

Yiddish Songs

Noted in “Everyday Life of Jews in Mariampole”

Bulbes [Potatoes]ⁱ

1.
Zuntik bulbes, montik bulbes,
Dinstik un mitvokh bulbes,
Donershtik un fraytik bulbes.
Shabes in a novine a bulbe-kigele!
Zuntik vayter bulbes!
2.
Broyt mit bulbes, fleysh mit bulbes,
Varimes un vechere bulbes,
Ober un vider bulbes,
Eynmol in a novine a bulbe-kigele!
Zuntik vayter bulbes!
3.
Ober bulbes, vider bulbes,
Nokh amol un oder amol bulbes!
Haynt un morgn bulbes!
Ober Shabes nokhn cholnt a bulbe-kigele!
Zuntik vayter bulbes!

Oyfn Pripetshik [At the Fireplace]

Oyfn pripetshik brent a fayerl,
Un in shtub iz heys.
Un der rebe lernt kleyne kinderlekh
Dem alef-beyz.

Refrain:

Zet zhe, kinderlekh, gedenkt zhe, tayere,
Vos ir lernt do,

Potatoes

On Sunday - potatoes, on Monday - potatoes,
on Tuesday and Wednesday - potatoes, on
Friday - potatoes, on Sabbath - a novelty, the
potato kugel. On Sunday - potatoes again.
Bread with potatoes, meat with potatoes, lunch
and dinner. Potatoes, potatoes over and over
again.
One meal is a novelty - the potato pie.
On Sunday -- potatoes again!

At the Fireplace

A flame burns in the fireplace, the room warms
up, as the teacher drills the children in the
alef-beyz: “Remember dear children, what you
are learning here. Repeat it again and again:
komets-alef is pronounced o. When you grow
older you will understand that this alphabet
contains the tears and the weeping of our
people. When you grow weary and burdened
with exile, you will find comfort and strength
within this Jewish alphabet.

Oh, the fire burns in the fire place, and the
room has heat. And the rabbi teaches all the
little ones all their ABCs; And the rabbi
teaches all the little ones, all their ABCs.
See now, little ones, listen children, don't
forget it, please. Say it once for me and say it
once again, All your ABCs.

Zogt zhe nokh a mol un take nokh a mol:

Komets-alef: o!

Lernt, kinder, mit groys kheyshek,
Azoy zog ikh aykh on,
Ver s'vet gikher fun aykh kenen ivre,
Der bakumt a fon.

Az ir vet, kinder, elter vern,
Vet ir aleyn farshteyn,
Vifl in di oysyes lign trenn,
Un vi fil geveyn.

Az ir vet, kinder, dem goles shlep,
Oysgemutshet zayn,
Zolt ir fun di oysyes koyekh shepn,
Kukt in zey arayn!

Most frequently called *Oyfn Pripetshik*, from its opening words, this song originally titled “Dar Alef-Beyz”, had gained such wide popularity that many did not realize its authorship. It was written by Mark M. Warshawsky (1840-1907), a discovery of Sholom Aleichem, who assisted in the publication of two collections of Warshawsky's songs, in 1901 and 1914. The music was later used as a theme in the film based on the life of George Gershwin. During the Nazi holocaust it was used as a ghetto song: “At the ghetto wall a fire burns, the surveillance is keen.” And in the Soviet Union, in the early '60's, a song that made the rounds clandestinely had the following words: “Even should they beat you or throw you on the pyre, repeat *komets-alef-o*.”

Yome, Yome (diminutive of the name Benyomen)

Folk song (textual variant published in 1901 by S. Ginzburg and P. Marek; text and music published in 1912 by Y.L. Cahan). This dialog or miniature folk play has many international parallels:

Yome, Yome, shpil Mir a lidele,
Vos meydele vil;
Dos meydele vil a por shikhelekh hobn,
Muz men geyn dem shuster zogn!

Neyn, mameshi, neyn!

Du kenst mikh nisht farshteyn,
Du veys nisht, vos ikh meyn!

Yome, Yome, shpil mir a lidele,
Vos dos meydele vil;
Dos meydele vil a hitele hobn,
Muz men geyn dem putserke zogn!

Neyn, mameshi, neyn! .

“**Yome Yome**,” sing to me of what my little girl wants.

Your little girl wants a pair of shoes. So we'll order them from the shoemaker.” .

“No, no, mother dear, no. You don't understand. You don't know what I want.”

“Your little girl wants a hat. So we'll order one from the milliner.” “

No, mother dear, no.” “A husband? So we'll speak to the matchmaker.”

“Yes, mother dear, yes.

Now you understand me.

Now you know what I want.”

Yome, Yome, shpil mir a lidele,
Vos dos meydele vil;
Dos meydele vil a khosndl hobn,
Muz men geyn dem shadkhn zogn!

Yo, mameshi, yo!
Du kenst mikh shoyn farshteyn,
Du veyst shoyn vos ikh meyn!

A Brivele Der Mamen: [A Letter from Mother]

This song, text and music by S. Shmulewitz
(1868-1943) immigration era on both sides of the
Atlantic.

Mayn kind, mayn treyst, du forst avek,
Ze zay a zun a guter,
Dikh bet mit trenn un mit shrek
Dayn traye libe muter.
Du forst, mayn kind, mayn eyntsik kind,
Ariber vayte yamen;
Akh kum ahin nor frish gezunt
Un nit farges dayn mamen.
Yo! for gezunt un kum mit glik.
Ze yede vokh a brivl shik,
Dayn mames harts, mayn kind, derkvik.

A brivele der mamen
Zolstu nit farzamen,
Shrayb geshvind, libes kind,
Shenk it di nekhome.
Di mame vet dayn brivele lezn
Un zi vet genezn,
Heylst it shmarts, it biter harts,
Derkvikst it di neshome.

A Letter from Mother

My child, my comfort, you are going
across the seas. Arrive in good health and
write each week to ease your mother's
worries. Write a letter soon, my child. Your
mother will read your letter and be
comforted. Ease her pain, her bitter heart,
refresh her spirit.

Refrain:

A letter to your mother don't delay
Write soon, my beloved child, and give
her solace. Your mother will read your
letter and she will be comforted.
You'll heal her pain and her aching heart
And revive her spirits.

Eight years now, I've been alone
My child has wandered far away
His childish heart is hard as stone
I've not received a single letter
How can he still have courage?
How has life treated him?
He must be well off and doesn't want me
to know I've sent a hundred letters
And he hasn't the slightest notion how
deep my grief is
How deep my grief is.

ⁱ Source: Zemerl <www.zemerl.com>