

A YIDDISH GUIDE TO COMEDIAN, SHMUEL BREBAN



by
Marjorie Gottlieb Wolfe

Shmuel Breban is an Orthodox Jewish American stand-up “komiker” (comedian). He is known for his sharp and unconventional style. He is fond of the use of the one-liner. He was born in Brooklyn, New York, and currently resides in Cedarhurst, New York. (Cedarhurst is one of the “Five Towns.”)

After a short stint in the pro wrestling industry, he began performing stand-up in 2002. He’s often compared to Mitch Hedberg.

Breban lives with his “mutter” (mother) and exhibits frugality. Perhaps we could call him a “karger” or “mieser oisvort”--a male cheapskate. Or, perhaps he’s just a “shnorer.” He has described himself as Jewish, with the addendum, “And more religious (“religyez”) than you.”

The following one-liners will present a Yiddish guide to the humor of this comedian (“komiker”).

“mase” (burden)

“abi vos” (anything)

“Growing up, my mom told me that I could be anything I wanted to be... so I chose financial--burden.”

“diete” (diet)

“zikh” (myself)

“froy” (woman)

“I just bought a whole bunch of diet books. Not for myself; I mail them anonymously to every woman that rejects me.”

“shkheynshaft” (neighborhood)

“Growing up Jewish was a little different; some of the other kids in my neighborhood had diaries; I had a ledger...where I recorded how many diaries I sold to the other kids.”

“eygelekh” or “oygn” (eyes)

“My friend had difficulty sleeping, but I can do it with my eyes closed.”

“mazldik” (lucky)

“tsukerl” (candy)

“farlobt” (engaged to be married)

“skhires” (salary)

“fingerl” (ring/jewelry)

“You’re supposed to spend two months worth of salary on an engagement ring, so when I get engaged, some lucky lady will receive a piece of Life Savers candy.”

“advokat” (lawyer)

“U2’s lawyer work pro Bono.”

“vo’luvke” (flea market)

“shtrikl” (string)

“fuftsn” (15)

“I recently purchased a yo-yo at a flea market for just 15 cents--No strings attached!”

“tayer” (expensive)

“fleysh” (meat)

“farhandlung” (negotiation)

“farkoyflekh” (negotiable)

“Do you know why kosher meat is way more expensive?...Jewish animals are better negotiators.”

“klas” (class)

“lernen” (to teach)

“Do you know that they teach skydiving classes?...No way, man, I’m not taking any class that’s graded pass/die.”

“kanape” (couch)

“khasene gehat” (married)

“broygez” (angry)

“Fraynd”/”khaver” (friend)

“A married friend of mine does one thing where he never goes to bed angry...because every time he and his wife fight, she makes him sleep on the couch.”

“shenken” (to donate)

“blut” (blood)

“If you received a tattoo within the last year, you’re ineligible to donate blood in most states, because Jews control the blood banks.”

“orntlekh” (honest)

“bakvem” (comfortable)

“I love America, but I just don’t feel comfortable celebrating Independence Day...because I still live at home with my mother and it wouldn’t be honest.”

“shvanger” (pregnant)

“fentster” (window)

“klayder” (clothing)

“pretendirn” (to pretend)

“The clothing shop near me had a pregnant mannequin in the window for a couple of months, but now there’s just an identical, regular mannequin, and they pretend like nothing happened, but I know she had an abortion.”

“haknose” (income)

“”tsvey” (two)

“I live in a two-income household, but who knows how long my mom can keep that up.”

“geshikhte” (history)

“trinkgelt” (tip/gratuity)

“Did you know that the only Israeli gold medal in the history of the Olympics was in sailing? Further reinforcing the stereotype that Jews don’t tip.”

“bet” (bed)

“karkoyfer” (salesman)

“I was having difficulty deciding if I wanted to purchase this bed I was looking at, so the salesman told me...sleep on it.”

“gleybn” (to believe)

“I used to believe that chiropractors were charlatans, but then I went to one, and now I stand corrected.”

“alergye” (allergy)

“If you are allergic to alcohol...can you take shots for that?”

“reich” (wealth)

“dire” (apartment)

“bafridikt” (satisfied/content)

“We Jews believe that true wealth is defined as being content with your lot--but the lot needs to have lots of rentable apartments.”

Source: Wikipedia and www.just-one-liners.com