

The Schmooze Stories with a Yiddish Twist

**YOU WANT TO LEARN YIDDISH?
READ JOSEPH DORINSON'S BOOK, "KVETCHING AND SHPRITZING"**

*by
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Syosset, New York

Yiddish was never used for secret communication in my childhood home in Rockaway Beach, New York. My mother even used "f" words: "farbisener," "farblonjet," "farkakt," "farkrimt" and "farshvitst."

We always knew when something terrible/serious was being discussed when Mom would say in Yiddish, "Nit yetz! Der kinder iz dor" (Not now, the children are here.)

I recently was given a review copy of Joseph Dorinson's 2015 book, "Kvetching and Shpritzing," (published by McFarland, \$40.00). I thoroughly enjoyed the "bukh," and made note of the many Yiddish words used by the author. "Gib a kik" - Give a look at the list shown below:

"tsores" - trouble

"rueh plotz - eternal resting place

"geshry" - outcry

There's the story about a couple who were about to celebrate their 25th wedding anniversary. The wife wanted a beautiful mink coat. She hoped she would receive it as a gift. She spent hours wondering how she would be able to hint to her husband about her wish. One night she excitedly awakened her spouse and gave a GESHRY. "I just dreamt a wonderful dream, about that mink coat, and you were at the furrier buying it for me."

The husband sleepily answered: "That's nice; go back to sleep and wear it gezunterheit!"

“schlemiel” - clumsy bungler, an inept person

“schlimazel” - luckless person; incompetent person

“luftmentsch” - person who has no business, trade, nor income

“folksmentsch” - a man of the people

“parsuneh” - livelihood

“oy gevalt” - Oh, God!

Note: “oy” is one of the ten most popular words in Yiddish.

“O-o-oy” means considerable pain.

There’s the story about a Rabbi who is visiting Boro Park. He drove through a red traffic light and was stopped by “der politsyant” (the policeman).

“Did you not see the light?” shouted the officer?”

“Oy! Sure I did,” said the Rabbi, “but I didn’t see you!”

“landsleit” - fellow traveler

“shmaltz” - high cholesterol chicken fat

Note: The world-renowned violinist, Itzak Perlman’s recipe for potato salad contains 3 tablespoons of schmaltz. Check it out:

Video.forward.com/video/timeless-Delicacies-Itzak-Perl

“dreck” - human dung; feces

“yiddisher kop” - Jewish smarts

“badchn” - jester, merry maker or master of ceremonies at a wedding

“kike” - vulgarism; a most obnoxious synonym for Jew.

Congressman John Rankin of Mississippi used the word kike on the House floor.

“schlock” - shoddy or cheap article

A “shlock-house” sells very cheap articles. Think of the “dollar stores” and those businesses which sell merchandise called “borax.”

“tam”/“ta-am” - Jewish flavor; taste; good taste

There’s an expression, “Dos hot mayn bobes tam” (This has my grandmother’s taste).

“shytel”/“shaitel” - Wig. At the wedding the ultra-orthodox bride has her hair cut off and she wears a shaitel ever after.

“kvetched” - complained

Lizzie Skurnick said there should be the word “camplain”--to kvetch with purpose. Gene told Anita that if she didn’t stop complaining, not only would they not stop at McDonald’s, she’d have to eat the offending peanut butter for a month.

A New York Post headline (4/29/16) read: Kvetchin’ cabinet sues Kissinger bro for \$1M. Walter Kissinger, 91, the younger sibling of

Henry Kissinger, is being sued by two former servants at his L. I. estate for nearly \$1 million in back pay.

“shvitzing” - sweating

Michael Wex says that “shvitz vee a beeber” means to “sweat like a beaver.”

“meshugginer” - crazy

In 2009, former Minnesota Vikings star Cris Carter had the chutzpah to try and burst out the Yiddish word “meshuggeneh” during some yente segment on ESPN--only he totally misused the word...and ended up looking like a total shmendrick.

“tzedakah” - charity

The Metropolitan Diary, Oct. 10, 2005, contained this letter:

Dear Diary:

As Yom Kippur approaches, I recall the time, some years ago, when my son, Shlomo, then 7, slipped into the synagogue pew next to his father during the holiday service in Woodmere, N. Y.

Shlomo was a little bit late, and he had missed the rabbi’s announcement that charitable pledges made by the congregants would be read aloud. All he heard was: “Mr. and Mrs. Adler, \$200; Mr. and Mrs. Berger, \$150; Mr. and Mrs. David, \$500.”

Shlomo listened raptly, then excitedly asked, “Hey, Dad, did we win?”
(Naomi N. Zomick)

“shmutz”/“shmutzik” - dirt; filth

“mame-loshn” - mother tongue; the everyday language of the home, the school, and the marketplace.

“olova sholem” - rest in peace

“Moshe Kapoyer” - upside down; backwards; Moses backwards

The name won popularity among Jews because the Jewish Daily Forward ran a single-frame cartoon feature so named.

“shund” - literary trash

“frailach” - lively and happy

A “freylekh lid” is a happy song

“meiskeits” - ugly thing or person vs. “sheyn” (beautiful/handsome)

The Yiddish expression, “In lebn zaynen faran dray epokhes; yung, mitlyorik, un ‘du kukst oys azoy gut.” (There are 3 stages in life: young, middle-age, and “you look so good.”)

“tummler” - noisemaker

Dorinson says that a noisemaker is someone “who does anything and everything to entertain the [Catskills] customers so that they won’t squawk

about their rooms or food.”

“shanda far die goyim” - shame before the non-Jews

Scott Sherman (“Bad For The Jews”) says that Bernie Madoff, the modern-day Robin Hood who forgot about giving-to-the-poor part, was a “ganef.” He wrote, “And when a Jew is bad, it’s bad for the Jews.” “Vos is geveyn iz geveyn un iz itz nishtu.” (What once was is in the past and is no longer here.)

Think of the movie “The Time Machine” where actor Rod Taylor sat in his time machine outside a store with a mannequin in a window, where her clothes changed rapidly as he passed through time.

“die veldt, yener veldt” - this world, the other world

If you’re looking for the perfect gift for your mother, father, sister--the whole “mishpokhe” (family)-- buy “Kvetching And Shpritzing - Jewish Humor in American Popular Culture” by Joseph Dorinson. No home library is complete without it!

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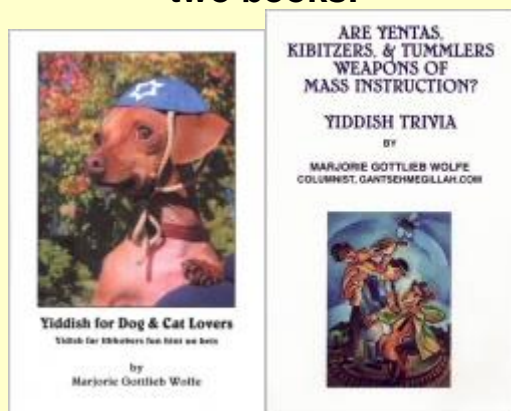
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**Marjorie Gottlieb Wolfe is the author of
two books:**



**"Yiddish for Dog & Cat Lovers" and
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