

If I Were a Rich Man

"Oh, Lord, you made many, many poor people
I realize, of course, it's no shame to be poor
But it's no great honor either!
So, what would have been so terrible if I had a small fortune?"

If I were a rich man
Ya ba dibba dibba dibba dibba dibba dum
All day long, I'd biddy biddy bum
If I were a wealthy man
I wouldn't have to work hard
Ya ba dibba dibba dibba dibba dibba dum
If I were a biddy biddy rich yidle-diddle-didle 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 of the "gee", be it "gow", be it "geh", be it "guh"
Would land like a trumpet on the ear
As if to say, "Here lives a wealthy man"

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I see my wife, my Goldie, 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 would come to fawn on me!
They would 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!
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 holy books with the learned men, several hours every day
And that would be the sweetest thing of all

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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?