

# The Schmooze

## Stories with a Yiddish Twist

### MOOCHERS, TAKE NOTE

by  
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*Syosset, New York*

The Yiddish word for “free”/“gratuitous” is “umzist.”  
In Yiddish, a “moocher” is “mootsher.”

A “mooch” is someone who tries to get something free of charge. They sponge, living off friends and/or family.

A “shnorrer” is a scrounger who takes advantage of the generosity of others. ([vocabulary.com](http://vocabulary.com))

Remember the jazz song, “Minnie the Moocher,” recorded in 1931 by Cab Calloway and His Orchestra? It sold over a million copies. Minnie “The Moocher” was a familiar figure in downtown Indianapolis. Her real name was Minnie Gayton. She acquired the quaint nickname by regularly begging food from grocers and carting it off in a baby buggy. She slept in doorways, on porches and in garages. She eventually died from exposure.

The song’s lyrics—in part—were as follows:

She had a dream about the King of Sweden  
He gave her things she was needin'  
He gave her a home built of gold and steel  
A diamond car with a p-la-ti-num wheel  
He gave her his townhouse and a racing horse  
Each meal she ate a dozen courses  
She had a million dollars' worth of nickels and dimes  
She sat around and counted them all a million times

Hi-dee hi-dee hi-dee hi.....

Khadeeja Safdar wrote an article for the WSJ titled, "Without Blushing, Makeup Moochers Get the Works." Tester junkies dab and blot cosmetic samples in department stores like Nordstrom WITHOUT planning to make a purchase! The self-service stations, according to Safdar, "invite people to test the limits of what's free—and many do, treating the places as tensions of their own bathrooms."

Beauty products can cost a fortune. Many beauty retailers such as Sephora and ULTRA, offer FREE samples through loyalty programs and online promotion codes.

According to Loni Venti, there are 6 places to score FREE beauty supplies when you don't have the money:

1. Nordstrom
2. Sephora
3. ULTRA
4. The Body Shop
5. Aveda

## 6. CVS

A department store (“universal-krom”) like Macy’s often give out FREE samples with purchases, especially for cosmetics, fragrances and other beauty products. This is especially true around holidays like Christmas, Valentine’s Day and Mother’s Day.

In 2006, Jean Godfrey-June wrote a book titled “Free Gift With Purchase - My Improbable Career in Magazines and Makeup.” She writes, “In my next life, I’m coming back as a beauty editor....Every day, cosmetics companies send the beauty editors dozens of packages—my office gets ten to twenty most days—carefully wrapped collections of whatever they’re serving up next. We unwrap, and we evaluate....At Elle, we used to have beauty GIVEAWAYS, where we’d put out all our excess merch on a conference table and let people have at it. [They had to stop the experience] because “The doors open, and even the most respectable, highly paid publishing executives transform instantly into ruthless, murderous WWF battles, knocking one another over, grappling, pushing, snarling. To control the mayhem, we began charging a nominal \$1 to \$5 a product (for charity), so people might consider whether they actually wanted that particular shade of nail polish/ flavor of bath gel before they bothered destroying their careers trying to snatch it out of someone else’s clutches.”

So, what’s FREE this month—September 2016?

- . Trader Joe usually has a demo station set up for you to taste-test a promoted coffee, frozen food, gourmet cheese, etc.

- . Whole Food will allow you to try any prepared food; simply ask a store associate.
- . Sam's Club and Costco have stations set up throughout the store for customers to taste food, from sausages to pre-packaged cookies.
- . KFC gave away 3,000 bottles of sunscreen that it said smelled like fried chicken to drum up buzz for its Extra Crispy fare. The fast-food giant said the offer, promoted on its Web site, was so hot that it ran out of the sunscreen in just a few hours. Nobody wants a sunburn ("zunenbren")!
- . Chipotle's latest burrito giveaway is for children ("kinder"). The company is offering FREE KIDS' MEALS on Sundays in September (2016), another attempt to lure back customers spooked by a series of food scares. An E. coli outbreak last year ("mit a yor tsurik") sent Chipotle sales plunging.
- . FREE DATING SITES. One in four people now meet their partner online. FREE online dating sites are a great alternative if you're on a budget ("budzhet"). And there's no longer a stigma about online dating!

Check out OkCupid, which allows you to view photos for all profiles FREE. It also lets you see complete profiles and send and receive messages via instant message or email from other users. PlentyofFish is another FREE dating sight. Those who choose to upgrade from a FREE membership to a paid one, may enjoy the results.

Watch out for those scams. According to Jennifer Levitz (WSJ, “Online Daters Are Falling Prey to Scams,” 9/1/16), “some popular dating sites are fleecing people out of their savings...Victims lost nearly \$120 million to ‘romance scams’ in the first six months of 2016, up 23% from the year-earlier period.”

And, finally, a “vunderlekh” story about a “shnorrer” living in Kiev. A barrel-maker by profession, he did not believe in imposing on the Lord.

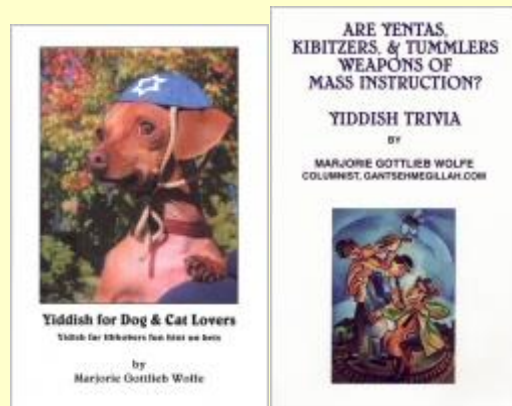
“Dear God,” he prayed, “all I’m asking from You is bread to eat and clothes to wear. Nothing—“gornisht”—more. The schnapps I’ll buy myself.”

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



**"Yiddish for Dog & Cat Lovers" and "Are Yentas, Kibitzers, & Tumblers Weapons of Mass Instruction?"**

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