

At the Fireplace

Most frequently called *Oyfn Pripetshik*, from its opening words, this song originally titled "Der 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*."

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

אויפן פריפעטשיק ברענט א פֿייערל,
און אין שטוב איז הייס.
און דער רבי לערנט קליינע קינדערלעך
דעם אלף-בית.

Refrain:

Zet zhe, kinderlekh, gedenkt zhe, tayere,
Vos ir lernt do,
Zogt zhe nokh a mol un take nokh a mol:
Komets-alef: o!

רעפֿריין:
זעט זשע, קינדערלעך, געדענקט זשע, טייערע,
וואס איר לערנט דא,
זאגט זשע נאך א מאל און טאקע נאך א מאל:
קמץ-אלף: א !

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

לערנט, קינדער, מיט גרויס חשק,
אזוי זאג איך אייך און,
ווער ס'וועט גיכער פֿון אייך קענען עברי,
דער באקומט א פֿון.

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

אז איר וועט, קינדער, עלטער ווערן,
וועט איר אליין פֿארשטיין,
וויפל אין די אותיות ליגן טרעין,
און ווי פֿיל געוויין.

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

אז איר וועט, קינדער, דעם גלות שלעפֿן,
אויסגעמוטשעט זיין,
זאלט איר פֿון די אותיות כוח שעפֿן,
קוקט אין זיי אריין !

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."

Moderate tempo

System 1:
 Chords: Dm, A, Dm
 Lyrics: Oy - fn pri - pe - tshik brent a fay - e - rl,
 Chords: Bb, A, D, Gm
 Lyrics: Un in shtub iz heys. Un der re - be le - rnt
 Chords: [Gm], Dm, 1. Bb, C7, F
 Lyrics: kley - ne kin - der - lekh Dem a - lef - beyz;
 Chords: 2. A7, Dm, Dm, A
 Lyrics: Dem a - lef - beyz. Zet zhe, kin - der - lekh, ge -
 Chords: [A], Dm, Bb, C7, F
 Lyrics: denkt zhe, tay - e - re, Vos ir le - rnt do,
 Chords: D7, Gm, [Gm], Dm
 Lyrics: Zogt zhe nokh a mol un ta - ke nokh a mol:
 Chords: 1. Bb, C7, F, 2. Gm, A7, Dm
 Lyrics: Ko - mets - a - lef: ol Ko - mets - a - lef: ol