

Glossary

Most of the words used here are in essence untranslatable. Think of the word “chutzpah,” which made it to the English language because there is no other way to describe that unique blend of audacity, wit, and boldness. Of course, the English version IS supposedly translatable, losing the twin meaning of chutzpah in the negative sense (more like “the nerve!”), which in its original usage can offer a gentle chiding.

Allow the meanings of these words, along with any context clues, to sit in your head until the words become your own.

Note that all words are of Hebrew origin unless otherwise specified.

Aveira - sin

Aveiros - sins

Avodah Zarah - foreign service, often idol worship

Ayin Hara - evil eye. When a person is jealous of another person, he can arouse a divine attribute of stricter judgment against his fellow. This may lead to punishment for a sin previously deemed negligible. Yosef was immune to Ayin Hara, and all of his descendants can also tap into this immunity, by simply not fearing it. (Of course, seeking to make another person jealous is an unkind thing to do!)

Beis Din - Jewish court

Bitachon - implicit trust in Hashem

Bris - covenant (*also used as “Bris Milah”*)

Bris Milah - covenant of circumcision

Chachomim - sages

Chassidus - Hasidism

Chas Veshalom - Heaven forbid

Chayus - (*lit. life*) energy. This is sometimes used as G-dly energy that vivifies the world, or as the enthusiasm a person has when doing good things.

Chazzan - prayer leader, he is considered a divine representative for the congregation in certain ways

Chitas - acronym for “Chumash, Tehillim, Tanya” — a program of daily study established by the Previous Lubavitcher Rebbe, Rabbi Yosef Y. Schneerson

Chochmas Noshim - (*lit. the wisdom of women*), an organization founded by the Previous Lubavitcher Rebbe to provide senior study options for women

Dibur - speech

Dovid Hamelech - King David

Edomim - Edomites

Eretz Yisroel - the land of Israel, formerly known as Canaan

Eved - slave

Eved Canaani - (*lit. Canaanite slave*) non-Jewish slave

Eved Ivri - Jewish slave

Gashmius - physicality, or physical objects (*as opposed to spiritual*)

Gashmius'dike - (*Yiddish*) adjective form of Gashmius.

Halacha - a Jewish law

Halachos - plural of Halacha

Hallel - (*praise*) the verses of praise to Hashem we recite in prayers on certain special days on the calendar

Hashem - G-d

Heilige - (*Yiddish*) holy (pronounced “Hay-lick-eh”)

Heilike - alternate spelling of “heilige”

Kapitel - (*Yiddish*) chapter, usually of Tehillim

Kapitelach - plural of kapitel, chapters (*usually of Tehillim*)

Kapote - long jacket, worn by men on Shabbos

Kavod - honor

Kavodike - honorable

Kedusha - holiness

Kelipa - (*lit. peel*) the impurities of the world. There are 4

kinds of Kelipah, the highest of which is Klipas Noga — a thinner sort of “peel.” Most things in the world which are neither forbidden or commanded fall into this category. Items with a Klipas Noga peel can either be elevated to holiness or demoted to impure or forbidden status.

Koach - strength

Kochos - strengths

Kolel Zekeinim - place of study for elders, name of organization founded by the Previous Lubavitcher Rebbe to provide for senior study options

Kovod - variant spelling of Kavod

Kuf Chof - 120 (*in letter representation*)

Lashon Kodesh - (*lit. the holy tongue*) the Hebrew language

Licht - light, candle

Loshon Kodesh - variant spelling of Lashon Kodesh

Maalah - advantage (pronounced “my-lah”)

Maamar - Chassidic discourse, generally very rich and with tremendous depth

Maamorim - plural of Maamar

Maaseh - action

Machshava - thought

Malach Gavriel - the angel Gabriel, who often comes to help those in need

Mashal - alternate spelling of moshol, parable

Mashke - (*lit. drink*) vodka

Mesiras Nefesh - giving up one’s life for the sake of Heaven. Later Chassidic teachings expressed that giving up one’s desires is also a level of Mesiras Nefesh. Colloquially, you will therefore hear people discussing the Mesiras Nefesh required to take on a significant difficult task, like living in a spiritual wilderness to bring others closer to Yiddishkeit.

Midos - emotional attributes

Minhag - custom. Jewish customs are not taken lightly. They are considered in many ways the foundation of Judaism.

Mitzrayim - Egypt

Mitzriyim - Egyptians

Mitzvas Asei - positive commandment

Mitzvas Lo Saasei - negative commandment

Moshol - parable

Neis - miracle

Neshama - soul

Nevuah - prophecy

Nisim - (*plural of Neis*) miracles

Olam Haba - the World to Come

Perek - chapter

Pesukim - (*plural of posuk*) verses

Posuk - verse

Rachmanus - mercy or pity

Reshimos - memoirs

Rosh Chodesh - the beginning (*head*) of the Jewish month

Ruchniyus - (*adj. or noun*) spiritual

Sechel - intellect

Shalom - peace

Shalosh Klipos Hatmeios - see “Kelipah”

Shevatim - tribes

Shikker - drunk

Shiurim - [Torah] lessons or lectures

Shlichus - mission, usually Divine mission

Shomayim - Heaven

Sicha - (*lit. conversation*) a talk, usually delivered by a Rebbe

Taavos - desires for worldly pleasures

Taharas Hamishpacha - Family Purity, or the study of the body of laws surrounding this mitzvah. Generally this study is not undertaken until immediately preceding marriage.

Teshuvah - (*lit. return*) true repentance, achieved by coming closer to Hashem

Tumah - impure

Tznius - modest

Yetzer Hara - “Evil Inclination” — the part of a person which induces us to sin

Yichud Nifla - amazing unity — the complete unity of a Jew with Hashem, through learning Torah

Yid - (*Yiddish*) Jew

Yiras Shomayim - fear of Heaven

Yishmaelim - Ishmaelites

Yovel - Jubilee year, the 50th year in the cycle of Shemitah (*Sabbatical*) years

Yud Tes Kislev - the date of the Alter Rebbe’s release from jail, on charges of treason, and a spiritual decree against the spreading of Chassidus