

TEFILLAH VOCABULARY

Daven: to recite Jewish liturgy; to pray. Mixed and varying etymology (possibly Medieval Latin, Lithuanian, Middle Dutch, Yiddish).

Shaliah Tzibur: Prayer, song or service leader; the “shatz.” Usually a lay leader of the community; literally “one sent by the community.”

Minyan: Prayer quorum of 10 Jews age 13 or older; required to recite specific sections of a service

Sh’moneh Esrei: Amidah; Literally “18” referring to the original 18 blessings that once comprised the *Amidah* liturgy; an additional blessing was added in the 1st Cent CE to make 19 blessings, but the name was retained.

Shaḥarit: Morning prayers; replaced daily morning Temple sacrifice. Associated with Abraham from Genesis 19:27. Tefillin are worn during weekdays.

Minḥah: Afternoon prayers; literally “gift” that is a reference to the meal offerings that accompanied the Temple sacrifices. Associated with Isaac from Genesis 24:63.

Musaf: Additional prayers on Shabbat, Festivals, Rosh Ḥodesh combined with Shaḥarit; replaces the additional sacrificial offerings during Temple services on these days. Related to the name *Joseph*, meaning “to add or increase.”

Ma’ariv: Evening prayers; technically “optional” as there were no evening Temple sacrifices. Associated with Jacob from Genesis 28:11.

Kabbalat Shabbat: “Receiving the Sabbath;” mystical prelude to Shabbat evening service composed by 16th century Kabbalists, plus 6 psalms representing the 6 days of Creation, L’kha Dodi, and the psalm for Shabbat.

Erev: Eve of; the evening or day before a holiday.

Ḥag(gim): Holiday(s); Yom Tov; *yontif* (Yiddish); Festival(s). Also, **Mo’adim**, used by Sephardim.

Ḥol (HaMo’ed): Regular [day]; intermediate days of Festivals. *Ex.:* First and last days of Pesah are *ḥag*, but the days in between are *ḥol*.

Nusah: The musical mode of the Jewish liturgy; dependent on time of day, season or holiday.

Trope: Ritual cantillation of the *tanakh*; markings provide accents and syntax as well as cantillation. Tiberian Trope System used today was codified in the 10th Century CE. There are 6 trope systems still used in the Ashkenazi tradition.

Minhag (HaMakom): a custom that is not *halakha* or mandated in Torah, but is followed nonetheless (local).

Shul: From the Yiddish word for “school;” synagogue. Also: **Beit Midrash** (House of Study), **Beit Kneset** (House of Fellowship), **Beit Tefillah** (House of Prayer), **Esnoga** (Ladino)