

Zero Mostel

"If I Were A Rich Man"

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SPOKEN:) Dear God, you made many, many poor people. I realize, of course, that it's no great shame to be poor... but it's no great honor, either. So what would have been the difference if I had... a small fortune?

If I were a rich man,
Daidle deedle daidle
Daidle daidle deedle daidle dum
All day long I'd biddy-biddy-bum
If I were a wealthy man.
I wouldn't have to work hard,
Daidle deedle daidle
Daidle daidle deedle daidle dum
If I were a biddy-biddy rich,
Daidle deedle daidle daidle man.

I'd build a big tall house with rooms by the dozen
Right in the middle of the town,
A fine tin roof with real wooden floors below.
There would be one long staircase just going up
And one even longer coming down,
And one more leading nowhere, just for show.

I'd fill my yard with chicks and turkeys and geese
And ducks for the town to see and hear,
Squawking just as noisily as they can,
And each loud "pa-pa-geeee! pa-pa-gaack! pa-pa-geeee! pa-pa-gaack!"
Would land like a trumpet on the ear,
As if to say, "Here lives a wealthy man."
Oy!

If I were a rich man,
Daidle deedle daidle
Daidle daidle deedle daidle dum
All day long I'd biddy-biddy-bum
If I were a wealthy man.
I wouldn't have to work hard,
Daidle deedle daidle
Daidle daidle deedle daidle dum

If I were a biddy-biddy rich,
Daidle deedle daidle daidle man.

I see my wife, my Golde, looking like a rich man's wife,
With a proper double chin,
Supervising meals to her heart's delight.
I see her putting on airs and strutting like a peacock,
Oy! What a happy mood she's in,
Screaming at the servants day and night.

The most important men in town will come to fawn on
me--
They will ask me to advise them,
Like a Solomon the Wise--
"If you please, Reb Tevye?"--
"Pardon me, Reb Tevye?"--
Posing problems that would cross a rabbi's eyes--
(chanting) Ya va voy, ya va voy voy vum...
And it won't make one bit of difference
If I answer right or wrong--
When you're rich, they think you really know.

If I were rich, I'd have the time that I lack
To sit in the synagogue and pray,
And maybe have a seat by the Eastern wall,
And I'd discuss the learned books with the holy men
Seven hours every day--
That would be the sweetest thing of all...
Oy!

If I were a rich man,
Daidle deedle daidle
Daidle daidle deedle daidle dum
All day long I'd biddy-biddy-bum
If I were a wealthy man.
I wouldn't have to work hard,
Daidle deedle daidle
Daidle daidle deedle daidle dum
Lord who made the lion and the lamb,
You decreed I should be what I am--
Would it spoil some vast, eternal plan,
If I were a wealthy man

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