

# The Schmooze

## Stories with a Yiddish Twist

### DOGS HAVE A “VUNDERLEKH” LIFE

Note: The Yiddish word for “wonderful” is “vunderlekh.”

by  
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Rabbi Sam Karf once told this story:

A man came to the rabbi in tears, saying, “My dog died yesterday. Would you please hold a funeral service for him.”

The rabbi said, “I can’t do that for a dog!” The man said, “Please, I loved that dog. And I’m prepared to make a generous donation to shul in his memory.”

So, the rabbi agreed and conducted a service for the dog, complete with a lengthy sermon (“droshe”).

Afterward, the man approached the rabbi and thanked him effusively, saying, “Rabbi, your service was wonderful. The sermon was so inspiring and such a fitting memorial. I never knew my dog did so much for Israel.”

Grab a #2 pencil and let's see how much you know about dogs.

1. "Cynophobia" means "the fear of dogs." T F
2. Dogs have been honored as family pets and even granted "bark mitzvahs." T F
3. In the Talmud, there is a prohibition against owning a dangerous animal. The halacha (law) is pretty clear that it's prohibited to own a dangerous one. It is also prohibited to own an animal that can be perceived as dangerous, even if it's not actually dangerous. T F
4. The late Joan Rivers celebrated her dog, Spike's "bark mitzvah" on her daytime TV show. Spike wore a tall it and a kipper for the occasion. T F
5. Hitler was famously devoted to Blondi, his German Shepherd. T F
6. There is a history of dogs being used to intimidate Jews, first in the pogroms and later in the Holocaust. T F
7. Fear of dogs is something that passes from one generation to the next, even if the later generation has no reason to be afraid. T F
8. At Hudson's in the Mile in Freeport, N. Y., Doggie Dining includes:  
Chicken Ala Pup  
Beagle Burger

Pomsky Salad

Yorkie-Whip

T F

9. Some Orthodox Jews still hold on to this fear of dogs, based on what happened to previous generations. And, in the Orthodox community that's more up on Torah learning, they even have sources to back up their fear of dangerous animals. T F
10. In 2007, a group of Florida rabbis wrote a book called "How to Raise a Jewish Dog." T F
11. After World War II Bergen Belson became a camp for displaced persons including mainly Jews. When the camp was eventually closed, it was found to contain masses of stray dogs and cats that the Jews had been feeding. T F
12. "Es lumen makable ponem zien dem oreman—a kalter vin un a baize hunt" means "Who comes to greet a pauper? A cold wind and wild dogs." T F
13. One of the most offensive insults in Yiddish is "du bist a hunt mit di oyern" (you are a dog with ears), which means that one is a person who lacks moral values and thus is a "real dog." T F

Answers:

All 13 statements are True!

And now some good news for dog (and cat) lovers: Dogs

can sail on the Queen Mary 2. The ship has just undergone \$132 million in renovations. This includes new accommodations for two-legged as well as four-legged passengers. “Vu gefiant sikh a rate-shifel?” (Where is a lifeboat?) Here is my passport. (“Ot iz main pass.”)

The ship now has 24 on-board kennels, in addition to room for 2,961 human guests.

Besides the ship’s additional kennels, the new canine quarters include expanded space for dogs to play (“shpilsn”) and to walk (“shpatsirn”), an owner’s lounge, and an authentic New York City fire (“fayer”) hydrant and a British lamppost. “Dos heist gelebt”—that’s what I call living.

Cunard ships have a history (“geshikhte”) of accommodating pets. Liz Taylor and the Duke of Windsor traveled with their dogs.

The animal waste is removed with a poop-scoop and disposed of in a special flush toilet (“klozet”).

What is “der prayz” (the cost)? Passengers pay \$800 to \$1,000 per kennel. “Azoy geyt es.” (That’s how it goes.)

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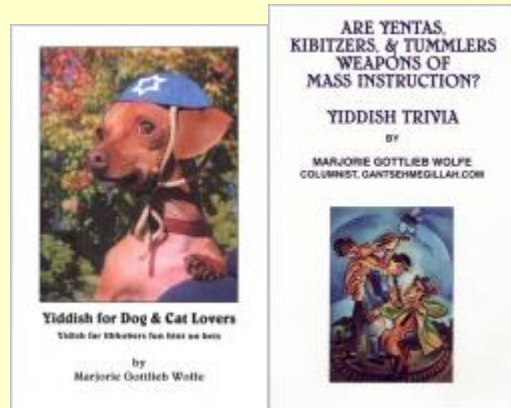
MARJORIE WOLFE was always told, “Az me shloft mit hint shtait men oif mit flai.” (If you lie down with the dogs, you get up with the fleas.)

Sources: The Associated Press, Newsday, New York Post, and Anna Shternshis, “Dogs,” YIVO Institute for

# Jewish Research.

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



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

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