

Book title: The Magic of Uroe Jas

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Page 1-2

In the heart of Bukhara, where winter wrapped everything in a sparkling blanket of snow, lived Oghul. She was a spirited girl who loved playing in the snow and enjoying the warmth of her family.

(Oghul waking up in her colorful room, adorned with traditional Bukharian patterns, with a view of the snow-covered town outside)

Pages 3-4

One morning, Oghul woke up feeling off. She was sniffing and sneezing, and her head throbbed with discomfort.

(Oghul in bed surrounded by tissues, red nose)

Pages 5-6

“Anneh!” Oghul called to her mom.

Her parents rushed into the room.

“What’s wrong Oghul-*jon*?” asked her father.

“I think I’m sick, Dadeh” replied Oghul.

(Oghul in bed, Anneh and Dadeh are sitting at the foot of her bed)

Page 7-8

They spoke Bukharian, a language rich with history and tradition spoken by Jewish people from Bukhara, in Central Asia.

Her mom and dad were not just any parents – they were skilled doctors, so they must know what to do.

(Her parents dressed as doctors, taking Oghul’s temperature with a thermometer)

To Oghul's surprise, no doctor was necessary for their solution – the remedy for Oghul's ailment was a magical soup called *uroe jas*.

(A bowl of soup with sparkles around it to make it seem magical)

Page 8-9

Together, they embarked on the whimsical journey of making this soup.

First, Oghul added basil to the pot and its fresh aroma filled the room. She and her parents made the noodles and added broth, and the soup looked scrumptious!

(the pot – a light yellow soup inside with noodles and green basil, bright warm colors filling the room, streaks for the aroma)

Pages 9-10

Then, Oghul’s parents added garlic into the soup – a *lot* of garlic. The sharp smell was so strong that Oghul could even smell it through her stuffy nose!

This made Oghul hesitate.

(Oghul with a disgusted look on her face as she smells the soup – green or yellow fumes)

Pages 11-12

“What if I just ate green rice instead?” asked Oghul.

“You mean *basch*? We eat *basch* on Shabbat,” replied Anneh.

“What about *dushpera*?” asked Oghul.

“We don’t have dough for the dumplings. Why not try the *uroe jas*?” suggested Dadeh.

Oghul was used to the familiar taste of Bukharian foods like, *shola*, *osh palov*, and *dushpera*. The idea of trying something new made her hesitate. (The different Bukharian dishes fill the pages)

Pages 13-14

Determined to feel better, Oghul explored other methods to cure her sickness – from herbal teas to cozy blankets – but nothing seemed to work.

(Oghul drinking warm tea from a mug, another image of her and her parents snuggled under a warm blanket)

“You can try to get better all sorts of ways, but you’ll find them to be a *chaise bach* – waste of time,” said Dadeh. “Try the soup!”

(Oghul and her parents looking at a clock)

Pages 15-16

“Oghul, my *dochdar*, there’s an old saying in our family,” Anneh said.

Together, Anneh and Dadeh recited, “*padar rizo, modar rizo, xudo rizo,*” in Bukharian, which means, “When your father is happy and your mother is happy, G-d is happy.”

(Oghul standing in between her parents as they rest their hands on her shoulders – the proverb written in Hebrew script above them)

Pages 17-18

Encouraged by her parents' words, Oghul decided to give the magical soup a try.

As they stirred the pot, the proverb echoed in the air, reinforcing the idea that happiness within the family is a magical remedy in itself.

(The family stirring the pot together, colorful, warm fumes circulating in the room around them along with the words of the proverb in the same script)

Pages 19-20

With the soup finally ready, Oghul took a brave sip. The vibrant flavors danced on her tongue, and she felt a warm, comforting sensation.

“Mmm!” she exclaimed.

(Oghul tasting the *uroe jas*, a swirl of magical colors surrounding her as she smiles)

Pages 21-22

The next morning, Oghul woke up feeling much better. The magic of *uroe jas* had worked, and the winter wonderland outside her window seemed even more enchanting.

(Oghul wakes up with a smile on her face, the world outside of her window is even brighter)

“Oghul-*jon*, are you feeling better?” asked Anneh.

Oghul nodded as she embraced her parents, she realized that the magic wasn't just in the soup – it was in the love and unity of her family.

(Oghul and her parents embracing)

Pages 23-24

And so, the story of Oghul and the magic of *uroe jas* became a cherished tale in Bukhara, passed down from one family to another. Oghul would often share the story with friends and neighbors to create a sense of community. The enchanting blend of Bukharian language and tradition had not only healed Oghul but had also woven a magical tapestry of love in her family and community.

(Circle of people holding hands around a big bowl of the soup)

Glossary (with pronunciations)

Bukhara – located in modern day Uzbekistan.

Anneh (an-neh) – Mom

Dadeh (da-deh) – Dad

-jon – term of endearment for children

Uroe Jas (oo-roh-ee jahz) – traditional Bukharian soup traditionally known to heal the sick

Basch – rice dish made with herbs that turn it green; often served on Shabbat

Shola – a stew made with rice, tomato paste, carrots, meat, and more.

Dushpera – traditional Bukharian meat-filled dumplings

Osh Palov – national dish of Uzbekistan also known as “plov,” made with rice, lamb, carrots, onions, and more.

Chaife bach (khayfee bakh) – waste of time

Dochdar (doh-kh-dahr) – daughter

Padar rizo, modar rizo, xudo rizo – “When your father is happy and your mother happy, G-d is happy.” A Bukharian proverb that emphasizes respect for elders and the importance of unity in the family, values very important to the Bukharian community.

Recipe for Uroe Jas

by The Escaped Flavors of Natella’s Kitchen on YouTube

Ingredients:

4 cloves of garlic

2 tsp of dry or fresh basil 1 tsp of mint (optional)

3.5 oz of thin noodles

1000 quart of chicken broth or water

2 tbsp of wine vinegar or apple cider vinegar

1. Bring a pot of water to a boil. Cook soup noodles and drain when ready.
2. Heat up oil in a separate pan and begin to fry garlic and fresh basil. Make sure the garlic doesn’t burn!
3. Add chicken broth to the same pan and bring it to a boil.
4. Pour the chicken broth mixture over the cooked noodles.
5. Add hot water and bring the soup to a boil.
6. Serve the soup.
7. Add two tablespoons of wine vinegar or apple cider vinegar, according to your taste.

Note to Parents

Dear Parents,

Welcome to "The Magic of Uroe Jas," a heartwarming journey into the enchanting world of Bukhara. This tale not only invites your child into a delightful story but also provides a glimpse into the rich cultural and linguistic heritage of the Bukharian people. As your child explores the magic of Uroe Jas, they'll discover the warmth of family, the beauty of traditions, and the healing power of love.

In the pages of this book, your child will witness Oghul's courageous adventure to overcome sickness, guided by the wisdom of her Bukharian-speaking parents. The vibrant illustrations capture the essence of Bukharian culture, from Oghul's colorful room adorned with traditional patterns to the aromatic pot of Uroe Jas filling the air with warmth.

Through the story, your child will learn about the significance of family unity, the value of trying new things, and the magic embedded in the Bukharian language. The inclusion of Bukharian words, the recitation of a meaningful proverb, and the delightful journey of making Uroe Jas all contribute to a unique and enriching experience.

We hope "The Magic of Uroe Jas" sparks curiosity in your child about different languages and traditions, fostering an appreciation for diversity. As you read this story together, may it inspire conversations about your own family traditions and create cherished moments of togetherness.

Warm regards,

Joyce Zhou, Liv Wiener, Keira Beller

Author's Statement

The Bukharian language, a variant of Judeo-Persian in Eastern/Central Asia, has endured numerous periods of conquest and the rise and fall of multiple empires (Shimonov). Bukharian Jews were unable to return to Jerusalem after the Babylonian conquest of the land, leading them to settle eastward. Their journey took them through Iraq, Iran, Afghanistan, and Turkmenistan, eventually culminating in Bukhara, which is where our story is set and where the name “Bukharian” is derived. As of 2018, the global Bukharian Jewish population is around 220,000, with the majority residing in Israel and the U.S. Among them, approximately 70% understand the language, while only 40% can speak it (Tolmas).

Bukharian, also known as Judeo-Tajik due to its close relation to the language Tajik spoken by non-Jews in the region, was initially solely used by Bukharian Jews for communication but eventually became a literary language as it was used to translate religious and secular texts. The language is part of the Persian language family, developing from Judeo-Persian and gradually transforming over time (Rubin and Kahn). The two languages share certain features such as their identical counting systems.

We wanted to be extremely careful in our portrayal of Bukharian Jews, with the understanding that children's books often provide kids with fundamental knowledge that they carry with them throughout their lives (Hintz and Tribunella). In order to effectively write about the Bukharian Jewish community, we interviewed two Bukharian Jews – one speaker and one descendant of speakers. Robert Nudel, more commonly known as Bobby, learned Bukharian over the last decade, inspired by his Bukharian heritage. Our second interviewee, Edan Menachemov, does not speak the language but knows certain words from older family members who communicated in the language. Their interviews emphasized Bukharian cultural values such

as tradition, family unity, respect for elders, religion, and cuisine. Through the lens of narrative, we dissect the intricate interplay of these Bukharian values, illuminating their role in fortifying familial structure and their broader implications for the preservation of cultural heritage.

Religion, while not a central theme, weaves seamlessly through the cultural fabric depicted. Although both Bukharian Jews, Edan grew up in a religious household while Bobby did not. Our intention is to acknowledge this diversity of practice and present a nuanced understanding of how religious elements are interwoven into cultural practices, contributing to the holistic identity without overshadowing other facets of daily life.

An exploration of Bukharian culture would be incomplete without delving into its linguistic idiosyncrasies. We strategically incorporate Bukharian loanwords, not as mere lexical rarities, but as integral components to shape the narrative and enrich the characters' vernacular.

The narrative extends beyond linguistic exploration and uncovers the need for efforts aimed at language revitalization. We illuminate the importance of sustaining the Bukharian language, acknowledging its pivotal role in cultural preservation. Given that Bukharian is an endangered language, our story is an effort to contribute to ethnolinguistic infusion, in which we attempt to foster a greater ideological and cultural connection to the Bukharian language rather than teach how to speak it (Benor). Furthermore, we hope that this book will elevate the ideological status of Judeo-Tajik in an effort to revitalize the language through status planning. This method is inspired by Edan's story, in which the understanding of Judeo-Tajik has not been passed down within his family due to their migration away from Bukhara, a common cause of language endangerment (Woodbury). He expects that his children will only know a few words, but plans on using cuisine and other cultural practices to secure their connection to their ancestry. With our book, we hope to instill an understanding of the cultural significance of the Bukharian language to future generations of Bukharian Jews and others.

In summary, our exploration of the Bukharian language and culture, depicted in our children's book, delves into the historical resilience and linguistic evolution of the community. Through careful portrayal and interviews with both a speaker and a descendant, we highlight cultural values, the nuanced role of religion, and the strategic incorporation of Bukharian loanwords in our narrative. Advocating for language revitalization, our story aims to foster a deep cultural connection and contribute to the preservation of Bukharian, transcending the superficial to capture the essence of a family balancing tradition and modernity.

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