***Night* Terms to Know**

*A Guide to Jewish References*

1. **Beadle**—a caretaker or “man of all work” in a synagogue.

2. **Cabbala/Kabbalah**—Jewish mysticism (the belief that it is possible to achieve communion with God through meditation. Followers believe that every aspect of the Torah has hidden meanings that link the spiritual world to everyday life. The teachings of the cabbala can be found in the Zohar, which was compiled in the thirteenth century.

3. **Hasidism**—a Jewish **reform movement** inspired by the cabbala that spread through Eastern Europe in the 1700s. For Hasidic Jews, the divine presence **is everywhere**, in everything. They therefore try to live a life of total dedication to God. The word *Hasidic* is an adjective used to describe followers of Hasidism or some aspect of their practices and beliefs.

4. **Maimonides**—a great Jewish **scholar who lived in the twelfth century.**

5. **Passover**—a Jewish holiday that is celebrated for **eight days each spring** to recall the Exodus of the Jewish people from **Egypt where they were held in slavery.**

6. **Pentecost**—the Jewish holiday that commemorates the revelation of the Law on Mount Sinai. Called *Shavuot* in Hebrew, it is celebrated about seven weeks after Passover.

7. **Synagogue**—a Jewish house of prayer.

8. **Talmud**—from a word that means study or learning. A collection of rabbinical teachings and commentaries on the Torah, the Five Books of Moses.

9. **The Temple**—a reference to the Temple in Jerusalem, which the Romans destroyed in 70 A.D. It was the center of Jewish worship in ancient times. Today Jews recall its destruction in their daily prayers.

10. **Zohar**—the Book of Splendor; a commentary on the Five Books of Moses and the major work of the cabbala.

11. **Zionism**—the belief that Jews must once more become a nation with a land of their own in Palestine. A commitment to Zionism led a number of European Jews to settle in Palestine in the early 1900s.

*Common Terms and Phrases*

12. **Auschwitz-Birkenau**—established in 1940 as a concentration camp, **a killing center** was added in 1942 at Birkenau. Also part of the huge camp complex was **a slave labor camp** known as Buna-Monowitz.

13. **Concentration camp**—a prison camp in which individuals are held without regard for accepted rules of arrest and detention. The Nazis constructed concentration camps to hold Jews, “Gypsies,” communists, and others considered “enemies of the state.”

14. **Death camp**—a camp where the Nazis murdered people in assembly-line style. The largest death camp was Auschwitz-Birkenau. The term was also used for concentration camps such as Bergen-Belsen and Dachau where thousands died of starvation, disease, and maltreatment.

15. **Kapo**—a prisoner forced to oversee other prisoners.

16. **Mengele, Josef** (1911–1979)—senior SS physician at Auschwitz-Birkenau from 1943–1944. He carried out “selections” of prisoners upon their arrival at the camp and conducted experiments on some of those prisoners.

17. **Selection**—the process the Nazis used to separate those prisoners who would be assigned to forced labor from those who were to be killed immediately.

18. **SS**—in German, Schutzstaffel; the elite guard of Nazi Germany. It provided staff for the police, camp guards, and military units within the German army.