

The Gospel According to Wanda B. Lazarus by Lynn Joffe

Glossary aka Shiksanary (Interactive in EPub Version)

A

abba – father

Adon Olam – Jewish liturgical hymn, ‘Sovereign of the Universe’

Afikomen – a morsel of matzoh hidden during the Passover Seder, sought after by children after the meal for a small reward

aleph bet – Hebrew alphabet, containing 22 letters, each of numerical value

amidah – the main section of morning, afternoon, and evening Jewish prayers

Ashkenazi – Eastern European Jews

B

B’not Mitzvah – Jewish girls’ coming of age ceremonies (plural)

b’va’ka’sha – please

Bar Mitzvah – Jewish boy’s coming of age ceremony

Bat Mitzvah – Jewish girl’s coming of age ceremony pl. B’not Mitzvoth

beitzim – literally, eggs; slangily, testicles

bimah – a raised platform in a synagogue, from which readings take place

blintz – thin pancake folded around a filling, often cream cheese, pl. blintzes

bobba – grandmother

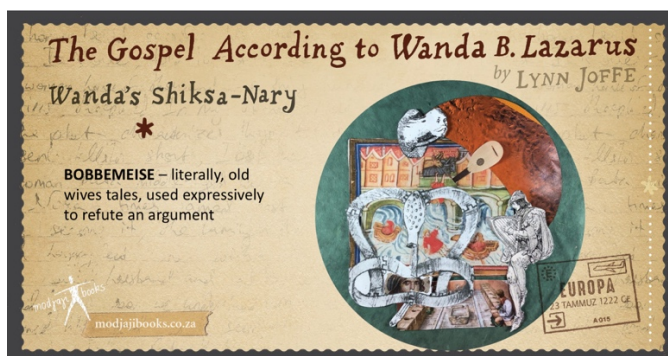
bobbemeise – old wives’ tales

bris (Yiddish) – circumcision of boy children at the age of 7 days in accordance with the covenant with the Jewish God, Yahweh

brit milah (Hebrew) – circumcision of boy children at the age of 7 days in accordance with the covenant with the Jewish God, Yahweh

brocha – blessing

bubkes – nothing



C

chag – religious festival, pl. chaggim

chai – ‘alive’, or ‘living’. The word is made up of two letters of the Hebrew alphabet, chet and yud. Numerologically, the letters add up to 18 (8+10)

Chametz – foods with leavening agents, such as bread, that are forbidden on the Pesach/Passover

charoset – a sweet paste made of fruits and nuts eaten at the Passover Seder, symbolic of the mortar used by Israelite slaves in Egypt for the bricks in the construction of Pharaoh’s monuments

chatzilim – Middle Eastern eggplant

chazzan – cantor, Jewish liturgical singer (traditionally male), who leads a congregation in prayer

chazzer – pig, or pork

chazzerai – things/stuff

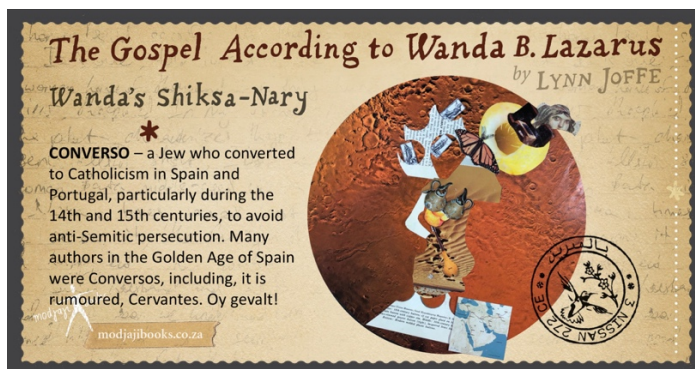
chet – 8th letter of the Hebrew alphabet

chevras – friends

chrein – grated horseradish

chutzpah – cheek/sass

Converso – a Jew who converted to Catholicism in Spain or Portugal, particularly during the 14th and 15th centuries, to avoid anti-Semitic persecution



D

daven – pray, past tense: davened. Jews are obligated to recite prayers thrice daily. Women, less frequently, if at all

dayeinu – ‘it would have been enough’. Also a song that is sung at the Passover Seder (meal)

Dreidel – spinning top

Dybbuk – a malicious possessing spirit in Jewish mythology



E

Eretz – Iudaea, the Land of Israel

F

faribel – a grudge

fleishedik – meat category (according to kosher law)

G

gatkes – long johns

gefilte fish – minced fish balls, usually sweet

gezundt – healthy, euphemistically used to describe obesity

glezzele – a small glass

golem – in Jewish folklore, a demonic archetype endowed with life

gonif – a thief

H

habibi – my love, my buddy

hamantaschen – a triangular pastry eaten on the Jewish festival of Purim, to symbolise the defeated enemy of the Jewish people, Haman, who plotted to kill the Jews of Persia under King Ahasuerus

HaShem – God (literally: The Name). Used by religious Jews to refer to their deity, Yahweh

havdalah – a Jewish religious ceremony that marks the symbolic end of the Sabbath and ushers in the new week

huk/hukking/hukked – nag/nagging/nagged

K

Kabbalism – Jewish mysticism

Kaddish – Jewish memorial prayer for the dead

Kashrut – ‘kosherness’; a set of dietary laws dealing with the foods that Jews are permitted to eat and how those foods must be prepared according to Jewish law

keffiyeh – Middle Eastern head scarf

keppie – (diminutive of kep) head

kethoneth – a long shirt-like garment – robe, cloak or tunic – usually of linen, worn by both males and females in biblical times

kinderlach – children

kippah – skullcap worn by Jewish men

kishkes – guts

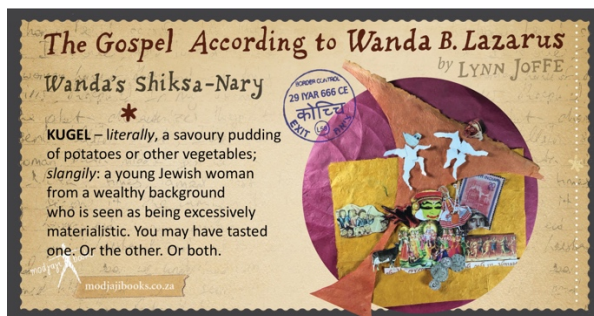
kneidlach – matzoh balls

knish – small, filled dumplings

kugel – literally, a kind of savoury pudding of potatoes or other vegetables; slangily: a young Jewish woman from a wealthy background who is seen as being excessively materialistic

kukele – love, darling

kvetch – complain



L

l'chayim – a toast, meaning 'to life!'

Ladino – Judaeo-Spanish language, spoken for centuries by Sephardic Jews throughout the world

lashon hora – literally, evil tongue; gossip or slander

latke – a fried potato pancake; slangily: coin or money

M

ma'ariv – Jewish evening prayer service

Magen David – Star of David

mamzer – bastard

matzoh – unleavened bread, eaten during Passover

mazel – luck

mechitzah – a partition used to separate men and women in prayer

megayer – convert to Judaism

Megillah – a Jewish religious text read on the festival of Purim

meidele – young girls

menorah – candelabra with seven lamps

meshuga – crazy

metziah bel peh – part of the ritual of orthodox male circumcision; the wound is sucked by the mohel to prevent excessive bleeding

mezuzah – a piece of parchment with verses from the Torah contained in a decorative case and affixed to the doorpost of a Jewish home

mikvah – a bath used for the purpose of ritual immersion in Judaism to achieve ritual purity. Used by women at the end of their monthly menstrual cycle

milchedik – milk category (according to kosher law)

minhag – custom or ritual practice

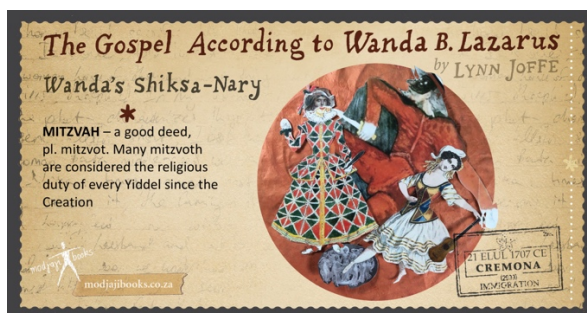
minyan – a quorum of ten men over the age of 13 required for traditional Jewish public worship.

mishpocha – family

mitzvah – a good deed, pl. mitzvot

Mizrachi – Middle Eastern and North African Jews

Mohel – a person who performs a bris/circumcision



N

'Nard – abbreviation for Spikenard, a costly perfumed ointment, derived from the rhizome of the valerian family.

Ner Tamid – literally, eternal flame: a lamp that is kept burning for its religious symbolism

nochschleppers – taggers on

O

opshearing – a ritual haircutting ceremony observed when an orthodox Jewish boy turns three years old. The forelocks remain uncut and dangling, forming the basis of the payos which Jewish males are commanded to wear

oy chalaria – exclamation: literally, oh cholera

oy gevalt – exclamation: literally, oh violence

oy vey – exclamation of dismay or grief, oh woe

oy-va-voy – exclamation, oh woe, woe is me

P

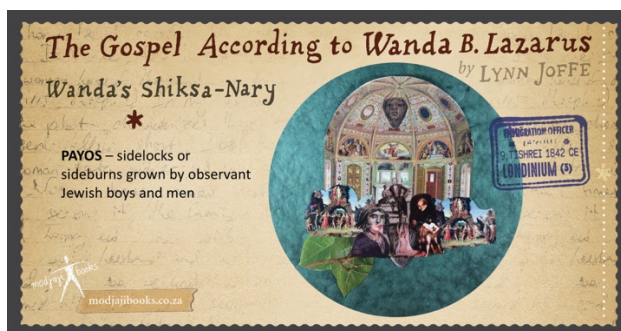
payos – sidelocks or sideburns grown by observant Jewish boys and men

Pesach – Jewish festival of Passover

pish – to urinate

Purim – Jewish festival commemorating the saving of the Jewish people from Haman, a Persian official and royal vizier to King Ahasuerus of the Persian Empire, who plotted to kill all the Jews in the empire. A Jewess, Esther, came to the rescue of her people and the evil Haman was vanquished

putzkered – tinkered



R

Rebbe (Yiddish)– Rabbi, teacher

Rov (Hebrew)– Rabbi, teacher

rozhinkes mit mandelen – raisins and almonds; the name of a traditional Yiddish lullaby

rugelach – a traditional Jewish pastry

S

Sanhedrin – the supreme council and tribunal of the Jews before the destruction of the Second Temple

schlenter – to fake or deceive

schlep – v. haul or carry; n. a tedious or difficult journey

schloff – sleep

schmaltzy – overly ornate, kitsch

schmekel – small penis, from schmuk, penis, slang: idiotic or disliked person

schmooze – talk with someone in a way that is intended to impress or manipulate them

schmutz – filth

schmutzik – filthy

schnozz – nose

schnozzel – nose

schtupp – literally, to push; slangily, an act of sexual intercourse

schtupperry – fuckery

schvitz – sweat

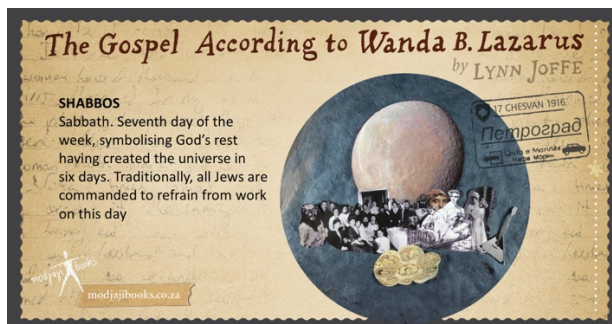
schvitzing – sweating

Seder – traditional Passover/Pesach meal

seichel – common sense

Sephardic – members or descendants of the Jews who lived in Spain and Portugal from the time of the Roman Empire until their persecution and mass expulsion in the last decades of the 15th century

Shabbos – sabbath. Seventh day of the week, symbolising God's rest having created the universe in six days. Traditionally, all Jews are commanded to refrain from work on this day



Shalom aleichem – greeting, peace be upon you

shamus – assistant to the cantor or chazzan in a Jewish synagogue

sheine – fine, beautiful

sheitel – wig worn by a Jewish woman after marriage as an act of modesty

shemzach – shame

Sheol – the abode of the dead in Jewish religious mythology

shiddach – a system of matchmaking in which Jewish singles are introduced to one another, usually by a matchmaker, for the purpose of marriage; v. shiddached

shiksa – from Hebrew sheqes, blemish, abomination, Non-Jewish woman

shin – 21st letter of the Hebrew alphabet

shmatte – an old rag; tattered clothing. Often used ironically to underplay garments of great value

shofar – ram's horn, blown as a type of trumpet. Used on Jewish religious holidays to call on the name of God

shtetl – small Jewish town or village

simlah – a biblical garment, cloak or mantle in wool or linen

slicha – sorry

Sukkoth – Jewish festival of tabernacles

T

tachlis – practical details of a matter; purpose, aim

tallis – fringed prayer shawl worn by Jewish men

Talmud – Jewish ancient teachings

Tanakh – the entire body of Jewish scripture

teigel – sticky confectionery; pl. teiglach

tekiyah – long note sounded by a shofar

teraphim – family gods or idols

teruah – nine short blasts sounded by a shofar

tichel – headscarf worn by a married Orthodox Jewish woman as an act of modesty

Torah – Old Testament, Pentateuch, first five books of the Jewish bible

treif – something non-kosher

tsoriss – trouble and suffering

tuchus – backside, buttocks, arse

tzatzke – a trinket, ornament, often used as a euphemism for something more valuable

tzedoka – charity

tzehitzt – emotionally heated

tzimbel – strum, improvise musically

tzimbeller – musical player

tzimmes – a sweet, traditional dish made of root vegetables and dried fruits



V

verpackt – packed

verschtkende – stinking

Y

yarmulke – skull cap worn by Jewish men

Yom Kippur – Jewish Day of Atonement

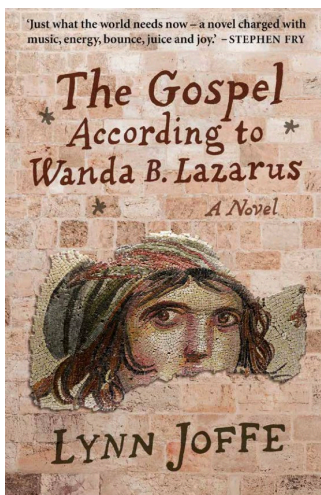
yoren – years

yud – the 10th letter of the Hebrew alphabet. Also has numerical value 10

Z

zaida – grandfather

zietsfleisch – literally, sitting flesh, buttocks, endurance



© Modjajibooks 2021 © Lynn Joffe 2021. To order the book in print or EPub with interactive glossary, go to www.modjajibooks.co.za/the-gospel-according-to-wanda-b-lazarus