

Glossary of Vocabulary Used in Agent Emes

1. **Emes:** The protagonist's name is Agent Emes. Emes (*also pronounced emet*) means truth.
2. **Abershter:** A way of referring to G-d in Yiddish. Has a connotation of familiarity.
3. **Lo-Tov:** Lo means not, in Hebrew, and tov means good. The “bad guy” in this series is called Dr. Not Good or perhaps Dr. No-good.
4. **Aveiros:** (*Also pronounced aveirot*). It means transgressions. When a Jew acts contrary to a mitzvah, we would say he had committed an aveira (*singular*). “Aveiros International” is the name of Dr. Lo-Tov's organization, because their mission is to cause Jews to transgress the various dictates of the Torah.

5. **Shpitzburgh:** Yiddishized play on words for Pittsburgh, where “Agent Emes” was filmed.
6. **Daven:** The Yiddish word for “pray”.
7. **Tefillin:** Phylacteries is the translation for tefillin, but that doesn’t help us understand it very much, does it? Tefillin are a very important part of the paraphernalia, or “prayer uniform” of Jewish men. They consist of two small leather boxes with long leather straps attached to them. The boxes contain parchment on which selections for the Bible are written. The biblical source from which the mitzvah to put on tefillin is Exodus 13:9 and 13:16 and Deuteronomy 6:8 and 11:18. It is those verses which tell Jews to put a symbol “on the hand and between the eyes” to remind them that a primary focus of their lives is to perform and teach God’s commandments. Tefillin are a sign of faith, and devotion to God. One goes on the head as a sign of intellectual loyalty and the other is placed opposite the heart as a sign of emotional loyalty to Him. They are donned every day for morning prayers except Shabbat and holy days.
8. **Kosher tefillin:** refers to tefillin that are made exactly as prescribed by Jewish law, in good condition, and with the appropriate parchment inside each box. Wearing tefillin that are not “kosher” – perfect – is completely unacceptable and will not fulfill the mitzvah to put them on. When Dr. Lo-Tov caused the man’s tefillin to disintegrate, he was preventing him from performing this mitzvah, which is very bad!
9. **Boker tov:** “Good morning” in Hebrew.
10. **Shmutz:** is a Yiddish word for dirt or messiness.
11. **Chaver:** “Friend” in Hebrew.
12. **Shmooze:** Yiddish for chat (*sometimes extensively*)
13. **Maasei Bereishis:** Literally “acts of creation (*or beginning*). This is sometimes what the mystical discussions of how G-d created the universe are called.
14. **Yetzer hora:** Literally means “evil inclination”. Jews believe that people are born with the capacity and the inclination to do both good and bad. G-d desires that we choose the right way, by listening to our “good inclination” (*yetzer tov*) and ignore our yetzer hora that wants act in the opposite way.
15. **Borchu:** The name of a prayer, it begins the key portion of the morning prayer service. Agent Emes was making a little joke here.
16. **Yeshiva:** A school that teaches Judaism.
17. **Talmidim:** is the plural for talmid, which means in Hebrew, a student. In a yeshiva the students are addressed by their teacher as “talmidim” and the teacher is called “Rebbe” (meaning Rabbi) by the students.
18. **Chumash:** literally refers to the Five Books of Moses; chamesh is the Hebrew word for five. The Rebbe instructs his talmidim to close their chumashim (plural for chumash), so that he can give them a quiz!
19. The nighttime study hall where Agent Emes goes to access the secret passage to “Tov Me’od” headquarters depicts a small group of men learning Torah together in study pairs know as “chavrusas.” The swaying back and forth that these men sometimes do is a reflexive action that helps them concentrate and “get into” their studies.

20. **Baruch ha Shem:** literally means, in Hebrew, “Blessed is the Name.” It is like saying “Thank God you have arrived.” Mrs. Berman says it when Agent Emes comes in.
21. **Kabbalah:** The Jewish mystical tradition. It goes beyond the “dos and don’ts contained in the Torah, to discuss matters of the spiritual realm.
22. **Emesdica explanation:** Emes means truth. Emesdica makes the word emes, truth, into an adjective. Something that is kosher for Passover is pesadica. An explanation that is emesdica is true, real, and valid.
23. **Zohar:** The source book of Jewish mysticism (Kabbalah). Its authorship is usually attributed to Rabbi Shimon Bar Yochai, a great sage of second Temple times.
24. **Moshe Rabbeinu:** literally means Moses our teacher. This is a traditional Jewish way of referring to the biblical character Moses
25. **Yeshiva bocher:** literally means a boy who studies in a yeshiva. In the video, when Mrs. Epstein asks her husband if he has seen her mop, he responds, “Not since I was a yeshiva bocher”. Again, this is understood to be a joke.
26. **Alef beis:** literally means alef and bet, the first two letters in the Hebrew alphabet. The Hebrew alphabet is called in Hebrew, the alef-bet, or alef beis in an East European or Ashkenazi pronunciation.
27. **Rabaiim:** Teachers.
28. **Chaverim:** literally mean friends.
29. **Kapores Chickens:** Kapores means “atonement”. On the morning before Yom Kippur, some Jews have the custom of swinging a chicken over their head three times and reciting a small prayer that essentially says, “any punishment I am deserving of because of my transgressions should be passed along, instead, to this bird.”
The chicken is killed with a quick cut to the neck and windpipe, which causes it to die instantly. However, some continue moving reflexively, and even run around for a while, before finally expiring. So, what we have here is Agent Emes saying “stop running around like a chicken with its head cut off.”
NOTE: Some, more sensitive souls, who want to do the “kapores” custom without killing an animal, will substitute a dollar bill (or some other currency) for the chicken.
30. **Meshugana:** “Crazy person” in Yiddish.
31. **Gemara Sugya:** Refers to a portion of a book of the Gemara, which covers one particular subject matter.
32. **Eretz Yisroel:** The land of Israel.
33. **Moshiach Tzidkeinu:** the Messiah. Judaism says: when all is good with the world, the Messiah will come. He is a man of flesh and blood who performs various activities (rebuilding the Temple in Jerusalem, for example) and ushers in a new period of peace in the world. Maimonides lists belief in the Moshiach’s coming as one of the thirteen essential principles of Jewish belief.