



The Tremble  
of  
Love

A Novel of the  
BAAL SHEM TOV

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# GLOSSARY



Note: Hebrew, Yiddish, and Polish words in the novel's text are italicized the first time they appear and subsequently appear in roman type. The following (unless otherwise indicated as Polish) are transliterated from Hebrew or Yiddish according to the Ashkenazic pronunciation used in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth in the 1700s.

**ADONAI:** the name of God used most often in the Torah:

the Tetragrammaton, *Yud Heh Yov Heh*, the ineffable name  
not to pronounced as written but rather as Adonai

**AHAVAH:** love

**AFIKOMEN:** a half piece of matzo broken off during the Passover  
ritual meal

**ALEPH:** first letter in the Hebrew alphabet

**ASHKENAZIM:** descendants of Jews from France, Germany,  
and Eastern Europe

**ALTA:** old or old one

**AYN MISPAR:** without number; cannot be counted; infinite

**AYN SOF:** literally, without end; a name for God, The Boundless One

**BAAL SHEM:** “master of the name”; one who brings healing using  
the Divine Name

**BAAL SHEM TOV:** “Good Master of the Name” and “Master of the  
Good Name”

**BARUCH HASHEM:** “Blessed is the Name”; also used as: “God Bless!”  
and “Thank God!”

**BAS:** daughter or daughter of, as in Rifka *bas* Aryeh

**BASHERTE:** destined or “destined one,” often referring to a soul mate

**BEIS MIDRASH:** House of Study

**BEN:** son or son of, as in Yisroel *ben* Eliezar

**BES:** second letter of the Hebrew alphabet

**BES HEH:** acronym for *Baruch HaShem*

**BIMAH:** raised platform in a synagogue from which the Torah is read

**B’RACHA:** a blessing

**CHALLAH:** braided bread prepared especially for the Sabbath and holidays.

**CHANUKAH:** winter holiday commemorating the rededication of the Holy Temple

**CHEREM:** Ban of Excommunication; highest ecclesiastical censure that mandates the total exclusion of a person from the community

**CHEVRA KADISHA:** “holy society”; the men and women who prepare a body for burial, performing the ritual cleansing, shrouding, and vigil until burial

**CHEYDER:** classroom where boys are taught until they turn thirteen

**CHOLENT:** stew containing meat, potatoes, beans, and barley

**DEVEKUT:** closeness to God; the practice of constant Remembrance

**DYBBUK:** in Jewish folklore, a malevolent, wandering spirit that enters and possesses the body of a living person

**EEESH:** man or husband

**EEESHA:** woman or wife

**ELOHEYNU:** “our God”

**ELOHIM:** a name for God

**ESH:** fire

**GEDOLAH:** big

**GROSCHEN:** silver coin

**HA'ARI:** “The Lion”; refers to Isaac Luria, renowned sixteenth-century rabbi and mystic of Safed in the Galilee Valley whose teachings are referred to as Lurianic Kabbalah

**HAGGADAH:** “telling”; a text that sets forth the order of the Passover Seder; reading the *Haggadah* is a fulfillment of the commandment to tell the story of liberation from slavery

**HAMAKOM:** literally “The Place”; a name for God

**HAVDALAH:** ritual that marks the end of Sabbath and ushers in the new week, performed on Saturday night after the appearance of three stars in the sky

**IGGERET HAKODESH:** “The Holy Epistle”; a Kabbalistic work written in the second half of the twelfth century that describes sexual intimacy between man and woman as sacred

**IMYIRTZE HASHEM:** “with the will of the Name”; God-willing

**KABBALAH:** the ancient mystical cosmology that explains the nature and purpose of existence, including the relationship between an unchanging and eternal *Ayn Sof* (Infinite Source) and the mortal and finite created universe; referred to as “the soul of Torah”

**KABBALIST:** student and practitioner of *Kabbala*

**KAHAL:** governing body with regulatory control over Jewish residents in a locality, responsible for administering religious, legal, and communal affairs

**KASHA:** porridge of buckwheat groats

**KLOIZ:** elite fellowship of rabbis gathered to study Torah and Kabbalah

**KUGEL:** sweet or savory pudding of noodles

**L'CHA DODI:** "Come, My Beloved," a prayer-song recited Friday  
at sundown to welcome the Sabbath

**LIVОВI:** "my heart"

**MALACH HAMOVES:** Angel of Death

**MATKA BOGA:** (Polish) Mother of God

**MELECH HA'OLAM:** "King of the Universe"

**MEZUZAH:** piece of parchment (often contained in a decorative case)  
inscribed with specified verses from Deuteronomy and affixed to  
the doorpost of a home or room

**MIKVEH:** ritual bath

**MISHNAH:** written compendium of Oral Torah; a compilation of  
rabbinic legal opinions and debates

**MITZVAH:** "commandment"; refers to a moral deed performed as a  
religious duty (one of 613 commandments in the Torah); has also  
come to describe an act of human kindness [pl. *Mitzvos*]

**MITZRAYIM:** "narrows; constriction; constricted place";  
Hebrew for Egypt

**MOREH:** teacher

**NIGGUN:** improvised melody comprised of repetitive syllables rather  
than words

**NISTAR:** one of the 36 hidden righteous ones in every generation

**ORE:** light

**PANI:** (Polish) salutation equivalent of Miss or Mrs.  
as in *Pani Leya*

**PARSHA:** weekly Torah portion read and studied communally  
and individually

**PARDES:** "orchard"; written PaRDeS, an acronym for levels  
of biblical interpretation

- REB:** salutation of respect before a first name or surname,  
e.g., Reb Eliezar or Reb Wolf (to be distinguished from *Rebbe*)
- REBBE:** Yiddish honorific deriving from Hebrew word *rabbi*,  
referring to a teacher of Torah, a spiritual master, personal mentor,  
and guide
- ROSH HASHONAH:** the Jewish New Year, a day of remembrance,  
described as the birthday of creation
- SCHNAPPS:** whiskey
- SEDER:** “order,” the ritual feast that marks the beginning of the holiday  
of Passover
- SEFER YETZIRAH:** “Book of Creation” aka “Book of Formation”;  
earliest extant Kabbalistic text
- SEFIROS:** Kabbalistic term meaning the emanations of the *Ayn Sof*,  
through which the Infinite reveals itself and continuously creates  
both the physical realm and the chain of higher metaphysical  
realms
- SEPHARDIC:** descendants of Jews from Spain, Portugal, North Africa,  
and the Middle East
- SHABBOS:** Sabbath
- SHADDAI:** one of God’s names [see *Shin*]
- SHALOM ALEYNU:** peace upon us; part of a prayer invoking peace
- SHAVUOUS:** holiday commemorating the giving and receiving of the  
Torah at Mount Sinai
- SHECHINAH:** “dwelling”; denotes the Indwelling Sacred Presence
- SHIN:** a letter in the Hebrew alphabet, especially auspicious because  
it is the first letter of *Shaddai*, a name for God often seen on a  
*mezuzah* case
- SHIVA:** seven-day mourning period beginning immediately after burial  
for the family of the deceased
- SH’LACH:** “send”; the 37th weekly Torah portion (*parsha*) in the annual  
Jewish cycle of Torah reading, Numbers 13:1-15:41

- SH'MA:** “Hear!”; the first word and name of the Prayer of Unity: *Sh'ma Yisroel Adonai Eloheynu, Adonai Echad*, “Hear, O Israel: the Lord our God, the Lord is one”
- SHOFAR:** ritual musical instrument made from the horn of a ram, sounded on the High Holy Days of Rosh Hashonah and Yom Kippur to herald spiritual awakening
- SHTREIMEL:** large, round, fur-edged hat
- SHUL:** house of prayer, synagogue
- SHVARIM:** three medium wailing sounds blown on the *Shofar*; one of four different sounds associated with the blowing of the *Shofar*
- SIMCHAS TORAH:** “rejoicing with the Torah”; holiday that marks the conclusion of the annual cycle of Torah readings and the beginning of a new cycle
- SMICHA:** ordination; transmission of rabbinic authority
- SOF:** last letter in the Hebrew alphabet
- SUCCAH:** “booth”; temporary hut used during the week-long Jewish festival of *Succos*
- SUCCOS:** “Feast of Booths” aka Feast of Tabernacles and Feast of the Ingathering; marks the end of the harvest time and also commemorates the Exodus, the period of wandering and complete dependence on the Unseen
- SZLACHCIC:** (Polish) nobleman [pl. *Szlachta*]
- TALMUD:** teachings and opinions of thousands of rabbis on a variety of subjects, including law, ethics, philosophy, customs, history, lore, and other topics; the basis for all codes of Jewish law and widely quoted in rabbinic literature; the *Talmud*, consisting of 63 tractates, has two components: the *Mishnah* (a written compendium of Rabbinic Judaism’s Oral *Torah*) and the *Gemara* (an elucidation of the *Mishnah*)
- TANTA:** aunt
- TEKIYAH:** long sustained blast on the *Shofar*; one of four sounds associated with the blowing of the *Shofar*

**TEKIYAH GEDOLAH:** prolonged, unbroken sounding of the *Shofar*

**TORAH:** “Instruction”; “Teaching”; *Torah* can both refer to the Pentateuch, the first five books of the twenty-four books of the Hebrew Bible, or to the entire canon of the Hebrew Bible, including the Pentateuch, Prophets, and other Writings of Wisdom Literature; also a way of life

**TRUAH:** ten very quick, abbreviated blasts in succession sounded on the *Shofar*; one of four different sounds associated with the blowing of the *Shofar*

**YENTA:** a gossip

**YESHIVA:** *Talmudic* academies for men focused on the study of traditional religious texts, primarily the *Torah* and *Talmud*

**YOM KIPPUR:** “Day of Atonement”; holiest day of the year; day of purification, repentance, and forgiveness

**YUD:** tenth and smallest letter of the Hebrew alphabet

**YUD HEH VOV HEH:** the Tetragrammatron [see *Adonai*]

**ZLOTY:** (Polish) coins of a higher denomination than *Groschen*

**ZOHAR:** “splendor”; “radiance”; the foundational work in the literature of mystical thought known as Kabbalah