

Common Gemara Vocabulary

For reference once the basic five components have become familiar

Appendix A lists the twenty markers to learn *first*. This appendix is the fuller reference to grow into: it repeats those twenty and adds the rest, organized by the job each word does in a sentence rather than by frequency. Do not read it straight through. Come here when a word on the page is unfamiliar and you want to know what kind of move it signals.

Question words

Term	Pronunciation	Phonetic	Meaning
מַאי	<i>Mai</i>	MY	What? What is ...?
מֵנָּה הֵנִי מִיָּלִי	<i>Mina hanei mili</i>	mee-NAH hah-NAY mee-LEE	From where do we know these things? What is the source?
מֵנָּה לָן	<i>Mina lan</i>	mee-NAH LAN	From where do we derive this?
מַאי טַעְמָא	<i>Mai taama</i>	MY tah-AH-mah	What is the reason?
הֵיכִי דָּמִי	<i>Heichi dami</i>	HAY-chee dah-MAY	What is the case? What are the circumstances?
לְמַאי נִפְקָא מִינָּה	<i>L'mai nafka minah</i>	luh-MY NAF-kah mee- NAH	What practical difference does it make?
מַאי קָא מִשְׁמַע לָן	<i>Mai ka mashma lan</i>	MY kah MASH-mah LAN	What is this teaching us: what is the novel point?
פְּשִׁיטָא	<i>Peshita</i>	peh-SHEE-tah	It is obvious: why did this need to be stated?

Term	Pronunciation	Phonetic	Meaning
הֵיכָא	<i>Heicha</i>	HAY-chah	Where? In what case does it apply?
מַאי קוּשְׁיָא	<i>Mai kushya</i>	MY KOOSH-yah	What is the difficulty? (suggesting there is none).

Challenges and objections

Term	Pronunciation	Phonetic	Meaning
קוּשְׁיָא	<i>Kashya</i>	KASH-yah	Difficult: a problem stands.
וְרַמְיָנְהוּ	<i>V'raminhu</i>	vruh-MIN-hoo	And they contradict each other.
מִיתִיבֵי	<i>Meisivei</i>	may-see-VAY	They raised an objection from a <i>Baraisa</i> .
תִּיּוּבָתָא	<i>Tiyuvta</i>	tee-YOOV-tah	A conclusive refutation.
לֵימָא מְסִייעָא לֵיהּ	<i>Leima m'sayya lei</i>	LAY-mah muh-SAY- yah LAY	Let us say this source supports him.
קוּשְׁיָא ... תִּיּוּבָתָא	<i>Kashya ... Tiyuvta</i>	KASH-yah ... tee- YOOV-tah	<i>Kashya</i> = a difficulty that may yet be resolved; <i>Tiyuvta</i> = a fatal refutation.

Answers and resolutions

Term	Pronunciation	Phonetic	Meaning
אַלָּא	<i>Ela</i>	el-AH	But rather: introduces a correction.
לֹא קוּשְׁיָא	<i>Lo kashya</i>	loh KASH-yah	No difficulty: here is how the apparent problem is resolved.
שְׁאֵנִי	<i>Shani</i>	SHAH-nee	It is different: this case is exceptional.
הֵכִי קָאָמַר	<i>Hachi ka'amar</i>	HAH-chee kah-AH- mar	This is what it actually means to say.

Term	Pronunciation	Phonetic	Meaning
הא מני	<i>Ha mani</i>	hah MAN-ee	To whose opinion does this teaching belong?
איצטריך	<i>Itzterich</i>	eets-TRIch	It was necessary to state, because ...
חסורי מחסרא	<i>Chasurei mechsera</i>	chah-soo-RAY mech- suh-RAH	The text is abbreviated; something must be added to make sense of it.

Logical structure

Term	Pronunciation	Phonetic	Meaning
הוה אמינא	<i>Hava amina</i>	HAH-vah ah-mee- NAH	I would have thought: an initial assumption about to be corrected.
קא משה לן	<i>Ka mashma lan</i>	kah MASH-mah LAN	It teaches us: the novel point being made.
בשלמא	<i>B'shlama</i>	bish-LAH-mah	It is understandable that ... (granted that, however ...).
אי הכי	<i>Ee hachi</i>	EE HAH-chee	If so: if your explanation is correct, then ...
מהו דתימא	<i>Mahu d'teima</i>	mah-HOO d'TAY- mah	What might one have said: anticipating a wrong conclusion.
אי נמי	<i>Ee nami</i>	EE NAH-may	Alternatively.
ואיבעית אימא	<i>V'ee ba'is eima</i>	v'EE bah-EES AY- mah	And if you wish, say (an alternative answer).
לעולם	<i>L'olam</i>	luh-oh-LAM	Actually: the original position is maintained despite the challenge.
איכא דאמרי	<i>Ika d'amri</i>	EE-kah d'AHM-ree	Some say: an alternative version.

Citations and source markers

Term	Pronunciation	Phonetic	Meaning
תִּנַּן	<i>Tenan</i>	tuh-NAN	We learned (in a Mishnah).
תַּנְיָא	<i>Tanya</i>	TAN-yah	It was taught (in a <i>Baraisa</i>).
תַּנוּ רַבָּנִן	<i>Tanu Rabbanan</i>	TAH-noo rah-bah-NAN	Our Rabbis taught (introduces a <i>Baraisa</i>).
אָמַר רַב / אָמַר רַבִּי	<i>Amar Rav / Amar Rabbi</i>	ah-MAR RAV / ah-MAR rah-BEE	Rav said / Rabbi said.
אִתְמַר	<i>Itmar</i>	eet-MAR	It was stated (an Amoraic dispute).
מִתְּנִינִין	<i>Masnisin</i>	mas-NEE-seen	Our Mishnah.
בְּרִיתָא	<i>Baraisa</i>	bah-RYE-tah	External Tannaitic teaching (not in our Mishnah).
דְּתַנַּן	<i>D'tenan</i>	d'tuh-NAN	As we learned (citing a Mishnah).
דְּתַנְיָא	<i>D'tanya</i>	d'TAN-yah	As it was taught (citing a <i>Baraisa</i>).
דְּכֵתִיב	<i>Dichtiv</i>	dich-TEEV	As it is written (citing a verse).

Common verbs

Term	Pronunciation	Phonetic	Meaning
אָמַר	<i>Amar</i>	ah-MAR	Said.
בִּעֵי	<i>Ba'i</i>	bah-EE	Asked; requires; needs.
קֵאָמַר	<i>Ka'amar</i>	kah-AH-mar	Is saying; means.
סָבַר	<i>Savar</i>	sah-VAR	Holds; thinks; reasons.

Term	Pronunciation	Phonetic	Meaning
מִסְתַּבֵּרָא	<i>Mistabra</i>	mees-TAB-rah	It stands to reason.
אִיפְּלִיגוּ	<i>Ifligu</i>	if-lee-GOO	They disagree.
קָמִיפְּלָגִי	<i>Ka'mifalgei</i>	kah-mee-fal-GAY	They are disputing about.
סְבִירָא לִיָּה	<i>S'vira lei</i>	svee-RAH LAY	He holds; he is of the opinion.
יָלִיף	<i>Yalif</i>	yah-LEEF	Derives; learns (a law from a source).
מִמְעֵט	<i>M'maet</i>	muh-mah-ET	Excludes.
מְרַבֵּה	<i>M'rabeh</i>	muh-rah-BEH	Includes.

Common nouns and concepts

Term	Pronunciation	Phonetic	Meaning
הַלְכָּה	<i>Halacha</i>	hah-lah-chAH	The law; the practical ruling.
דִּינָא	<i>Dina</i>	dee-NAH	Law; judgment.
טַעְמָא	<i>Taama</i>	tah-AH-mah	Reason.
סְבָרָא	<i>Sevara</i>	svah-RAH	Logical reasoning.
מִילְתָּא	<i>Milsa</i>	mil-TAH	Thing; matter; statement.
גִּבְרָא	<i>Gavra</i>	GAV-rah	Man; person.
אִיתְתָּא	<i>Isesa</i>	ee-tuh-TAH	Woman.
עֲלָמָא	<i>Alma</i>	al-MAH	World; everyone.
קֶרָא	<i>Kra</i>	KRAH	A verse of Scripture.
הִיתִירָא	<i>Heteira</i>	hay-TAY-rah	Permissibility.

Term	Pronunciation	Phonetic	Meaning
איסורא	<i>Isura</i>	ee-soo-RAH	Prohibition.
מצוה	<i>Mitzvah</i>	MITZ-vah	Commandment.
חייב	<i>Chiyuv</i>	chee-YOOV	Obligation.
פטור	<i>Patur</i>	pah-TOOR	Exempt.
מותר	<i>Mutar</i>	moo-TAR	Permitted.
אסור	<i>Asur</i>	ah-SOOR	Forbidden.

Time and condition

Term	Pronunciation	Phonetic	Meaning
לכתחילה	<i>L'chatchila</i>	luh-chat-chee-LAH	Ideally; from the outset.
בדיעבד	<i>B'dieved</i>	b'dee-AH-ved	After the fact; less ideal but still valid.
מדאורייתא	<i>Mid'Oraisa</i>	mid-oh-RYE-tah	By Torah law.
מדרבנן	<i>Mid'Rabbanan</i>	mid-rah-bah-NAN	By Rabbinic law.
הכא	<i>Hacha</i>	HAH-chah	Here.
התם	<i>Hatam</i>	hah-TAM	There.
השתא	<i>Hashta</i>	HASH-tah	Now.
מעיקרא	<i>Me'ikara</i>	may-ee-kah-RAH	Originally; at first.
לבסוף	<i>L'basof</i>	luh-bah-SOF	In the end; finally.

People and pronouns

Term	Pronunciation	Phonetic	Meaning
מָר	<i>Mar</i>	MAR	"Master": a respectful third-person reference.
רַב / רַבִּי	<i>Rav / Rabbi</i>	RAV / rah-BEE	Rabbi (<i>Rav</i> is generally Babylonian; <i>Rabbi</i> generally Eretz Yisrael).
רַבָּנָן	<i>Rabbanan</i>	rah-bah-NAN	The Rabbis (plural).
אִיהוּ	<i>Ihu</i>	EE-hoo	He.
אִיהִי	<i>Ibi</i>	EE-hee	She.
אִינְהוּ	<i>Inbu</i>	IN-hoo	They.
אַנָּן	<i>Anan</i>	ah-NAN	We.
נַפְשֵׁיהּ	<i>Nafsheih</i>	naf-SHAY	Himself.

Conclusions

Term	Pronunciation	Phonetic	Meaning
הִלְכָּתָא	<i>Hilchesa</i>	hil-chEH-sah	The law is.
תִּיקוּן	<i>Teiku</i>	TAY-koo	The question is unresolved.
מִסְקָנָה	<i>Maskanah</i>	mas-kah-NAH	The settled conclusion of the sugya.

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