

# GLOSSARY

## Ashkenazim

Originally descendants of Medieval Rhineland Jews; later referring to all Central and Eastern European Jews

## Blood Libel

The claim that Jews murder Christian children for the purpose of using the blood in baking matzos

## Conversos

Spanish Jews who converted to Catholicism

## Diaspora

Greek origin word referring to the dispersion of an ethnic people; first used in the Greek translation of the Hebrew Bible (Septuagint); most commonly refers to Jews living outside of Israel

## Gaon, Gaonim (pl)

Title of heads of academies

## Halakha

Collective body of Jewish law, including Biblical, Talmudic, and rabbinic law, plus customs and traditions

## Haskalah

Hebrew term for “enlightenment”

## Pale of Settlement

Area of western Russia where Jews were permitted by Czarist Russia to settle permanently

## Pogrom

Violent riot or mob attack on a minority community, particularly attacks on Jewish communities in Russia during the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries

## Sephardim

Descendants of Iberian Jews

## Septuagint

Greek translation of the Hebrew Bible, produced in Alexandria about 200 BCE

## Shulchan Arukh

Collected table of Jewish laws and customs

## Talmud

Compilation of rabbinic discussions and decisions on law, customs, and prayer; most frequently refers to the Babylonian Talmud, produced at the academies in Mesopotamia in the period 220 to 600 CE

## Tanakh

The Hebrew Bible. The name is an acronym of the three sections of the Hebrew Bible: Torah (Five Books of Moses), Neviim (Prophets), and Ketuvim (Writings)

## YHVH

Hebrew letters *yud-heh-vav-heh*. The unpronounced four letter name of God; “Adonai” (my God) is substituted when reading Torah

## Yiddish

Language of Ashkenazi Jewish origin, a combination of German dialects with Hebrew, Aramaic, and other languages; written in Hebrew alphabet