

Glossary

Note: Forms in brackets are plurals.

- Aliyah** - the "going up" of one man to lead (some of) a Torah reading [at least by saying its *brachos**]
- amah** - a "cubit"; a fixed linear measurement based on the "average" arm (from the elbow to the tip of the middle finger) [19 in. (48 cm.) according to R. Chaim Na'eh, 21¼ in. (54 cm.) according to R. Moshe Feinstein^o (and 23 or 24 inches for the more stringent matters), 22¾ in. (58 cm.) according to the *Chazon Ish*^o]
- Amora** [*Amora'im*] - one [or more] of the Sages of the Talmudic era
- Aron HaKodesh** - the "Holy Ark" of a synagogue (where the Torah scrolls are kept)
- Ashkenazi** - lit. "of Germany", but actually generally refers to the non-*Sefardi** Jewish world
- Aveirah** - sin
- Assur** - forbidden by Halacha*
- Baraisa** - material from the Oral Torah less authoritative than the Mishnah* [lit. "outside"]
- Bavli** - Babylonian (Talmud)
- Beis HaMikdash** - the Temple
- Bimah** - platform upon which the *Sefer Torah** is placed when it is read
- Birkas HaMazon** - "Grace" [*bracha**] after meals
- Bracha** [*brachos*] - blessing[s]
- Chassan** [*chassanim*] - groom[s] [lit. "the one[s] being wed"]
- Chatas** - a type of "sin" offering
- Chazzan** - a leader in the synagogue (usually of the prayers) [lit. "one who sees to" something]
- Chol HaMoed** - the intermediate non-*Yom-Tov** days between the beginning and end of Pesach/Sukkos
- Chumash** - the Pentateuch
- Daf** - lit. "page", but with respect to Gemara* it refers to a two-sided folio.
- Dreidel** - four-sided top, spun on Chanukah
- Esrog** - citrus fruit which one "takes in hand" on the first of Sukkos*, along with three other "species"
- Gemara** - the Talmud (usually the Babylonian - called *Talmud Bavli*)
- Haftarah** - [lit. "ending off"]; a reading from the Prophets, which on some occasions follows the Torah reading
- HaKadosh Baruch Hu** - lit. the Holy One blessed be He; i.e. G-d.
- Halacha** [Halachos] - law[s] (of Orthodox Jewish practice of the Torah)
- Hallel** - A special set of chapters of *Tehillim*, about which it was instituted that they be recited on certain days [lit. "enthusiastic praise"]
- Hashem** - G-d
- Havdalah** - the Mitzvah* to declare the "difference [in sanctity] in the day" (of Shabbos* or *Yom Tov**) as it departs (said over "a cup" of wine or the like) [lit. "differentiation"]
- Heichal** - the "main Sanctuary building" of the *Beis HaMikdash**

* see Glossary ^o see Bibliography O.C. = volume *Orach Chayim* (of *Shulchan Aruch*, etc.)
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Kaddish - the public call (often led by a mourner) to glorify and sanctify Hashem's Name (and also addressing other similar all-encompassing causes) [at some points in the service only "half" is said]

Kiddush - the Mitzvah* to "sanctify the day" (of Shabbos* or *Yom Tov**) with "words" (said over "a cup" of wine or the like) [lit. "sanctification"]

Kislev - the ninth Jewish month (counting from Nissan* as the first)

Kohen [*kohanim*] - priest[s]

Kohen Gadol [*kohanim gedolim*] - High Priest[s]

Levi [*levi'im*] - male member[s] of the Levite tribe

Ma'ariv - the evening prayer service

Maftir - lit. "ends off"; the last *aliyah** of a Torah reading to be followed by reading from the Prophets (also used to refer to the man who is honored with that *aliyah* - who will also be honored with the reading from the Prophets)

Melacha - lit. "work"; the special "creative labors" that are *assur** on Shabbos* (and *Yom Tov**)

Mehadrin - Mitzvah "enhancers" or "pursuers" (see *Shulchan Aruch* O.C. 671:2)

Menorah - the candelabra of the *Beis HaMikdash** (and sometimes refers to a Chanukah candelabra)

Megillah - lit. "scroll", but commonly refers to the Book of Esther

Mezuzah - holy scroll put on the doorpost of dwelling structures

Mikvah - lit. "gathering" [of water], for immersing [usually to remove non-physical contamination]

Mincha - the afternoon prayer service

Minhag [*minhagim*] - Torah-oriented practice[s] not necessarily mandated by Halacha (or at least not for all Jews)

Mizbayach - altar

Mishkan - the "temporary" Sanctuary which was built in the desert (and was finally replaced by the Temple)

Mishnah - the repository of the basic authoritative Oral Torah, as transmitted by the *Tanna'im**

Muttar - permitted by Halacha*

Mussaf - the "additional" service on Shabbos and other holidays [those that are Torah-mandated (as the *Beis Yosef* in O.C. 682:1 points out)] (we say a special *Shemoneh Esray** for it, and when there was a *Beis HaMikdash** there were special offerings)

Navi - lit. "prophet"; often refers to the works of the Prophets

Neder [*nedarim*] - a kind of declaration that something that's otherwise *muttar** should become *assur**

Ne'ilah - the prayer service added at the end of *Yom Kippur** (specifically, its *Shemoneh Esray**) [lit. "closing" (the gates)]

Nissan - the first Jewish month [as per *Sh'mos* (12:2), though the Jewish "new year" is 6 months away in Tishrei*]

Parsha - Torah portion [usually: one of the divisions read annually, one per week]

Pasuk [*pesukim*] - Biblical verse[s]

Pesach - the holiday of Passover

Rosh HaShanah - the holiday of the Jewish new year

Sefer Torah [*Sifrei Torah*] - Torah scroll[s] (of the five "books of Moshe")

Se'if [*se'ifim*] - section[s], usually in *Shulchan Aruch**, and usually used to give a reference number

Sefardi - lit. "of Spain", but actually generally refers to the Jewish world with the traditions of the early authorities in Moslem-occupied lands

Sh'ma - the sections of the Torah (starting with "Hear O Israel") recited each morning and night

Siman [*simanim*] - lit. "sign" ["signs"]; often used similarly to the word "chapter[s]"

Shabbos [*Shabbosim*] - the Sabbath [or many]

Shacharis - the morning prayer service

Shavuos - the holiday of "weeks" (fifty days after the first day of Pesach*)

Shemoneh Esray - the main part of each prayer service, said standing (and therefore also called "*amidah*") [lit. "eighteen" (the number of *brachos** it was originally composed of)]

Shofar - horn [of a ram] blown on *Rosh HaShanah**

Siddur [*siddurim*] - prayer book[s]

Sugya - complete segment of Gemara* [lit. "flow"]

Sukkah - temporary "hut" or booth which one dwells in on Sukkos*

Sukkos - the holiday of "booths" (at the end of the autumn)

Tanna [*Tanna'im*] - one [or more] of the Sages of the pre-Talmudic era

Tefach - a "handbreadth"; a fixed linear measurement based on the width of an "average" fist [generally calculated as one sixth of an *amah**]

Tefillin - phylacteries (holy scrolls put into special leather boxes, to be fastened onto the arm and head)

Teiveis - the tenth Jewish month (counting from Nissan* as the first)

Terumah - the "donation" one must set aside for the *kohanim* (from most Israeli produce)

Tosefta - the most authoritative Baraisa* material - a parallel to the Mishnah [lit. "supplementary"]

Tzedakah - charity

Tzitzis - special knotted strings attached to four-cornered garments

Yahrtzeit - anniversary of the death of someone's parent [lit. "year day"]

Yerushalayim - Jerusalem

Yerushalmi - Jerusalemite (Talmud)

Yom Kippur - the Day of Atonement

Yom Tov [*Yamim Tovim*] - holiday[s] (or festival[s]), also called "*chag[im]*"

Yotzei - fulfill (one's obligation) [lit. "go out"]

Zav - person who acquires a strong level of non-physical contamination due to certain discharges

Halacha "Principles" Glossary

Bein haShmashos - the Halachic twilight period (lit. "between the sun[down]s"). The Mishnah (*Shabbos* 34a) says there is a period which is "possibly [considered] day and possibly night." Some authorities hold it is defined as *beginning* when the sun disappears; others hold it is defined as *ending* "when the stars come out" [see below] (which they hold is over an hour later than when the sun disappears). In *Shulchan Aruch*, this is dealt with mainly in the Halachos of Shabbos (O.C. 261).

Brachos on Mitzvahs are said before the Mitzvah act (Hebrew: "*oveir la'asiyan*") - This is an explicit Gemara (*Pesachim* 7b), which in *Shulchan Aruch*^o is dealt with mainly in O.C. 25:8, 158:11, and 651:5 [i.e. by some of the unusual cases]. (The Gemara mentions one exception, immersing in a *mikvah*, explaining that beforehand "the person is not fitting [for saying the *bracha*] yet.") Many authorities (including the *Mishnah Berurah*) say this also means that one must say the *bracha* *immediately* before the Mitzvah act (not "*oveir d'oveir*").

Bypassing a Mitzvah [i.e. where it's most immediately available] - Reish Lakish states that this is *assur* (as brought in a number of Gemaras [such as *Megillah* 6b]). A typical example of dealing with this is the arrangement of *tefillin* within their "case" (O.C. 25:1).

Counting the omer - Starting from the second day of Pesach (when the "*omer*" offering would be brought in the time of the *Beis HaMikdash*), the days - and weeks - are counted until Shavuot. The idea that the Mitzvah is to count the days "*temimos*" ["complete"] - so that if someone missed one day then he simply stops - is discussed in detail in *Shulchan Aruch*, O.C. 489:8.

Days when Tachanun is not said - This special "falling on one's face" prayer (said after the *Shemoneh Esray* of *Shacharis*) is considered inappropriate for "times of joy"; a number of such times are listed in *Shulchan Aruch*, O.C. *siman* 131, *se'ifim* 4-7.

Doubts about brachos call for being lenient - i.e. when someone is in doubt whether he is obligated to say a certain *bracha*, he can assume he is *not* obligated [and therefore *must not* say it (*Mishnah Berurah* 167 n49)]. The language is a paraphrase of "Doubts about Rabbinical [obligations] call for being lenient" (*Shabbos* 34a, *Eiruvin* 45b, *Beitzah* 3b), and it results from the fact that almost all *brachos* are Rabbinical. In *Shulchan Aruch*, this is dealt with mainly in O.C. 209:3.

Great Loss - In a number of places, the Gemara says that the Sages were more lenient when necessary to prevent a "great loss". (Hebrew: "*hefsed merubah*") The *Shulchan Aruch* and commentaries (in volume *Yoreh Dei'ah* [especially in *siman* 126 and after *siman* 242]) detail what's called "great loss".

Ish to k'gufo - lit. "One's wife is like his own body," the general concept that husband and wife are treated as actually being one person. This can apply in varying ways (see *Brachos* 24a and *Bechoros* 35b).

Lo plug - generally "no distinction is made" by the Sages (within Rabbinical Halachos) [even if certain cases logically ought to have been "exceptions"] (*Yevamos* 107a, *Kesubos* 52b, *Bava Metzi'ah* 53b).

Mitzvahs are best done by oneself and not a representative [i.e. a "*shaliach*"] - This is an explicit Gemara (*Kiddushin* 41a), which in *Shulchan Aruch* is dealt with mainly in O.C. 250:1, with respect to preparations for the honor of Shabbos.

Mitzvahs were not given to benefit from - The practical meaning is that when it's *assur* to derive benefit from some source, it's nevertheless *muttar* to fulfill a Mitzvah by means of that same source (*Eiruvim* 31a, *Nedarim* 16b, *Chulin* 89a). [Two examples are in *Shulchan Aruch* O.C. *siman* 586.]

Muktzeh - when something is "set aside" not for uses that fit with Shabbos or *Yom Tov*, it may not be moved at all then. The extensive details of this are mainly dealt with in *Shulchan Aruch* O.C. 308 - 312. [Examples in this volume: lit candles ("muktzeh due to something [i.e. affecting the flame] being *assur*" - see O.C. 279:1), and previously-lit earthenware candles ("muktzeh due to repulsiveness" - see O.C. 279:6 and *Mishnah Berurah* 308 n136 for how we rule about this category.)]

Oil that is to be burned - *Terumah* has two qualities - its sanctity and the *kohanim's* claim to it. If it becomes impure, the *kohanim* keep their rights to it, but because of its sanctity - it now must be burned. The standard example of this is *Terumah oil*, which is called by the above name (*Shabbos* 23b).

Onen - someone with duties towards a relative's burial, which have not yet been completed. He is considered "exempt from Mitzvahs" in general (see *Brachos* 17b and *Mo'ed Kattan* 23b; in *Shulchan Aruch* this is dealt with mainly in volume *Yoreh Dei'ah*, *siman* 341).

Ruling like the later authority - "Whenever two *Tanna'im* or two *Amora'im* disagree with each other, and it's not stated [i.e. in the Gemara] that the Halacha is like this one or like that one: If it's 'the teacher against the student' [i.e. a Sage from an earlier generation against one from a later one], [then] the Halacha does not follow the 'student' in the 'place' of the 'teacher' - until Rava; and from Rava and onward - the Halacha is like the later [authority]." (*Seder Tanna'im V'Amora'im* [of the *Gaonim*] #25, as quoted by the Chida^o). This universally accepted principle is discussed in the *Rema* (volume *Choshen Mishpat* 25:2).

Tadir - lit. "The more 'frequent' Mitzvah", which generally is done first (*Brachos* 51b and elsewhere; see O.C. 681:2).

"Tainting" - If someone was just honored with an *aliyah* to the Torah reading, he may not read again, in a second *Sefer Torah*^{*}, because this seems to indicate that there was something wrong with the first *Sefer Torah*. (Hebrew: "*pegam*") This is explicit in the Gemara (*Yoma* 70a, *Sotah* 41a), and in the *Shulchan Aruch* it's mainly discussed in O.C. 144:4.

Tamay meis - a kind of impurity caused by certain kinds of contact with a dead body. A person (or some kinds of containers) that becomes *tamay meis* can only be purified by a seven day process which includes being sprinkled with the special waters prepared by use of the "red cow" (see *Bamidbar* 19).

Tziduk HaDin - A prayer recited as a formal "acceptance of the judgment". It is not said on certain "*Yamim Tovim*". [The *Sefardi minhag* is that it is said even on *Chol HaMoed* or the second day of *Yom Tov*, and the *Ashkenazi minhag* is not to say it on any "days when *Tachanun* is not said" (*Shulchan Aruch* volume *Yoreh Dei'ah* 401:6).]

We "raise things up" in holiness and we do not "lower" them - this means that as time progresses, involvement with any aspect of holiness may be increased (or intensified or enhanced), and conversely should *not* be lessened. (Hebrew: "*ma'alin bakodesh ve'ain moridin*") [The source is the Mishnah, in *Menachos* 99b (explained by the Gemara *ibid.* 99a) and in *Shekalim* 6:4. A standard place in *Shulchan Aruch* where this is applied is in the Halachos of *tefillin* (O.C. 25:1).]

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When the stars come out - The Gemara (*Megillah* 20b) says that's when the day ends and the night begins. In *Shabbos* (35b), it says this is when three medium-size stars are visible. In addition, the nearby Gemaras bring other ways to establish whether this point has come. Furthermore, there are sources which say this should be determined only by small stars, and only if they are near each other. In *Shulchan Aruch*, this is dealt with mainly in O.C. 235:1, 263:2, and 562:1.

When there's someone to fall back on - Halachic authorities often use such a phrase to describe a situation when there is a position that really should *not* be followed, but if someone follows that position - they need not be opposed. The Maharik^o ("new" responsa, 49) points out that this can be seen in the Gemara (*Shabbos* 130a, *Yevamos* 14a) about R' Eliezer's position concerning circumcision on Shabbos.