

This poem has been circulating widely on the Internet with no attribution of authorship.  
Somebody is not getting the credit s/he deserves.

## YIDDISH - THE SECRET CODE

*See the Glossary provided at the bottom*

Yiddish was the secret code, therefore I don't *farshtaist*,  
A *bisseleh* maybe here and there, the rest has gone to waste.  
Sadly when I hear it now, I only get the gist,  
My Bubbeh spoke it beautifully; but me, I am *tsemisht*.

So *och un vai* as I should say, or even *oy vey iz mir*,  
Though my *pisk* is lacking Yiddish, it's familiar to my ear.  
And I'm no *Chaim Yonkel*, in fact I was *shtick naches*,  
but, when it comes to Yiddish though, I'm talking out my *tuchas*.

*Es iz a shandeh far di kinder* that I don't know it better  
(Though it's really *nishtkefelecht* when one needs to write a letter)  
But, when it comes to characters, there's really no contention,  
No other linguist can compete with honorable *mentshen*.

They have *nebbishes* and *nebechels* and others without *mazel*,  
Then, too, *schmendriks* and *schlemiels*, and let's not forget *schlemazel*.  
These words are so precise and descriptive to the listener,  
So much better than "a pill" is to call someone '*farbissener*.'

Or - that a brazen woman would be better called *chaleria*,  
And you'll agree *farklempt* says more than does hysteria.  
I'm not *haken dir a tsheinik* and I hope I'm not a *kvetch*,  
But isn't *mieskeit* kinder, than to call someone a wretch?

*Mitten derinnen*, I hear Bubbeh say, "It's *nechtiker tog*, don't fear,  
To me you're still a *maven*, *zol zein shah*, don't fill my ear.  
A *leben ahf dein keppele*, I don't mean to interrupt,  
But you are speaking *narishkeit*... And a *gezunt auf dein kup!*"

## GLOSSARY

A gezunt auf dein kup = Health on your head  
Bisseleh = A little  
Chaim Yonkel = country bumpkin  
Chalera = Evil woman. Probably derived from cholera.  
Es iz a shandeh far di kinder = A pity/shame for the children  
Farklemp = Too emotional to talk. Ready to cry.  
Farbissener = Embittered; bitter person  
Farshtaist = Understand (Lit. Do you understand?)  
Haken dir a tsheinik = Don't get on your nerves (Lit., Don't bang your teapot!)  
Kvetch = Whine, complain; whiner, a complainer  
Leben ahf dein keppele = Words of praise like: Well said! Well done! (Lit., A long life upon your head.)  
Maven = Expert, often used sarcastically  
Mazel = Luck  
Mentshen = Decent human beings  
Mieskeit = Ugly  
Mitten derinnen = All of a sudden, suddenly  
Naches = Joy, Gratification  
Narishkeit = Foolishness  
Nebbishes = A nobody or simpleton  
Nebechels = A pitiful person or playing the role of being one  
Nechtiker tog! = He's (it's) gone! Forget it! Nonsense! (Lit., a night's day)  
Nishtkefelecht = Not so terrible  
Och un vai = Alas and alack  
Oy vey iz mir = Woe is me  
Pisk = Mouth  
Schlemazel = Luckless person. Unlucky person; one with perpetual bad luck (it is said that the shlemiel spills the soup on the shlimazel!)  
Schlemiel = Clumsy bungler, an inept person, butter-fingered  
Schmendrik = Nincompoop; an inept or indifferent person  
Shtick = A bit, a part  
Tsemisht = Confused or mixed  
Tuchas = Rear end, behind  
Zol zein shah! = Be quiet. Shut up!!