

# **The Schmooze** **Stories with a Yiddish Twist**

## **HEAVEN OR HELL?**

Note: The Yiddish word “shtarbn” means “to die.”

A deceased person is also referred to in the Hebraic locution “shoykhn-ofar,” - sleeper in the dust.

When one mentions in conversation those who have died recently it is good manners to add “aykh tsu lengere yor”--many years to you.

Source: “In praise of Yiddish” by Maurice Samuel

*by*  
**Marjorie Gottlieb Wolfe**



**Syosset, New York**

Rabbi Bentzion Kravit (“Belief in Heaven is Fundamental to Judaism”), wrote, “Although Judaism believes in Heaven, the Torah speaks very little about it. The Torah focuses less on how we get to heaven and considerably more on how to live our lives. Judaism’s view of hell more closely resembles purgatory.”

Rabbi Baruch HaLevi (“Ask A Rabbi”) writes, “Yes, Judaism believes in Heaven, and Yes, Judaism also believes in “Hell....As the saying goes, ‘Two Jews, three opinions.’ So, believe what you want, because ultimately Judaism doesn’t care what you believe, but rather what you do.”

My friend, Bill Wunder, from West Palm Beach, shared the following tale with me. This is the Yiddish version. The source is unknown.

**HEAVEN OR HELL**

A man and his “hunt” (dog) were walking along a “veg” (road). The man was enjoying the scenery, when it “plutsling” (suddenly) occurred to him that he was “toit” (dead).

He remembered dying and that the “hunt” walking beside him had been dead for “yorn” (years). He wondered where the road was leading them.

After a while, they came to a “hoykh” (high) “vays” (white) stone wall along one side of the road.

It looked like fine marble.

At the top of a “lang” (long) hill, it was broken by a “hoykh” (tall) arch that glowed in “di zunlikht” (the sunlight).

When he was standing before it, he saw a “glentsndik” (magnificent) gate in the arch that looked like mother-of-pearl, and the street that led to the gate looked like “reyn” (pure) gold.

He and “der hunt” walked toward the gate, and as he got closer, he saw a man at a “shraybtish” (desk) to one side.

When he was close enough, he called out, “Antshuldik mir” (Excuse me), where are we?”

“This is ‘himl’ (Heaven), sir,” the man answered.

“Wow! Would you happen to have some “vaser” (water)?”

“Of course, sir. ‘Kumt arein!’ (Come in.)

“I’ll have some ‘ayz vaser’ (ice water) brought right up.”

The man gestured and “der toyer” (the gate) began to open. ‘Can my ‘fraynd’ (friend), pointing toward ‘der hunt,’ come in, too?’”

“I’m sorry, sir, but we don’t accept pets.”

The man thought and then turned back toward the road and continued the way he had been going.

After another “lang” (long) walk, and at the top of another “lang” hill, he came to a “erd” (dirt) road leading through a farm gate that looked as if it had never been closed. There was no fence.

As he approached “der toyer” (the gate), he saw a man “ineveynik” (inside), leaning against a “boym” (tree) and reading a “bukh” (book).

“Antshudik mir” (Excuse me!)” he called to the man. “Do you have any ‘vaser’?”

“Yeah, sure, there’s a pump over there, come on in.”

“How about my ‘fraynd’?” the traveler gestured to ‘der hunt.’”

“There should be a ‘shisl’ (bowl) by the pump,” said the man.

They went through the gate, and sure enough, there was an old-fashioned ‘hant” (hand) pump with a ‘shisl’ beside it. The traveler filled the ‘shisl’ with ‘vaser’ and took a long drink ‘zikh’ (himself), then he gave some to ‘der hunt.’

When they were “ful” (full),he and “der hunt” walked back toward the man who was standing by the tree.

“What do you call this place?” the traveler asked.

“This is “himl” (Heaven) he answered.

“The man down the road said THAT WAS HEAVEN, TOO.”

“Oh, you mean the place with the gold streets and pearly gates? Nope. That’s Hell.”

“Doesn’t that make you ‘broygez’ (angry) for them to use your “nomen” (name) like that?”

“Nay. (No.) We’re just ‘gliklekh’ (happy) that they SCREEN OUT THE FOLKS WHO LEAVE THEIR BEST FRIENDS BEHIND.”

---

MARJORIE GOTTLIEB WOLFE will be speaking at the following locations:

July 29, 2015  
August 7

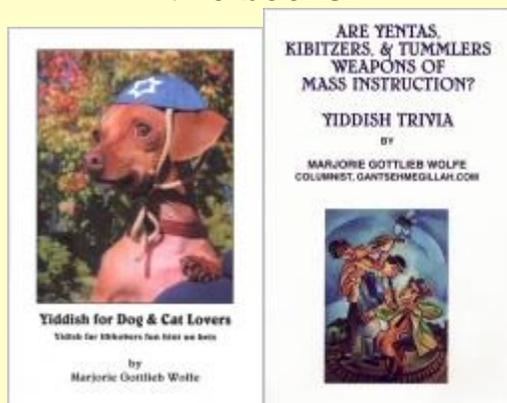
August 18  
Sept. 17  
Sept. 21  
Oct. 19

Gurwin, Commack "The Humor of Joan Rivers"  
Atria, Roslyn Harbor, "The 3 B's: Brooklyn, the  
Bronx, and the Bungalows of Rockaway Beach"  
Bethpage Public Library, "Humor of Billy Crystal"  
Plainview-Old Bethpage Union Meeting, "Bintel Brief"  
B'nai Torah, Wantagh, "Humor of Judge Judy"  
Jericho Public Library, "Humor of Judge Judy"

### Search for Stories Beginning with the Letter

<u><a href="#">A</a></u>	<u><a href="#">B</a></u>	<u><a href="#">C</a></u>	<u><a href="#">D</a></u>	<u><a href="#">E</a></u>	<u><a href="#">F</a></u>	<u><a href="#">G</a></u>	<u><a href="#">H</a></u>	<u><a href="#">I</a></u>	<u><a href="#">J</a></u>	<u><a href="#">K</a></u>	<u><a href="#">L</a></u>	<u><a href="#">M</a></u>
<u><a href="#">N</a></u>	<u><a href="#">O</a></u>	<u><a href="#">P</a></u>	<u><a href="#">Q</a></u>	<u><a href="#">R</a></u>	<u><a href="#">S</a></u>	<u><a href="#">T</a></u>	<u><a href="#">U</a></u>	<u><a href="#">V</a></u>	<u><a href="#">W</a></u>		<u><a href="#">Y</a></u>	<u><a href="#">Z</a></u>

**Marjorie Gottlieb Wolfe is the author of  
two books:**



**"Yiddish for Dog & Cat Lovers" and  
"Are Yentas, Kibitzers, & Tumblers Weapons of Mass Instruction?  
Yiddish  
Trivia." To order a copy, go to her  
website: [MarjorieGottliebWolfe.com](http://MarjorieGottliebWolfe.com)**

**NU, what are you waiting for? Order the book!**



[Yiddish Stuff](#)  
[Jewish Humor](#)  
[Schmooze News](#)  
[More Majorie Wolfe](#)

[Principle](#)  
[Jewish Stories](#)  
[All Things Jewish](#)  
[Jewish Communities of the World](#)

Site Designed and Maintained by  
Haruth Communications