my father bought for two zuzeem.

5. Then came the water, which you would not want done to you.

6. Then came the water and extinguished the fire, which burned the staff, which beat the dog, which bit the cat, which devoured the kid, which my father bought for two zuzeem.

**From this verse on read d' instead of v' in the repeated portions.**

**Translation**

1. One kid, one kid, which my father bought for two zuzeem. One kid, one kid.

2. Then came a cat and devoured the kid, which my father bought for two zuzeem. One kid, one kid.

3. Then came a dog and bit the cat, which devoured the kid, which my father bought for two zuzeem.

4. Then came a staff and beat the dog, which bit the cat, which devoured the kid, which my father bought for two zuzeem.

5. Then came a fire and burned the ox, which drank the water, which extinguished the fire, which burned the staff, which beat the dog, which bit the cat, which devoured the kid, which my father bought for two zuzeem.

6. Then came the water, which you would not want done to you.

7. Then came the ox and drank the water, which extinguished the fire, which burned the staff, which beat the dog, which bit the cat, which devoured the kid, which my father bought for two zuzeem.

8. Then came the Shochet and slaughtered the ox, which drank the water, which extinguished the fire, which burned the staff, which beat the dog, which bit the cat, which devoured the kid, which my father bought for two zuzeem.

9. Then came the angel of death and killed the Shochet, who slaughtered the ox, which drank the water, which extinguished the fire, which burned the staff, which beat the dog, which bit the cat, which devoured the kid, which my father bought for two zuzeem.

10. Then came the holy One, blessed be He, and slew the angel of death, who killed the Shochet, who slaughtered the ox, which drank the water, which extinguished the fire, which burned the staff, which beat the dog, which bit the cat, which devoured the kid, which my father bought for two zuzeem.

**Allegorical Meanings**

1. A. The Kid:
   a. Israel--the ancient and modern nations
   b. The oppressed Jewish people in the Diaspora
   c. The scapegoat in the legend of Abraham's sacrifice of Isaac.

2. B. The Father: God, Jehovah
3. C. Two Zuzeem:
   a. Two ancient coins
   b. Moses and Aaron

4. a. Mysticism of body and soul
   b. Ancient Kingdoms of Israel and Judea
   c. Legend of Abraham and Nimrod
   d. Two tablets of the Ten Commandments

5. 1. The Cat: (fox): Assyria

6. 2. The Dog: Babylonia

7. 3. The Stick: Persia--under Cyrus, the defeat of Babylonia, liberation from captivity and rebuilding of the Jerusalem temple

8. 4. The Fire: Macedonia

9. 5. The Water: Rome

10. 6. The Ox: Saracens--who conquered Palestine

11. 7. The Angel: Turkey--rulers over Israel

12. 8. The Shochet: (ritual slaughterer):
   a. Crusaders
   b. New European peoples
   c. Counterparts (not identified ritually) in the Spanish Inquisition, the Russian and Polish pogroms, the Nazi holocaust

13. 9. The Malach Hamavet (Angel of Death):
   a. Turkey--rulers over Israel
   b. New, suspicious powers, e.g. atomic and nuclear energy in our time

14. 10. The Kadosh Baruch Hu (Holy One, Blessed be He):
   a. Literal reference to the all-encompassing power of the Almighty God
   b. Vindication of Israel--the only kid
   c. Righteousness and responsibility of personal action
   d. Removal of fear of death
   e. Principle of eternal moral justice
   f. Allusion to the Biblical legend of Joseph and his brothers
   g. Dictum of Rabbi Hillel--"Do not do unto others that which you would not want done to you"
   h. Allusion to the ancient Hammurabic Code--Lex (Jus) talionis, "an eye for an eye"--Mosaic Civil Law Exodus XX, 2-6, 24-25
   i. Anticipation for the establishment of the Messianic time
   j. Cumulative summation of symbolic meaning in the Janus-faced reminder of the dynamic, hopeful nature of the Jewish people and their covenant with God--the true, final representative of justice

**Side One**

**Band 1:**

**Aramaic**

Source: Tarnopol, Galicia (Poland)

Recording location: Los Angeles, California

Performer: Abraham A. Schwadron

Recorder: Same

Stanzas: 1 through 10

Comments: Learned from the singer's father, a devout Reader of the Law. The mode, intensive interpretation and embellished style show preference for older, Oriental practices. The pronunciation is Ashkenazic.
Band 2:

a. Aramaic
Source: Frankfurt, Germany; Hungary-Czechoslovakia
Recording location: Stockholm, Sweden
Performer: Leo Rosenblith, Cantor Emeritus, Great Synagogue of Stockholm
Recorder: Same
Stanzas: 1, 10
Comments: The chorus is suggestive of the more conservative German style; the verse, given the modality and florid cantorial style, of Hungarian influence. Both are paternally derived.

b. German
Source: Kassel, Germany
Recording location: Stockholm, Sweden
Performer: Theodore Katz, Stockholm
Recorder: Same
Stanzas: 1, 2, 3, 4, 10
Comments: The text, Ein Lammchen (One Little Lamb)—a poetic paraphrase of the original—can be found in many German Haggadahs. The tune, less well-known, is undoubtedly folk-derived and attracts interest because of the sudden change to the minor third with each final "Lammbchen."

c. Yiddish
Source: Russia-Poland
Recording location: Los Angeles, California
Performer: Harry Abrams, Los Angeles
Recorder: Esther Abrams Landon, Los Angeles
Stanzas: 1, 2, 3, 10
Comments: The singer was born in Grayewo, Poland and sang an Aramaic version there as a boy. After age 16, he lived in New York where he was taught to this Yiddish version by a group of young immigrants who studied Yiddish culture. The text paraphrases the Aramaic and is closely related to the German folk song, Der Herr der schickt den Jochkel aus. (See H. Lefkowitz, ed. Yiddische und Hebräische Lieder, New York: H. Lefkowitz, 1917, p. 12.)

d. Yiddish
Source: Balkiersk, Russia
Recording location: Berkeley, California
Performer: Florence C. Lewis
Recorder: Dov Noy, Hebrew University, Jerusalem
Stanzas: 1, 2, 10
Comments: This was first learned as a lullaby (maternal Russian influence). The rubato style, contemplative interpretation and text particulars are different than item c, although both are rooted in the same German prototype.

e. Aramaic
Source: Kalamei, Poland
Recording location: Brooklyn, New York
Performer: Myer Fund, Rabbi to the Flatbush Minyan, Brooklyn
Recorder: Irving Schwadron, Brooklyn, New York
Stanzas: 1, 2, 3, 10
Comments: The uniqueness of this example lies in Rabbi Fund's declamatory style, suggestive of prayer modes rather than pure song. The musical intonation follows his father's Ashkenazi tradition.

f. Aramaic
Source: Leodina, Rumania

Band 3:

a. Greek and Aramaic
Source: Ioannina, Greece
Recording location: Same
Performer: Unknown female
Recorder: Leo Levi, Genoa, Italy
Stanzas: 1, 2, 10
Comments: Based on maqm Hijaz, this Chad Gadya also shows the "pure" Greek style in text, melodic ornamentation, free rhythm and passionate expressivity. Unlike other parts of Greece (viz. items b and c), Ioannina was not politically dominated by foreign powers. (This and the following two examples are used with permission of the National Sound Archives, Jewish National and University Library, Jerusalem, Israel.)

b. Ladino
Source: Salonika, Greece
Recording location: Same
Performer: Unknown male
Recorder: Leo Levi, Genoa, Italy
Stanzas: 1, 2, 3, 10
Comments: Ladino (a mixture of Castilian Spanish and Hebrew) follows in the Sephardic tradition. Underlying the music in this example are the maqm Saba and the nasal quality readily identified with the artistic style of Turkey. Conceivably these characteristics stem from former Turkish political (and cultural) influence in Greece. The closing phrases, "por dos az, por dos az hari," are corruptions of "por dos aspros, por dos levni." Both refer to the Aramaic, "azu, viz as coins. In some versions the term is aspros, pesitos, etc.
c. Aramaic
Source: Corfu, Greece
Recording location: Same
Performer: Unknown group
Recorder: Leo Levi
Stanzas: 1, 2, 3, 8, 9, 10
Comments: The brisk tempo, exuberant 6/8 duple rhythm and dance-like style (tartanella) might well be related to the fact that Corfu was at one time an Italian protectorate.

d. Ladino
Source: Rhodes Island, Greece
Recording location: Los Angeles, California
Performer: Maurice B. Hasson, Salisbury, Rhodesia, Africa
Recorder: Abraham A. Schwadron
Stanzas: 1, 2, 3, 4
Comments: The beauty of this version is in its simplicity of unornamented line, regularity of rhythm, tempo and dispassionate expression. As such, it stands in contrast to item e, although both are from the same locale. Note the closing phrases, "por dos levanim." The reference is to the white coins (Hebrew: lavan, white) of ancient Israel.

e. Ladino
Source: Rhodes Island, Greece
Recording location: Los Angeles, California
Performer: Morris Mizrahi, Basil Tekiah (Master of the Shofar), Sephardic Temple Tifereth Israel, Los Angeles
Recorder: Abraham A. Schwadron
Stanza: 10
Comments: The ornate, rubato style and emotively rendered interpretation of this tenth stanza is strikingly different in overall intensity from item d. Rather there seems to be a closer parallel with the example from Iscaria, even though this version from Rhodes is structured on the maqam, Oshok. The other nine stanzas maintain similar, albeit less intensive, levels of expressivity, so that the tenth functions as an effective climax.

Side Two

Band 4:
a. Russian
Source: Bialystok, Poland
Recording location: Los Angeles, California
Performer: Bluma Jarrick
Recorder: Abraham A. Schwadron
Stanzas: 1, 2, 3, 10
Comments: Most unusual is the vocal range (eleventh). Proximity of Bialystok to the Russian border would account for the Russian text and probably for the folk source of the song. In any case the learning source is paternal and the version is still maintained in the family tradition.

b. Judeo-Provençal
Source: Provence, S. France
Recording location: Same
Performer: Unknown
Recorder: Uri Epstein
Stanzas: 1, 2, 3, 8, 9, 10
Comments: The dialect, quickly disappearing, is otherwise known as shuadit. (See George Jochnowitz, "Some Jewish Languages," Moment, Vol. 4, No. 6, June, 1979, pp. 39-40.) The Provençal "chaz" (for chad) is evident; and the "un escu, deu escu" (for the Aramaic, Bitrey Zuzey) is curious.

Band 5:
a. Aramaic and Italian
Source: Firenze, Italy
Recording location: Same
Performer: Fernando Belgrado, Chief Rabbi and Cantor, Israelitica Communita, Firenze
Recorder: Abraham A. Schwadron
Stanzas: 1, 10 in Aramaic; 1, 2, 3, 10 in Italian
Comments: This example and the two that follow mark those cities in Italy where Jewish communities are well and long established. The particular song marks the location; ergo, this is the version as sung by all native Florentine Jews. The same melody holds for both Aramaic and Italian texts, but the rhythm deviates to accommodate the text, i.e. 6/8 pattern for the Italian. The minor mode used here is neither Italian or Jewish.

b. Italian
Source: Venice, Italy
Recording location: Same
Performer: Colombo Vitaliano, Cantor of the synagogue in the Venice ghetto
Recorder: Abraham A. Schwadron
Stanzas: 1, 2, 3, 10
Comments: Version is traditional to Venice. The introduction of key terms adapted from the Aramaic text (e.g. zuzetto) points up the Judeo-Italian mixture. The dialect is reported to be maintained principally in the Passover songs. Notable also are the occasional lapses from duple to triple time (capretto, zuzetto) and the major mode. The informant also sang his family version from Padua in Aramaic.

c. Aramaic
Source: Verona, Italy
Recording location: Same
Recorder: Abraham A. Schwadron
Stanzas: 1, 2, 10
Comments: This is the traditional version as sung in Verona. In major mode and also utilizes duple and triple rhythm to accommodate the text (gad-ya, di-zu-bin a-bba). Cantor Weiss-Levi's family version, from Turin, involves a Piedmontese dialect.

Band 6:
a. Ladino
Source: Istanbul, Turkey
Recording location: Los Angeles, California
Performer: Isaac Behar, Cantor, Sephardic Temple (Tiphereth Israel), Los Angeles
Recorder: Abraham A. Schwadron
Stanzas: 1, 2, 3, 4, 5
Comments: The performer was born in Shumen, Bulgaria but learned this version from his father and grandfather who were from Istanbul. Of note are the typical nasal timbre, the interpolated "muy hermoso" (second verse), the repetition of the chorus in Aramaic and the maqam, Bayat.
b. Ladino
Source: Turkey
Recording location: Los Angeles, California
Performer: Edwin Beroussi, Jerusalem
Recorder: Abraham A. Schwadron
Stanzas: 1, 2, 3, 10
Comments: The performer learned this Sephardic-Turkish version in
Montevideo where he was born. (His family migrated to Uruguay from
Alexandria, Egypt.) He is now an Israeli resident. The rapid,
pattern-like exposition of the text on the one pitch with only
punctuated aid from a
Source:
Stanzas: 1, 2, 3, 10
Comments: The performer learned this Sephardic version in
Montevideo where he was born. (His family migrated to Uruguay from
Alexandria, Egypt.) He is now an Israeli resident. The rapid,
pattern-like exposition of the text on the one pitch with only
punctuated aid from a

b. Aramaic
Source: Persia
Recording location: Jerusalem
Performer: Bracha Zion (Kiali)
Recorder: Irving Schwadron
Stanzas: 2, 3, 4, 5
Comments: The narrow range (four tones) is indicative of older strata;
the general melodic style, of Oriental-Sephardic practice. Another
version (three tones) by the paternal head of the family is also sung
in Aramaic and Persian.

Abraham A. Schwadron

Abraham A. Schwadron was born in Brooklyn, New York, in 1925.
After graduating from Boys High School he served in the U.S. Marines
during World War II. He holds degrees from Rhode Island College,
University of Connecticut, and Boston University. He has taught music
in the public schools of New London and Waterford, Connecticut, and in
the music departments of the University of Connecticut, Rhode Island
College, and the University of Hawaii. His publications—articles,
monographs, music compositions and transcriptions, reviews, book essays,
and a book—number over 100. Schwadron is also an instrumental performer
(clarinet, saxophone) with roots in chamber music and jazz. His academic
interests have been in aesthetics of music, music education, and, more
recently, in ethnomusicology, where the focus is on Jewish music.
Currently, he is Professor of Music and Chairman of the Music Department,
University of California at Los Angeles.