

CLIMATE/SCHLIMATE; PROZAC/SCHMOZAC AND CULTURED/SHMULTERED

By



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Brian McFadden used the words “climate/schlimite” in his New York Times piece titled, “The Climate Denial March on Reality,” Sept. 28, 2014.

Shown below are some Yiddish words that all begin with “sh” or “sch.”

“shpilkes” - Pins and needles; edge, as in “on edge.” Mothers “sit on shpilkes” until their children get back to Hotzeplotz and call to say they arrived safely. “Hotzeplotz” means “Timbuktu, the middle of nowhere.”

Source: “Yiddish with Dick and Jane” by Ellis Weiner and Barbara Davilman

“schmo” - A hapless, naive person, a fool. Possibly a euphemistic rendition of the Yiddish “shmuck” or “shmok,” meaning both penis and a dope or jerk. Al Capp gave the name Shmoo to the adorable egg-shaped character in the comic strip L’il Abner.

“schmutz” - Yiddish for dirt, filth, garbage.

“shporevdik” - Someone who is thrifty. Ex. Someone who eats lunch by sampling the foods at Costco.

“shulekhil” - Diminutive of “shul.” Refers to a small room in a shul where services are often had on weekdays.

“shtokh” - To point or jab (as one does with a finger). A “shtokh in hartsn” is a “dig” in the sense of an insult or an emotional wound.

“shtiklekhvayz” - Piecemeal (adv.)

“shpotzirn” - To walk from one place to another for the enjoyment of

the walk itself. To shpotzir is “a walk without a destination.”

“shtuppers” - sexual intercourse. Lenny Bruce’s routine included this line: “Unlike your people,” he tells his non-Jewish audience, “our people are shtuppers.”

Chris Doyle wrote, “Your husband brought home a copy of the Kama Sutra and is determined to try all 153 positions over the next five months. Get ready for the SHTUP DU JOUR.” (New York Magazine)

“schmegeggy” - A stupid oaf, usually rather harmless. It can mean baloney, nonsense or foolishness as well. Peter Monheit’s Yiddish Dictionary of Fools, says a “schmeggege” is someone who’s sure he’ll take a killing with his musical toilet seat, and acts like a makher about it.

“schmaltz” - Chicken fat.

“schlump”/“shlumperdik” - Unkempt; sloppy. Michael Kors wrote, “You don’t want to dress up too much, but you don’t want to be a schlump.”

“schnorrer”/“shnorer” - beggar; cheapskate
Remember the lines from the Captain Spaulding song (Bert Kalmar, Harry Ruby) in the Marx Brothers “Animal Crackers”:

Spaulding: This fact I emphasize with stress, I never take a drink unless--
Somebody’s buying.

All: The Captain is a very moral man. Hooray for Captain
Spaulding, the African Explorer.

Spaulding: Did someone call me schnorrer?

All: Hooray, hooray, hooray!

Alan Richman interviewed the oldest Jewish waiter at Ratner’s, Alex Hersko. Hersko told him about a regular customer who comes in every day after 3 P.M., always asks for a menu and always orders a bowl of potato soup, nothing more. “I ask him if he is one of those waiters who know what a customer is going to order before he sits down.”

“No,” he says, “but I do know how much tip they are going to give. You can feel a good customer, a tipper, not a schnorrer.”

Source: “Oldest Living: The Professional Jewish Waiter is as Endangered as Ratner’s Broiled Kippered Herring--And No Prettier,” by Alan Rich, GQ, Oct. 2000.

“schlub”/”zshlub” - Lazy slob.

He shows up with schmutz on his untucked shirt. To Archie Bunker, “meathead” looked like a zshlub when he met him--although he’d never say it.

Source: “The Yiddish Dictionary of Fools” by Marnie Winston-Macauley.

Michael Daly wrote about Faisal Shahzad, who was removed from Emirate Airlines. “Evil once more proved itself banal. A guy who sought to murder as many innocents as he could--children included--looked like just another schlub.”

Source: Daily News, May 5, 2010

Anne Rogers writes, “I’m a RETIREE...Does that mean I also have to be A SCHLUB? She admits, “I’m not required to do the whole dress nicely-nicely-fix-hair-apply makeup routine several days in a row. Instead I apply the Groupon technique, handling social outings to achieve maximum benefit from my dwindling efforts at adornment. Any retiree or free-lancer working from home knows exactly what I’m talking about.”

Source: The Palm Beach Post, Feb. 23, 2012

“schlemiel” - pathetic, clumsy loser.

He drives over, through your living room. The “schlimazel” is the unlucky loser. He’s the one the schlemiel was visiting.

Source: Peter Monheit, “The Yiddish Dictionary of Fools”

“sheyn”/”sheyner” - beautiful/handsome.

A “sheyner mentsh” can mean “a handsome man,” but it can also mean “a fine man,” “an admirable man,” or a man of good character.

“shayneh”

“Joey, what’s the matter you can’t bring me home a box of candy once in a while at least?” sniffed his wife. “Before we were married you were always bringing me little presents.”

“Shayneh, tell me,” asked Joey, “does it make sense a man should give worms to a fish after he catches it?”

“sheyner Yid” -

A well-bred and well-behaved Jew “S’iz nisht sheyn” can be translated as “It’s not proper” or “It’s not something one does.”

Source: Philologos@forward.com, “What’s So ‘Nice’ About a Criminal

Mind?”

“shmatter” - A word of interconnected meanings. Its primary sense means rag, as in “Don’t just stand there like a shlemiel; take a shmatter and wipe it up.” From here it comes to mean “torn, messy or inferior clothing, as in, “He goes around in shmatters just to upset his mother.”

“shmattered out” means chronically low in self-esteem, e.g., “After being yelled at like that I just feel like a shmatter.” To treat someone like a shmatter is to behave towards them with deep disrespect. The word “shmatter” contains a living link with the world of our ancestors.”

Source: “Let’s Schmooze - Jewish Words Today” by Julian Sinclair

“shlep” - to carry

Ronnie Caplane wrote, “Shlep’ isn’t even Yiddish anymore. It’s in the dictionary. What other word would you use to describe a woman with a purse falling off one shoulder, ill-assorted papers and books in one arm, a pen between her teeth, glasses slipping off her nose, a cup of coffee in one hand and a basket of bagels in the other, walking to a meeting?”

Source: “Pass the Shpilkes! Shlepping Yiddish to a meeting,”
Nov. 14, 2003

Julian Sinclair reminds us that we DON’T “schlepp naches.” “You schepp naches.”

“schlepping”

Jordan Friedman wrote, “Everything’s going digital. Even bar mitzvah preparation.

Some high-tech parents are signing up their kids for a more modern brand of bar mitzvah lessons, rather than schlepping them to the synagogue for the traditional one-on-one lessons in person...Glenn Sherman, a cantor based in Delray Beach, FL, gives bar mitzvah lessons online. With lessons via Skype, he helps prepare youngsters with their bar mitzvah lessons.

Source: USA Today, Aug. 6, 2013

“sheptshen” - to whisper

“schmeer” -

1. The entire set (as in the whole shmeer)
2. Bribe or flattery

3. Spread or paste

James Sullivan wrote, "All three of the women sharing the bill have extensive TV experience--HBO and Comedy Central specials, Letterman, Leno, the whole schmear."

Source: "We Are Women, Hear Us Roar"; The San Francisco Chronicle, Oct. 17, 2002

"schmear campaign"

Political ploy wherein candidate fondly involves any and all Jewish relatives, no matter how distant.

Source: Lenore Skenazy, Au 17, 1999

"schmoozer"/"shmuesn" - to talk/casual conversation

In a old episode of "The West Wing," the president's chief of staff, Leo McGarry is schmoozing up a politician the White House wants to win over. After the chat, McGarry pugs the ultimate power move on the pol: he casually ushers the dazzled into the Oval Office, where the president is waiting to greet him like a dear friend."

Source: Michael Isikoff, Newsweek, March 15, 2010

Rabbi Perry Raphael Rank of the Midway Jewish Center in Syosset, New York, wrote a piece titled, "Thou Shalt Schmooze (A Little) With Thy Neighbor." He writes, "...those strangers you're sitting next to are family. Exchange names with them, shake hands, find out where they live, play Jewish geography, bless them with wishes for a healthy new year... In short, thou shalt schmooze, perhaps not during the rabbi's sermon or when the cantor is singing Hineni, but at other discreet moments, cast off your inhibitions and make your neighbor feel at home."

"shnippishok"

A mythical city used in jokes and proverbs.

MARJORIE WOLFE'S favorite "cultured"/"shmultered" joke:

A man went to a jewelry store to buy his wife a set of pearl earrings.

"You'll like these," said the jeweler, displaying an expensive set.

"Guaranteed one-hundred-per-cent cultured."

"Cultured! Pultured!--Shmultered!" exploded the customer.

"I want just plain pearls Let somebody else pay for their college diploma!"

Source: "Joys of Jewish Humor" by Henry D. Spalding