

From Albert to Arik: There Has Been None Like Einstein

by Norman Berdichevsky (December 2013)

Jewish sages honored the memory of the august philosopher “Maimonides,” also known as Moshe ben Maimon, 1134-1205, proclaiming that from the time of “Moshe” (the first Moses, flourished ca. 1450 B.C) there had been no other like him, thereby expressing their admiration in the highest form of an accolade extending across 2,500 years. The same, to a somewhat lesser degree, might well be said of the late Israeli singer Arik Einstein. “That from the time of the first Einstein (Albert), there had been no other figure so revered as the current Einstein (Arik)” – at least by the Israeli public.



Arik Einstein

While no educated person, let alone a Jew, is ignorant of Albert Einstein (he remains the Jewish figure most celebrated by the world, as determined by the number of postage stamps representing dozens of countries which have so honored him for his achievements in physics), the same cannot be said of Arik Einstein, who, until his death a few days ago, (Nov. 26, 2013) was certainly regarded by the Israeli public as its most beloved singer in the modern era of popular Hebrew song. Yet, he was largely unknown among Jews abroad who are unfamiliar with modern Hebrew language and culture.

His popularity, appeal and charm have been compared to that of Frank Sinatra, Elvis Presley and Bruce Springsteen combined. He certainly remained in the public limelight for as long as any of these three American superstars and what is more impressive, he was equally successful in all of the genres of modern popular song including traditional love ballads, patriotic expressions of love of country, its landscape and people, soulful laments, protest songs and even childrens’ songs and rock.

Why is such a personality so prominent in Israel’s cultural life such an unknown quantity in the Diaspora. I asked the same question about [his essay The Left is Seldom Right](#).

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