



Specialized vocabulary for JMOHP collection

General:

Aliyah (Hebrew)- Literally, “going up”. This refers to going up to the platform to recite a blessing or read a section of Torah during religious services. It also refers to moving to Israel (making aliyah).

Aron (*Hebrew*), **Ark** - The place where Torah scrolls are kept. In a synagogue setting these are often beautifully adorned.

Bar/bat mitzvah - A Jewish lifecycle event marking a child’s reaching the age of legal responsibility in the eyes of tradition, age 12 for girls and 13 for boys. A bar or bat mitzvah is usually celebrated by the child being publicly called to read Torah for the first time, and is often accompanied with a party.

Bris - also brit or brit milah. The ritual circumcision that baby boys undergo on the eighth day of life. This is a joyous occasion in Jewish lifecycle celebrating the entry of a new child into the covenant with G-d.

Cheder (Yiddish) - school for young children, religious school.

Davening - (Yiddish hybrid) praying. Jewish prayer often involves a swaying movement.

Goyim - (Hebrew) literally *nations*. Gentiles. This term is understood to refer to nations other than Jews, though its literal meaning is universal.

Haftarah (Hebrew)- Prophetic writings. In the weekly Torah reading cycle, a portion of Torah is paired with a portion of the Writings.

Haggadah (Hebrew) - The Passover story/liturgy, in book form.

Kashrut (Hebrew) – Jewish dietary laws. Laws requiring separation of milk/meat, prohibition on consuming pork, etc.

Mikvah (Hebrew)- A Ritual bath, used for immersion most often used by women after menstruation, and by men and women undergoing conversion. In traditional customs, ritual immersion is done before Shabbat, before a wedding, and before High Holidays.

Oneg (Hebrew)- lit. “delight.” As a noun it refers to a celebration with food especially on Shabbat.

Shabbat (Hebrew) or **Shabbes** (Yiddish) – the Sabbath, which begins at sundown on Friday and lasts through sunset on Saturday. The Sabbath is a central feature that governs the rhythm of Jewish life. It is customary to welcome the Sabbath by lighting candles and enjoying a family meal.

Shema (Hebrew)- The central prayer which affirms G-d's unity or one-ness.

Shiva (Hebrew) - A gathering of mourners after the death of a loved one. The first seven days following a death are spent 'sitting shiva.' Community members visit to comfort the bereaved and traditionally bring food.

Shul - (Yiddish) literally "school." Refers to a synagogue, emphasizing the role of study/learning in Jewish life.

Synagogue - Jewish place of worship and study, more commonly used in Conservative or Orthodox circles.

Tanakh - (Torah, **Neviim**, **Ketuvim**) A contraction of the words which refer to the 3 sections of the Hebrew bible: the Torah is the Five Books of Moses, the **Neviim** are the Prophets, and **Ketuvim** are the Writings (Proverbs, Psalms, etc.)

Temple - Term common in Reform Judaism to refer to a synagogue building and congregation. This word is not used by more traditional streams of Judaism due to the belief that the word Temple is specific to the First (c.1000–586 BCE) and Second (c. 516 BCE and 70 CE) Temples in Jerusalem.

Torah (Hebrew) – Literally "teaching." The Jewish holy scripture, Pentateuch, or Five Books of Moses, written by scribal hand on scrolls. These are the most sacred objects in any Jewish religious setting. Torah is a concept that can also refer to all Jewish teaching.

Yeshiva - A traditional religious school for high school and above.

Yiddishkeit (Yiddish)- meaning "Jewishness" - referring to Jewish culture.

Zionism - The modern political movement for a Jewish national homeland and Jewish self-determination in the land of Israel.

Holidays:

Break the fast - The meal ending the fast of Yom Kippur after sunset.

Passover - (In Hebrew *Pesach*) A major Jewish holiday in Spring time which celebrates the liberation of ancient Israelites from slavery in Egypt.

Purim - A spring holiday which involves the reading of the Biblical Book of Esther. It has a festive, almost carnivalesque quality and celebrates the victory of Persian Jews over the villainous Haman who wanted to kill all Jews in the kingdom.

Rosh Hashanah (Hebrew)- The festive beginning of the Fall holiday cycle, the Jewish New Year.

Seder (Hebrew) - The ceremonial meal that is the central home observance of the Passover holiday.

Yom Kippur (Hebrew)- The Day of Atonement, a major holiday in the Fall characterized by a 25 hour fast, long liturgy enumerating communal sins and asking forgiveness, and a tone of solemnity.

Foods:

Challah (Hebrew) - A braided Sabbath bread.

Chametz (Hebrew)- Leavened products (bread, etc.) that are forbidden during Passover.

Haroset (Hebrew) - a mixture of fruit, nuts, and wine that is part of the Passover seder meal and symbolizes the mortar that Hebrew slaves used to build with bricks.

Holishkes (Yiddish)— A stuffed cabbage dish.

Knish (Yiddish)- a savory pastry filled with mashed potatoes

Kreplach (Yiddish) - a traditional dumpling, often filled with meat.

Kugel (Yiddish)- baked pudding/casserole, can be sweet or savory.

Lukshen kugel (Yiddish) - noodle pudding/casserole

Matzah (Hebrew) - Unleavened bread that is eaten during the eight days of Passover. Represents the haste with which the Israelites left Egypt and is referred to as the Bread of Poverty due to its simplicity.

Milchig - (Yiddish) Dairy. In traditional kosher observance, meat and dairy foods are strictly separated, never eaten or prepared together. Homes would have separate dishes and utensils for use with meat (Fleishig) or dairy (Milchig) foods.

Schmaltz (Yiddish)- rendered chicken fat