

# Glossary

Most of the words used here are in essence untranslatable. Hebrew words tend to have multiple meanings, allowing one word to express a variety of nuances. 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 loses the negative sense of chutzpah (more like "the nerve!"), which in its original usage is intended to offer a gentle (or not-so-gentle) chiding.

For that reason, even English-speaking chassidim will often prefer to simply use the original terminology rather than an English version. Join them! Allow the meanings of these words, along with any context clues, to percolate in your head until the words become your own.

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

## A

**Achdus** - unity

**Achdus Hashem** - the understanding of the absolute unity of all of creation with its Creator.

**Ahava** - love used in reference to three kinds of love. Love of G-d (*see Ahavas Hashem*), love of the Torah and love of the Jewish people (*see Ahavas Yisroel*). These three loves are intrinsic to the heart of every Jew and can be developed through conduct based on Torah and particularly Chassidic teachings. They are interdependent, so that it is not possible to truly love G-d and the Torah without loving one's fellow, and our love for another must be with the knowledge that we are children of G-d and are committed to living according to the Torah.

**Ahavas Hashem** - love for G-d. (*One of the three loves intrinsic to the Jewish soul.*) There are many forms of development and expression of this love (*see also Ahava Mesuteres*). It is expressed properly through following the will of the Creator to act in accordance with G-d's commandments.

**Ahavas Yisroel** - Love of a fellow (*one of the three loves intrinsic to every Jewish soul.*) This love is based on the understanding that all Jews together comprise one soul. Separation only occurs when individual souls descend into separate bodies. By focusing instead on the unity present in our souls, we feel as one, and a love is aroused. It is expressed in acting kind and caring for another.

**Aibishter** - (*Yiddish*) more familiar term for Hashem. Related to the Yiddish word "Oiben," above.

**Aliya** - being called up to the Torah. (*Lit. elevation*) Every part of the Jewish soul is elevated when being called up to the Torah, including its second half (*a spouse is the other half of the soul*).

**Al Kiddush Hashem** - giving up one's life for the sanctification of Hashem's name, e.g. rather than convert. This is a very lofty level, but this capability is inherent to every Jew.

**Alter Rebbe** - lit. "the old Rebbe" referring to the very first Rebbe of Chassidus Chabad, R' Shneur Zalman of Liadi (*see also Chassidus*)

**Aron** - the ark, often referring the Ark of the Covenant in the Beis Hamikdash. A coffin containing the body of one who passed away is also called an Aron, and it is treated with utmost respect.

**Asur** - prohibited

**Aveira** - sin

**Aveiros** - sins (*plural of Aveira*)

**Avodah** - work, service (when not otherwise qualified, usually referring to efforts in serving G-d)

**Avodah Zarah** - foreign service, often idol worship

**Avos** - forefathers (Avraham, Yitzchak, and Yaakov)

**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!)

## B

**Baal Peh** - by heart

**Baal Peh** - by heart

**Beinoni** - (*literally "intermediate"*) a person who does not allow expression of his animal soul's desires. This is the type of perfection we can all aspire to! Not that we will no longer WANT our worldly desires, but that we will choose whether or not those desires are in keeping with our divine mission — and if not, we simply will choose not to think about, say, or do them.

**Beis Din** - Jewish court

**Beis Hamikdash** - the Holy Temple, which stood in Jerusalem for many years. This was one place where G-dliness was more openly revealed. There are many mitzvos whose observance hinges on whether or not the Beis Hamikdash stands. Many aspects of prayer are related to the service in the Beis Hamikdash.

**Bentch** - bless; or say the Grace After Meals (*Birchas Hamazon*)

**Bitachon** - implicit trust in Hashem

**Bracha** - blessing

**Brachos** - (*plural of Bracha*) blessings

**Bris** - covenant (*also used as "Bris Milah"*)

**Bris Milah** - covenant of circumcision

**B'simcha** - with joy (*see Simcha*)

## C

**Chabad** - acronym for the words "Chochma, Bina, Daas" (inspiration, contemplation, application) that are the foundation of the Alter Rebbe's universal methodology for serving Hashem

**Chachomim** - sages

**Chassidim** - (*plural of Chossid*) see "Chossid"

**Chassidishe** - (*Yiddish adj.*) of or related to Chassidus. This term is generally used to refer to a person or behavior in keeping with or advancing the ideals of Chassidus.

**Chassidus** - the unique path of spirituality established by the Baal Shem Tov, and elucidated in different styles and approaches by the leaders following him. The specific “flavor” of Lubavitcher Chassidim is Chassidus Chabad, founded by the Alter Rebbe, on the premise that understanding is the true key to attaining spiritual heights expressed in practical behavior.

**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

**Cheit Eitz Hadaas** - the Sin of the Tree of Knowledge. This sin caused significant spiritual ramifications, which we are still correcting today.

**Chelek** - part or section

**Chesed** - kindness

**Chinuch** - education

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

**Chochma** - wisdom. Also, the divine attribute of Chochma, meaning an initial spark of revelation

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

**Chossid** - one who studies and follows the path of Chassidus. A worthy appellation.

**Chumash** - the 5 books of the Torah, or one of the volumes thereof

**Chumashim** - plural of Chumash

## D

**Daven** - pray

**Davening** - prayer, or praying

**Davka** - specifically

**Dibur** - speech

**Dor** - generation

**Doros** - generations (*plural of “Dor”*)

**Dovid Hamelech** - King David

## E

**Edomim** - Edomites

**Einiklach** - grandchildren

**Emes** - truth

**Eretz Yisroel** - the land of Israel

**Eretz Yisroel** - the land of Israel, formerly known as Canaan, given as a gift to the Jewish people (as clarified in Rashi’s very first commentary on the Torah)

**Eved** - slave

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

**Eved Ivri** - Jewish slave

## F

**Farbrengen** - a get-together where songs, words of Torah, advice and encouragement are shared among friends.

**Friediker Rebbe** - the Previous Rebbe, Rabbi Yosef Yitzchak Schneerson

## G

**Gaavah** - haughtiness

**Gartel** - a cord worn around the waist of a married man, providing a symbolic separation between the upper (*intellectual and emotional*) and lower (*purely physical*) parts of the body. (*The halachic requirement for separation is satisfied with any waistband or belt as part of clothing.*) Chabad custom is not to wear a gartel until marriage.

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

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

**Gemara** - Talmud

**Getlichkeit** - (*Yiddish*) G-dliness

**Geulah** - redemption (*also see Moshiach*)

**Golus** - exile, displacement

**Goyim** - (*lit. nations*) Gentiles. Often refers to idol-worshippers, to exclude the “Chasdei Umos HaOlam,” the righteous gentile, or those who follow the 7 Noahide laws.

**Goyishe** - non-Jewish

**Grubbe** - coarse, self-indulging

**Guf** - body

## H

**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

**Hamelech** - the king

**Hanavi** - the prophet

**Har Sinai** - Mt. Sinai, the place of the giving of the Torah

**Hashem** - G-d

**Hashgacha** - supervision

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

**Heilike** - alternate spelling of “heilige”

**Hidur** - beautification of a mitzvah, i.e. an optional stringency that enhances a mitzvah

**Hiskashrus** - (*lit. connection*) the bond between a Chossid and the Rebbe, one that is strengthened by regular correspondence, learning the Rebbe’s Torah insights, and following his direction

**Histalkus** - the date when the soul of a tzadik changes from earth-based to heaven-based. The physical body retains holiness, and a certain part of the soul remains connected to it forever. (*Thus the custom of praying at the gravesites of tzadikim.*) With a Rebbe, this also becomes the date when the mantle of leadership is passed on.

## I

**Inyan** - concept

**IY”H** - acronym for “Im Yirtzah Hashem” — if G-d wills.

## K

**Kaddish** - prayer praising Hashem said

**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

**Kehunah** - priesthood (*see Kohen*)

**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.

**Ketores** - a special kind of incense burned in the Beis Hamikdash. The 11 spices used in it are recited daily in davening.

**Kinderlach** - (*Yiddish*) children

**Koach** - strength

**Kochos** - strengths (*plural of Koach*)

**Kohanim** - members of the priestly family, tasked with the holy work of Temple service. Even nowadays, they are accorded certain privileges like being called first to the Torah, and are given certain restrictions, like not entering a cemetery.

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

**Korban** - offering - usually of an animal or bird, but flour offerings were brought as well

**Korbanos** - (*plural of korban*) offerings

**Kovod** - variant spelling of Kavod

**Kriyas Yam Suf** - the splitting of the sea

**Kuf Chof** - 120 (*in letter representation*)

## L

**Lashon Hara** - evil talk, gossip - prohibited by Torah law (*also see Tzoraas*)

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

**LeAsid Lavo** - (“*The world to come*”), one of the later stages in the era of Moshiach, when, among other things, Techiyas Hameisim will take place

**Levaya** - (*lit. accompaniment*) funeral, accompanying one on his final journey

**Leviim** - Levites, tasked with certain parts of Temple service. Even nowadays, they are accorded certain privileges, such as a designated aliyah to the Torah

**Levushim** - (*lit. “clothing”*) the three expressions of the soul: thought, speech, and deed. A person can “put on” the “clothing” of either the Nefesh Elohis (G-dly soul) or the Nefesh Habehamis (*animal soul*), by choosing to think G-dly thoughts or otherwise.

**Licht** - light, candle

**Lichtig** - (*Yiddish adj.*) light

**Loshon Kodesh** - variant spelling of Lashon Kodesh

**Luchos** - tablets (*with the Ten Commandments inscribed on them*)

## M

**Maalah** - advantage (pronounced “my-leh”)

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

**Maamorim** - plural of Maamar

**Maariv** - evening prayers

**Maaseh** - action

**Machshava** - thought

**Mahn** - manna (*pronounced “Munn”*)

**Malach** - angel

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

**Malachim** - alternate spelling of Malochim

**Malochim** - angels

**Mashal** - alternate spelling of moshol, parable

**Mashke** - (*lit. drink*) vodka

**Matan Torah** - the giving of the Torah

**Medrash** - homiletic explanation of Torah. Those written by various sages throughout the ages have achieved a status as accurate parts of Torah.

**Meforash** - commentary

**Meforshim** - commentaries

**Mems** - “the forties” — referring to the years 5740 - 5749 of the Rebbe’s leadership (the 1980’s)

**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.

**Me’aras Hamachpeilah** - the burial site of our forefathers, located in Chevron (*Hebron*)

**Midbar** - wilderness or desert

**Middos** - alternate spelling of Midos

**Midos** - character traits or emotional attributes

**Mikvah** - body of water with certain specifications that confers ritual purity to people or objects immersed in it. The mikvah is used often — Chassidic men regularly immerse before prayer, Jewish women immerse as part of the practice of Taharas Hamishpacha, and vessels are immersed prior to their first use.

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

**Minhagim** - customs, plural of “minhag”

**Mishkan** - the temporary (and modular!) temple, which was used when the Jews traveled in the desert and in Israel until the Beis Hamikdash was complete.

**Mishnayos** - parts of the Mishna

**Mishpacha** - family

**Mitzrayim** - Egypt (pronounced “Mitts-rye’-yim”)

**Mitzriyim** - Egyptians (pronounced “Mitts-ree’-yim”)

**Mitzva** - (*lit. connection*) commandment of G-d, which connects us to the divine

**Mitzvas Asei** - positive commandment

**Mitzvas Lo Saasei** - negative commandment (*prohibition*)

**Mizbeiach** - altar, usually referring to the one used for korbanos in the Beis Hamikdash. (There was also a second mizbeiach for incense, the Mizbeiach Haketores)

**Moshiach** - (*lit. Messiah*) the individual, a messenger of G-d, who will be tasked with ushering the world over the threshold to the era where the world will be in the state of perfection it was originally created for (also called the times of Moshiach, or Geulah).

**Moshol** - parable

**Motzei Shabbos** - post-Shabbos

## N

**Narische** - (*Yiddish adj.*) foolish

**Narishkeit** - (*Yiddish*) foolishness

**Navi** - prophet

**Nefashos** - souls

**Nefesh** - soul. There are many levels of the soul, and nefesh is the lowest (i.e. most physical, the furthest from revealed G-dliness) of those levels.

**Nefesh Elohis** - (*lit. the G-dly soul*) the source of spiritual drive in a person

**Nefesh Habehamis** - (*literally* “animal soul”) the source of baser and physical instincts in a person

**Neis** - miracle

**Neshama** - soul

**Nesius** - leadership

**Neviim** - (*plural of Navi*) prophets

**Nevuah** - prophecy

**Niggun** - melody, usually referring to a Chassidic melody

**Niggunim** - melodies (*plural of Niggun*)

**Nilus** - Nile (*River*)

**Nisim** - (*plural of Neis*) miracles

**Nittel Nacht** - the eve of December 25th, when a powerful spirit of impurity rests on the world. Many Jews refrain from studying Torah on this night, so as not to “feed” this impurity.

## O

**Ohel** - (*literally tent*) - the burial place of a Tzadik. When not otherwise specified, this generally refers to the Ohel of the Lubavitcher Rebbe in Queens, NY.

**Olam Haba** - the World to Come

## P

**Pasken** - issue judgment

**Pa”n** - (acronym for “Pidyon Nefesh,” soul redemption). A formal request to a Rebbe, accompanied by some Tzedakah, to intercede in the heavenly courts for mercy. A Pa’N is generally sent on certain special days on the Chassidic calendar, or at time of great need.

**Perek** - chapter

**Pesukim** - (*plural of posuk*) verses

**Poshute** - (*Yiddishized*) simple, i.e. not highly intellectual. This is in many places in Chassidus seen as an advantage, for the uncomplicated and unwavering trust in Hashem and the honesty of one who does not rationalize choices.

**Posuk** - verse

**Potches** - (*Yiddish*) whacks, spankings

## R

**Rabbeinu** - our teacher, generally an appellation following the name of Moshe (*Moses*)

**Rachmanus** - mercy or pity

**Rasha** - wicked person

**Rashi** - Rabbi Shlomo Yitzchaki, the most famous commentator to the Torah. His writings were intended to clarify the Chumash so that a five-year-old beginning to study would understand. The Rebbe has pointed out some of the tremendous depth in these seemingly simple clarifications.

**Ratzon** - will or desire, often referring to “Ratzon HaEloyon,” the Divine will, the essence of Hashem

**Resha’im** - (*plural of Rasha*) wicked persons

**Reshimos** - memoirs

**Ribbis** - interest on a loan

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

**Ruchniyus** - (*adj. or noun*) spiritual

## S

**Sanhedrin** - Jewish High Court, consisting of 70 righteous judges

**Sechel** - intellect

**Sefer** - book

**Sefira** - Kabbalistic attribute

**Seudah** - meal

**Shacharis** - morning prayers

**Shalom** - peace

**Shalosh Klipos Hatmeios** - see “Kelipah”

**Shas** - the entire set of Talmud

**Shema** - “Hear O Israel,” the declaration of faith in Hashem

**Shevatim** - (*plural of Shevet*) tribes. This can also refer to the progenitors of the tribes, Yaakov’s sons

**Shevet** - tribe (*the 12 tribes of Israel*)

**Shevuah** - very serious promise, sworn

**Shikker** - drunk

**Shir Hashirim** - [Solomon’s] Song of Songs

**Shiur** - lesson; defined halachic amount

**Shiurim** - [Torah] lessons or lectures (*plural of “shiur”*)

**Shliach** - male emissary of the Rebbe (*singular of “shluchim”*)

**Shlichus** - mission, usually Divine mission

**Shlomo Hamelech** - King Solomon

**Shlucha** - female emissary of the Rebbe — a friendly grammatical misrepresentation of the female form of “Shliach.” (*The correct form would be “Shlichah”*)

**Shluchim** - the Rebbe’s emissaries, who live all over the world helping their local communities do more mitzvot and strengthen their Judaism.

**Shomayim** - Heaven

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

**Siddur** - prayerbook

**Siman** - sign

**Simcha** - joy, one of the mitzvot — to serve Hashem with joy!

**Siyum** - completion, usually of a section of Torah, marked by a celebration

## T

**Taava** - desire (often a negative term, referring to a desire for worldliness)

**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.

**Tahor** - pure. This is a spiritual state.

**Taiva** - alternate spelling of “Taava” (or sometimes of “Teivah,” but it should be clear which it is!)

**Takana** - (*from the root “fixing”*) practice instituted by a Rebbe, such as the study of Chitas or the ban on drinking more than 4

**Tallis** - prayer shawl. Essentially a large woolen sheet with Tzitzis strings attached to the corners, worn to fulfill the obligation of enwrapping oneself in the Tzitzis. Chabad custom is not to wear a Tallis until marriage.

**Talmid** - student

**Talmid Chochom** - Torah scholar

**Talmidim** - students (*plural of Talmid*)

**Tatties** - daddies (*plural of Tatty*)

**Tatty** - daddy

**Techiyas Hameisim** - Resurrection of the Dead. One of the core beliefs of Judaism; in the era of Moshiach all departed souls will return to the world, in recreated healthy bodies, to continue fulfilling Hashem’s will in the world and to receive their earned rewards.

**Tefillin** - “phylacteries” (if that is any more clear than “Tefillin” :-)) Black leather boxes, with parchment scrolls inside, worn by men to fulfill the commandment of binding the words of G-d upon the arm (near the heart, seat of emotion) and head (—the seat of intellect). Their unique holiness precludes anyone not specifically commanded to from wearing them, as it is very difficult to provide that honor due them nowadays, and therefore the risk is only considered worthwhile in the context of one commanded to wear them.

**Tehillim** - Psalms, written by Dovid Hamelech (*King David*)

**Teivah** - Noah’s Ark. “Teivah” also means word.

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

**Tomei** - impure

**Tumah** - impurity

**Tzaddik** - purely righteous person

**Tzedakah** - charity. The literal meaning is “justice,” as we are taught that charity isn’t a choice of benevolence, it is the expected thing to do. Hashem doesn’t give us ALL of the money we are in possession of as a no-strings-attached gift, a portion (10%+) of it is given to us with the intention that we pass it on to the less fortunate.

**Tzemach Tzedek** - The third Lubavitcher Rebbe, Rabbi Menachem Mendel Schneersohn, who was Rebbe from 1831 - 1866

**Tzimtzum** - contraction — the way Hashem incrementally conceals His Divine light so that a “finite” world can exist

**Tzimtzumim** - plural of Tzimtzum

**Tzivos Hashem** - (*lit. “the army of Hashem”*) the international kids’ club established by the Rebbe, with a military theme emphasizing the fight to do what’s right

**Tznius** - modest

**Tzoraas** - “leprosy,” the skin rash given as a spiritual consequence for speaking ill of others. This disease, which could also show up on walls or clothing, only existed in the times of the Beis Hamikdash, as it was not a physical disease, and could only be “cured” with specific steps, including bringing sacrifices.

## V

**Varem** - (*Yiddish*) warm

## Y

**Yartzeit** - anniversary of someone’s passing. The souls of the departed are brought to a higher level in heaven on this day, and their accomplishments on earth similarly get a boost of strength. The yartzeit of a tzadik is typically not seen as a sad day, as their accomplishments — the primary purpose of their existence — continue, and as such they are still “alive” in that sense.

**Yechidus** - private consultation of a Chossid with a Rebbe. This is a very holy and pivotal experience, and is often referred back to in years to come.

**Yerushalayim** - Jerusalem

**Yesod** - element. This can also refer to the Sefira of Yesod.

**Yesod Haruach** - the element of wind

**Yesodos** - (*plural of Yesod*) elements

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

**Yetzer Tov** - “positive inclination”

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

**Yid** - (*Yiddish*) Jew

**Yidden** - Jews

**Yiddishe** - Jewish

**Yirah** - awe, fear (when used without a modifier, it usually refers to Yiras Shomayim)

**Yiras Shomayim** - fear of Heaven

**Yishmaelim** - Ishmaelites

**Yomim Tovim** - (*plural of Yom Tov*) holidays

**Yom Tov** - (*lit. “good day”*) holiday

**Yovel** - Jubilee year, the 50th year in the cycle of Shemithah (*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

## Z

**Zechus** - privilege or merit

**Zekeinim** - elders