The Libes Briv of Isaac Wetzlar

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Glossary of Terms and Names

**Aggadah (pl. aggadot)** - Narrative (as distinguished from legal) passages in rabbinic literature (Talmud and Midrash).

**A"H** - Abbreviation for, "of blessed memory."

**Akdamut** - Aramaic poem by R. Meir ben Isaac Nehorai read in the synagogue at the beginning of the Torah reading on Shavuot.

**Almosnino, R. Moses** – (c. 1515-c. 1580), scholar and rabbi in Salonika.

**Ani Ma'amim** – "I believe," the first words of Maimonides’ "Thirteen Articles of Faith." Used as term for these "Thirteen Articles."

**Anim Zemirot** – Synagogue hymn attributed to R. Judah ha-Ḥasid (d. 1217). Often sung at the conclusion of the Sabbath morning service.

**Ashkenazim** – Jews from Central and Eastern Europe.

**Ashrei** – Psalm 145. A prayer in the morning and afternoon services.

**Cordovero, R. Moses** – Important kabblist in 16th century Safed.

**Ein ke Elokenu** – A prayer at the conclusion of the Sabbath service.

**Gemara** – Part of Talmud (Mishnah and Gemara) consisting of commentaries and discussions of the Mishnah.

**Haftorah** – Section from the Prophets read in the synagogue on sabbaths and festivals.

**Halakhah** – Legal traditions of Judaism.

**Hallel** – Psalms of praise.

**Hanukkah** – The festival of Lights.

**Haver** – Colleague, scholar.
Hillukim – Type of Talmudic analysis popular in the early modern period in Central and Eastern Europe.

Hoshen Mishpat – Section of the Shulhan Arukh dealing with torts and other aspects of business law.

Hover – An honorary title indicating that its possessor studied in a yeshiva and is considered a scholar.

Humash – The five books of Moses.

Judah ha Hasid – (d.1217). Important medieval pietist and mystic. Central figure in pietistic and mystical movement called “Hasidei Ashkenaz.”

Ketubah – Marriage contract.


Ma’ariv – The evening prayer.

Midrash (pl. Midrashim) – Homiletical and exegetical interpretation of scripture by rabbis, from the first to 10th centuries. Also refers to the body of literature containing this exegesis.

Minhah – The afternoon prayer.

Mishnah (mishnah) – First collection of rabbinic legal writings codified by Rabbi Judah the Prince, 200 c. C.E. Each section within the Mishnah is also called a “mishnah.”

Musar – Ethics; chastisement. Designates books of moral theology.

Oleinu le-Shabbe’ah – Prayer which concludes the service.

Oral Torah – Rabbinic teachings, as opposed to “Written Torah,” scripture.

Oreḥ Hayyim – Section of “Tur” and “Shulkhan Arukh” relating to daily life and holidays.

Parnas (pl. Parnasim) – Communal leaders.

Pereq Shirah – Anonymous tract containing hymns in praise of God.

Pesukei de Zimra – “Psalms of Praise,” introductory prayers of morning service.


Sephardim – Jews tracing their origins from the Iberian Peninsula.

Shabbat ha-Gadol – The sabbath before Passover.

Shabbat Shuvah – The “Sabbath of Return.” The sabbath between Rosh Hashannah (New Year) and Yom Kippur (Day of Atonement).

Shas – “The Six Orders,” a term denoting Mishnah and Talmud.

Shavuot – Festival of giving of the Torah.


Shemoneh Esreh – “The eighteen Blessings,” the central prayer of the three daily prayers.

Shir – Term for psalms of praise.

Shir ha-Yihud – “Hymn of Unity.” Medieval liturgical poem divided into seven parts. It was traditional in some synagogues to recite a section each day of the week at the end of the service.

Shir ha-Kavod – See “Ani m Zemirot.”

Shulhan Arukh – Code of Jewish Law by R. Joseph Karo (16th century), composed of four parts, Oreḥ Ḥayyim, Yoreh Deah, Hoshen Mishpat, and Even Hoezer.

TaNaKh – Torah, Nevi’im, Ketubim. The Hebrew Scriptures.

Tosafot – Important medieval commentary on the Talmud.

Treiṭ – Not kosher.

Tur (pl. Turim) – Halakhic compendium by Jacob ben Asher (1270?-1340) consisting of four parts, Oreḥ Ḥayyim, Yoreh Deah, Hoshen Mishpat and Even Hoezer.

Yeshiva – School for advanced studies.

Yigdal – A hymn based on Maimonides’ “Thirteen articles of Faith.” It is often sung at the end of services in the synagogue.

Yishtabbah – A prayer which is part of the morning service.

Zimra – Term for psalms of praise.