

THE COVERED WIFE

BY LISA EMANUEL

GLOSSARY

Aleinu – A Jewish prayer

Amidah – Made up of nineteen blessings that are at the centre of the Jewish daily prayers, recited three times daily

B'sha'ah tovah – Response to a pregnancy announcement, meaning 'may all go well'; literally, 'at a good hour'

Baal teshuvah – Literally, 'master of return'; refers to a Jew from a secular background who becomes religiously observant

Babka – A glazed, sweet bread, typically made with fruit

Bar mitzvah – A Jewish coming-of-age ritual for a boy that occurs on or around his thirteenth birthday. In Judaism, thirteen is the age of male religious adulthood.

Baruch Hashem – Blessed be God; 'thank God'

Beit tefila – A building or place of meeting for worship and religious instruction in Judaism

Beth Din – A Jewish court of law composed of three rabbinic judges

Bimah – In Jewish synagogues, a raised platform with a reading desk from which the Torah is read during Shabbat and festivals

Binah – Understanding, analysis; associated with certain powers of spiritual discernment

Blech – A metal sheet used to cover stovetop burners on Shabbat as part of the precautions taken against contravening the prohibition on cooking

Blintzes – A thin, crepe-like pancake typically filled with cheese, traditionally eaten on Shavuot

Bris – The ceremony in which a Jewish baby boy is circumcised

Bubbe (Yiddish) – Grandmother

Challah/Challot (pl.) – A plaited loaf of bread traditionally baked to celebrate the Sabbath

Chametz – Foods with leavening agents that are forbidden during the Jewish festival of Passover

Chassid/Chassidic (pl.) – Belonging to a Jewish mystical sect founded in Eastern Europe during the eighteenth century

Cholent – A traditional Jewish stew, commonly eaten for lunch on Shabbat

Chuppah – A Jewish wedding canopy

Davening – Praying

Dvar Torah – A talk relating to that week's Torah portion

Frum (Yiddish) – Religious

Halacha/halachically correct – Jewish law; according to Jewish law

Haroset – Sweet mixture of fruit, nuts and wine eaten at the Passover seder

Hashem – Reference to God; means 'the name'

Havdalah – Literally, 'separation'; the ceremony marking the end of Shabbat

Imma – Mum, Mummy

Kibbutz – A communal settlement in Israel, typically a farm

Kiddush – Literally ‘sanctification’, blessing over wine

Kippa – A skullcap worn by a religiously observant Jewish man

Kittel (Yiddish) – A white robe worn by religious Jewish men on festivals

Koach – Strength

Kohen/Kohanim (pl.) – Descendant of the sons of Aaron who served as priests in the Temple in Jerusalem. In Judaism, kohanim get special honours in synagogue but also are subject to certain restrictions.

Kol hakavod – Literally, ‘all the honour’ as in ‘well done’ or ‘way to go’

Kosher – Food that is ‘fit’ for consumption for a religious Jew. It has also come to refer more broadly to anything that is ‘above board’ or legitimate.

Lag BaOmer – A Jewish holiday celebrated on the thirty-third day of the Counting of the Omer; known for bonfires, weddings and haircuts

Lashon hara – Speaking badly of another

Lubavitcher Rebbe – The spiritual leader of the Chabad-Lubavitch Chassidic dynasty; commonly used to refer to Menachem Mendel Schneerson, the most recent Lubavitcher Rebbe

Maariv – Jewish evening prayers

Mahzor – A Hebrew prayer book containing the Jewish liturgy for festivals

Matzah – Unleavened flat bread eaten during the Jewish festival of Passover

Matzah balls – Soup dumplings made out of ground matzah and traditionally eaten during Passover and especially as part of the Passover seder meal

Mazel tov – Congratulations

Mechitzah – A curtain or divider that serves as a partition between women and men, typically in an Orthodox synagogue

Mezuzah – A piece of parchment contained in a decorative case and inscribed with specific Hebrew verses from the Torah, which is then affixed to the doorposts of a Jewish home

Mikvah – A ritual bath

Minyan – In Judaism, the quorum of ten Jewish adults required for certain religious obligations. In orthodox Judaism, only males aged thirteen and older may constitute a minyan.

Mitzvah/Mitzvot (pl.) – Literally ‘commandment’; refers to any of the 613 commandments in the Torah

Modeh Ani – A Jewish prayer that observant Jews recite daily upon waking

Moshiach – The Jewish messiah

Niddah – Begins with the onset of menstruation and finishes with the woman’s immersion in a mikvah (ritual bath)

Noahide laws – The Seven Laws of Noah. According to the Talmud, these were given by God as a binding set of universal moral laws for all people.

Oi vey – A Yiddish phrase expressing dismay, frustration or grief

Passover – A Jewish festival celebrating the liberation of the Israelites from slavery in ancient Egypt

Purim – A Jewish festival commemorating the saving of the Jewish people from Haman in the ancient Persian Empire

Rabbi – Jewish religious leader

Rebbetzin – Rabbi’s wife

Rev – Teacher or personal spiritual guide

Ruach – Spirit

Sandek – A person who holds the Jewish infant during the circumcision ceremony

Schvitzing (Yiddish) – Sweating

Seder – A ritual involving the retelling of the story of the liberation of the Israelites from slavery in ancient Egypt on the first and second nights of the festival of Passover

Shabbat – The Jewish day of rest, observed from Friday afternoon until Saturday evening

Shabbos (Yiddish) – The Sabbath

Shalom – Hello, goodbye and peace

Shavarim – Three long sounds made on the shofar as prescribed in the Jewish ritual for Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur

Shavuot – A major Jewish festival commemorating the giving of the Torah to the Jews at Mount Sinai

Sheitel – A wig worn by a married woman

Shema – Among the best known prayers in Judaism, recited during morning and evening prayers, and traditionally as the last words before death

Shiur – A lesson on any Torah topic

Shofar – An ancient musical horn typically made of a ram's horn, used for Jewish religious purposes

Shomer negiah – A person who abides by the Jewish rule prohibiting or restricting physical contact with a member of the opposite sex

Siddur/Siddurim (pl.) – Jewish prayer books containing a set order of daily prayers

Simcha – A celebration

Snood – Head-covering, traditionally for women, where hair is held in a cloth or yarn bag

Synagogue – A house of worship for a Jewish congregation

Talmud – The written version of the Jewish oral law and the subsequent commentaries on it; regarded as sacred and normative by orthodox religious Jews

Tefillin – Phylacteries, a set of small black leather boxes containing scrolls of parchment inscribed with verses from the Torah. Tefillin are worn by observant adult Jews during weekday morning prayers.

Tekiah – One of the long deep calls sounded on the shofar as prescribed in the Jewish ritual for Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur

Teruah – Nine staccato blasts sounded on the shofar as prescribed in the Jewish ritual for Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur

the Omer – Literally, ‘sheaf’; an ancient Israelite unit of dry measure used in the era of the Temple in Jerusalem. Refers to the forty-nine-day period between the second night of Passover and the holiday of Shavuot.

Torah – Literally ‘guide’ or ‘instruction’, refers to the Five Books of Moses. It can be used more broadly to also include the Oral Torah – rabbinical teachings now embodied in the Talmud and Midrash, or even the totality of Jewish teaching, culture and practice.

Tzedakah – Charity

Yarmulke – The common Yiddish word for the skullcap worn by Jewish males

Yeshiva – A Jewish educational institution that focuses on the study of traditional religious texts

Yiddishe mama (Yiddish) – Jewish mother, especially as a cultural stereotype

Yiddishkeit – Literally, ‘Jewishness’ or ‘a Jewish way of life’. From a secular perspective, it is associated with the traditional practices of Yiddish-speaking Jews of Eastern and Central Europe.

Yom Kippur – Also known as the Day of Atonement. Jews traditionally observe this holy day with a day-long fast and intensive prayer.

Zaide (Yiddish) – Grandfather

Zohar – Widely considered the foundational work of Kabbalah, Jewish mysticism