

# Glossary

*Of Hebrew and Aramaic Terms*

---

**Aggadah** *ag-ab-DAH* אגדה

Non-legal material in the Talmud: stories, ethics, theology, and homiletics.

**Amora** *ah-MOR-ah* אמורא

A sage of the Gemara (c. 200–500 CE).

**Amud** *ah-MOOD* עמוד

One side of a *daf*; literally "column."

**Baraisa** *bah-RYE-sah* ברַייתא

A Tannaitic teaching that was not included in Rabbi Yehudah HaNasi's Mishnah but is preserved elsewhere.

**Bavli** *BAV-lee* בבלי

The Babylonian Talmud, compiled in the academies of Bavel. When "the Talmud" is mentioned without qualification, the Bavli is intended.

**Bein Hashemashos** *bayn hab-shub-MAH-shos* בין השמשות

Twilight: the transitional period between sunset and nightfall, whose status as day or night is left in doubt. Its length is itself disputed. R' Yehuda holds it is a substantial interval; R' Yose holds it is momentary, "like the blink of an eye." The distinction between those two views drives the Rabbi Meir / Rabbi Yehuda exchange in Chapter Thirteen.

**Beis Din** *bays DIN* בית דין

A rabbinic court.

**Beis HaMikdash** *bays hab-mik-DASH* בית המקדש

The Holy Temple in Jerusalem.

**Berachah** *bub-rab-chAH* בְּרָכָה

A blessing.

**Chazakah** *chab-zab-KAH* חֲזָקָה

A legal presumption that a prior state remains until proven otherwise.

**Chazal** *chab-ZAL* חֲז"ל

Acronym for *Chachameinu Zichronam Livracha*: "our Sages, of blessed memory."

**Daf** *DAF* דָּף

A folio page of the Talmud, comprising two sides (*amudim*).

**Dechiyah** *dub-chee-YAH* דְּחִיָּה

A rejection or limitation of a proof.

**Drash** *DRASH* דְּרַשׁ

Homiletical or exegetical interpretation, as distinct from the plain meaning.

**D'Oraisa** *d'oh-RYE-sah* דְּאִוְרַיִיתָא

By Torah law.

**D'Rabbanan** *d'rab-bab-NAN* דְּרַבָּנָן

By Rabbinic law.

**Gemara** *guh-MAR-ab* גְּמָרָא

The Aramaic commentary and analysis on the Mishnah; with the Mishnah, it forms the Talmud.

**Gezeira Shava** *guh-ZAY-rab SHAH-vah* גְּזֵירָה שְׁוָה

An exegetical rule: deriving a law by comparing two passages that share a distinctive word.

**Halacha** *hab-lab-chAH* הִלְכָּה

Jewish law; the operative ruling.

**Kal v'Chomer** *kal v'chOH-mer* קַל וְחֹמֶר

An *a fortiori* argument: if X applies in a lighter case, it certainly applies in a heavier one.

**Kohanim** *kob-hab-NEEM* כֹּהֲנִים

Descendants of Aharon HaKohen, with distinct service responsibilities.

**Krias Shema** *kree-YAS shub-MAH* קריאת שמע

The twice-daily recitation of the *Shema*.

**L'Halacha** *lub-hab-lah-chAH* להלכה

For practical law; what the operative ruling is.

**L'Maaseh** *lub-MAH-seh* למעשה

In practice; how something is actually done.

**Maseches / Masechta** *mab-SEH-ches / mab-SEch-tab* מסכת / מסכתא

A tractate. The Talmud comprises sixty-three.

**Maskanah** *mas-kah-NAH* מסקנה

The settled conclusion of a sugya.

**Mesorah** *muh-sob-RAH* מסורה

The chain of authoritative transmission of Torah from generation to generation.

**Mishnah** *MISH-nah* משנה

The concise written record of the Oral Torah compiled by Rabbi Yehudah HaNasi.

**Perek** *PEH-rek* פרק

A chapter of a tractate.

**Peshat** *pub-SHAT* פשט

The plain, straightforward meaning of a text.

**Psak** *p'SAK* פסק

A binding halachic ruling.

**Raayah** *rah-AH-yah* ראיה

A proof or supporting argument.

**Savoraim** *sah-voh-rah-EEM* סבוראים

Post-Amoraic scholars (c. 500–700 CE) who made final editorial additions to the Talmud.

**Seder / Sedarim** *SEH-der / sub-dah-REEM* סדר / סדרים

One of the six Orders of the Mishnah; their plural.

**Sevara** *svah-RAH* סְבָרָא

Logical reasoning, often standing on its own as a basis for halacha.

**Shakla v'tarya** *SHAK-lah v'TAR-yah* שְׁקָלָא וְטָרְיָא

The give-and-take of Talmudic argument.

**Shas** *SHAS* ש"ס

Acronym for *Shisha Sidrei Mishnah*, the six Orders. By extension, the entire Talmud.

**Shaylah** *SHAY-lah* שְׂאִילָה

A question; the move by which the Gemara identifies a problem.

**Shechita** *shub-chee-TAH* שְׁחִיטָה

Ritual slaughter; one of the classic examples of halacha that requires the Oral Torah to explain.

**Stammaim** *stab-mah-EEM* סְתָמָאִים

The anonymous editors whose voice weaves together the Gemara's discussions.

**Sugya** *SOO-gyah* סוּגְיָא

A self-contained Talmudic discussion; the basic unit of Gemara study.

**Tamei** *tah-MAY* טָמֵא

Ritually impure; the opposite of *tahor*. A Kohen who became *tamei* may not eat *teruma* until he immerses in a *mikveh* and nightfall arrives. See *Tumah / Tahara*.

**Tanna** *TAN-ab* תַּנָּא

A Mishnaic sage (c. 10–220 CE).

**Teiku** *TAY-koo* תֵּיקוּ

A question left unresolved; traditionally read as an acronym indicating that *Tishbi* (Eliyahu HaNavi) will one day resolve such questions.

**Teretz** *teh-RETS* תִּירוֹץ

An answer; the move by which the Gemara proposes a resolution.

**Teruma** *tuh-roo-MAH* תְּרוּמָה

A portion of produce set aside for a Kohen, eaten in a state of ritual purity.

**Tosefta** *tob-SEF-tab* תוספתא

A parallel collection of Tannaitic teachings organized alongside the Mishnah; literally "addition."

**Tumah / Tahara** *too-MAH / tab-bah-RAH* טומאה / טהרה

Ritual impurity and purity.

**Tzuras HaDaf** *tsoo-RAHS hab-DAF* צורת הדף

"The form of the page": the standard layout of the printed Vilna Talmud.

**Yerushalmi** *yuh-roo-SHAL-mee* ירושלמי

The Jerusalem (or Palestinian) Talmud, compiled in Eretz Yisrael.

**Zocheh** *ZOH-cheh* זוכה

Merited; privileged to attain.

---

From *A Beginner's Guide to Gemara*. Free to print and keep alongside your learning.