

GENERAL JEWISH LIFE VOCABULARY LIST

Most lists are in alphabetical order, by the column with transliteration.

Items in "quotations" are literal translations.

* Terms with an asterisk are part of the Hebrew Through Movement vocabulary lists

Greetings and Exclamations		
Hebrew	Transliteration	Translation/Description
בְּהַצְלָחָה	<i>b'hatzlahah</i>	Good luck
בְּסֵדֶר	<i>b'seder</i>	Okay; "in order"
בְּתֵאֵבוֹן	<i>b'tey-avon</i>	Bon appetite; enjoy your meal
בְּבִקְשָׁה	<i>b'vakashah</i>	Please; you are welcome
בְּרוּךְ הַשֵּׁם	<i>barukh hashem</i>	Thank God
הַכֹּל בְּסֵדֶר	<i>hakol b'seder</i>	Everything is okay; "Everything is in order"
כָּל הַכְּבוֹד	<i>kol hakavod</i>	Good job; "All the respect to you"
לְחַיִּים	<i>l'hayim</i>	Cheers; "to life"
לְהִתְרָאוֹת	<i>l'hitra-ot</i>	Bye; see you later
לְבְרִיאוֹת	<i>lab'ri-ut</i>	Bless you; after a sneeze: "to health"
מִזֵּל טוֹב	<i>mazal tov</i>	Congratulations; "good fortune"
נְסִיעָה טוֹבָה	<i>n'siyah tovah</i>	"Have a good trip"

רְפוּאָה שְׁלִימָה	<i>r'fu-ah sh'leimah</i>	Feel better; "a full recovery"
סְלִיחָה	<i>s'lihah</i>	Excuse me
שְׁלוֹם	<i>shalom</i>	Hello; farewell; "peace"
תּוֹדָה	<i>todah</i>	Thank you
טוֹב	<i>tov*</i>	Good
יִישַׁר כַּחֲדָי	<i>yishar kohekh</i> colloquially pronounced: <i>yasher ko-hekh</i>	Statement made to a female in response to something done well, especially after a Torah reading or <i>d'var Torah</i> ; "May your strength be made straight"
יִישַׁר כַּחֲדָי	<i>yishar ko-h'kha</i> colloquially pronounced: <i>yasher ko-ah</i>	Statement made to a male in response to something done well, especially after a Torah reading or <i>d'var Torah</i> ; "May your strength be made straight"
יוֹפִי	<i>yofi*</i>	Beautiful; nice
יוֹם הַוּלְדוֹת שְׂמַח	<i>yom huledet</i> <i>same-ah</i>	Happy birthday

Value Words			
	Hebrew	Transliteration	Translation/Description
Conceptual	עַל רֶגֶל אַחַת	<i>al regel ahat</i>	“On one foot”; Meaning: without/little forethought.
	בְּצֶלֶם אֱלֹהִים	<i>B'tzelem Elohim</i>	In the image of God
	בְּרִית	<i>b'rit</i>	Covenant; contract
	דֶּרֶךְ אֶרֶץ	<i>derekh eretz</i>	“Way of the land”; Meaning: the common way that people act
	אֵלוּ וְאֵלוּ	<i>eilu v'eilu</i>	Both this and that
	חַי	<i>hai</i>	Life; alive; living
	חֶסֶד	<i>hesed</i>	Kindness
	חֲצִפָּה	<i>hutzpah</i>	Nerve; guts; the quality of over-stepping boundaries with no shame
	קָדוֹשׁ	<i>kadosh</i>	Holy
	מְעַנְטֵשׁ	<i>mensch</i>	(Yiddish) A good person
	מִדּוֹת	<i>middot</i>	Values; virtues
	מִצְוָה	<i>mitzvah</i>	Commandment
	תְּכֵלִית	<i>takhles</i> (note the pronunciation difference from the Hebrew)	(Yiddish) Details; essence; bottom line
	תְּשׁוּבָה	<i>t'shuvah</i>	Repentance
	צְדָקָה	<i>tzedek</i>	Justice

Value Words			
	Hebrew	Transliteration	Translation/Description
Relational	בְּקוּר חוֹלִים	<i>bikkur ḥolim</i>	Visiting the sick
	חֲבֵרוּתָא	<i>ḥavrutah</i>	(Aramaic) friendship, study partner, traditional rabbinic style of Talmud study in pairs
	גְּמִילוּת חֶסֶדִים	<i>g'milut ḥasadim</i>	Acts of loving kindness
	הַכְּנָסַת אוֹרְחִים	<i>hakhnasat orhim</i>	Welcoming guests
	לְשׁוֹן הָרַע	<i>lashon hara</i>	Gossip; “evil tongue”
	שְׁלוֹם בַּיִת	<i>sh'lom bayit</i>	Peace of the home
	תִּיקוּן עוֹלָם	<i>tikkun olam</i>	Repairing the world

Bible/Torah		
Hebrew	Transliteration	Translation/Description
בְּרֵאשִׁית	<i>B'reishit</i>	Genesis; "in the beginning"
שְׁמוֹת	<i>Sh'mot</i>	Exodus; "names"
וַיִּקְרָא	<i>Vayikra</i>	Leviticus; "and he called"
בְּמִדְבָּר	<i>B'midbar</i>	Numbers; "in the desert"
דְּבָרִים	<i>D'varim</i>	Deuteronomy; "words"

Jewish Texts		
Hebrew	Transliteration	Translation/Description
תּוֹרָה	<i>Torah*</i>	Law/teaching, Five Books of Moses
תנ"ך	<i>Tanakh</i>	Hebrew Bible – <i>Torah, N'vi'im, K'tuvim</i>
נְבִיאִים	<i>N'vi'im</i>	Prophets (section of the Bible)
כְּתוּבִים	<i>K'tuvim</i>	Writings (section of the Bible)
הַלְכָּה	<i>halakhah</i>	Jewish law; “the way to go”
מִשְׁנָה	<i>Mishnah</i>	Rabbinic writings of Jewish Oral Law; first part of <i>Talmud</i>
גְּמָרָא	<i>Gemara</i>	Rabbinic commentary on the <i>Mishnah</i> ; second part of <i>Talmud</i>
תַּלְמוּד	<i>Talmud</i>	Rabbinic books of legal codes, stories, debates, made of <i>Mishnah</i> and <i>Gemara</i>
פְּרָקֵי אָבוֹת	<i>Pirkei Avot</i>	Text about relationships and ethics; “Ethics of Our Sages”

Jewish Books		
Hebrew	Transliteration	Translation/Description
סִדּוּר	<i>siddur*</i>	Prayerbook
סִדּוּרִים	<i>siddurim*</i>	Prayerbooks
תּוֹרָה	<i>Torah*</i>	Law/teaching; Five Books of Moses in scroll form
חֻמָּשׁ	<i>humash*</i>	Five Books of Moses in book form
מַחְזֹר	<i>mahzor*</i>	High Holiday prayerbook
הַגְּדָה	<i>haggadah*</i>	Book used at <i>Pesah seder</i> ; "telling"

Ritual Objects		
Hebrew	Transliteration	Translation/Description
כִּפָּה	<i>kippah*</i>	(Yiddish: <i>Yarmulke</i>) ritually-worn head covering
טלית	<i>tallit*</i>	Prayer shawl
תְּפִלִּין	<i>t'fillin*</i>	Phylacteries; the small black boxes worn on a person's head and arm during weekday morning services
צִיצִית	<i>tzitzit*</i>	Fringes with knots tied onto <i>tallit</i>
מְזוּזָה	<i>m'zuzzah</i>	Scroll placed on door frame with words from the Torah inside
יָד	<i>yad*</i>	Torah pointer; "hand"

Prayer and Worship		
Hebrew	Transliteration	Translation/Description
תְּפִלָּה	<i>t'fillah</i>	Prayer; services; worship
קַבְּלַת שַׁבָּת	<i>Kabbalat Shabbat</i>	Friday night service; "receiving <i>Shabbat</i> "
שַׁחֲרִית	<i>Shaharit</i>	Morning service
מוֹסָף	<i>Mussaf</i>	Additional service on <i>Shabbat</i> , holidays, <i>Rosh Hodesh</i> (the beginning of a Hebrew month)
מִנְחָה	<i>Minhah</i>	Afternoon service
מַעֲרִיב	<i>Ma'ariv</i>	Evening service
בָּרוּךְ	<i>barukh</i>	Blessed; praised
בְּרָכָה	<i>b'rakhah</i>	Blessing
שְׁהֵינָנוּ	<i>Sh'heheyanu</i>	Blessing of praise for first times and joyous occasions

הַמוֹצֵיא	<i>Hamotzi</i>	Blessing over bread and food
בְּרַכַּת הַמָּזוֹן	<i>Birkat Hamazon</i>	Grace/blessing of thanksgiving after eating
הַבְּדֵלָה	<i>Havdallah*</i>	Ceremony at the end of <i>Shabbat</i> ; “separation”
מִי שֶׁבֵרַךְ	<i>Mi sheberakh</i>	Blessing for those in need of healing; “One who blesses”
קַדִּישׁ	<i>Kaddish</i>	Prayer said in remembrance of those who died; also used as a divider between sections of a service as words of praise
רֹאשׁ חֹדֶשׁ	<i>Rosh Hodesh</i>	New Month, considered a minor holiday; “head of the month”
סְלִיחוֹת	<i>S'lihot</i>	Service preceding Rosh Hashanah; “forgiveness”
יִישָׁר כֶּחֶךְ	<i>yishar ko-h'kha</i> colloquially pronounced: <i>yasher ko-ah</i>	Statement made to a male in response to something done well, especially after a Torah reading or <i>d'var Torah</i> ; “May your strength be made straight”
יִישָׁר כֶּחֶךְ	<i>yishar kohek</i> colloquially pronounced: <i>yasher ko-hekh</i>	Statement made to a female in response to something done well, especially after a Torah reading or <i>d'var Torah</i> ; “May your strength be made straight”

Lifecycle			
Event	Hebrew	Transliteration	Translation/Description
Birth	בְּרִית מִילָה	<i>B'rit milah</i>	"Covenant of circumcision"
	מוֹהֵל	<i>mohel</i>	One who performs ritual circumcision
	שְׂמֻחַת בַּת	<i>Simhat bat</i>	Girl's naming ceremony; "celebration of the daughter"

Lifecycle			
Event	Hebrew	Transliteration	Translation/Description
Bar/Bat Mitzvah	עֲלִיָּה לְתוֹרָה	<i>aliyah la'torah</i>	Calling up to the <i>bimah</i> to recite Torah blessings or read from Torah
	בָּר מִצְוָה	<i>Bar Mitzvah</i>	A boy's coming of age according to Jewish tradition, often celebrated with ceremony; "son of the commandment"
	בַּת מִצְוָה	<i>Bat Mitzvah</i>	A girl's coming of age according to Jewish tradition, often celebrated with ceremony; "daughter of the commandment"
	בְּנֵי מִצְוָה	<i>B'nai Mitzvah</i>	Plural of <i>Bar Mitzvah</i> ; "children of the commandment"
	בָּנוֹת מִצְוָה	<i>B'not Mitzvah</i>	Plural of <i>Bat Mitzvah</i> ; "daughters of the commandment"

Lifecyle			
Event	Hebrew	Transliteration	Translation/Description
Wedding	אויפרוף	<i>Aufruf</i> colloquially pronounced: <i>oof-roof</i>	(Yiddish: "calling up") Pre-wedding honor and blessing at services
	חֲפָה	<i>huppah</i>	Wedding canopy
	כְּתוּבָה	<i>k'tubah</i>	Marriage contract, agreement

Lifecyle			
Event	Hebrew	Transliteration	Translation/Description
Illness	בִּיקוּר חוֹלִים	<i>bikkur holim</i>	Visiting the sick
	מִי שֶׁבֵרַךְ	<i>Mi Sheberakh</i>	Blessing for those in need of healing; "one who blesses"
	רְפוּאָה שְׁלִימָה	<i>r'fu-ah sh'leimah</i>	Feel better; "a full recovery"

Lifecycle			
Event	Hebrew	Transliteration	Translation/Description
Death	שִׁבְעָה	<i>shivah</i>	Week of mourning following a death
	שְׁלוֹשִׁים	<i>sh'loshim</i>	Thirty days following a death
	יָאָרְצַיִט	<i>Yartzeit</i>	(Yiddish) Year-anniversary of a death
	זְכוֹרוֹנוֹ לְבָרָכָה	<i>zikhrono livrakhah</i>	"May his memory be a blessing"
	זְכוֹרוֹנָהּ לְבָרָכָה	<i>zikhronah livrakhah</i>	"May her memory be a blessing"
	קַדִּישׁ יָתוֹם	<i>Kaddish yatom</i>	Mourner's Kaddish; prayer said in remembrance of those who died

Lifecycle			
	Hebrew	Transliteration	Translation/Description
Greetings	מַזָּל טוֹב	<i>mazal tov</i>	Congratulations; “good fortune”
	וַיֵּשֶׁר כַּחֲדָד	<i>yashar kohekh</i> colloquially pronounced: <i>yasher ko-hekh</i>	Statement made to a female in response to something done well, especially after a Torah reading or <i>d’var Torah</i> ; “May your strength be made straight”
	וַיֵּשֶׁר כַּחֲדָד	<i>yishar ko-h’kha</i> colloquially pronounced: <i>yasher ko-ah</i>	Statement made to a male in response to something done well, especially after a Torah reading or <i>d’var Torah</i> ; “May your strength be made straight”
	יוֹם הוֹלָדֶת שִׂמְחָה	<i>yom huledet same-ah</i>	Happy birthday

Synagogue/Community			
	Hebrew	Transliteration	Translation/Description
People	רב	<i>Rav</i>	Rabbi
	חזן	<i>Hazzan</i>	Cantor
	גבאי	<i>Gabbai</i>	One who helps with Torah service
	שְׁלִיחַ צְבוּר	<i>shali-ah tzibur</i>	Prayer leader (male)
	שְׁלִיחַת צְבוּר	<i>sh'lihat tzibur</i>	Prayer leader (female)
	מִנְיָן	<i>minyan</i>	Prayer group of at least 10 people
	קְהֵלָה	<i>k'hillah</i>	Community
	מוֹרֶה	<i>moreh*</i>	Teacher (male)
	מוֹרָה	<i>morah*</i>	Teacher (female)
	מוֹרִים	<i>morim*</i>	Teachers (male or mixed gender)
	מוֹרוֹת	<i>morot*</i>	Teachers (female)
	מְדַרְיָן	<i>madrikh*</i>	Guide; used as: teen assistant (male)
	מְדַרְיָה	<i>madrikhah*</i>	Guide; used as: teen assistant (female)
	מְדַרְיָכִים	<i>madrikhim*</i>	Guides; used as: teen assistants (male or mixed gender)
	מְדַרְיָחוֹת	<i>madrikhot*</i>	Guides; used as: teen assistants (female)

Synagogue/Community			
	Hebrew	Transliteration	Translation/Description
Places	בֵּית כְּנֶסֶת	<i>beit k'neset</i>	"House of gathering"; synagogue
	בֵּית מִדְרָשׁ	<i>beit midrash</i>	"House of study"
	בֵּית תְּפִילָּה	<i>beit t'fillah</i>	"House of prayer"; sanctuary
	סִפְרִיָּה	<i>sifriyah</i>	Library
	כִּתָּה	<i>kitah</i>	Classroom

Synagogue/Community			
	Hebrew	Transliteration	Translation/Description
Things	אָרוֹן הַקֹּדֶשׁ	<i>aron hakodesh*</i>	Holy Ark
	בִּימָה	<i>bimah*</i>	Stage; platform in synagogue
	עֵרוֹב	<i>eruv</i>	Public area designated as “private domain” by wire boundary that permits activities usually forbidden publically on Shabbat (i.e. carrying)
	מְחִיצָה	<i>m'hitzah</i>	Partition; division for separation between men and women, usually during prayer
	נֵר תָּמִיד	<i>ner tamid*</i>	Eternal light
	סֵפֶר	<i>sefer*</i>	Book
	סְפָרִים	<i>s'farim*</i>	Books

Synagogue/Community			
	Hebrew	Transliteration	Translation/Description
Other	מִנְהַג הַמָּקוֹם	<i>minhag hamakom</i>	“Custom of the place”
	שְׁעוּר	<i>shi-ur</i>	Lesson
	צְדָקָה	<i>tz'dakah*</i>	Charitable giving

Kashrut		
Hebrew	Transliteration	Translation/Description
בְּשָׂרִי	<i>b'sari</i>	Meat
חֲלָבִי	<i>halavi</i>	Dairy
פָּרוּוה	<i>parve</i>	(Yiddish) Neutral; neither meat nor dairy
טְרֵיף	<i>treif</i>	(Yiddish) Not kosher
הֶכְשֵׁר	<i>hekhsher</i>	Kosher certification approval
כָּשֵׁר	<i>kasher</i>	To make kosher; to make fit for use
כְּשָׁרוֹת	<i>kashrut</i>	Laws concerning status of food for eating and ritual; kosher
מִשְׁגִּיחַ	<i>mashgi-ah</i>	One who oversees <i>kashrut</i> status of kitchen
הֲלָכָה	<i>halakhah</i>	Jewish law; “the way to go”

Torah Service		
Hebrew	Transliteration	Translation/Description
עֲלִיָּה לְתוֹרָה	<i>aliyah la'torah</i>	Calling up to the <i>bimah</i> to recite Torah blessings or read from Torah
בִּמָּה	<i>bimah*</i>	Raised area in synagogue; can also refer to the pulpit
דְּבַר תוֹרָה	<i>d'var Torah</i>	Sermon; "words of Torah"
דְּרָשָׁה	<i>d'rashah</i>	Interpretation or explication of Torah
עֵץ חַיִּים	<i>etz hayim</i>	Wooden handles of Torah scroll; "Tree of life"
גְּלִילָה	<i>g'lilah</i>	Dressing the Torah
גַּבַּי	<i>gabbai</i>	One who helps with Torah service
הַפְּטָרָה	<i>Haftarah</i>	Reading from books of <i>Nevi'im</i> /Prophets accompanying the Torah portion
הַגְּבָהָה	<i>hagbahah</i> colloquially pronounced: <i>hagbah</i>	Raising of the Torah scroll
הַקְּפָה	<i>hakafah</i>	Going around or circling with Torah scrolls; Torah procession
מַפְטִיר	<i>maftir</i>	Concluding section of Torah reading; last Torah reader
פָּרָשָׁה	<i>parashah</i>	Portion of Torah
פָּרָשַׁת הַשְּׁבוּעַ	<i>parashat hashavu-a</i>	Torah portion of the week

God		
Hebrew	Transliteration	Translation/Description
יהוה	<i>Adonai</i>	God
אֱלֹהִים	<i>Elohim</i>	God
הַשֵּׁם	<i>Hashem</i>	God; "The Name"

Israel and World Jewry			
	Hebrew	Transliteration	Translation/Description
Concepts	עֲלִיָּה	<i>aliyah</i>	Ascend/go up; move to Israel
	עַם יִשְׂרָאֵל	<i>am Yisra-el</i>	People of Israel
	עַם יִשְׂרָאֵל חַי	<i>am Yisra-el <u>h</u>ai</i>	“The people of Israel live”
	אַשְׁכְּנָזִי	<i>Ashkenazi</i>	From Eastern European Jewish descent
	מִזְרָחִי	<i>Mizrahi</i>	From Middle Eastern Jewish descent
	סְפָרְדִי	<i>S'faradi</i>	From Spanish/North African Jewish descent
	הַתִּקְוָה	<i>Hatikvah</i>	Israeli national anthem; “The Hope”

Israel and World Jewry			
	Hebrew	Transliteration	Translation/Description
Places	אֶרֶץ	<i>eretz</i>	Land; country
	אֶרֶץ יִשְׂרָאֵל	<i>eretz Yisra-el</i>	Land of Israel
	הַכֶּתֶל	<i>Ha-Kotel</i>	The Western Wall of The Temple in Jerusalem
	קִבּוּץ	<i>kibbutz</i>	Communal settlement in Israel
	יְרוּשָׁלַיִם	<i>Y'rushalayim</i>	Jerusalem
	יִשְׂרָאֵל	<i>Yisra-el*</i>	Israel