

Uncovering Meanings:
An Exploration of Jewish Ritual Objects and Symbols

Beth Nichols
May 2, 2005

CURRICULUM RATIONALE

In existence itself there is a dimension of depth, of the “transcendent,” which is the meaningful element of reality. How is it possible to portray or imagine the aspects of that hidden realm? How can one conceptualize these aspects in order to meditate upon them? How can they be expressed so that they can be shared with others? Only through the medium of symbols – objects, terms, stories, texts, or behaviors, whose only purpose is to point to a reality beyond them. Amorphous conceptions of the transcendent realm can be defined only through symbols; and only through them is it possible to develop our awareness of that transcendent realm, to meditate upon it, to communicate it with another, and to awaken it in his heart. Symbols of the transcendent realm are not only able to intimate and to represent, but also to move to action. The symbols incorporate passion, and through them it is possible as well to arouse passion.

- Moshe Greenberg¹

Greenberg wrote these words in reference to Jewish texts. In his vision of Jewish education he advocates for a focus on Jewish texts, believing that these texts are authentic Jewish symbols pointing to the deeper meanings of Judaism. His words also apply to the world of Jewish ritual objects and symbols. While we call ourselves “the People of the Book,” our practice encompasses much beyond the written word. Our Jewish life and practice are continually deepened by the richness and depth of the Jewish objects and symbols that form the fabric of our environment. This curriculum guide invites us to explore the multi-dimensional character of familiar ritual objects and symbols; to delve into the history and symbolism of our religious environment; and to deepen our religious life through an enhanced interaction with these objects and symbols.

Generations of Jews, across time and space, have felt or feel a connection to their Judaism and to the Jewish community through their encounters with Jewish ritual objects and symbols. When a Jew holds a pair of silver candlesticks, meets someone wearing a Star of David, or sees an old

¹ Moshe Greenberg, “We Were as Those Who Dream: An Agenda for an Ideal Jewish Education.” *Visions of Jewish Education*. Ed. Seymour Fox, Israel Scheffler, and Daniel Marom. Cambridge: Cambridge University, 2003. Page 135.

menorah in an antique shop, there is an immediate reaction and sense of familiarity. This curriculum groups together Jewish ritual objects and Jewish symbols because items in both categories hold rich histories, bear multitudes of meanings, and elicit emotional reactions. In addition, when we examine how individuals interact with and perceive ritual objects and symbols, we find that the line between object and symbol blurs. While ritual objects have specific uses in Jewish ritual life, they may also carry weight as recognizable symbols of Jewish life. For example, a menorah is used at Chanukah, but its presence on a shelf all year long carries meaning. Similarly, Jewish symbols, such as a Star of David, may not have specific, assigned roles in ritual life, but are ever-present markers of Jewish life.

This curriculum is designed to be used with an adult education class in a synagogue setting. (This material is relevant to Jewish adults in multiple settings, and can be adapted for use in advanced high school programs, Jewish college organizations, or adult components of family education programs.) Our synagogue adult education classes are full of individuals seeking a deeper understanding of their Judaism. For many adults these classes are their first introduction to the rich interpretive tradition of Jewish texts. Many relish the textual subtleties and the layers of meaning. We also see many adults finding meaning in life cycle ceremonies and new rituals. For example, adult b'nai mitzvah classes and Rosh Chodesh groups continue to draw in adult learners.

Adult learners are not only seeking deeper understanding of our textual tradition, but are also longing for a greater understanding of their ritual practice

and their ritual surroundings. Ritual objects and symbols offer us a largely untapped subject for study. Adults entering this curriculum may know how to use a ritual object, or be able to express a reason that they find meaning in a certain ritual object or symbol. But why should we relegate ritual objects merely to their usage, or limit their meaning? Like the Jewish texts that captivate learners, ritual objects and symbols hold within themselves centuries of Jewish thought, layers of evolution to unpack, and myriads of meanings with which to wrestle. And like religious ceremonies such as adult b'nai mitzvah or Rosh Chodesh, the use of ritual objects can offer moments of deep spiritual and communal connection. Over the last few decades much of the Jewish community has embraced new ritual objects, such as Miriam's Cup. When incorporating these objects into our practice, we share their meanings and their histories. This curriculum strives to do that with objects that are already part of our ritual lives.

Jewish history provides us with an abundance of material to approach our study of ritual objects and symbols. In order to organize our study, this curriculum presents learners with four lenses:

- 1) Historical and Textual Origins
- 2) Symbolic Significance and Usage over Time
- 3) Current Understandings
- 4) Personal Response.

Teachers and learners will use all four lenses to examine five focus objects and symbols: mezuzah, menorah, Magen David, tallit, and sefer Torah. These objects and symbols were chosen because they are familiar to most learners,

and because each one presents learners with different challenges. The mezuzah will act as an introductory object, helping students develop skills associated with each of the four lenses. Each of the remaining objects will provide an opportunity to use all four lenses, while highlighting one lens in particular.

Our examination will also rely on the following enduring understandings:

- 1) Jewish ritual objects and symbols, like texts, can serve as primary evidence of Jewish beliefs, and through an examination of these objects and symbols we can explore and develop our own beliefs and values.
- 2) Over time and space Jews have transformed and transvalued symbols to reflect their particular beliefs, and we can enhance our understanding of the Jewish objects and symbols we encounter today by examining the varied meanings they held in the past.
- 3) We often relate to Jewish symbols in a way that surpasses a mere recognition of what the symbols represent, and the perceived power of these symbols may prompt us to respond with intense emotions and actions.
- 4) A symbol has value because of its ability to bring together multiple ideas and emotions, and therefore we can expand our personal understanding of a symbol by exploring the symbol's meaning and value within a larger Jewish context.

These enduring understandings relate the centrality of ritual objects and symbols in our Jewish lives. Ritual objects both communicate and shape our values and beliefs, and thus an in depth study of them challenges us not only to articulate our own beliefs, but also to be open to augmenting our beliefs as we

uncover layers of meaning. A learner may enter the class with a single strong association to an object. Our goal is not to remove that association, but to add to it: to enable that same learner to conclude the class possessing a multi-dimensional connection to that original object. The heart of this curriculum is the Jewish religious practice of each individual who undertakes this study. The units ask us to step back from ritual objects with which we have interacted for years, and to challenge ourselves to suffuse that object with sacred meaning.

ENDURING UNDERSTANDINGS

Jewish ritual objects and symbols, like texts, can serve as primary evidence of Jewish beliefs, and through an examination of these objects and symbols we can explore and develop our own beliefs and values.

Over time and space Jews have transformed and transvalued symbols to reflect their particular beliefs, and we can enhance our understanding of the Jewish objects and symbols we encounter today by examining the varied meanings they held in the past.

We often relate to Jewish symbols in a way that surpasses a mere recognition of what the symbols represent, and the perceived power of these symbols may prompt us to respond with intense emotions and actions.

A symbol has value because of its ability to bring together multiple ideas and emotions, and therefore we can expand our personal understanding of a symbol by exploring the symbol's meaning and value within a larger Jewish context.

CURRICULUM GOALS

This course is designed to...

1. Demonstrate to Jewish adults how ritual objects and symbols can be a means for examining their own Jewish beliefs and values.
2. Deepen Jewish adults' understanding of ritual objects and symbols through the use of four different lenses in order to...
 - A. Show students how to trace the textual origins of ritual objects and symbols. (*Historical and Textual Origins*)
 - B. Illustrate how both historic and geographic context can alter the meanings Jews place on ritual objects and symbols. (*Symbolic Significance and Usage over Time*)
 - C. Enable students to see how a single ritual object or symbol can possess a multiplicity of meanings today. (*Current Understandings*)
 - D. Challenge students to examine their own relationships with, and reactions to, ritual objects and symbols. (*Personal Response*)
3. Help students enrich their experience of Jewish ritual by integrating their multi-dimensional understandings of ritual objects and symbols into their practice.

UNIT OUTLINE

1. INTRODUCTION
 - A. Definitions
 - B. Significance
 - C. The Mezuzah through the Four Lenses
 - a. Historical and Textual Origins
 - b. Symbolic Significance and Usage Over Time
 - c. Current Understandings
 - d. Personal Response

2. TALLIT
 - A. Historical and Textual Origins
 - B. Symbolic Significance and Usage Over Time
 - C. Current Understandings**
 - D. Personal Response

3. MAGEN DAVID
 - A. Personal Response
 - B. Historical and Textual Origins
 - C. Symbolic Significance and Usage Over Time**
 - D. Current Understandings

4. MENORAH
 - A. Historical and Textual Origins**
 - B. Symbolic Significance and Usage Over Time
 - C. Current Understandings
 - D. Personal Response

5. SEFER TORAH
 - A. Historical and Textual Origins**
 - B. Symbolic Significance and Usage Over Time
 - C. Current Understandings
 - D. Personal Response

6. SYNTHESIS

* Focus Lens in **bold**. See page 9 for further explanation.

NOTE TO THE TEACHER

Dear Colleague,

Welcome! You have chosen to begin an exciting journey. I believe this curriculum offers a rich opportunity for learning and connection for you as well as for your students. The following pages are your guide, offering you a framework, activity suggestions, and resources. Use this guide to shape the class you would like to teach, and your community is open to learning. The following two pages are filled with tips and definitions to help you use this guide to its fullest. Enjoy.

- Beth Nichols

CURRICULUM APPLICATIONS

The primary application that I imagine for this guide is a semester long adult education class. I encourage you, however, to adapt the materials provided to best serve your needs. You may choose to excerpt a single unit in order to incorporate an object into a related curriculum. For example, you could use the tallit material in an adult b'nai mitzvah class. With some modifications you could also adapt this material for a high school or college audience.

FOCUS LENS

As you explore the curriculum you will find that each of the center units has a focus lens. The guide is written so that by the end of the course, you have highlighted each of the four interpretative lenses once. In order to emphasize the focus lens you may choose to give it a larger proportion of the time set aside for the unit.

PLANNING A UNIT

It would take significantly longer than a semester to complete all of the suggested activities. When planning your class, pick and choose the activities that meet the needs of your students. A good rule to follow is to plan according to the four lenses, making sure to cover each lens with each object.

MODES OF TEACHING

I have sought to include a variety of teaching methods in the suggested activities. These suggestions are flexible: adapt the instructions to fit with your style of teaching. Many activities include short writing exercises. Before starting your class, you may want to consider how to create a comfortable learning community where students feel comfortable writing and sharing. Establishing a culture of writing and sharing encourages students to be active participants in their learning.

QUESTIONING SEQUENCES

In most activities I have written focus or guiding questions. These lists provide you with a jumping off point. Use them to start a discussion or guide students in independent work. At the same time, add your own questions and let the input of the students steer the discussion in new directions.

UNIT LAYOUT

NOTES TO THE TEACHER:

Each unit begins with a note to the teacher introducing the subject matter and the rationale for the unit.

UNIT GOALS:

These are the goals specific to this unit of the curriculum. These are often particularized versions of the curriculum goals. Come back to these goals as you choose activities.

ESSENTIAL UNIT QUESTIONS:

These three or four questions are the overarching questions the class' learning should seek to unravel. You may choose to share these questions with your students, or use them as reference in your planning and teaching.

OBJECTIVES:

Objectives are observable behaviors that your students should be able to demonstrate by the end of the unit. As you choose activities, go back to the objectives to check if you are choosing a wide enough variety of activities to enable students to reach the objectives.

UNIT DETAILS:

A suggested length of the unit is included to help you in your planning. In addition, a suggested order provides you with a possible order for the four lenses.

FOCUS LENS:

The four center units include a paragraph explaining why the focus lens was chosen for each object. The focus lens is also written in bold type.

MEMORABLE MOMENT:

The four center units include one or two memorable moments: activities that I feel will add an extra level of interest to the students' learning. These activities often include guests or extra preparation. The memorable moments are also included under the appropriate lens.

SUGGESTED ACTIVITIES:

These activities are arranged according to the unit headings, or the four interpretative lenses. Each activity includes a brief background section, which provides the key content piece of the activity or explains the reason for including the activity. The activity then includes a detailed list of instructions, including suggested discussion questions. Finally, many activities include helpful notes to the instructor.

UNIT BIBLIOGRAPHY:

These short annotated bibliographies provide the instructor with additional resources to consult for background information and activity enhancement. A complete bibliography is included at the end. In addition, each resource section begins with the *Encyclopaedia Judaica* article on the unit ritual object.

RESOURCES:

Following each unit are resources and activity components, labeled according to the suggested activity number. When a textual resource is included you may choose to use the excerpt provided, or you may choose to have students look up the reference in the full text.

UNIT 1: INTRODUCTION

NOTE TO THE TEACHER:

This unit serves two distinct purposes: First, to help students connect to the content of the curriculum by defining ritual object and symbol. Second, to introduce students to the four lenses that they will use to consider each object in the curriculum. This unit teaches the methodology of the four lenses using the mezuzah as a sample ritual object. Students will not learn about the mezuzah to the same depth as the objects studied in subsequent units, but will learn some material about the mezuzah while simultaneously learning research skills.

UNIT GOALS:

This unit is designed to...

1. Help students construct a working definition of religious symbol and ritual object.
2. Demonstrate to students that people possess multi-dimensional understandings of ritual objects and symbols.
3. Expose students to the rich history of the mezuzah in order to demonstrate the use of the following four lenses: Historical and Textual Origins, Symbolic Significance and Usage over Time, Current Understandings, and Personal Response.

ESSENTIAL UNIT QUESTIONS:

1. What qualities define a religious symbol and a ritual object?
2. What characteristics of symbols or ritual objects cause them to become significant to individuals?
3. What tools can we use to examine Jewish symbols and ritual objects?

OBJECTIVES:

At the end of the unit students will be able to...

Present a working definition of religious symbol and ritual object.

List reasons why a religious symbol or ritual object might be significant to an individual.

Explain why a certain religious object is significant to them.

Define the four lenses with which the class can examine ritual objects and symbols.

Share new information they have learned about the mezuzah.

UNIT DETAILS:

Suggested Length of Unit: 2-3 sessions

Suggested Order of Unit:

- A. Definitions
- B. Significance
- C. Four Lenses through the Mezuzah
 - a. Historical and Textual Origins
 - b. Symbolic Significance and Usage Over Time
 - c. Current Understandings
 - d. Personal Response

SUGGESTED ACTIVITIES:

Definitions:

1. Building a Definition From Exemplars

Background:

Before studying specific examples of religious symbols and ritual objects, it is important for the group to have a unified understanding of terms.

Instructions:

1. Divide the class into three or four groups and give each group a ritual object. The ritual objects should be familiar.

Possible Objects:

Kiddush Cup, Challah board, Havdalah Candle, Seder Plate, etc.

2. Each group must answer the following questions about its object:
 - What qualities make this object a ritual object or religious symbol?
3. Have each group write their answers on a large piece of newsprint and mount it next to the board.
4. Ask students to point out commonalities among the qualities.
5. From the commonalities, create beginning definitions of ritual object and religious symbol.

Questions to ask while writing definitions:

- What might be the differences between a ritual object and a religious symbol?
- In what ways are ritual objects and religious symbols similar?
- It is possible for something to fit both definitions?

Notes:

The next activity brings in scholarly definitions, so try not to steer students in a specific direction. Allow students to construct their own meanings.

2. Comparative Definitions

Background:

Scholars of religion, archaeology, art history, and other disciplines, have sought to define symbol. This activity seeks to bring these ideas together with those of the students.

Instructions:

1. Write the definition of symbol (not ritual object) that students developed during the previous activity on the board. (If you chose not to do that activity you might ask students to brainstorm what a symbol is.)
2. Pass out copies of a collection of scholarly definitions. These definitions include writings by Goodenough, Hoffman, and Meyers. You may decide to include additional definitions.
3. As a class read through each definition.

Guiding Questions:

- How does this author define symbol?
 - What is the most salient feature of this definition?
 - What, if anything, do we want to incorporate from this quotation into our class definition? Why?
4. As the group defines what ideas they want to add to the class definition, write them around the definition on the board.
 5. At the end, ask for ways to reword the board definition to include the new ideas.
 6. Return to the definition of ritual object from the last activity and see if the group would like to change it in anyway based on the symbol discussion.
 7. After class make copies of these definitions for each student and post them in the classroom.

Notes:

Try not to get stuck on the small details of individual definitions. This activity is intended to start students' thinking rather than limit ideas. If students get stuck on step five, ask a student to volunteer to work on the language before the next class meeting.

Significance:

3. Personal Religious Objects

Background:

Most Jewish adults have at least one Jewish ritual object to which they have a strong attachment: Perhaps because of its place in their family, its meaning, or its appearance. This activity allows students to enter into the curriculum through the familiar, and through the personal.

Instructions:

1. The week before this activity, ask students to bring in any Jewish ritual object that is important to them, and that they feel comfortable sharing with the class.

2. Ask each student to share the story of his or her object. As you listen, note on the board phrases the person uses to describe his or her attachment to the object.

Possible phrases:

- My grandfather gave it to me.
 - I got it for my Bat Mitzvah.
 - I think it is beautiful.
 - I love the meanings behind this object.
 - I use this on my favorite holiday.
3. After everyone has shared, ask the class to see if they can group the phrases you have written on the board into categories.

Possible Categories

- Family Heirloom
 - Ritual Meaning
 - Beauty
 - Important Use
4. Conclude the activity by pointing out that each member of the class has different ties to their objects, and that it is possible to have ties to the same object that bridge multiple categories. One goal of this curriculum is for members of the class to enrich the number of ways they find meaning and connection to ritual objects.

Notes:

You may have students who are not Jewish, or who do not have a ritual object to bring. Invite them to listen to the stories of other students, or describe a ritual object they think is important or would like to learn more about.

This activity could be used as a set-induction to the four lenses because the ties that different people feel to their objects may fall into one of the four lenses.

See the corresponding activity in Unit 6.

4. Rational vs. Non-Rational

Background:

Millennia of Jewish tradition have given us hosts of rational reasons for performing rituals and using certain ritual objects and symbols. On some level, though, we also perform these rituals for non-rational reasons.

Instructions:

1. Pass out excerpts from Barry Holtz's chapter, "Holy Living," in *Finding Our Way*. Holtz uses the example of a lulav and etrog to discuss reasons we perform mitzvot.
2. Give students time to read the pages and then lead a discussion.

Discussion Questions:

- Why does Holtz say that doing a mitzvah solely because “they were done before me” is insufficient?
- Why does Holtz use the lulav and etrog as an example? Can you think of similar ritual objects?
- What are some of the meanings the rabbis applied to the lulav and etrog?
- Why does Holtz feel they needed these additional explanations?
- How does Holtz describe the connection between the reasons for mitzvot and the performance of mitzvot?
- What gets added to the “reasons” during the performance of the mitzvot?
- Can you think of examples of rituals that you perform where either the rational or the non-rational is more present?

Notes:

This activity is a good follow-up to the previous activity because it adds a technical framework to students’ personal sharing.

The Mezuzah through the Four Lenses:

Notes: The following activities examine the mezuzah using the four lenses of the curriculum. In addition to completing an activity for each lens, it will also be important to clearly identify the lens. By the end of the unit it should be transparent to students how you will together study each future object.

Lens: Historical and Textual Origins

5. On the Doorposts of Your House

Background:

The text of the Shema, from Deuteronomy 6, commands us to “inscribe [these words] on the doorposts of your house and on your gates.”

Instructions:

1. Pass out the text of the Shema that is included in a Mezuzah. (Deuteronomy 6:4-9 and 11:13-21)
2. Divide the class into pairs.

Discussion Questions:

- What is the opening statement of this text?
 - List the responsibilities a person has concerning these instructions.
 - What would you say are the main messages of this text?
3. As a group, go through the list of responsibilities, discussing how people can fulfill each.
 4. Return to the idea of the mezuzah fulfilling the command to “inscribe them on the doorposts of your house.

Focus Questions:

- What effect does placing these words on our doorposts have on us, and on others?
- If the words are not visible, why do you think we should bother putting a mezuzah up?

Lens: Symbolic Significance and Usage Over Time

6. Evolution through History and Across Geography

Background:

Deuteronomy tells us to inscribe words on our doorposts. What does that mean? Mezuzot have taken many forms throughout Jewish history. This activity will also serve as a mini Jewish history lesson.

Instructions:

1. Post the photo collection of mezuzot around the room. Each picture should have a number.
2. Pass out the Jewish history timeline and world map.
3. Ask students to suggest criteria that will help them determine a mezuzah's age or place of origin. (decoration, material, detail, etc)
4. Have students walk around looking at the pictures. They should do their best to place each mezuzah on the timeline and map by writing the number of the picture on the timeline and map.
5. Review the answers with the class.

Follow-up Discussion:

- What factors in history influence a group's ritual objects? (Make sure to discuss geography, social status, influence of dominant culture, etc.)

Notes:

The purpose of the timeline and map is to orient students to Jewish history so that you can reference time periods in later lessons without needing to provide extensive explanations.

It was difficult to find pictures of early mezuzot. This activity will be enhanced if you add to the collection of images provided.

7. Amulet

Background:

There is extensive evidence that since the rabbinic period people have regarded mezuzot as possessing protective powers. In the Middle Ages these beliefs expanded to the point where people added text and symbols to mezuzah scrolls to enhance their efficacy as protective amulets.

Instructions:

1. Ask the class to brainstorm cultural examples of superstitious behaviors that people do in order to protect themselves from a perceived harm.

2. Explain that many Jews throughout history have perceived the mezuzah as having protective power. Invite students to share initial responses to this idea.
3. Pass out copies of quotations excerpted from Trachtenberg's chapter on Amulets, photocopies of the magical scrolls detailed in Trachtenberg, and Maimonides' ruling against altered mezuzah texts.
4. Divide students into groups to study the texts. Ask each group to come up with a correspondence between two people living in the Middle Ages who disagree about the magical powers of the mezuzah.
The first letter should be from a person who uses amulets. The second should be from a rabbinic authority who condemns the use of amulets.
5. Have each group present their correspondence to the group.

Notes:

The instructor should read Trachtenberg's entire section on mezuzot before teaching this activity.

Lens: Current Understandings

8. Mezuzahs for your...

Background:

Thousands of Judaica shops across the world sell mezuzot to wear, and mezuzot to put in your car. Are these mezuzot in alignment with the Torah commandment?

Instructions:

1. Pass around a car mezuzah and a mezuzah pendant. (The Curriculum Resources includes a page with internet advertisements for car mezuzot.)
2. Ask students to respond in writing to the following questions:
 - Why might someone choose to wear a mezuzah necklace?
 - Why might someone choose to put a car mezuzah in his or her car?
 - Do you believe that these are appropriate adaptations of the commandments to write these words on the doorposts of our houses?
 - Do you see the pendant and car mezuzah as similar in nature or different? Why?
3. Moderate a discussion as students share their opinions.

Notes:

It is important to note that most car mezuzot include the Traveler's Prayer rather than the Shma.

Keep in mind that members of the class may possess either type of mezuzah.

Lens: Personal Response

9. Personal Testimonies

Background:

Jews from different backgrounds and generations have different reactions to seeing mezuzot on the door.

Instructions:

1. Invite a diverse group of congregants to record on tape their feelings about seeing a mezuzah on their door, and why they choose to put up, or not put up, a mezuzah.
2. Play the tape for the class.
3. Ask students to complete a five-minute free-write on their reactions to the testimonies and what their own answers are.
4. Invite students who feel comfortable to share their writing.

Notes:

This activity requires a variety of testimonies. Make sure you have a diverse group of recordings before scheduling this activity.

You may choose to have students share their reflections out loud rather than asking them to write first.

10. Hanukat Bayit

Background:

Our liturgy includes a ceremony for putting up a mezuzah and dedicating a new Jewish home.

Instructions:

1. Copy the home dedication liturgy that your congregation uses.
2. Study the liturgy in class, examining each piece to see how it fits into the class' understanding of the mezuzah, and the intent of the ceremony.

Focus Questions:

- Who is involved in this ceremony?
 - What types of physical elements are incorporated into the ceremony?
 - According to this particular liturgy, what message does the presence of a mezuzah seem to convey?
3. Hold, or attend, a Hanukat Bayit service together.

Ideas for Ceremonies:

- Ask the synagogue staff if there is a room in the synagogue that needs a mezuzah. Invite lay leadership to a service officiated by members of the class.
- Ask if a member of the class needs a mezuzah put up and would be willing to host the class for an evening.

UNIT BIBLIOGRAPHY:

Hoffman, Lawrence A. *The Art of Public Prayer*. Woodstock, Skylight Paths Publishing, 1999.

Hoffman's second chapter, "Lost Symbols," presents a religious understanding of signs and symbols. Hoffman helps readers bridge the gap between sociological definitions' of symbols, and the religious experience of symbols.

Holtz, Barry W. *Finding Our Way*. New York: Schocken Books, 1990.

The second chapter of Holtz's book, "Holy Living," is a provocative piece on the challenge of creating a holy life in the modern world. Students will read the specific component on ritual objects, but I believe the entire chapter presents the instructor with a way of looking at Jewish practice.

Trachtenberg, Joshua. *Jewish Magic and Superstition*. Cleveland: World Publishing, 1961.

Today, we often conceive of amulets as part of the distant past, or as part of other, more "primitive" religions. Trachtenberg's chapter entitled "Amulets" brings us into the Jewish world of superstition.

UNIT 2: TALLIT

NOTE TO THE TEACHER:

The tallit has been chosen as the first unit to follow the introduction because of its familiarity to students. While some students may not currently wear a tallit, they are, or are becoming, familiar ritual garments in many congregations. The origin of the tallit's tzitzit comes directly from the Torah. One central piece of this unit will be helping students to understand why the tzitzit are of primary importance, rather than the tallit itself. Throughout history the tallit has appeared in life cycle rituals, holding a position in ritual beyond that of a prayer shawl worn by an individual. In the past few decades we have seen this role expand, as the tallit is incorporated in new and different ways into ritual practice.

UNIT GOALS:

This unit is designed to...

1. Demonstrate to Jewish adults how the tallit can be a means for examining their own Jewish beliefs and values.
2. Deepen Jewish adults' understanding of the tallit through the use of four different lenses in order to...
 - A. Show students how to trace the textual origins of the tallit and the tzitzit.
 - B. Illustrate how both historic and geographic context have altered how Jews use the tallit.
 - C. Enable students to see how the tallit possesses a multiplicity of meanings.
 - D. Challenge students to examine their own relationship with, and reaction to, the tallit and tzitzit.
3. Help students enrich their experience of Jewish ritual by integrating their multi-dimensional understandings of the tallit into their practice.

ESSENTIAL UNIT QUESTIONS:

1. How does the evolution of the tallit and tzitzit as Jewish ritual objects serve as evidence of Jewish beliefs?
2. How has the symbolism of the tallit been interpreted over time?
3. What emotions do seeing or wearing a tallit provoke in us?
4. How does the complex history of the tallit affect our contemporary understanding of this ritual garment?

OBJECTIVES:

At the end of the unit students will be able to...

Identify how tzitzit and tallit were derived from Biblical commandments.

Relate the wearing of a tallit to humans' relationship with God.

Explain the numeric significance of tzitzit.

List and explain some of the laws relating to the wearing of a tallit and tzitzit.

Identify how tallitot are used in traditional and modern lifecycle events.

Present reasons for why people choose to, or choose not to, fulfill the commandment to wear tzitzit.

Articulate personal views on wearing a tallit.

Describe how the tallit and tzitzit may serve as a reminder for liberal Jews.

UNIT DETAILS:

Suggested Length of Unit: 3-4 sessions

Suggested Order of Four Lenses:

- A. Historical and Textual Origins
- B. Symbolic Significance and Usage Over Time
- C. Current Understandings**
- D. Personal Response

FOCUS LENS:

Current Understandings

The focus lens of this unit is Current Understandings. In the past few decades, the use of tallitot by both men and women in Liberal Jewish movements has increased dramatically. This expanded usage encompasses both the traditional wearing of a tallit during prayer, as well as creative uses of the tallit in ceremonies marking life cycle events and other significant life moments. This focus allows students to explore the many ways the tallit acts as a ritual object, and leads nicely into the final lens of students considering their own use of the tallit.

MEMORABLE MOMENT

Tallit Artist Interview

Background: Judaica shops and Jewish art fairs are filled with a colorful array of tallitot. Today's tallitot have gone far beyond the traditional wool tallit with blue or black stripes to include varied materials and images. Many artists express Jewish concepts and values through their craftsmanship.

Instructions:

1. Invite a local tallit artist to speak to your class.
2. Provide the artist with a set of questions on which to focus his/her presentation.

Guiding Questions:

- How did you get involved creating Jewish ritual objects?
- Describe your creative process.
- How do you decide what designs or images to use in your work?
- Why do you think people are attracted to non-traditional tallitot?

Notes:

You may live in a community without a tallit artist. If possible you may consider arranging for an artist to come in and do an artist-in-

residence weekend for the entire congregation, with special time set aside for your class.

SUGGESTED ACTIVITIES:

Lens: Historical and Textual Origins

1. A Reminder of God's Commandments

Background:

The command to place fringes on the corners of your garment comes directly from the Torah.

Instructions:

1. Pass out copies of Numbers 15:37-40 in Hebrew and English.
2. Divide the class into *chevruta* (partners) to study the texts and provide them with guiding questions.

Guiding Questions:

- Describe the commandment found in the Numbers text.
 - What does the text suggest is the purpose of these fringes?
 - Create a scenario to describe how the fringes might serve this function.
 - Pretending that you have not seen a tallit before, imagine different ways that people could fulfill the commandments found in the text.
3. Bring the class back together and ask them to share their answers and scenarios.
 4. Draw students' attention to the additional version of this commandment in Deuteronomy 22:12. Point out that different Hebrew terms are used in the two Biblical texts. Provide the class with Hebrew dictionaries to look up the two terms: *tzitzit* and *g'dalim*.

Notes:

The question that asks students to imagine different ways to fulfill the commandment may be challenging because they have a set image of a tallit. Encourage students to be creative. Drawing their ideas may also be helpful.

2. From Priestly Robes to a Kingdom of Priests

Background:

In the Torah God carefully instructs Moses about the details of the priestly vestments. Reuven Hammer suggests that the importance of prayer "dress" today serves a similar purpose.

Instructions:

1. Opening Question: What messages do we convey when we dress up to come to synagogue?

2. In the time of the Temple, dress was much more significant for those who had the closest contact with God: the priests. Pass out copies of Exodus 28. Ask volunteers to read paragraphs.
Discussion Questions:
 - What do you think was the effect of wearing these garments for the priests?
 - What message did the priests' dress convey to the people?
 - Why do you think God required these special garments?
3. Read the line from Exodus 19:6 on the Israelites becoming a kingdom of priests. Ask students to reflect on what this might mean for us today.
4. Share Reuven Hammer's paragraph comparing the tallit to the priestly garments.
Concluding Discussion:
 - Given Hammer's comparison, how would you define the role of the tallit?
 - How does this definition fit with your previous notions of the tallit?
5. If you would like to make this discussion more advanced, you can also introduce Jacob Milgrom's discussion of how the use of shatnez (a mix of wool and linen) also connects the tallit to the priestly garments. Milgrom's inclusion of a Catholic acolyte's impression of men wearing tallitot is particularly moving and relevant to this discussion.

Notes:

This discussion is designed to take place as an entire class because it requires students to make multiple links in order to arrive at the final comparison.

3. Dress as a Symbol of Our Relationship with God

Background:

In Jewish life and worship we are directed to wear a number of special items. These items are not merely decorative, but symbolize the Jewish people's relationship to God. The Jewish textual tradition provides us with texts that demonstrate how a tallit increases our closeness to God in multiple ways.

Instructions:

1. On the board, brainstorm with the class ways that the tallit demonstrates our relationship with God. The class should have a few ideas from the initial activities of the unit.
2. The students' answers will probably indicate that the tzitzit show our dedication to God's commandments. The texts provided propose two additional ideas: that wearing the tallit is in imitation of God, and that wearing a tallit receives God's presence.

3. Complete these text studies as a group.

Texts:

- Psalm 104 (included in siddurim before the blessing to put on a tallit)
- Quotation from *Conservative Judaism* by Martin Cohen: “On the most basic level of symbol and myth, the Jew who wraps himself in his tallit is acting in direct imitation of God, thereby fulfilling the most primary longing of religious man: to be holy and to be like God. By so doing, he demonstrates his faith in the doctrine of God the Creator, and willingness and intent to create a private universe of symbol, metaphor and myth, with and in which to serve the divine paradigm.” Martin Cohen, “The Tallit,” *Conservative Judaism* pg 15
- Sifre to Numbers 115:2
- Quotation from the CLAL Faculty included in *The Book of Jewish Sacred Practices*.

Discussion Questions:

- What does Psalm 104 celebrate?
- How would you describe God’s character in this psalm?
- Focusing on verses 1-2, how does the image of God wrapped in a robe of light add to the image of God found in the psalm?
- Psalm 104 is often included in siddurim before the blessing to put on a tallit. How does Martin Cohen explain this link between Psalm 104 and our wearing of tallitot?
- Summarize how Psalm 104 and Cohen believe that wearing a tallit shows something about our relationship with God.
- What grammatical form does R. Meir use to make his point?
- How does Sifre link the physical tallit and God?
- Summarize how Sifre believes that wearing a tallit shows something about our relationship with God.
- Which explanation of how the tallit symbolizes our relationship with God are you most comfortable with? Why?

Lens: Symbolic Significance and Usage Over Time

4. The Mathematics of Ritual Garb

Background:

Gematria is the Jewish practice of finding meaning in words through the numerical values of the Hebrew alef-bet. The tying of tzitzit is linked to gematria values.

Instructions:

1. Pass out a sheet listing the numerical values of the Alef-Bet. Give students a couple of examples to demonstrate the concepts.
Possible Examples:
 - *Chai* = 18
 - *Tu B'Shevat* = the 15th of Shevat because *Tu* = 15
2. Pass out the formula sheet and ask students to work through the equation with you on the board. This sheet will demonstrate how the value of tzitzit + the number of strands + the number of knots = 613.
3. When the class has completed the worksheet ask them to reflect on the following question:
 - How does this formula demonstrate the purpose of wearing tzitzit? (Relate this question to the Biblical texts the group has studied.)
4. Pass out the second formula sheet and ask students to complete this sheet on their own. This sheet shows how the number of times the *shamash* string is wrapped around is equal to *Adonai Echad* (God is One).

5. Tying Tzitzit

Background:

Numbers 15:38 instructs the Israelites to make tzitzit for themselves. This activity gives them that opportunity. (An instruction sheet can be found in the resource section of the curriculum.)

Instructions:

1. Before the lesson, cut string to the correct length and group strands together. (If any students are tying tzitzit on to a real tallit rather than tying tzitzit for practice, instruct them on where they can buy proper tzitzit string.)
2. Point out the instruction in Numbers 15:38 that we are supposed to make fringes for ourselves.
3. Distribute the materials and instruction sheets.
4. Students can either tape down the strings or take turns holding the ends for a partner.
5. Circulate while students work, helping any students who may be having difficulty. Also have tallit available for students to see correctly knotted strings.
6. After completing the project ask students to reflect on the experience.

Discussion Questions:

- How did you feel completing the mitzvah of tying tzitzit?
- Does anyone think they will do this on a tallit for themselves or for someone else? Why or why not?
- In your opinion how does tying tzitzit yourselves, change the experience of owning a tallit?

Notes:

This is a good follow-up exercise to the study of gematria. If you did not complete that activity it may be important to briefly go over the significance of the way the tzitzit are tied.

6. Laws of Intention: Maimonides 1:11

Background:

Maimonides' list of rules for tzitzit in the *Mishneh Torah* includes one rule that conveys the importance of tzitzit by dictating a person's intention while creating them, and by bringing in other rules.

Instructions:

1. Introduce students to Maimonides and his major works.
2. Pass out copies of *Hilchot Tzitzit* 1:11.
3. In groups or as a class, work through the following questions after reading the text.

Discussion Questions:

- What is the initial rule found in this excerpt?
- What do you think this initial statement conveys about the making of tzitzit and tzitzit themselves?
- Why are the multiple ways of collecting wool forbidden?
- In the final paragraph, what other Jewish values/laws are connected to the making of tzitzit?
- What does the connection between these laws and tzitzit express about the status of tzitzit?

Notes:

If students express interest in learning more about Maimonides, he wrote an extensive list of rules on tzitzit. This rule was chosen because of the larger statements it makes about tzitzit.

7. Daywear or prayer-wear?

Background:

Liberal Jews associate the tallit primarily, or even exclusively, with a prayer service. Yet, many Jews wear tzitzit all day in the form of a tallit katan.

Instructions:

1. Return to the text from Numbers 15:37-40 that students studied in Activity 1. This time, ask students to find the information that specifically suggests when tzitzit / tallit should be worn. (The instruction is to "see them," which the rabbis interpreted as referring to the daytime.) Follow-up by asking students to come up with a number of ways people could interpret this detail.
2. Pass out the selection of resource texts that comment on the appropriate time to wear a tallit. These texts include laws by Maimonides, commentary by Ibn Ezra, and basic information on

the tallit katan. Have students study the texts in chevruta or as a class.

Guiding Questions:

- What is the majority opinion on when and how to wear tzitzit?
- What challenges do texts such as Ibn Ezra's commentary provide?

Notes:

Bringing in an example of a tallit katan would enrich students' understanding of this activity.

8. Married and Buried: The Use of the Tallit in Lifecycle Events

Background:

Tallitot are traditionally used throughout the Jewish lifecycle.

Instructions:

1. Post a large circle on the board labeled "The Jewish Lifecycle."
2. Hand out the included information about the use of tallitot at different lifecycle events. (Ex. Birth, B'nei Mitzvah, Wedding, Burial)
3. On cardstock ask students to label and summarize the event they read about and post in on the board.
4. Give students a chance to read the other cards.

Follow-up Discussion:

- Did any of the uses of the tallit surprise you? Why or why not?
- From what we have learned about the significance of the tallit, why do you think it appears so frequently along the Jewish lifecycle?

Notes:

This activity is relatively brief, but will provide a good basis for later discussions. It may be helpful to type and distribute the labels students make in order for all students to have a record of how tallitot are used.

Use your synagogue's B'nei Mitzvah packet or booklet as the resource for seeing how a tallit is used in the ceremony.

Lens: Current Understandings

9. Kissing Choreography

Background:

Over time customs have evolved about how to put on the tallit, when to hold the tzitzit, when to kiss them, etc.

Instructions:

1. Bring tallitot so that each student who wishes to use one, has one.
2. Pass out *siddurim* and show students how the tallit is used in the service.

3. Then invite students to wear the tallitot, and walk students through the choreography of putting the tallit on at the beginning of the service, gathering the four corners before the Shma, and kissing them during the Shma.

Notes:

This activity is purely a “how-to” activity. Make sure that the overall lesson includes activities that challenge students to think about the tallit.

10. Tallit Artist Interview

See Directions Above

11. Creative Ritual Use

Background:

As the liberal Jewish community seeks to reclaim and redesign rituals, it incorporates old symbols, such as the tallit, into new settings.

Instructions:

1. Collect copies of services, booklets, and poems that describe the use of a tallit in a modern Jewish ritual. A beginning collection is provided for you in the curriculum resources.
2. Ask students to examine the “artifacts” you have collected in pairs.

Group Work Questions:

- What life event is your artifact marking?
- Is this ritual new to Jewish life, or a modification of a traditional ritual?
- How is the tallit used in the ceremony?
- Why do you think the people who created this ritual chose to use the tallit in this way?

3. Ask each pair to share their artifact.

Notes:

In addition to using the resources provided, ask the congregation’s rabbi if he/she has used a tallit in any unique ways.

12. A Class Debate: Have we found the source of Tekhelet?

Background:

Numbers 15:38 commands us to place fringes on the corner of our garments, and to include a strand of *tekhelet*. Tekhelet is a strand of wool dyed a special color blue. For centuries the source of the dye was lost, but today some people claim to have the proper dye.

Instructions:

1. Introduce the concept of tekhelet, using the Encyclopedia Judaica article as reference.
2. Divide the class into two groups and provide each group with a copy of the resource material.

3. Assign one group to the position that we should wear tekhelet today and one group to the position that we should not.
4. Provide groups with time to prepare arguments.
5. Stage a debate presenting the two sides.

Notes:

Consider how much time you want to give to this activity. The length of time can vary depending on how many resource materials you provide, and how much time you give groups to prepare. If you spread this activity out, you can encourage students to do additional research on-line.

13. Congregation Guide

Background:

Most congregations have tallitot available for worshippers. In addition, many congregations encourage families to present tallitot to B'nei Mitzvah.

Instructions:

1. Decide with the help of the congregational rabbi or another senior staff member what the best format is for this activity. It could take the form of a sign to be hung above the tallit rack in the sanctuary or a pamphlet that could be placed next to the tallit rack or available with congregational brochures.
2. Inform students that they have been invited to produce a informational document for the congregation on wearing tallitot.
3. Divide the students into working groups to complete different parts of the guide.

Possible categories:

- The history of the tallit.
 - Opportunities for using a tallit.
 - How to wear a tallit.
 - Advice on choosing a tallit.
4. When groups have completed their sections, ask for a volunteer to compile the information. You may have a student who enjoys computer graphic work.
 5. Hang the project or print up pamphlets and make them available for use.

Notes:

Speak to someone on the senior staff of the congregation before completing this activity to determine an appropriate use of the end product. This activity might be a useful conclusion to the unit because it requires students to bring together different material they have learned. A crucial piece of this activity is making the final product available.

This activity is also included as a suggestion in Unit 6. Consider how you want to end the curriculum before inserting this activity into the tallit unit.

14. Tallit Styles

Background:

The variety of tallitot available today is overwhelming. They vary in size, color, fabric, and design. Although these tallitot may not look “traditional” they are helping to fulfill the practice of “hiddur mitzvah,” beautifying the commandments.

Instructions:

1. Introduce the concept of hiddur mitzvah and ask students to give examples of ways we enhance the mitzvot we perform.
2. Pass out the text from Mechilta Shirata, B’shalach 3: Rabbi Ishamel taught: In the book of Exodus (15.2) it teaches, *This is my God Whom I will beautify*. A person cannot make God beautiful, but he can make himself beautiful to God through the commandments. I will make myself a beautiful lulav, a beautiful sukkah, a beautiful tallit, beautiful tefillin...

Guiding Questions:

- What is the context of the verse from Exodus? (Provide Bibles.)
 - What emotions prompted Moses to say these words?
 - Why can a person not make God beautiful?
3. Pass out advertisements for tallitot or examples of artistic tallitot that you have collected.
 - How do these examples fit with the text we studied?
 - Do you have a personal preference for a “traditional” tallit or a contemporary tallit? Why?

Lens: Personal Response

15. Wrapping Ourselves

Background:

The blessing for donning a tallit describes us as “wrapping ourselves” in tzitzit.

Instructions:

1. Pass out copies of the pages from your synagogue prayerbook dealing with putting on a tallit.
2. Ask students to record the answers to the following questions individually.

Journal Questions:

- How do you think the excerpt from Psalm 104 sets up the act of wearing a tallit?
 - The blessing tells us to “wrap ourselves” in the tallit. What does it mean to you to “wrap” yourself in the tallit? What images and ideas are you wrapping yourself in?
3. Invite students who wish, to share their writing with the class.

Notes:

This activity could accompany the activity from the previous lens looking at how we kiss the tallit during worship. You may need to

edit or add to the questions depending on what your synagogue prayerbook includes.

16. Why or Why Not? A Panel Discussion

Background:

Many Liberal congregations have congregants who follow a variety of practices concerning the wearing of tallitot.

Instructions:

1. Invite a panel of congregants to share their views on wearing tallitot. Try to find a diversity of people who have made conscious choices about tallitot: a man who wears a tallit, a man who does not, a woman who does, a person who wears a tallit katan, etc.
2. Questions for Panelists:
 - Describe to us your tallit practice.
 - What ideas led you to decide on this practice?
3. Open up the floor for questions from the class.
4. An additional resource is a vignette written by Dr. Dvora Weisberg on her decision to wear tallit and tefillin.

Notes:

Check and see if you have a member of the class who has thought carefully about tallitot and wants to sit on the panel.

17. Of What do They Remind Us?

Background:

The Torah tells us that tzitzit are reminders of our obligation to observe God's commandments. Most Liberal Jews do not follow all of the commandments and may not feel commanded to observe those mitzvot that they do practice.

Instructions:

1. Introduce students to the dilemma of how tzitzit can be significant for liberal Jews.
2. Give students a chance to complete a free write on the following question:
 - As a liberal Jew who may not follow all of the commandments, for what can the tzitzit serve as a reminder to us?
3. Invite students to share their writing with a partner or with the entire class.

UNIT BIBLIOGRAPHY:

Cohen, Martin. "The Tallit," *Conservative Judaism*. Vol. 44, 1992. 3-16.
Cohen's article leads readers through the imagery of the tallit. He touches on historical evidence, ancient literatures, and on metaphor. Cohen's article is particularly relevant to his curriculum because he focuses on deepening our understanding of the tallit's meaning.

Kadden, Bruce and Barbara Binder Kadden. *Teaching Tefillah*. Denver: A.R.E. Publishing, 1994.
The Kaddens' chapter on ritual garb provides a succinct introduction for an instructor who may not be as familiar with prayer garments. The activities included in the chapter may also spark new ideas to incorporate into the unit.

Trager, Eliyahu. *Maimonides Mishneh Torah: The Laws Governing Tefillin, Mezuzah, and Torah Scrolls and The Laws of Tzitzit*. New York: Moznaim Publishing, 1990.
I suggest that instructors browse Maimonides' laws on tzitzit. All the laws are not addressed in the scope of this curriculum, but they help to give a sense of how centuries of Jews considered this mitzvah. I used this translation, but any translation with commentary is appropriate.

UNIT 3: MAGEN DAVID

NOTE TO THE TEACHER:

Today people recognize the Magen David as the primary symbol of the Jewish people. Yet, the identification of the six-pointed star as a Jewish symbol evolved slowly over centuries and the history of this symbol remains somewhat elusive to scholars to this day. With that fact in mind, this unit aims to present students with snapshots from the Magen David's past and present. This approach will include some uses of the six-pointed star in non-Jewish settings. It is important to both inform students that much is unknown about this symbol's story, as well as challenge students to use what is known to augment their understanding of the Magen David.

UNIT GOALS:

This unit is designed to...

1. Demonstrate to Jewish adults how the Magen David can be a means for examining their own Jewish beliefs and values.
2. Deepen Jewish adults' understanding of the Magen David through the use of four different lenses in order to...
 - A. Show students how to trace the textual origins of the Magen David.
 - B. Illustrate how both historic and geographic context have altered the meanings Jews placed on the Magen David.
 - C. Enable students to see how the Magen David possesses a multiplicity of meanings.
 - D. Challenge students to examine their own relationship with, and reaction to, the Magen David.
3. Help students enrich their experience of the Magen David by integrating their multi-dimensional understandings of the Magen David into their practice.

ESSENTIAL UNIT QUESTIONS:

1. How does the evolution of the Magen David as a Jewish symbol serve as evidence of Jewish beliefs?
2. How has the six-pointed star been utilized overtime in Jewish and non-Jewish settings?
3. What emotions do I think of and feel upon seeing a Magen David?
4. How does the complex history of the Magen David affect our contemporary understanding of this symbol?

OBJECTIVES:

At the end of the unit students will be able to...

Describe the ancient usage of the six-pointed star.

Explain the use of the word *magen* in Biblical material.

Identify multiple Jewish and non-Jewish settings where the six-pointed star has been used over time.

Articulate ways that the Magen David has been used as both a positive symbol of Judaism and a symbol of anti-semitism.

Label and explain the six points of Rosensweig's Star of Redemption.

Articulate reasons why the Magen David was chosen as a symbol of Zionism and the modern state of Israel.

Create a project that demonstrates a personal connection with the Magen David.

UNIT DETAILS:

Suggested Length of Unit: 2-3 sessions

Suggested Order of Four Lenses:

- A. Personal Response
- B. Historical and Textual Origins
- C. Symbolic Significance and Usage Over Time**
- D. Current Understandings

UNIT FOCUS:

The focus lens of this unit is Symbolic Significance and Usage Over Time. The hexagram took centuries to become known as the Magen David. By emphasizing the Magen David's symbolic evolution, this unit allows students to trace the hexagram's development from a universally powerful symbol, to a symbol identified with the Jewish people.

MEMORABLE MOMENT

A Survivor's Story: Wearing a Yellow Star

Background:

The Nazi's use of a yellow star to mark Jews is only one example of the way the Magen David has been used for anti-Semitic purposes.

Instructions:

Arrange for a Holocaust survivor to come in, who as part of their suffering under the Nazis was forced to wear a yellow star. Have the survivor share with the class the experience of being marked in such a way.

Micrography Magen David

Background:

During the Middle Ages many Jewish communities regarded the Magen David as possessing magical protective powers. One popular tradition was to write the words of Psalm 121 in the form of a hexagram as an amulet for women in childbirth.

Instructions:

1. Share this tradition with students and show them examples of the micrography stars.
2. Read Psalm 121 and discuss with students why people chose this psalm to be paired with the protective powers of the Magen David.

Key Questions:

- What qualities of God are described which make God a source of protection?
 - How will God protect the narrator of this Psalm?
 - How does our previous knowledge of the Magen David relate to the message expressed in the Psalm?
3. Pass out art materials to students so they can create a personal micrography Magen David. Rather than writing Psalm 121, ask students to use words that reflect their current understanding of the meaning of the Magen David. Have available for their use all of the texts you have studied throughout the unit.

SUGGESTED ACTIVITIES:

Lens: Personal Response

1. Six-Pointed Star Museum

Background:

Today, most people readily identify the six-pointed star as a Jewish symbol. Throughout this unit, however, students will discover that the six-pointed star has a history that goes far beyond a Jewish environment.

Instructions:

1. Before class begins, mount the photographs of images containing six-pointed stars around the room. The images should be labeled with numbers only. The majority of these images will be of non-Jewish objects or buildings. Examples of possible images include roman plates, the star on the American dollar bill, an optical illusion of a star, a medieval church throne, a medieval flag of Poland, a sheriff's badge, etc.
2. When students enter, provide them with a museum observation sheet with spaces for each image. Students should look at each photo and answer the following questions:
 - What do you think this is a picture of?
 - How do you think this object or building was/is used?
3. Once students have had an opportunity to view all the pictures, gather the group back together. Ask for comments about each image and then provide students with the true identification of each image.
4. Follow-up Discussion:
 - What surprised you about this activity?
 - From the images we have seen so far, describe different ways the six-pointed star has been used.
 - How have these images changed your understanding of the "Jewish star"?

Notes:

This activity could be used as the introduction for the entire unit. The presentation of images could be done through a slide presentation rather than a museum layout. A number of images have been provided in the resource section. I encourage you to add images that you find.

2. Gunther Plaut's Surprising Discovery

Background:

While serving as an army chaplain during WWII, Rabbi Gunther Plaut came upon a Magen David in the stained glass window of a bombed out German church. This finding prompted him to search out the origins of the Magen David.

Instructions:

1. Pass out copies of the prologue to Plaut's book, *The Magen David*, which tells of his experience finding a Magen David in a church in Germany.
2. Invite students to respond to the piece.
 - Would their reaction have been similar to Plaut's reaction?
 - What kind of emotions does the image of a Magen David in a German church raise for them?

3. Wearing a Jewish Star Discussion

Background:

Many students in the class will probably wear, or have worn, a Magen David necklace.

Instructions:

Lead a discussion about wearing a Jewish star, and what the significance of that act is for the students in the class.

Possible Questions:

- Does anyone in the class wear jewelry with a Magen David on it?
- When you wear it, what does it represent for you?
- What do you think it tells others about you?
- Are there specific times or places that you choose to wear or not wear the jewelry?

Notes:

This discussion may be a way of opening the unit and allowing students to share their current understandings of the Magen David before introducing them to new material.

Lens: Historical and Textual Origins

4. Compass Rosettes

Background:

In antiquity, the six-pointed star was among a group of decorative and symbolic designs used on buildings that symbolized divinity.

Scholars believe that this category of images, known as rosettes was appreciated for its “perfect” design.

Instructions:

1. Equip each student with blank pieces of paper, colored pencils, and a compass.
2. Using the instruction sheet take students through the steps of making a six-pointed classic rosette and a six-pointed star in a circle.
3. After teaching students the basics, allow them to be creative and make their own designs based on the geometric concept of the rosette.
4. Ask students to turn to a partner and answer the following questions.

Discussion Questions:

- How did it feel to create these designs?
 - Why might people in antiquity have been attracted to these designs?
 - Why do you believe that these designs were connected with deities and used to symbolize divine powers?
5. Ask each pair to share one reason they believe the designs were connected with deities or supernatural powers.

5. The Word *Magen* in the Bible and in Prayer

Background:

While the connection of the six-pointed star and the term “Magen” is made many centuries after the Biblical and Rabbinic periods, the word Magen, and its association with significant biblical figures is found in the Bible itself.

Instructions:

1. Distribute copies of the Biblical and liturgical texts to the class and divide students into pairs.

Texts may include:

- II Samuel 22:2-3, 31 – David calls God his *magen*.
 - Psalm 18:3 - David calls God his *magen*.
 - Genesis 15:1 – God tells Abram that God is his *magen*.
 - *Avot v’Imahot*
 - Traditional Blessing after the Haftarah
2. Depending on time, have pairs look at all the texts, or assign each pair one text.

Guiding Questions:

- What does *magen* refer to in this text?
 - To whom is the *magen* promised as protection?
 - What qualities does the *magen* possess?
 - Are there other images used in this text to portray similar qualities?
3. Discuss the group of texts as a class.

Concluding Questions:

- How do these metaphorical uses of *magen* relate to the concrete image of the Magen David?
- How do these texts enhance our understanding of the Magen David's significance and symbolism?

Lens: Symbolic Significance and Usage Over Time

6. Is the Magen David a Symbol?

Background:

The Magen David is recognized as a symbol of the Jewish people, yet it is unclear what it represents.

Instructions:

1. Brainstorm on the board a list of reasons the Magen David fits the definition of a symbol. (You can use the definition of symbol the class developed in the first unit.) Also list any reasons why the Magen David might not fit the definition.
2. Distribute and read Gershom Scholem's comments on the Magen David's questionable status as a symbol:
"None of the marks of a true symbol...apply to it. It express no "idea," awakens no primeval associations which have become entwined with the roots of our experiences, and it does not spontaneously comprise any spiritual reality. It calls to mind nothing of biblical or rabbinical Judaism; it arouses no hopes...
(*The Messianic Idea in Judaism*, 259)

Follow-Up Questions:

- What characteristics is Scholem suggesting are crucial for something to be called a symbol?
- How does the Magen David fit/not fit these characteristics?
- What might you say to challenge Scholem's statement?
- How has Scholem's statement added to your understanding of the Magen David's identity as a symbol?

Notes:

This quotation could serve as a set induction for looking at various meanings of the star over time.

7. Magical Powers Jigsaw

Background:

The six-pointed star has been connected with magical powers and protective forces since antiquity.

Instructions:

1. Divide the class into small groups.
2. Provide each group with a different piece of background material that describe how the six-pointed star was used for magical purposes. Examples of possible group topics may

include the use of the star to ward off demons, the use of the star inside of mezuzah casings, the medieval disagreement over what image King David took into battle for protection, amulets for pregnant women, etc.

Focus Questions:

- What is the context of your materials?
 - How is the six-pointed star used?
 - What powers do the users of the star appear to attribute to it?
3. Jigsaw the groups and have each student share their original group's findings with the jigsaw group. To jigsaw, create new groups made up of members from each of the original groups.

8. A Timeline of Symbolic Evolution

Background:

Historians are unsure about much of the history of the Magen David. Their research, though, includes artifacts and stories from the Jewish community spanning centuries and continents.

Instructions:

1. Hand out the Magen David timeline to students.
2. Assign pairs or small groups of students different points on the timeline. Points may include references to the shields of Solomon and David, the Prague Jewish community's flag, parallels to the cross, etc.
3. Provide each group with a short piece to read about their item. Give students a few minutes to read the material and prepare a short explanation for the class.
4. As each group presents to the rest of the class, encourage students to fill in details on their timelines.

Notes:

Entire books have been written speculating on the origin of the Magen David. This activity provides a condensed way to expose students to many points along the star's evolution.

9. Micrography Magen David

See description above.

Lens: Current Understandings

10. Nazi Era Badges of Persecution

Background:

Under Nazi rule, thousands of Jews were forced to wear yellow stars to identify themselves as Jews.

Instructions:

1. Bring in a poster showing different Nazi era badges.
2. Provide students with lined paper and pens.

3. Give students time to do a free write about the meaning the Magen David takes on when it is used in this way.
4. Invite students to share their writing with the class.

Notes:

A small picture of a poster is included in the resources. Full-color posters can be ordered on-line.

11. A Survivor's Story: Wearing a Yellow Star
See description above.

12. Star of Redemption Text Study

Background:

Franz Rosenzweig offers us a twentieth century understanding of the Magen David's symbolic significance by labeling the six points of the star with words that encompass his philosophical understanding of Judaism.

Instructions:

1. Handout or share brief background information on Rosenzweig in order to give students a context for his writing.
2. On the board, walk the class through the first triangle of Rosenzweig's star: God, Humans, and World.
3. List the remaining three labels on the board: Creation, Redemption, and Revelation. Ask students to turn to the person next to them to discuss where the remaining labels fit. Ask for volunteers to explain where each term goes and how that concept interacts with the points to which it is attached.

13. Creative Rosenzweig Star

Background:

In the previous activity students will have an opportunity to study Franz Rosenzweig's modern explanation of the Magen David. This activity utilizes Rosenzweig's methodology to encourage student creativity.

Instructions:

1. Review Rosenzweig's Star of Redemption and how Rosenzweig used the shape of the Magen David to explain his conception of Judaism's structure.
2. Pass out blank six-pointed stars and direct students to develop their own labels for the six points.

Questions to consider while designing their stars:

- What concepts are fundamental to your understanding of Judaism?
 - How do these concepts relate to one another?
3. Give students an opportunity to present their stars to the class or in small groups.

14. Flag Proclamation

Background:

The World Zionist Congress adopted the Magen David as its symbol in the late 19th century. Upon the establishment of the State of Israel in 1948, the question was raised of whether the Zionist flag should be adopted as the national flag. Israel did decide to keep the flag and it remains the same today.

Instructions:

1. Through photocopies or a computer presentation, show students flag proposals submitted to the Israel Provisional Council of State in 1948.
2. Also distribute and read the text of the official proclamation passed by the Israel Provisional Council of State in 1948.
3. Possible Discussion Questions:
 - What reasons might people have given for why or why not the Zionist flag should be adopted as the flag for the State of Israel?
 - What values do the symbols included in the various proposals convey?
 - What values does the combination of the blue stripes of the tallit and the Magen David convey?

Notes:

The following website includes many of the proposals:

<http://www.crwflags.com/fotw/flags/il.html>

15. From Destruction to Hope

Background:

In modern times the Magen David has been a symbol of some of the darkest times for the Jewish people, and some of the brightest.

Instructions:

1. Read the closing paragraph of Gershom Scholem's article, "The Star of David: History of A Symbol," and the closing quotation in Gerbern Oegema's book, *The History of the Shield of David*. Both selections capture the contrast of the Star of David as a symbol of death and destruction, and as a symbol of life and hope.

Focus Question:

- What statement/message unifies these two texts?
2. Lead a discussion around the following statement: The Magen David may not possess an inherent symbolic connection with Judaism, yet it tells us much about the story of the Jewish people.

Follow-up Discussion:

- How do the previous texts help us understand this statement?

- How might this statement help us make an argument for the Magen David's identification as a symbol?

Notes:

This activity may be used as a conclusion to the unit.

UNIT BIBLIOGRAPHY:

Oegema, Gerbern S. *The History of the Shield of David: The Birth of a Symbol*. Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 1996.

Oegema provides an academic history of the six-pointed star. This book is not the place to begin research, but richly supplements either Plaut or Scholem with historical examples and scholarly research.

Plaut, W. Gunther. *The Magen David: How the Six-Pointed Star Became an Emblem for the Jewish People*. Washington, D.C.: B'nai B'rith Books, 1991.

Plaut's book demonstrates his personal commitment to exploring the Magen David's past. The book provides readers with a lot of information in a readable format. Instructors should read this book before teaching the unit.

Scholem, Gershom. *The Messianic Idea in Judaism*. London: George Allen & Unwin Ltd, 1971.

Scholars regard Scholem's article in this book, "The Star of David: History of a symbol," an authoritative work on the Magen David. His work played a major role in the development of the previous two entries. Scholem's article is clear and concise. It does not include a lot of examples, but covers the span of history, and presents varied theories.

UNIT 4: MENORAH

NOTE TO THE TEACHER:

The title of this unit may draw your students' minds directly to Chanukah, because for most American Jews today, the word "menorah" describes the *chanukiyah*, the nine-branched candelabra used on Chanukah. While this unit will touch on the history of the Chanukah menorah, its focus is on the seven-branched menorah. The original menorah described in the Torah had seven branches and was a centerpiece of the tabernacle the Israelites constructed in the desert, and in the Holy Temple in Jerusalem. Following the destruction of the Temple, continuing until today, the menorah became a symbol of the Jewish people. The menorah carries with it a rich history and a promise of hope. Through this unit students will come to understand the distinction between the menorah and the *chanukiyah*. An enhanced understanding of both will help to deepen their experience of the symbol of the menorah, and their use of the *chanukiyah*.

UNIT GOALS:

This unit is designed to...

1. Demonstrate to Jewish adults how the menorah can be a means for examining their own Jewish beliefs and values.
2. Deepen Jewish adults' understanding of the menorah through the use of four different lenses in order to...
 - A. Show students how to trace the textual origins of the menorah and the *chanukiyah*.
 - B. Illustrate how both historic and geographic context have altered the meanings Jews placed on the menorah.
 - C. Enable students to see how the menorah possesses a multiplicity of meanings.
 - D. Challenge students to examine their own relationship with, and reaction to, the menorah and the *chanukiyah*.
3. Help students enrich their experience of Jewish ritual by integrating their multi-dimensional understandings of the menorah into their practice.

ESSENTIAL UNIT QUESTIONS:

1. How does the evolution of the menorah as a Jewish ritual object and symbol serve as evidence of Jewish beliefs?
2. How has the symbolism of the menorah been interpreted over time?
3. What emotions does seeing a seven-branched menorah or *chanukiyah* provoke in us?
4. How does the complex history of the menorah affect our contemporary understanding of the symbol of the seven-branched menorah and the ritual use of the *chanukiyah*?

OBJECTIVES:

At the end of the unit students will be able to...

Describe the appearance of the tabernacle menorah and explain its use.

Define menorah using simple Hebrew grammar.

Articulate how the menorah evolved from a ritual object into a potent Jewish symbol.

Distinguish the seven-branched menorah from the *chanukiyah*.

Identify several different interpretations of the menorah's symbolism over time.

Design a menorah or *chanukiyah* that demonstrates an enhanced understanding of the menorah.

UNIT DETAILS:

Suggested Length of Unit: 3-4 sessions

Suggested Order of Four Lenses:

A. Historical and Textual Origins

B. Symbolic Significance and Usage Over Time

C. Current Understandings

D. Personal Response

FOCUS LENS:

Historical and Textual Origins

The focus lens of this unit is Historical and Textual Origins. Both the Bible and Rabbinic Literature have rich texts describing the menorah and its use. This focus will allow students to experience extended text studies and sharpen their text reading skills. In addition, this lens will include students' initial exploration of the relationship between the menorah and the *chanukiyah*.

MEMORABLE MOMENT

Clay Menorah / *Chanukiyah*

Background: The *menorot* and *chanukiyot* that the students will study throughout the unit reflect the aesthetic of their times and the symbolism attached to the objects.

Instructions:

1. Give students materials and tools with which to create their own *menorah* or *chanukiyah*. Clay is ideal.
2. Direct students to create a *menorah* or *chanukiyah* that somehow illustrates their enhanced understanding of the object's meaning and form.
3. Provide students with paper and pens to write an explanation for their creation.
4. Display the objects and explanations in the synagogue.

Notes:

Invite a professional artist in to lead this activity or choose a material with which you are comfortable.

The explanation is the key to having this activity function as an assessment tool. Make sure to provide adequate time for this piece of the activity.

SUGGESTED ACTIVITIES:

Lens: Historical and Textual Origins

1. Constructing the Tabernacle Menorah

Background:

The Torah provides us with a detailed plan for the building of the tabernacle menorah. Despite the detail, however, it is difficult to imagine exactly what the craftsman Betzalel built.

Instructions:

1. Orient students to the level of detail God uses to describe the building of the tabernacle to Moses, recorded in Exodus. Explain that after Moses received these instructions, the artist Betzalel created the tabernacle and its tools.
2. Pass out copies of Exodus 25:31-40, pencils, and construction paper.
3. As individuals, or in pairs, instruct students to draw the menorah following the instructions in the text as closely as possible.
4. Have students share their drawings. You may also want to share examples by scholars and artists.
5. Follow-up Discussion:
 - Was it difficult to create an image from the text?
 - Why do you think God provided Moses with such detailed plans?
 - From the description of the menorah, how do you imagine it was used in the tabernacle?

Notes:

For an extra challenge students can also refer to Leviticus 24:2-4 and Numbers 8:1-4. These texts provide additional details about the menorah's construction and design.

2. Lampstand or Lamp? Defining Menorah

Background:

When we imagine the menorah we imagine placing candles directly into the menorah. The Biblical menorah, however, was probably a stand on top of which oil lamps were placed. The grammar of the Hebrew term helps us understand this.

Instructions:

1. On the board write the word menorah in Hebrew. In addition, write the blessing for candles for either Shabbat or Chanukah.
2. Ask students to find the word in the blessing that has a similarity with menorah. (*Ner*)

3. Have a volunteer look up *ner* in a Hebrew dictionary. (Light / candle / lamp)
4. Explain that the *mem* changes the meaning from “lamp” to “support of the lamp.” For this reason people translate menorah as “lampstand.”
5. Ask students to imagine how lamps were placed on the menorah in ancient times.

Notes:

This activity is very short, but adds another level of understanding to the students’ concept of menorah.

3. Tracking the Menorah: From Tabernacle to Temple to...

Background:

We know from biblical texts and other ancient sources, that the tabernacle, and the First and Second Temples each had one menorah, or multiple menorahs, in them. It is difficult to trace what happened to the original menorah. Is it hidden somewhere or is it the menorah that Titus took to Rome?

Instructions:

1. Divide students into small “investigative” groups. Inform them that they are archaeological detectives and that the goal of their case is to trace the use of the menorah from the desert through the destruction of the Second Temple.
2. Pass out the list of biblical texts, Bibles and other documents that mention menorahs at different time periods. Give each group a large strip of paper and markers to make a timeline.
3. Give groups time to work through the texts, adding information to their timeline as they read.
4. Hang up the timelines at the end for students to compare.

Notes:

Generations of rabbis, historians, and archaeologists have many differing theories about what happened to Moses’ menorah. Encourage students to hypothesize as they create their timelines.

4. Locating the Divine in the Tree of Light

Background:

Some scholars suggest that the menorah’s origin lies in ancient depictions of trees. The menorah takes on increased symbolism when connected with the tree of life. In addition, the Bible includes many examples of theophanies that occur next to significant trees. In this activity texts and images will come together to demonstrate the menorah’s connection to divine power.

Instructions:

1. Reread Exodus 25:31-40 and ask students to list on the board all the pieces of the Tabernacle menorah that relate to trees.
2. Creation Trees:

Questions:

- What are the most famous trees in the Bible? (Creation story)
 - What qualities do these trees possess?
3. Tree Theophanies: Multiple times in the Bible significant interactions or covenants with God occur near a tree. Hand out Biblical texts to individuals or groups. Ask groups to quickly identify how a tree is involved in the text, and how God interacts in the text.

Texts:

Genesis 12:6-7 - Abraham receives promise of land.

Joshua 24:25-28 – Joshua renews covenant.

Judges 4:4-5 – Deborah receives prophecy under a palm tree.

2 Samuel 5:22-25 – God leads David into battle through the trees.

4. Messianic Trees:

Trees in the Bible have messianic connections.

Read over the following texts, looking for how the tree symbolizes redemption:

- Job 14:7-9 – Description of a tree reviving
 - Exodus 15:16-18 – Image of Israel as a tree on God's mountain.
5. Reconnecting Menorah and Trees:
Pass out images of seven-branched trees from Ancient Israel and surrounding cultures demonstrating the connection between the tree of life and the menorah.
6. Why the Almond Tree?
- Note that the Almond tree is the first to bloom in Spring.
 - Read Jeremiah 1:11 where a play on words connects the almond tree and God's protection.
 - Reference Numbers 17 where Aaron's staff turns into an almond branch to prove God's power.
7. Summary: Ask students to free-write for a few minutes on the following prompt: The significance of the menorah's relation to the tree. Share writing to conclude the exercise.
8. You can also share the following quotation by Meyers from *The Tabernacle Menorah* (page 175), which is one way to answer the writing prompt:
"The notion of God's omnipotence and omnipresence was not emotionally convincing, and in cult and prayer the proximity of God was sought. And insofar as minds are metaphoric by nature, God's nearness could be expressed symbolically to provide the necessary emotional reassurance. Hence the life theme of the tree motif of the menorah, in entering the cosmic sphere, can be seen as performing the function within the tabernacle shrine of establishing the center of the center,

bringing the organizing principle of God's presence in the cosmos into visible focus in the midst of the people."

Notes:

This activity uses many Biblical texts and images. It will be important to make sure the entire class stays with the line of thinking. It is not important to fully read each text. You can decide which texts to study, and which texts to reference.

5. Menorah Midrashim

Background:

The Midrash tradition provides us with a number of opinions on the imagery of the menorah. This lesson takes a few examples from this collection.

Instructions:

1. Have students work through the texts in pairs, focusing on a single question:
 - How does this text contribute to our understanding of the menorah's symbolism?

Texts:

- Midrash Rabbah Numbers 14:9 – Lamp represents Torah
 - Midrash Rabbah Exodus 36:3 – Light of Torah
 - Midrash Rabbah Numbers 15:6 – Light symbolizes God's covenant
 - Midrash Rabbah Exodus 36:1 – Israel is like a light to the nations
2. Ask each individual student to choose one text and represent their understanding of that text through torn paper midrash:
 - Start with a solid piece of construction paper.
 - Rip additional pieces of paper and glue them on to the large piece in order to represent your understanding of the chosen text.
 - No scissors or writing utensils may be used.
 - Write a paragraph and attach it to the collage that explains your work.
 3. Have each student present their artwork to the class.

Notes:

It will be helpful to students if you have studied the midrashim ahead of time and have looked up some of the verses referenced in order to answer questions. Students do not need to spend a long time looking up material in order to grasp the essence of each text.

6. Adding a Branch: From Menorah to *Chanukiyah*

Background:

The most famous story of the origins of Chanukah tells of the miraculous jug of oil, which lasted for eight days. The Apocryphal Book of Maccabees, however, tells of no such jug.

Instructions:

1. Ask each student to write down on a notecard why we celebrate Chanukah. Gather the notecards and anonymously list the reasons on the board. Duplicate answers can be recorded with a check.
2. Ask students if they know where we find the story of Chanukah. After allowing for a few guesses, make sure it is clear that Chanukah is not found in the Bible!
3. Explain that the class is going to compare two texts that give different reasons for the observance of Chanukah.

Texts:

I Maccabees 4:36-59

Babylonian Talmud, Shabbat 21b:

Focus Questions:

- What is the focus of the excerpt from Maccabees?
- In the Maccabees text, how does Chanukah become a festival?
- Who are the main actors in the Maccabees text?
- What is the focus for the rabbis of the Talmud?
- For the rabbis, how does Chanukah become a festival?
- Who are the main actors in the Talmud text?
- How can each text enrich our understanding of the menorah?

Notes:

Whenever the *chanukiyah* is mentioned during this unit it will be important to make sure that students are clear about the distinction between the Temple menorah and the *chanukiyah*.

7. Prohibiting Recreation

Background:

The Talmud prohibits a person from making anything that seeks to replicate the ancient Temple.

Instructions:

1. Pass out the Talmud text: Rosh Hashanah 24a-b:
A man may not make a house in the form of the Temple, or a porch in the form of the Temple hall, or a court corresponding to the Temple court, or a table corresponding to the table, or a candlestick corresponding to the candlestick, but he may make one with five, or six or eight lamps, but with seven he should not make, even of other metals.
2. Discussion Questions:
 - What does this text prohibit?
 - What are the additional stipulations placed on the making of a menorah?
 - Why do you think the rabbis declared these prohibitions?

- Do you think menorahs and *chanukiyot* that we use today go against the rabbis' ruling? Why or why not?

Notes:

One explanation given for why later depictions of the menorah did not violate this rule is that the rabbis are prohibiting the actual creation and use of a menorah, but not the symbolic depiction of one.

Lens: Symbolic Significance and Usage Over Time

8. Messianic Menorah: A Symbol of Hope

Background:

After the destruction of the Temple, the menorah became a symbol of messianic hope. The menorah symbolized the return of power to the Jews and the rebuilding of the Temple.

Instructions:

1. Post two pieces of posterboard on the wall. In the center of one write, "Messiah." In the center of the second write, "Hope."
2. Pass out markers and ask the class to write "graffiti" on the posters. They should write words or phrases that comment on why these two words might be connected with the menorah.
3. After a period of time, ask students to read over the comments of classmates.
4. Pass out pens and paper and have each student write a paragraph explaining why the menorah is connected with the Messiah, or with hope.
5. Invite students to share their writing.
6. Pass out a page with excerpts from books describing the role of the menorah in messianic thought.

Notes:

This activity encourages the students to be part of the meaning-making process by imagining how people interpreted the menorah to have certain meanings.

9. Mystical Menorah: The Sefirot Menorah

Background:

The ten sefirot of Kabbalah are most often depicted in a diagram known as the Tree of Life. Kabbalists have also depicted the sefirot in the shape of a menorah.

Instructions:

1. Pass out an introductory chart of the 10 sefirot and briefly introduce them.
2. Provide participants with paper and guide them through rewriting the 10 sefirot in the shape of the menorah.
3. Follow-up discussion:
 - How does the shape of the menorah aid in explaining the system of sefirot?

- How does the connection of the menorah and the sefirot enhance our understanding of the relationship between the menorah and God?

10. *Chanukiyah* Design

Background:

Jewish communities often followed the lamp making customs of their surrounding cultures when designing *chanukiyot*. The *chanukiyah* patterned after the tabernacle menorah is actually of medieval origin.

Instructions:

1. Read excerpts from Noam Zion's article, "Designing a Hanukkah Menorah," that describes halachic guidelines for the menorah.

Zion, Noam. "Designing a Hanukkah Menorah," *A Different Light: The Big Book of Hanukkah*. Jerusalem: Shalom Hartman Institute, 2000.

2. Pass out photos of historic *chanukiyot*.

Guiding Questions:

- Does this *chanukiyah* conform to the rules outlined in the article?
- What do you like or dislike about this design?

Notes:

This activity is short, but helps to expand students' notion of what a *chanukiyah* looks like.

Lens: Current Understandings

11. Mixing Menorahs: The Torah and Haftarah Portions for Chanukah

Background:

The Torah and Haftarah portions read during Chanukah reference the seven-branched menorah of the tabernacle.

Instructions:

1. Inform students of the key question:
 - How do images of the seven-branched menorah enhance our experience of Chanukah?
6. Pass out copies of the Torah and Haftarah portions for Chanukah. (excerpts from Numbers 6:22-8:4, Zechariah 4:1-7)
7. Read the texts together or in small groups.

Guiding Questions:

- What is the setting of this text?
 - What is the mood of this text?
 - How is the menorah depicted in this text?
 - What symbolism does the menorah hold in this text?
8. Bring students together as a group to consider the relevance of these texts.

Discussion Questions:

- Why are these texts read on Chanukah?
- What significance do these texts place on the menorah?
- How might we transfer that significance to our celebration of Chanukah and the use of the *chanukiyah*?

Notes:

If you are short on time, the class can be divided into two groups. One group can study the Torah portion, while the other studies the Haftarah portion.

Earlier in the unit you will have made efforts to distinguish the menorah from the *chanukiyah*. In this activity, students will be able to discover how images of the menorah highlight the themes of Chanukah.

12. Light of a Nation: The Menorah as Israel's National Seal

Background:

While the Magen David was chosen to be the center of the Israeli flag, the menorah was elected as the state seal.

Instructions:

1. Distribute excerpts from Noam Zion's article, "In Search of an Appropriate National Symbol." Ask students to read through the article, noting reasons the menorah makes a good national symbol.
2. List the reasons on the board.
3. Tell students to pretend they are in the Knesset arguing for the menorah over the Magen David. Have them write a short paragraph presenting their argument.

Notes:

Zion's article is a bit lengthy. You could ask people to read it at home or assign sections to groups.

Keep in mind that you may have already studied the place of the Magen David in Israel. This activity can be a complement to that discussion.

13. *Chanukiyah* Basics

Background:

One of the goals of the curriculum is for students to develop their ritual practice. This activity provides them with information on the proper design of a *chanukiyah* and on its use.

Instructions:

1. Hand out one rule to each student, or to pairs of students.

Sample Rules:

The candle holders must be of equal height, except for the shamash.

The candles should be put into the *chanukiyah* right to left.

One candle should be added each night.

The newest candle is lit first.

2. Pass out markers and paper. Each paper should have two squares drawn on it.
3. Ask students to simply illustrate their rule by drawing the correct way to follow the law on one side, and an incorrect way, crossed out, on the other side.
4. Hang up the signs and ask other students to guess the rule from the posters.

Notes:

It would be helpful to assemble a list of the rules studied so students will have them available to consult during Chanukah.

Lens: Personal Response

14. Temple Tour: The Depiction of the Menorah in Our Communal Space

Background:

Many synagogues have images of menorahs in the sanctuary or in other places around the building.

Instructions:

1. Send students on a walk around the building looking for menorahs used in Temple art, signs, architecture, etc.
2. When they find a menorah ask students to fill out an observation sheet.

Questions:

- Where did you find a menorah?
- How is it being used?
- Do you think its use or appearance relates to any of the texts or images we have studied? Which ones, and how?
- What symbolism do you see in this example of a menorah?

Notes:

Not all synagogues have menorahs. Check and make sure there is something for students to find before using this activity. You may want to check synagogue letterhead and bulletins as well as the building.

If your congregation has any significant pieces of art employing the image of the menorah, find out from the senior staff or lay leaders the history of the piece.

15. Clay Menorah

See description above.

16. Menorah Symbolism Chart

Background:

Throughout history the symbolism associated with the menorah has changed.

Instructions:

1. Pass out a chart to students. The vertical axis should include the major time periods or categories that the activities you have chosen cover. For example: Torah, Bible, Rabbinic Period, Medieval, Modern, etc. The final vertical label should be "Me." The horizontal axis should include two labels: General Notes, What I found most interesting.
2. After each lesson give students time to fill in the chart.
3. At the end of the unit ask students to fill in the row marked "Me." This row is an opportunity for students to bring together the information they have learned and create a concept of the menorah with which they resonate.
4. Give students an opportunity to share their personal concept.

Notes:

Students will learn many pieces of information throughout the unit. This activity provides them with a way to record and synthesize the information.

Students can use the chart throughout the unit, or during the last lesson.

UNIT BIBLIOGRAPHY:

Meyers, Carol L. *The Tabernacle Menorah: A Synthetic Study of a Symbol from the Biblical Cult*. Missoula: Scholars Press, 1976

Meyers' focus is purely on the Biblical menorah. She begins with a helpful introduction to her methodology, which can apply to other areas of this curriculum. She then explores Biblical language and archaeological evidence to make hypotheses about the menorah's symbolism. Her knowledge and incorporation of other ancient cultures is particularly interesting.

Yarden, L. *The Tree of Light: A Study of the Menorah*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1971.

Yarden covers a wider span of history than Meyer does. He addresses both antecedents to the Biblical menorah, as well as usages of the menorah through modern times. Yarden's discussion of the menorah's relationship to the tree is especially helpful.

Zion, Noam and Barbara Spectre. *A Different Light: The Big Book of Hanukkah*. Jerusalem: Shalom Hartman Institute, 2000.

A Different Light is a comprehensive Hanukkah resource. The section relevant to this curriculum's scope is the section entitled "Scientists' and Kabbalists' Thoughts on Light and Lamps." In addition, the book includes a number of beautiful illustrations of both menorot and *chanukiyot*.

UNIT 5: SEFER TORAH

NOTE TO THE TEACHER:

The word “Torah” carries with it a multiplicity of meanings: the five books of Moses, the written and Oral Torah, Jewish tradition as a whole, the physical Torah scroll, etc. At the core of these meanings lies a belief that the words of the Torah testify to the Jewish people’s covenantal relationship with God. This unit, however, focuses not on the words of Torah, but specifically on the Sefer Torah, the physical Torah scroll. The unit begins with the question, “if the words are what is important, why do the words written in the form of a Sefer Torah possess more power, and merit a higher level of respect, than a printed text?” The unit goes on to explore laws and customs that reflect the Sefer Torah’s special status.

UNIT GOALS:

This unit is designed to...

1. Demonstrate to Jewish adults how the Sefer Torah can be a means for examining their own Jewish beliefs and values.
2. Deepen Jewish adults’ understanding of the Sefer Torah through the use of four different lenses in order to...
 - A. Show students how to trace the historic and textual origins of the written Torah.
 - B. Illustrate how both historic and geographic context have altered the significance Jews placed on the Sefer Torah.
 - C. Enable students to see how the Sefer Torah possesses a multiplicity of meanings.
 - D. Challenge students to examine their own relationship with, and reaction to, the Sefer Torah.
3. Help students enrich their experience of Jewish ritual by integrating their multi-dimensional understandings of the Sefer Torah into their ritual encounters with the Sefer Torah.

ESSENTIAL UNIT QUESTIONS:

1. How does the evolution of the meaning of the word “Torah” serve as evidence of Jewish beliefs?
2. How has the symbolism of the sefer Torah been interpreted over time?
3. What emotions does seeing or touching a sefer Torah provoke in us?
4. How does the complex history of the sefer Torah affect our contemporary understanding of this ritual object?

OBJECTIVES:

At the end of the unit students will be able to...

Present multiple definitions of the word “Torah” as it is found in the Bible.

Explain why writing was considered sacred in the ancient world.

Give examples of ways that Jewish tradition has personified the Torah.

Describe how people regard a sefer Torah differently than they do a printed Torah.

Connect laws that demand respect for the Torah with actions in the Torah service.

Identify how the Torah service acts as a recreation of Sinai.

Articulate their own emotional connection to a sefer Torah.

UNIT DETAILS:

Suggested Length of Unit: 3-4 sessions

Suggested Order of Four Lenses:

A. Personal Response

B. Historical and Textual Origins

C. Symbolic Significance and Usage Over Time

D. Current Understandings

FOCUS LENS:

Personal Response

The focus lens of this unit is Personal Response. Although the students may not be able to articulate their relationship with the sefer Torah, many Jews feel deeply moved by the sight of, or contact with, a sefer Torah. By initiating the unit with this focus lens, students will work through subsequent activities mindful of the unique way in which Jews view the sefer Torah. The focus lens does not include more activity suggestions than the other lenses, yet it can become the focus through the care and seriousness with which you engage learners in examining their relationship with Torah.

MEMORABLE MOMENT

Sofer Workshop

Background:

A sofer is a scribe trained to write sacred scrolls such as a sefer Torah.

Instructions:

1. Invite a sofer to come and speak with the class.
2. Give the scribe a specific focus.

Possible focuses:

- The materials used to write a sefer Torah.
- How the scribe prepares for writing.
- How the name of God is treated.
- Special Torah portions

3. Make sure to allow time for questions.

Notes:

Many scribes today have experience working with congregational groups. Consult local rabbis to see if they recommend someone in particular.

This may be a program you want to open up to the entire congregation or community, particularly if the cost is high.

SUGGESTED ACTIVITIES:

Lens: Personal Response

1. Receiving Torah Circle

Background:

For many Jews the act of holding or touching the Torah is extremely emotional and spiritual.

Instructions:

1. Form a circle on the bimah in front of the ark.
2. Invite students to wear a tallit if they wish.
3. Before taking out the Torah, point out the different parts of the Torah's dress. If the Torah scrolls in your congregation have a particular story, share them with the class.
4. Remove the crowns and breastplate from the Torah so it will be easier to hold.
5. Instruct the class to be silent. (You could also sing a niggun).
6. Pass the Torah to each person, inviting students to hold the Torah for a minute and close their eyes.
7. Have the class spread out around the sanctuary and write a journal entry on their feelings when they hold the Torah. (You may want to give these directions ahead of time so the group can move silently into writing.)
8. Back on the bimah, allow students to share what they have written or describe their experience.

Notes:

Be aware of the diversity of the class. You may have students who have never touched a Torah, as well as students who do not feel comfortable touching it. Work to accommodate their needs so they can participate in some way.

2. Torah Synectics

Background:

The Torah is at the center of Jewish life, yet it is often difficult for us to describe the Torah's importance, and our feelings toward the Torah.

Instructions:

1. Set-up an easel with large newspaper.
2. Ask the students to answer the following question in writing:
 - Why is it important to put the words of the Torah into the form of a sefer Torah?
3. Round 1: The Torah is like...

List the students' answers on the newspaper. This is brainstorming, so do not judge answers as they are given.

 - What kind of animals is the Torah like?
 - What kind of weather is the Torah like?

- What other objects is the Torah like?
Ask the students to choose one object from the list.
- 4. Round 2: Descriptors
Post the previous list on the wall and list the students' answers on a new sheet of paper.
 - Pretend you are x (the object voted on). What does it feel like?
The goal is to list multiple adjectives and phrases, some of which contrast.
- 5. Round 3: Contrasting Pairs
Post the previous list on the wall and list the students' answers on a new sheet of paper.
 - Using the descriptors, match pairs of contrasting words. Ask the students to choose one pair from the list.
- 6. Round 4: Final Objects
Post the previous list on the wall and list the students' answers on a new sheet of paper.
 - What things can you think of that have both of these contrasting qualities?
- 7. Ask the students to write on the original question again. They are welcome to use any of the images that have come up during the synectics exercise. The exercise should help them be more creative and expressive in their writing.

Notes:

Synectics is a specific model of teaching. Although the exercise will work if you follow the instructions, it will be easier if you read the information provided about synectics.

It will be difficult in this exercise to distinguish between the sefer Torah and the Torah in general. The format of the question will aid in this.

3. Scroll Unwrapping

Background:

It is important for students to see the writing on a real Torah scroll.

Instructions:

1. Unwrap the Torah scroll so that a number of seams are visible. You can do this by having a few people line up and unwrapping the Torah upright. Or you can put together a number of long tables and unroll the scroll flat on the table.
2. Ask students to spread out along the scroll and search for things to ask questions about.

Possible Things to Point Out:

- Portions written in special ways. (10 commandments, Shirat Hayam, etc.)
- Familiar names
- Justification of the columns

- Letters written small or large
- Style of the letters

Notes:

Showing respect to the Torah should be a priority in choosing how you do this activity. Remind students not to touch the writing.

It is particularly important to include this activity if you are not able to bring in a sofer. You could also use it to prepare the class for asking the sofer questions.

4. Our Kavod laTorah: Torah Service Behavior

Background:

There are many customs about how people should behave during the Torah service. Some of the laws pertaining to behavior will be studied in a later activity.

Instructions:

1. Meet in the sanctuary with siddurim open to the Torah service.
2. Ask students to walk the class through a Torah service.
3. Stop and note any actions that show the Torah respect. Ask students to speculate on how these actions demonstrate respect.

Notes:

It is unnecessary to use the Torah scroll in this activity. It is helpful to be in the sanctuary, however, to help students recreate the service in their minds.

Lens: Historical and Textual Origins

5. "Torah" in the Torah

Background:

The word "torah" appears many times in the Bible. It rarely, however, refers to a written document, let alone the form we now associate with the word Torah.

Instructions:

1. Pass out the Bible worksheet with Biblical verses including the word Torah. Each time the word appears do not translate it.
2. Pass out copies of entries for "Torah" from Biblical Hebrew dictionaries.
3. In pairs, have the students choose which translation they would use for the word Torah.
4. Compare answers and discuss how the different translations affect the meaning of the verse.

Notes:

You can make this exercise more advanced by bringing different published translations of the verses to compare.

6. The Dichotomy of Oral and Written

Background:

In ancient times writing held immense power because the majority of the community was illiterate. The priests and scribes gained power through their unique ability to pass on knowledge to the people through recitation and teaching. Out of this reality comes the dual importance of hearing and seeing the Torah.

Instructions:

1. Assuming that the majority of your students cannot understand Biblical Hebrew, ask the students to imagine that the Torah scroll is written in English.

Discussion Questions:

- How would this change your feelings toward the sefer Torah?
 - How would this change the importance of the ritualized Torah service?
 - How would this change access to the Torah's words?
2. Introduce the idea that in ancient times the majority of people were illiterate.
 - How did the people learn God's words?
 - How do you imagine the people felt about writing and the people who could write?
 3. Pass out the sheets with Biblical verses showing the duality of written and oral and have students study them in pairs.

Texts:

- Deuteronomy 31:19
- Joshua 1:8
- Ezekiel 3:1
- Nehemiah 8
- 2 Chronicles 17:9

Guiding Questions:

- How is writing a part of this text?
 - How is oral transmission a part of this text?
 - Who holds the power in this text?
 - What is the experience of the people in this text?
4. Invite each pair to share the text that they found most significant.

Notes:

The excerpt provided from Susan Niditch's *Oral World Written Word* can be used to supplement the discussion or can be passed out to interested students.

7. The Second Commandment

Background:

The second commandment, "You shall not make for yourself a sculptured image..." has led to millennia of discussions about what constitutes idolatry. While Judaism presents itself as aniconic (without images), the line between iconic and aniconic has remained blurry.

Instructions:

1. Complete the “make your own Talmud page” with the Second Commandment written in the middle.
 - Divide the students into four groups.
 - Have each group complete Section 1.
 - Rotate the pages between groups and complete Section 2.
 - Repeat for Sections 3 and 4.
2. Read each sheet to show students the differences that can result from a single verse of Torah.
3. Pass out the definition sheet, which defines iconic, aniconic, and material aniconism. For each term ask students to brainstorm examples.
4. Ask the students to individually place the sefer Torah in one of the categories. Discuss students’ opinions.
5. Pass out the excerpt titled “The Thin Line between Text and Image” from the author’s thesis. Ask the class to respond in light of their opinions from the last step.

Notes:

Some students may be uncomfortable with the suggestion of the sefer Torah acting as an icon. Remind them that part of this curriculum is to challenge our notions of familiar ritual objects.

Lens: Symbolic Significance and Usage Over Time

8. Commandment to write a Torah

Background:

Tradition tells us that the last commandment found in the Torah is that every person must write for themselves a copy of the Torah.

Instructions:

1. Pass out copies of the Talmud passage, Sanhedrin 21b, where the rabbis derive from Deuteronomy 31:19 that each person is obligated to write a Torah.
2. Divide students into small groups.

Questions:

- From where do the rabbis derive the commandment that every person should write a scroll?
 - Why might the rabbis have felt it was important to articulate this law?
 - Do you think this is a commandment that we should stress today? Why or why not?
 - How might we fulfill this commandment today?
3. Bring the class back together and ask each group to share one interesting point that came up in their discussion.

Notes:

If you search “613th commandment” on the internet you will find many examples of ways congregations have fulfilled the mitzvah of writing a Torah scroll.

9. Woman Wisdom

Background:

At the end of every Torah service we sing “Eitz Chayim He/She is a tree of life,” and we all know that “She” is the Torah. Yet, this connection is not explicit in Proverbs. Only later does the “Woman Wisdom” of Proverbs become the Torah.

Instructions:

1. Play a recording of Eitz Chaim He. Ask students to identify the song and describe what it means.
2. Explain that the text comes from Proverbs and refers to Woman Wisdom.
3. Pass out copies of Proverbs 1:20-33. Read through the chapter and then lead a discussion.

Questions:

- How would you describe the character of Wisdom?
 - What is her complaint to the people?
 - What does she say will happen if the people do not heed her warnings?
 - Assuming that Wisdom refers to the Torah, what does this tell us about how we should regard the words of Torah?
4. Inform students that apocryphal books expand on the image of Woman Wisdom and the connection of Wisdom with Torah. Divide the class into three groups and give each group an excerpt from a different book.

Texts:

- Wisdom of Solomon 10
- Baruch 3 and 4
- Sirach 24

Group Questions:

- How is Wisdom portrayed in this text?
 - What new information do we find out about Wisdom?
 - Are Wisdom and Torah connected in this text? If yes, how does the text connect them?
5. Ask each group to share their findings with the class.

10. Kabbalistic Images: Removing the Torah's Garments

Background:

A parable from the Zohar identifies the Torah as a beautiful woman clothed in layers of meaning, and the Torah scribe as her lover.

Instructions:

1. Pass out copies of the parable and highlighters.

2. In pairs ask students to read the story. As they find parts of the allegory they should highlight the phrases and write what they think they represent.
3. At the end, have groups take turns breaking down the allegory on the board.
4. Conclude by passing out the handout defining the interpretive levels of *pardes*. Have students connect the levels with parts of the parable.

11. Every Crown has Meaning

Background:

Certain Hebrew letters of Torah script are richly decorated with crowns. A Talmudic story asserts that each crown has meaning.

Instructions:

1. Pass out copies of the Talmud text Menachot 29b.
2. Have students work through the text using guiding questions.

Guiding Questions:

- According to this text, who wrote the Torah?
- Why does Moses question God's actions?
- What does God tell Moses that Akiba will do?
- Why does Moses have trouble following the class?
- How is Moses comforted?
- How does this text give validity to the rabbis of the Talmud?
- What does this text add to your understanding of the physical Torah scroll?

Notes:

Make sure to show students letters written in Torah script so they understand to what the story is referring.

12. Torah as Talisman

Background:

Many traditions connected with the Torah indicate that the sefer Torah has powerful properties, and contact with it can be helpful or dangerous to a person. In the Talmud story below we learn of the Torah's amulet-like power. This activity follows a verse from Bible through the rabbis' reinterpretation.

Instructions:

1. Write Deuteronomy 17:18-19 on the board and put it in context for the students. (These verses are describing a king.)

Questions:

- What is the king commanded to do?
- What do these verses suggest about the importance of the Torah?

2. Pass out copies of Mishnah Sanhedrin 2:4.

Questions:

- How does the Mishnah expand on what the king must do?
 - What do the rabbis enhance the role of the Torah?
3. Pass out the excerpt from the Talmud: Sanhedrin 21b.

Questions:

- Why do the rabbis of the Talmud see a need for two scrolls?
- What does the scroll that will be kept in the treasure house teach us about the importance of the Torah?
- How will the king use the other Torah?
- What powers does this use grant to the sefer Torah?
- Does this use surprise you? Why or why not?

Notes:

As you go through this activity make sure that students are clear about the relationships between Torah, Mishnah, and Talmud.

13. Legalized Kavod LaTorah

Background:

Medieval law codes contain dozens of laws that detail how one must show proper respect to the Torah.

Instructions:

1. On the board, have students imagine ways that a student in the Middle Ages might have shown respect to a teacher.
2. Read the quotation from the *Kitzur Shulchan Aruch* that describes a person bowing to the Ark, as a student would bow to a master. (25:7).
3. Introduce the idea that many legal codes anthropomorphize the Torah when describing how to respect it. Ask students to complete the line, "The Torah is like a master because..." Go around the room sharing until everyone is out of ideas.
4. Pass out excerpts from Maimonides' *Mishneh Torah* and the *Kitzur Shulchan Aruch* on showing respect to the Torah.

Focus Questions:

- Stemming from the central notion that we should show the sefer Torah respect, how do the law codes suggest we should treat the Torah?

Notes:

An additional conversation that could result from these texts is about the Torah's anthropomorphism. Ask students to describe how the Torah is being treated like a person.

Lens: Current Understandings

14. Recreating Sinai

Background:

The liturgy of the Torah service, and our behavior, serve to recreate the experience of receiving the Torah at Sinai.

Instructions:

1. Introduce the idea that the Torah service, in a small way, recreates the experience at Sinai.
2. Have students imagine what emotions the rabbis intended to spark by imbuing the service with images of Sinai. Write their ideas on the board.
3. Move through the Torah service, stopping at points that help to recreate Sinai. At each point, look at, or describe, the point in the Torah service, and then read the liturgy to see how it helps recreate Sinai.

Focus Points:

- Standing at the beginning.
- Passing the Torah with the right hand.
- Awe and reverence of the procession.
- Accompanying the Torah.
- Hagbah – Lifting the Torah.

Notes:

If the students have already completed the exercise comparing translations of the word Torah, this exercise can reinforce their learning by looking at verses included in the Torah service that have been interpreted to be specific to the Torah. Remind students that the word Torah may be translated differently outside of the context of the Torah service.

15. The Lifecycle of a Torah

Background:

The ceremonies that mark the lifetime of a Torah bear many similarities to the Jewish rituals that mark stages in our own lives.

Instructions:

1. Divide the class into two groups. Give one group information (photos and services) on dedicating a new Torah. Give the other group information on burying a Torah.
2. Have each group look through their materials and prepare a short presentation for the other group.

Group Focus Questions:

- What are different ways a congregation might choose to mark this event?
- Why might a congregation decide to do such a ceremony for the Torah?
- What communal values are expressed through these ceremonies?

Notes:

Ask the congregational staff or lay leadership if the congregation has held any of these ceremonies recently. If it has, see if you can add to the resources the service from the congregation. For the

group studying a Torah's burial, get information from the local geniza.

16. Priestly Garments

Background:

One explanation of the Torah's garments is that they are meant to reflect the special garments worn by the High Priest. This idea communicates messages about the Torah's role in the community.

Instructions:

1. Read Exodus 28 and compile a list of the High Priest's garments.
2. Pass around a copy of Moshe Levine's model of the High Priest to give students an idea of what the dress may have looked like.
3. Lie out all of the ornaments and mantle for one of the congregation's Torah scrolls on a table and invite students to compare them to the description of the High Priest. Once they have finished their own comparisons pass out the excerpt from *The Torah as an Icon*, and a copy of Joel Grishaver's drawings comparing the Torah to the Priest and see if they missed anything.
4. Discussion:
 - What roles do you think the priest played in Ancient Israel?
 - Why might the rabbis have wanted to dress the Torah like the High Priest?
 - What is the Torah's role in our community?
 - How do the role of the priest and the role of the Torah compare to each other?

Notes:

This activity could also be included in the previous lens (Symbolic Significance). It is included here because the Torah ornaments are salient images for the students' current connections with the sefer Torah.

If you use actual Torah ornaments make sure to properly cover the Torah scroll in the ark.

The Discussion is the main focus of this activity. Challenge the students to think of the implications of the Torah being dressed like a priest.

UNIT BIBLIOGRAPHY:

Neusner, Jacob. *Torah: From Scroll to Symbol in Formative Judaism*. Philadelphia: Fortress, 1985.

Neusner's book is an excellent resource for finding additional texts.

Neusner categorizes usages of the word *torah* in Biblical and Rabbinic

literature. This book is not intended for general reading, but as a compendium of citations of traditional texts.

Niditch, Susan. *Oral World and Written Word*. Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 1996.

Niditch captures the power of the written word in this book detailing the ancient Jewish world where few people possessed the “power” to read and write. Her depiction helps to establish an idea of how the sefer Torah became a valuable Jewish symbol.

UNIT 6: SYNTHESIS

NOTE TO THE TEACHER:

Now is the time for your students to demonstrate their learning and share their knowledge with others. This unit provides a variety of ways for the class to bring together their new knowledge and skills in a public way. While you may choose to do more than one of these activities, any one of them can serve as an appropriate conclusion. This unit does not include Essential Questions or Objectives because these depend on which project you choose to implement. These projects are also useful ways for you to assess student learning.

UNIT GOALS:

This unit is designed to...

1. Enable students to bring together their new knowledge and skills in the form of a presentation or project.
2. Provide students with an opportunity to share their learning with the community.
3. Allow the teacher to assess student learning.

UNIT DETAILS:

Suggested Length of Unit: 2 sessions and Presentation

SUGGESTED ACTIVITIES:

Object Review:

1. Group Projects on the Four Curriculum Objects

Background:

Most of the curriculum is contained within the classroom. This project challenges the students to synthesize their learning and put it together in a way that benefits the entire synagogue community.

Instructions:

1. Divide the class into four groups: Tallit, Magen David, Menorah, Sefer Torah.
2. Ask each group to synthesize the material they have studied about their object into a form to present to the community. You may choose to have all groups use the same format, or leave the decision up to individual groups.

General Presentation Ideas:

- Bulletin Articles published monthly
- Poster presentation in the lobby
- Wine and Cheese night with presentations
- Pamphlet prepared for visitors to the synagogue

Presentation Formats Specific to Objects:

Tallit:

- Pamphlet given to B'nei Mitzvah
- Information sheet posted above tallit rack

Magen David:

- Information hung by a work of art featuring the Magen David.
- Poster presentation as part of Yom Ha'atzmaut

Menorah:

- Information hung by a work of art featuring the menorah.
- Text accompanying a menorah display at Chanukah.

Sefer Torah:

- Discussion at a Tikkun Leil Shavuot.
- Information displayed with congregational Torah ornaments.

Notes:

If you are planning to do this project, you may choose not to do some of the unit activities that involve communal presentations.

Applying the Lenses:

2. Employing the Four Lenses to study a New Object

Background:

One of the major goals of the curriculum was to enable students to learn the skills necessary to investigate ritual objects and symbols, as well as their Jewish life in general. This project challenges them to apply their skills to something new.

Instructions:

1. As a class, or in groups, pick a new ritual object or symbol that people are interested in learning more about.

Examples:

- Shofar
 - Kiddush Cup
 - Kippah
 - Ner Tamid
2. Give students an opportunity to research the chosen object in the library, on-line, and in local museums.
 3. Organize the material into the four lenses and assign people to prepare presentations on each lens.
 4. See Activity 1 for presentation ideas.

Notes:

This project is heavily dependent on your community's resources and the drive of the students. If your synagogue does not have a developed library I would recommend choosing another project.

Personal Objects:

3. Enhancing our Knowledge of our own Significant Objects

Background:

An opening activity for the curriculum was an exercise asking people to bring in personally significant Jewish ritual objects

Instructions:

1. During the course, collect information on each ritual object brought in by a participant. Ideally, this information will include at least an encyclopedia article and one additional text.
2. At the opening of this unit distribute the material and allow students to read through the material.
3. Have students share their object and learning through a presentation.

Presentation Ideas:

- “Museum” Display of the objects with student-prepared information.
- Wine and Cheese night with students’ families and congregants.
- Short bulletin articles.
- Resource booklet displayed in the synagogue library.

Notes:

This activity requires a significant amount of preparation time by the instructor. Your goal is to provide a small amount of information for students in order for them to learn new information. If students are excited about the project, help them find additional resources and encourage them to search the Internet. If information is not available for an object, you may choose to ask the student to pick another object.

Unit 1: Introduction

Resources

Suggested Activity 2: Comparative Definitions

1. Definitions of Symbols

Goodenough, Erwin R. *Jewish Symbols in the Greco-Roman Period, Abridged Edition*. Princeton: Princeton University, 1953.

Hoffman, Lawrence A. *The Art of Public Prayer*. Woodstock: Skylight Paths Publishing, 1999.

Meyers, Carol L. *The Tabernacle Menorah: A Synthetic Study of a Symbol from the Biblical Cult*. Missoula: Scholars Press, 1976.

Definitions of Symbols

Erwin Goodenough:

A symbol is an image or design with a significance, to the one who uses it, quite beyond its manifest content...or...an object or a pattern which, whatever the reason may be, operates upon men, and causes effect in them, beyond mere recognition of what is literally presented in the given form.

Goodenough, Erwin R. *Jewish Symbols in the Greco-Roman Period, Abridged Edition*. Princeton: Princeton University, 1953, 40.

Lawrence Hoffman:

A true symbol has the following qualities:

- It evokes its response automatically.
- Verbal descriptions of a symbol's significance is by definition superfluous and inadequate.
- In a ritual that deals with group experience, the symbol's significance must be shared by the members of the group.
- True symbols are immediately apprehended and seem self-evident, so people hold to them with considerable emotional tenacity.

Adapted from Hoffman, Lawrence A. *The Art of Public Prayer*. Woodstock: Skylight Paths Publishing, 1999, 40-41

Carol Meyers:

...the mark of a live symbol is its ability to carry a message on a non-verbal, emotional level; any explanations which theoretically might attach themselves are therefore subsidiary to the immediate impact of the symbol and cannot truly present the full range of associations carried by the symbol at its primary sensate level. In some sense, the existence of a potent symbol precludes the existence of an accurate and contemporary commentary thereon."

Meyers, Carol L. *The Tabernacle Menorah: A Synthetic Study of a Symbol from the Biblical Cult*. Missoula: Scholars Press, 1976, 134.

Suggested Activity 4: Rational vs. Non-Rational

1. “Holy Living” – Teacher’s Copy

Holtz, Barry W. *Finding Our Way*. New York: Schocken Books, 1990.

2. “Holy Living” – Student Excerpts

FIN D I N () O U R W A

Jewish Texts and the Lives We Lead Today

BARRY W. HOLTZ

T W O

HOLY LIVING

I have spoken about one way of looking at our relationship to the Jewish tradition: as a kind of "conversation" between the tradition and ourselves. But I suspect that there are probably no times in which that discussion is more heated and more strained than when we consider the way the tradition makes demands upon our behavior. Being an adult, we like to feel, means having nobody tell us what to do, and yet here is the Jewish tradition with its almost overwhelming lists of prescribed and proscribed actions trying to direct our lives.

Consider the classic model of a traditional life as exemplified by the Talmud's description of Rabban Yohanan ben Zakkai:

He never engaged in ordinary conversation, nor did he ever go four cubits without studying Torah, nor four cubits without wearing his Tefillin, nor did anyone ever get to the Study Hall before he did, nor did he ever sleep or nap in the Study Hall, nor did he think about Torah while in alleys where there was any filth. . . .

(Talmud, *Sukkah* 28a)

Here we have Judaism's highest ideal, the portrait of a man whose entire life is devoted to holiness. But is it, we might ask, a life one would want to live?

I was brought up with the idea that one of the characteristic

features of Judaism was that it made no distinction between sacred and secular moments—everything could and should be infused with holiness: how we pray, of course, but also how we eat, how we deal with matters of property and business, how we celebrate a wedding or conduct a divorce. Everything, in other words, is “religious.”

Things would be a lot simpler, of course, if we always lived in that sacred dimension of time, that world of the present moment, which I tried to describe at the beginning of the last chapter. If every instant of my life were as powerful, as meaningful and alive as that five minutes of interchange that I remember from my visit to my grandmother at the hospital, I suppose I would have very little problem in living a “holy” life. By “holy” here I don’t mean simply an ethical or ritual life, although those dimensions are certainly part of it, but rather living with a sense of meaning and significance informing everything that I do.

In the history of Judaism there is probably no stronger statement of this view of life than that which was presented in the early writings of Hasidism toward the end of the eighteenth century. This revivalist movement urged people to conduct even their most ordinary daily affairs with the same intentionality and intensity usually reserved for “religious” activities such as prayer. *Avodah begashmiut*, serving God in the midst of the events of ordinary life, is what they strived for, as we can see in the following text:

Through everything you see,
become aware of the divine.
If you encounter love, remember the love of God.
If you experience fear, think of the fear of God.
And even in the bathroom, you should think—
“here I am separating bad from good,
and the good will remain for His service.”
(*Tzava'at Rivash* 3b)¹

It is a remarkable statement, a daring statement, in fact. In the same text the writer expresses not only lofty sentiments about the

love of God, but he brings matters down to the most mundane of human activities with a startling directness.

And note how much further such a text goes than the classic Jewish prayer from the morning liturgy that praises God for fashioning within the human body “numerous openings and passages . . . so that if but one of these were impaired, we could not long continue to exist.” The prayer, like the Hasidic text above, also deals with matters of the body, but it does not connect bodily functions to acts of spirituality. In the Hasidic statement even the bathroom can become a place of meditation on the divine.

What a vision of living this text suggests! It’s almost as if the Hasidic master is trying to shock his disciples: “Every moment should be infused with holiness,” he teaches. “Are you listening?” he shouts out. “Do you understand me? I mean every moment!”

It is a stunning demand, powerful and uncompromising, but I wonder about the poor disciple at the other end of the text. What does *he* say? Obviously the popularity of Hasidism in its early years, its success in recruiting followers as it swept across the Jewish communities of Eastern Europe, is a testament to the compelling power of the message, although to be sure the teachings of Hasidism contained more than this one direction. But there must have been some listeners who shared my own reaction two hundred years later: at once admiration for the seriousness of what the master taught and at the same time a strong dose of skepticism about my own ability to live according to those prescriptions.

And though the Hasidic rendition of this idea is unusual, the point of view behind the text does not come out of thin air. It is a kind of spiritual descendant—and more radical version—of older tales from the Talmud in which disciples try to learn the ways of holy living from the example of their teachers. Thus, we have incidents reported in which Rabbi Akiva followed his teacher Rabbi Joshua into the bathroom and Rabbi Kahana hid under his teacher’s bed—in both cases to learn rather personal things from their masters. When they were questioned about such extraordinary behavior, they each replied, “This too is Torah and I need to learn it!” (Talmud, *Berakhot* 62a). And in a famous utterance many

years later the Hasidic Rabbi Leib the son of Sarah put the same idea this way: "I did not come to the Maggid of Mezeritch to learn interpretations of Torah from him, but to watch how he tied his shoelaces."

In a certain way such behavior is not difficult to understand. There are people whom I admire and whose opinions and behavior I count on as a kind of guide to my own—personal "opinion-makers" we might call them. And most of us rely on certain public thinkers as well: if an event happens in the political arena, we value the reactions of those particular columnists or philosophers whom we always find interesting or challenging. That's how people like George Will and Flora Lewis earn their daily bread.

And of course we remember those people who profoundly affected our lives when we were young. But in adulthood it's rare for anyone to have a personal role model who can so influence one's behavior in all aspects of life. We are simply too aware of the feet of clay hiding beneath the robes. A friend of mine says that he never wants to meet the writers that he admires—he'd prefer not to have to deal with the character flaws that he's sure he would see. The books themselves should be sufficient.

But the declarations by Rabbi Akiva and Rabbi Kahana that "this too is *Torah*" and the comments of Leib, son of Sarah, are more than reflections about the importance of having a religious role model. They represent a position which asserts that we should *always* be engaged in Torah—in a "religious" life. And it is a similar principle that drives the classic Jewish conception of the *mitzvot*, the commandments. According to the classical view, God has given us a set of acts that we are expected to perform, or in the case of the negative commandments, to avoid. These commandments include areas of ritual life, certainly, but also matters of property, criminal behavior, and domestic life as well. Fulfilling the requirements of the *mitzvot* is a Jew's primary obligation.

But why, following this view, were the commandments given? This is a matter of considerable debate in the traditional literature. In one famous midrashic explication we read:

Rav said: the *mitzvot* were given only in order that human beings might be purified by them. For what does the Holy One, blessed be He, care whether a person kills an animal by the throat or by the nape of the neck? Hence their purpose is to refine human beings.
(Genesis Rabbah 44:1)

The allusion in the passage is to the method of killing an animal in the fashion appropriate to the requirements for kosher meat. But Rav's main point seems to be that the *mitzvot* are not so much significant in their particularities, but become significant in the process of fulfilling them. When the commandments are performed, something else happens—human beings are "purified."

But of course we are still left somewhat puzzled. What does "purify" mean? And equally important, what is Rav's view about the very nature of the *mitzvot*? Is there no specific meaning in the actions we are required to perform? Are they mere divine whims? Or to put it another way, were the *mitzvot* given simply to teach us how to obey God's will? That is, since human beings need to be taught the discipline of divine service, God gave them the *mitzvot*. The specific content of the *mitzvot* is irrelevant—our job is to learn to obey.

This is a view that certainly has had its advocates throughout Jewish history, but it is balanced by the opposite pole—the *mitzvot are rational*, the specific actions that are required *do* have meaning. God would not give human beings a set of meaningless commandments.

But another problem can be raised nonetheless. Let us say that the *mitzvot* do have meaning. Isn't it possible that despite their rationality, the meaning may be unintelligible to the human mind? That is to say, perhaps God has given commandments that are important at *His* plane of reality but to us they remain incomprehensible. This too could be argued based on Rav's statement in the midrash above: We are being "purified," but because of our limited capacities, we don't know in what way that purification is taking place.

This idea—that the *mitzvot* are rational but we are inadequate—seems almost cruel. And it was rejected by a number of thinkers, most importantly by Moses Maimonides in the Middle Ages.

Maimonides made the distinction between the mitzvot in general and the specific details of their actualization. These details, he said, may be without specific meaning, but the mitzvot as a whole are certainly available to the powers of human reason:

The generalities of the commandments necessarily have a cause and have been given because of a certain utility; their details . . . were given merely for the sake of commanding something. For instance the killing of animals because of the necessity of having food is manifestly useful. . . . But the prescription that they should be killed through having the upper and not the lower part of their throat cut . . . is like other prescriptions of the same kind, imposed with a view to purifying the people. . . . In my opinion all those who occupy themselves with finding causes for something of these particulars are stricken with a prolonged madness in the course of which they do not put an end to an incongruity, but rather increase the number of incongruities. Those who imagine that a cause may be found for suchlike things are as far from truth as those who imagine that the generalities of a commandment are not designed with a view to some real utility.

(*Guide of the Perplexed* III, 26)²

Maimonides is taking a double-edged approach to the problem of the mitzvot: On the one side, the commandments as a whole are seen as meaningful and intelligible; on the other side, the little details of their performance serve to train human beings to submit to God's will. And it is through that submission that people become "purified." "Purification," then, occurs through a life of obedience to divine will.

Others in the tradition took a different tack. Even the little details were meaningful, according to this view. And what is interesting is that the more mystically oriented thinkers within Judaism did not reject the commandments, as we might have predicted (since why would those at the lofty heights of mysticism care about the petty details of the mitzvot?), but rather they emphasized, in contrast to Maimonides, that even the smallest details of the mitzvot had significance—holiness could be found in *everything*, they argued.³

But where does that leave us? Today we seem to be in exactly

the opposite situation from the one addressed by Maimonides. For us the problem is not in the small, seemingly irrational detail of the mitzvot, but in the whole general structure. That is, if I feel confident about the mitzvot as a whole, I would probably have a good deal less difficulty with the specific details of observance.

Our problems begin with the whole question of the holy life that I raised earlier: I am not sure that I would *want* to live in a world so infused with holiness, even if I could do it. We live in a world of the nonholy and as part of modernity. For most Jews today the world of the nonholy is attractive and compelling, and there is no denying that. Of course, this may be our own weakness, and I'm sure there are those who would see such a position as just that. Certainly, there is much that is wrong with Western secular modernity. But we are part of it and that is not going to change. What we want to do is find those places where modernity simply doesn't seem to work, where modernity fails to address our hunger for a sense of deeper meaning in our lives. But drawing that line is not always easy to do.

I remember walking to the movies in New York one Saturday night some years back and bumping into a group of *hasidim* hurrying off in the opposite direction. "Where are they going?" I thought, and then I realized they were on their way to a *melave malke*, a Saturday night celebration that tries to extend the spirit of Shabbat into the week. I too had had Shabbat, but now I was on my way to the movies. And my first reaction was: Haven't they had enough holiness for today? Don't they want a little time off? I certainly did. For me it was the perfect image of the world of tradition versus the world of modernity. I live a Jewish life; I feel connected to the mitzvot. But on Saturday night I'm more likely to go to the movies than to a *melave malke*. Yet once again I am not sure which of us is mistaken. Perhaps my desire for secularity is not a quality to be admired, but one which shows my own inadequacies as a religious soul.

Still, in recognizing the pull of secular life on me, I am not denying at the same time my desire to live part of my life in that world of holiness. That is, there is something in the midrash quoted before that seems right on the mark when it says that the

purpose of the mitzvot is to purify human beings. The mitzvot can do something for us: they give us a chance to move away from the claims of secularity and toward a sense of the holy in our lives, and in that way they become a kind of "purification" from both the positive and negative aspects of contemporary life.

Thus, one midrashic text talks about the reasons behind the mitzvah of lulav and etrog, the palm branch and citron waved by Jews during particular moments in the prayers of the holiday of Sukkot: "The Holy One, blessed be He, has said 'I have given you many commandments—because I needed them? . . . It is not for My sake that I have given you these commandments, but rather to benefit you'" (Midrash Tanhuma, *Parshat Emor* 24).

To my mind the crucial idea about the commandments is their power to give one's life a sense of wholeness. The mitzvot are about the integration of human experience. And more than that, they are about an apprehension of meaning that is beyond the self, something, I would argue, that even the most secular person needs. When I look at the varied activities of my life, I try to find some sense of meaning, some thread of connection among all the things that I do. There is within the system of the mitzvot the power to accomplish just that. The "benefit" is precisely that sense of connection, that feeling that there is both integration and a greater significance in my harried and disconnected life.

Part of that sense of integration comes out of the fact that the mitzvot carry with them the weight and power of tradition. Like other aspects of tradition that I explored in the last chapter, the mitzvot have the advantage of antiquity; when I perform these deeds, I have not invented them out of the air, but I have put myself into a larger sense of wholeness, not only tying together my own life, but joining me to those very things that my great grandparents and theirs before them had done in their lives. And these actions are the same deeds that have engendered pages of explication and years of pondering throughout Jewish history.

But it is not just the significance of the past that matters. Even more significant, it seems to me, is the inherent power of *deeds*, of action. This connection strikes me as a very deep one. For it is not merely what flashes through my mind, my thinking, that the

mitzvot are about, but activities in the world of materiality, the world of my body. It is what my ancestors *did*, not what my ancestors *believed*, that matters here. In all likelihood I am very far away from the intellectual world of those who came before me. As I tried to show in the last chapter, over time tradition evolves and deepens through interpretation, through acts of mind. Akiva lives in a world very far from the world of Moses. And his Judaism is different as well.

And so I do not believe that my great grandfather and I would really have much to talk about if we could meet: I would seem bizarre to him and he would seem antique to me. Our beliefs and our attitudes would be very different, shaped by the age in which each of us lived. The historian Robert Darnton in writing about his approach to eighteenth-century French history brings home the same point as he comments on the gulf that separates us from the past:

Nothing is easier than to slip into the comfortable assumption that Europeans thought and felt two centuries ago just as we do today—allowing for the wigs and wooden shoes. We constantly need to be shaken out of a false sense of familiarity with the past, to be administered doses of culture shock.⁴

But one of the powerful dimensions of Judaism is the sense that despite the passing of time, of generations in fact, I am tied to those who have gone before me not by "thoughts and feelings" as Darnton puts it, but by the physical deeds that I do. If I wave the lulav and etrog at Sukkot, I know that my great-grandfather—no matter what his beliefs and worldview—would have done that very act as well.

I have said that part of the sense of integration comes from connection to the past, but, for me at least, that level of meaning only tells part of the story. To say "I do these deeds because they were done before me" ultimately seems to me like an insufficient, perhaps even circular argument. The actions in and of themselves have to resonate with a level of meaning.

In a way, some of that meaning does come out of their antiq-

uity. That is, doing the mitzvot is not just a matter of doing things that my ancestors did—it's doing things that my ancestors felt to be meaningful as they did them. And I'm sure that part of the weight of meaning my great-grandfather felt in, let's say once again, waving the lulav and etrog came because he knew that it was meaningful for *his* great-grandfather.

But beyond the chain of the generations, we want there to be something else for it to work. For Jews throughout history, and for some today as well, that something may have been the clear sense of obeying God's will and command. But although there are times in which I do feel that too, my own connection to the mitzvot comes mostly out of another sensibility.

In fact, classical Jewish literature abounds with interpretive explication of why we do these deeds. Rarely are we left with no explanation, and the phrase "this is what God wants of you" tends to be the *beginning* of inquiry, rather than its conclusion. For an example we shall look at a set of rabbinic interpretations about the lulav and etrog. I have mentioned lulav and etrog in this chapter a number of times precisely because *unlike*, say, giving *tzedakah* (charity), it is a mitzvah that is hard to justify on the grounds of rationality or societal needs. *Tzedakah* in that sense is an easy case (though not always very easy in the doing!) because it is obvious that any community needs to find a way to take care of its poor. Now, of course, we know that societies—America today, for example—are not always committed to this task. But the case for *tzedakah* is not a difficult one to make.

In lulav and etrog, however, we have an example of a mitzvah that appears to be without an easy explanation. Obviously, as we can see in the midrashim below, the rabbis felt a similar need to understand this commandment. From the rabbinic period onward a considerable literature evolved concerning this particular practice. In one place in the Talmud, for example, waving the lulav and etrog was compared to the biblical⁵ waving of the sacrificial loaves:

In the Land of Israel they taught the following: Rav Hama b. Ukva stated in the name of Rav Yose the son of Rav Hanina—the priest

waves them [the loaves] to and fro in order to restrain harmful winds; up and down, in order to restrain harmful dews. . . . In connection with this Rava stated—And thus with the lulav.

(Talmud, *Sukkah* 37b-38a)

The comparison to the sacrificial "wave offering" is of less interest to us here than the underlying reason stated by these rabbis—the waving of the lulav has an almost magical significance. It affects the fall of rain and dew.

What is interesting about this reading is how close it seems to the most elemental dimension of the ritual and probably to its origins in prehistory. Even today when we watch or participate in the ceremony of lulav and etrog, there is that sense of the "primitive" that cannot be ignored. Shaking the palm and the citron in the classic four directions of the compass, as well as upward and downward, and chanting "Please, O Lord, deliver us" puts the worshiper in touch with an ancient human ritual.

And yet, of course, at the same time that elemental quality can easily make us uncomfortable too. The thought intrudes: What am I doing, a sophisticated modern man, shaking these plants and asking for salvation? After all, I don't really believe that I am going to effect the rain and dew by performing this ritual.

That that same self-consciousness was shared by our rabbinic forebears seems to be indicated by the enormous number of classical interpretations that are precisely *not* like the text quoted above. The rabbis developed a vast symbolic literature on lulav and etrog that undermined the more "primitive" dimension and emphasized instead the almost allegorical nature of the ritual. Since by biblical injunction the lulav and etrog are bound together with two other native plants of the Land of Israel—the willow and the myrtle—these four "kinds" or "species" form the basis of a vast array of symbolizing midrash. (During the ritual of "waving" itself the citron is held in one hand while the palm, to which willow and myrtle branches are attached, is held in the other. The four species are held right next to one another during the ritual.) For example:

Of the four plants two bear fruit and two do not. The ones that bear fruit must be bound closely to the ones that do not. The former represent disciples of the wise whose prayers . . . are meant to bear fruits of mercy for ordinary householders, delivering them from all degrees of poverty and kinds of affliction. . . . On the other hand, the plants that do not bear fruit must be bound close to those that bear fruit since the former represent those persons who are meant to provide a shelter of physical comfort for the Sages and their disciples.

(Pesikta Rabbati 51:2)*

This tendency to compare the four species to different kinds of Jews is typical of the symbolizing efforts of the rabbis, as we see in one of the most well known of such readings:

"On the first day you shall take the product of goodly trees, branches of lulav, boughs of leafy trees and willows of the brook, and you shall rejoice before the Lord your God for seven days."

(Leviticus 23:40)

Just as the etrog [understood by the phrase "fruit of goodly trees"] has taste as well as fragrance, so Israel has among them those who possess both learning and good deeds. As the lulav has taste but not fragrance, so Israel has among them those who possess learning but no good deeds. Just as the myrtle [understood by the phrase "leafy trees"] has fragrance but no taste, so Israel has among them those who possess good deeds, but not learning. And just as the willow has no taste and no fragrance, so Israel has among them those who possess neither learning nor good deeds.

What then does the Holy One, blessed be He, do to them? To destroy them is impossible. But, He says, let them all be tied together in one band and they will atone for one another.

(Leviticus Rabbah 30:12)

But this is not the only interpretive tradition. In other rabbinic texts the four species are compared to God or to the great biblical heroes and heroines or to the limbs and organs of a human being or to the scholars and judges of Israel. And there are more. In fact, it seems that the example of lulav and etrog is an almost unparalleled opportunity for symbolic explication in Jewish religious literature. Perhaps this results from the rabbis' discomfort with these "primitive" ritual devices, or perhaps the very physi-

cality and richness of the objects inspired them to new heights of interpretation. But for whatever reason, we have an enormous body of material that deals with the reasons behind the ritual. And these texts about lulav and etrog provide only one example of a whole bookcase, as it were, within the classic Jewish library, the literature of *taamei hamitzvot*—"reasons for the commandments."

The *taamei hamitzvot* literature clearly shows that the rabbis believed there was a legitimacy in pursuing the reasons behind the commandments. It may be that absolute obedience to God was the most fundamental "reason" of them all, but the rabbinic interpretive imagination—as evidenced by the example of lulav and etrog—was not inhibited by that fact.

And yet I wonder about *taamei hamitzvot*. In the long run, what is the relationship in real life between the *taam*, the reason, and the mitzvah? What, if anything, does the reason do for the person actually performing the prescribed act?

While I am waving the lulav and etrog, am I really thinking about the four kinds of Jews or the four limbs of the body or anything else? The connection between the experiential dimension of performing a mitzvah and *taamei hamitzvot*—the intellectual reasons behind the mitzvah—is what I am trying to get at here, and I suspect in real life the link is not very strong.

In fact, I suspect that *taamei hamitzvot* are effective really not *during*, but *before* the actual mitzvah: the "reason" may be what gets me to do the mitzvah in the first place. Thus, waving a palm branch and citron may seem rather silly at first blush, but once I am convinced that there is indeed a symbolic dimension to what I am about to do, I can then go ahead in good conscience and perform the deed. It is a kind of antidote to my own self-consciousness if I can see that, yes, very rational people can perform ritual acts such as these.

Taamei hamitzvot work in the realm of rationality, but mitzvot themselves, I think, tend to affect us in some other aspect of our nature. When I myself am actually waving the lulav and etrog, do I really think much about that whole library of explanation? To be fair—only sometimes. On occasion, it does slip into my head: "Ah yes, the four types of Jews. As I am doing this, I am sym-

bolizing my aspirations for a Jewish community bound together in common purpose." But mostly I am not experiencing the "waving" as allegorical. Now of course if you stop me in the street and ask, why do you Jews wave those silly plants on Sukkot, I would have a ready answer: "Silly? They certainly are not silly. Let me tell you about some of the symbolic reasons. . . ." And off I'd go with my *taamei hamitzvot*.

But that is more for public, or at any rate rational, consumption. The *experience* of the ritual is something very different. The deed as it is performed is far more than the explanatory reasons, whether they be the classic allegories or the ones that I have invented this morning. The deed includes my rationality, of course. I certainly have not expunged those *taamim* from at least the level of my subconscious. And a new "reason" that I might create or hear will have the power to engage me. Living interpretation is always fascinating. But as I perform the actual ritual, the reasons may only float occasionally into mind, if at all.

Along with rationality, waving the lulav also carries with it a sense of the ancient and the nonrational that is missing from most of my modern existence. It also gives me the simple and incommunicable pleasure of the ritual and its physicality. I am taken back to some ancient form, but I differ from those ancestors (I suppose, although who can tell?) because often I am both performing the ritual and watching myself perform it at the same time. The thought intrudes: "Hm. Here I am waving the lulav and etrog. Strange ritual, isn't it." Such it is with modernity: Ritual is not an easy thing for any of us.

But what's interesting is that *despite* this self-consciousness, I continue to wave the lulav. Of course, there are times in which the ritual does not seem strange at all. I am on occasion struck by how interesting this ritual is, how the symbolism seems so right. And there are other times still: times when I am not *thinking* about the ritual at all. I am just doing it. And I experience a kind of consonance between the interpretative reasons that I carry with me and the actual performance of the ritual act.

I suspect, however, that despite the nonrational heart of ritual that I have been trying to describe, the rational *taamei hamitzvot*

still may play a crucial role in all of this. Because of my modernity not only do I need that rational substructure, that introductory push that allows me to throw off my rational inhibitions, but I also need to be *educated into ritual*. I need to learn to enjoy the ritual, to love the ritual, we could even say. And that affection comes first through the route of reason, bolstered over time by habit. It may be that Jewish rituals, like any difficult discipline, only make sense and come alive after years of concentrated practice. In its own way waving the lulav and etrog is like being the Zen archer or the practitioner of other arcane and demanding arts: At first it just doesn't make too much sense, but over the years one finally comes to see the depth of the experience.⁷

For some, of course, the path takes a different route. For those raised with the early habit of the mitzvot, the role of the "reasons" may be different. In that case *taamei hamitzvot* may become the intellectual bulwark to bolster those habits of childhood acquired long ago. Of course, a person raised with the mitzvot has the advantage of long practice and practical knowledge. Knowing the rudiments of Jewish practice is in itself an accomplishment; after all, even waving the lulav and etrog is a complex and minutely regulated ritual. In addition, such a person has the psychological connection to ritual that goes back into the world of the pre-rational. If you cannot even remember a time in which you didn't experience lulav and etrog on Sukkot or see the candles being lit before the Sabbath, the mitzvot are in some sense part of your deepest self, an inner world older than memories.

But there are prices to be paid even there. For some the connection to childhood means never coming to see the adult dimension of ritual. For those people the meaning of ritual is always stuck in the past. They may never outgrow the understanding of their youth, and as time passes that fact may inhibit the ritual from growing with them as they get older. And for others the associations with childhood are too tied up with the other things of youth that we all throw off as we get older. Ritual in that case is tied to the psychological constraints of the past—to parents and home and family. To be free of ritual becomes symbolic of being free in general. (In my mind this resembles the story of the

second-generation Jews in America who in throwing off their parents' East European ways for the attractions of the Golden Land saw Jewish ritual practice as intricately tied to that "Old World." They felt that in throwing out the past, they had to throw out *all* of the past—the accents, the ways of dress, and the Jewish ritual life as well.) Yet despite these impediments, the person raised in Jewish ritual practice enters adulthood with great advantages of knowledge and familiarity.

This is assuming, of course, that one wants to enter into any of this at all. I have said above that the literature of *taamei hamitzvot* can provide a way into ritual practice or a rational substructure upon which to base such practice, but what gets a person to want to open up those books of interpretation to begin with? Most people living in secular modernity live very far away from the world of ritual and religion, and, unlike the situation of our grandparents, we can easily choose to opt out of ritual life. Indeed, most people have. It is this reality that is captured by the sociologist Peter Berger in his book *The Heretical Imperative*. Here is how Berger describes the change from the world of the past to the religious situation of today:

Sociologically speaking, premodern societies are marked by the fact that their institutions have a very high degree of taken-for-granted certainty. This is not to say that this certainty is total; if it were, there would never have been any social change. But the degree of certainty, when compared to that of modern society, is very high indeed....

The modern individual... lives in a world of choice, in sharp contrast with the world of fate inhabited by traditional man. He must choose in innumerable situations of everyday life, but this necessity of choosing reaches into the areas of beliefs, values, and world views.⁸

I have said before that I believe that the mitzvot offer an opportunity to give one's life a sense of wholeness and meaning. Such rituals can give one a sense of personal integration within the context of a larger history of one's people and one's past. They offer the power of tradition. I am not saying that this is guaran-

teed; I am not saying that this works all the time or that it's easy to do. Nor have I yet tried to spell out in detail how this sense of the mitzvot may relate both to the classic demands of the tradition and to our desire to remain part of the modern world. But I do believe that the many achievements of modernity—most of which we would find very difficult to give up—may not offer the final answer to the deepest desires of human beings for meaning, continuity, and wholeness. And I believe that some of that meaning can be found within Judaism's own approach to living in the world. Or at least to the way we can interpret that approach for a contemporary consciousness.

But I think it's clear that despite my own assumptions about the mitzvot and their contemporary power, not everyone will agree. Not everyone will want to begin to explore those rituals or will find them to be meaningful even if they do give them a try. To use an image that I've suggested elsewhere,⁹ sometimes I think about the Jewish world today as one traversed by a kind of imaginary line. I picture a large group of people assembled around a swimming pool. On one side of the line are those—by far the larger majority—for whom Jewish symbols, rituals, and literary sources mean very little. Perhaps out of a kind of nostalgia they may attend a Seder or even light candles for Shabbat, but aside from that Judaism does not speak to them in a meaningful way. They are standing around the swimming pool fully dressed; they never really take the plunge.

The other group, considerably smaller, is already in the pool. Sometimes as they splash around in the ambience of Jewish content that is their world, they are aware of that larger group, sitting by the sidelines occasionally peeking in but by and large taking little notice of the swimmers.

For a long time as I thought about the people standing around that pool, I think I operated under a particular delusion—something that could be called perhaps "educator's optimism." I believed that all one had to do was teach people the extraordinary symbolic significance of the mitzvot—*taamei hamitzvot*, the reasons behind practice—and with little hesitation they would leap to embrace them. Of course, in retrospect this seems very naive.

It underestimates exactly what Berger has pointed to—the very nature of modernity makes such a possibility difficult indeed.

But more than naive, I think I was missing something very crucial about the nature of the mitzvot themselves—how deeply they are tied to the nonrational side of reality. It is not simply giving some interesting “reasons” for the mitzvot that will lead people to observe the commandments; because that behavior, as I tried to show earlier, is something much larger than the work of rationality. Studying the symbolism of ritual can help people appreciate why others might want to perform these rituals, but it may have very little influence on their own actions. Or at least that is true for most people. For it’s clear that since the mitzvot live in some realm beyond or behind reason (and therefore beyond or behind “reasons” for doing them), in some way the decision to explore the mitzvot and to consider actually practicing them in one’s own life is going to have to be in large part a matter of individual temperament. That is, there are people who, because of who they are, will just not want to enter the pool.

And I would not even want to begin to define what the “mitzvot-oriented” temperament would be. The many aspects of the mitzvot themselves would preclude that: I have known people who performed mitzvot out of sentimentality, or mysticism, or obedience, just to name a few motivations. But what is clear is that some people will never find a way in or want to.

The question of temperament was probably always with us. But until the ancient structures of Jewish communal and religious life began to break down, it was irrelevant. People observed the commandments because it was part of the rich fabric of the community’s life. For some the commandments were no doubt very meaningful; for others the mitzvot were merely a regular part of ordinary life. Some may have wondered in passing about the whole enterprise of the commandments, but for the most part they were simply what one did.

Nor, despite our idealization of the past, was the observance of mitzvot at the same level of intensity for every Jewish community and in every age before modernity. These matters surely differed

among localities and across time. But for the most part, the mitzvot were part of the central structure of the community. We can probably think in our own lives of similar communal structures that we sometimes care deeply about, but which we seldom question even if they don’t seem terribly meaningful to us. In our society, for example, just about every child goes to school. We never think much about that fact, even though throughout human history (and in some places even today), most children *didn’t* go to school. For us it’s simply a fact of life. For some people it is very important and compelling—they love school or they passionately argue about it; for others it is a necessary burden.

Going to school is the expectation of our society as Jewish ritual practice was once the expectation of the community of the past. But with modernity the attitude toward ritual practice changed. When the practice became a matter of choice, temperament and inclination began to become significant factors. (Of course, we should not forget that there are many communities of Jews today in which the communal expectation of ritual practice still obtains. But—excepting the world of the ultra-Orthodox—interactions between the Jewish and non-Jewish culture are so plentiful that Berger’s point about choice is very much a reality.)¹⁰

Thus, there are many who will always stay on the sidelines. But what about those who are open to the exploration? In this case too the “reasons” for the mitzvot are only a partial solution. The fact is, finding *taamei hamitzvot* is not the crucial problem people have in performing the commandments. As I have said before, since the “reason” is only one part of the experience of the ritual itself, having a quiver full of *taamin* may still not lead you to load up the bow. There are many rituals for which I could enumerate lovely explications; but I still might not perform the mitzvah.

Of course, this may itself be one of the dangers of the whole enterprise of *taamei hamitzvot*. The rabbis worried about rationalizing the commandments because they feared that knowing the reason might lead someone to say, “Well, in that case I don’t have to perform the act. Isn’t knowing the reason enough?”¹¹ Focusing

on the reasons, the rabbis argued, no matter what one's motivation, can lead you away from actually performing the commandments.

And for us the difficulty is even greater because the view of the commandments that I suggested before is not based on a sense of the will of God behind the deeds we do. That is, if I live with a consciousness of God's stringent demands upon me, I may perform the mitzvot, as the rabbis had hoped, out of obedience if for no other reason. But without that, performance of the commandments can easily lapse.

We live in a time and culture which does not easily embrace external authority. But we should be cautious about too lightly dismissing the power of "being commanded" as motivation for religious action. The sense of discipline and order that such a sensibility brings, and even the exhilaration of feeling oneself to be serving God's will was a profound force in the lives of Jews for generations, and for many today as well. Those who can hear the clear voice of God's command and who can focus their lives upon it are blessed with a kind of religious confidence that brings rich rewards.

But what about those who do not hear that voice, who do not accept the authority of a greater external will? One can only be honest: You cannot make yourself believe in divine command and practice obedience if you do not feel yourself to be commanded. And although there may be moments when one might very well believe "this is what God wants me to do," most of the time such a belief may simply not be there. Instead, it is the personal significance of the mitzvot that motivates one to perform them. In that case you *choose* to follow that path, rather than feel you are *commanded* to do so.

One possible solution to the dilemma is to take an "as if" approach to the situation. That is, to act "as if" I really did believe that God wanted my steadfast obedience to the divine will, even if I don't feel that all the time. And there are times that such an attitude may allow me a way into observance. I do not expect to perform each mitzvah with perfect concentration; as I said earlier in this chapter, it is precisely that kind of demand within Hasidism

that I find daunting. I am perfectly willing to accept the fact that many times I will perform mitzvot without such concentration and intentionality, the quality the rabbis called *kavanah* (to be "directed"). No, the structure and regularity of the mitzvot is one of its appealing qualities; *kavanah* in performing the mitzvot is what we can hope for, though not what we need expect.

But despite all that, a consistency in performing the mitzvot is not easy to attain and "as if" is not going to work all the time. Nor am I talking about the more difficult, demanding, or ideologically remote commandments. For example, simply saying the blessing before eating—only one sentence, and an idea that I find completely reasonable and unproblematic—is something I cannot easily find the motivation to do at every meal.

Why should that be so? I have come to see in my own life that there are times that some kind of natural laziness or secular stubbornness is just going to fight against performing the mitzvot. In a way—to take a secular analogy—I sometimes think of the mitzvot as being like exercise or avoiding foods that are bad for you—you know what you should be doing, you know that it's good for you, but it's still hard to do what's right.

Most of us, if we do wish to find a way into the commandments, are going to have to deal with the fact that we have been shaped by modernity. I am reminded of an oft-quoted talmudic dictum of Rabbi Hanina which states, "Greater is he who is commanded and fulfills the commandment than one who is not commanded and fulfills the commandment" (Talmud, *Bava Kamma* 87a). In other words, what really matters is your relationship of service to the divine, not your own human inclinations, even if they are positive ones. This expression of the classic underpinning for the mitzvot, it seems to me, is one that seems very far away from the central values of modernity and one that most of us will have difficulty embracing. For us personal autonomy and decision-making, even in our religious lives, are going to have to be at the heart of who we are.

In that regard we should not forget that our ancestors also understood the difficulty of fulfilling the commandments. After all, the classic literature often refers to the mitzvot as a "yoke"

that human beings must bear. Indeed, there is a dangerous side to Torah as well:

"This is the Torah which Moses placed [Hebrew: *sam*] before Israel. . . ."

(Deuteronomy 4:44)

If he is worthy, it becomes for him a drug [Hebrew: *sam*] of life, if not it is a drug of death. That is what Rava meant when he said: If he uses it the right way, it is a drug of life to him; if he does not it is a drug of death.

(Talmud, *Yoma* 72b)

Like many midrashic texts, this one bases itself on a wordplay. In this case the Talmud associates the Hebrew verb meaning "to place" (*sam*) with a different word pronounced the same way, "medicine" (also *sam*). Because of the word order of the original, the Talmud is able to read the biblical text as "This is the Torah which is a drug . . ." an effect that can't quite be captured in translation. And since in classical Hebrew, as in contemporary English, the word "drug" has both positive and negative connotations, an additional dimension is added to the interpretation.

Torah is not a simple thing—it has a two-sided nature. For those who are "worthy" it brings life; for those not worthy, death. (Of course, paradoxically, one of the reasons classically given for the commandments in general is *l'zakot etkhem*, to make you worthy.) And what might Rava mean when he says "using it the right way" will make it a drug of life to you? How could one use Torah in the "wrong" way?

One could simply say that the rabbis believed that violating the mitzvot of the Torah would bring a person death, either in the literal sense or in terms of the future punishments that such a person would receive. Thus, if you are unworthy—a sinner—you will eventually find Torah to be "poisonous." But I suspect that the text is somewhat more complex than that. It seems to me that in some way the rabbis here recognize the difficulties of the yoke of Torah and in this utterance, at least, we have an opaque, almost allegorical representation of the darker side of the mitzvot.

But such warnings aside, it is clear that the mitzvot generally were seen as opportunities for joy. *Simha shel mitzvah*, the joy of performing a commandment, was a key element in the traditional understanding of the mitzvot, as was the notion that the highest ideal was to perform mitzvot for "their own sake." Performing a mitzvah for its own sake is a difficult concept, far more so, I think, than the more familiar idea of *Torah lishmah*, study for its own sake, another common rabbinic aspiration. The latter case resonates with all that we know about experiences of learning for the simple joy of learning, both in secular and religious contexts. But what does it mean to perform a mitzvah for its own sake?

Of course, it obviously means not to think about the reward that such a deed may bring. The rabbis wanted to discourage too much focus on the divine ledger of reward and punishment. Indeed, they tell us that the reward of a mitzvah is the chance to do another mitzvah (Mishnah, *Avot* 4:2)! But more than that, the concept of mitzvot for their own sake seems to speak of that inner dimension of connection and integration that I tried to explore earlier in this chapter. At that point I was speaking about a ritual mitzvah, lulav and etrog, but I think that the joy of mitzvah for its own sake can come out of other practices as well. I have noticed in myself over the years that kind of reaction personally whenever I give *tzedakah*. Why this should be I don't know. But I find that after writing out a set of donation checks, there is something that just simply makes me feel good. And I think that it is more than the sense of helping people in need (though that too is powerful), but it also comes out of the feeling that I have just performed a mitzvah!

Now, I am perfectly willing to admit that not everyone is going to feel this. Obviously, one has to care about mitzvot before this can work. Nor, I think, did I myself always have this same kind of reaction. But I've noticed in recent years something that I can only call the joy of mitzvah for its own sake. And I think that comes out of a feeling of relationship to something larger than my own personal whim: my people's history, a sense of my place in the universe.

The growth of this attitude toward mitzvot happened for me

over the course of time, and there is something to be said for the incremental, organic sense of doing mitzvot that the tradition was well aware of. There is no way around the fact that to find "deeds" meaningful one has to do them. As the rabbinic sage Rav said: "From doing mitzvot from ulterior motives you will eventually come to do them for their own sake" (Talmud, *Pesachim* 50b).

Of course, mitzvot were never seen as a field you could wander around in based on your own fancy. Mitzvot were intricately bound, one to the next, in a much larger system or fabric. Yet while it is clear from rabbinic declarations and warnings that every age had its own set of "difficult" or lapsed commandments, what distinguishes our age, and indeed Jewish history since the Emancipation, is the breakdown of the whole acceptability of that larger fabric. In the past there were some Jews who observed the commandments with rigor and others who were less punctilious, but only society's true "outsiders" denied the centrality of the mitzvot themselves. But today, in a world of many options, the norms have changed and the outsiders and insiders have switched positions.

In this kind of world it is probably necessary to rethink the role that mitzvot can play in the lives of most Jews. For some people any commitment to the commandments is going to be gradual and ultimately only partial, if at all. For some a beginning exploration of the mitzvot will lead to other mitzvot. This is the way that the ancient rabbis envisioned it—"a mitzvah will inspire another mitzvah." For reasons I have explored earlier in this chapter, it seems unlikely that everyone will come to find a connection to the whole system of commandments outlined by Jewish tradition.

But more significant, I believe, is the possibility that there are many people who might want to find their way into those commandments, to try them on, so to speak, and perhaps to grow into them. Here I think there are possibilities. To begin with there is one dimension of the commandments that I have touched upon only slightly in my discussion here, but it is not to be underestimated. I have focused mainly on the element of personal significance found in the mitzvot, but we should not forget that many

of the commandments are performed within a social context, a community of like-minded people. If the personal-significance side of the mitzvot might be seen as the vertical dimension of the commandments (at least in the traditional imagery—one's connection to God, let us say), this other side of the commandments is its horizontal dimension. Performing the mitzvot—waving the lulav and etrog for example—with others around you doing the same deed gives the individual a sense of belonging, a feeling that one is part of something larger than oneself.

I think in that sense of the feeling I have had attending an early morning weekday service. Not all the people that show up are great spiritual masters, seeking communion with the holy. Very few are, I suppose. But starting the day in communal prayer, seeing friends and neighbors in the first hours of the day, gives everyone—even the least devout—a sense of being bound up in the framework of community and a sense of shared purpose in an enterprise sanctioned by history and tradition. In a time such as ours, characterized by loneliness and displacement, the attraction of a welcoming community needs no explanation.

In addition to that horizontal domain, of course, I do believe that there is an openness in people today toward finding ways of enriching and deepening the experience of their lives in the "vertical" plane. And for that the mitzvot, to be sure, are only one part of a larger picture. But what I have tried to argue in this chapter is that one can find in their symbolic weight and in their very physicality a sense of integration and of joy that is both meaningful and compelling. That, as I have said, does not ease the difficulty of living the life that they demand, particularly given who we are today, but there is a sense around us that secularity, attractive though it is, may not hold every answer. And Judaism, it seems to me, with its complement of ritual and deed, represents a challenge to that secularity, a different kind of echo that we hear behind us.

purpose of the mitzvot is to purify human beings. The mitzvot can do something for us: they give us a chance to move away from the claims of secularity and toward a sense of the holy in our lives, and in that way they become a kind of "purification" from both the positive and negative aspects of contemporary life.

Thus, one midrashic text talks about the reasons behind the mitzvah of lulav and etrog, the palm branch and citron waved by Jews during particular moments in the prayers of the holiday of Sukkot: "The Holy One, blessed be He, has said 'I have given you many commandments—because I needed them? . . . It is not for My sake that I have given you these commandments, but rather to benefit you'" (Midrash Tanhuma, *Parshat Emor* 24).

To my mind the crucial idea about the commandments is their power to give one's life a sense of wholeness. The mitzvot are about the integration of human experience. And more than that, they are about an apprehension of meaning that is beyond the self, something, I would argue, that even the most secular person needs. When I look at the varied activities of my life, I try to find some sense of meaning, some thread of connection among all the things that I do. There is within the system of the mitzvot the power to accomplish just that. The "benefit" is precisely that sense of connection, that feeling that there is both integration and a greater significance in my harried and disconnected life.

Part of that sense of integration comes out of the fact that the mitzvot carry with them the weight and power of tradition. Like other aspects of tradition that I explored in the last chapter, the mitzvot have the advantage of antiquity; when I perform these deeds, I have not invented them out of the air, but I have put myself into a larger sense of wholeness, not only tying together my own life, but joining me to those very things that my great grandparents and theirs before them had done in their lives. And these actions are the same deeds that have engendered pages of explication and years of pondering throughout Jewish history.

But it is not just the significance of the past that matters. Even more significant, it seems to me, is the inherent power of deeds, of action. This connection strikes me as a very deep one. For it is not merely what flashes through my mind, my thinking, that the

mitzvot are about, but activities in the world of materiality, the world of my body. It is what my ancestors *did*, not what my ancestors *believed*, that matters here. In all likelihood I am very far away from the intellectual world of those who came before me. As I tried to show in the last chapter, over time tradition evolves and deepens through interpretation, through acts of mind. Akiva lives in a world very far from the world of Moses. And his Judaism is different as well.

And so I do not believe that my great grandfather and I would really have much to talk about if we could meet: I would seem bizarre to him and he would seem antique to me. Our beliefs and our attitudes would be very different, shaped by the age in which each of us lived. The historian Robert Darnton in writing about his approach to eighteenth-century French history brings home the same point as he comments on the gulf that separates us from the past:

Nothing is easier than to slip into the comfortable assumption that Europeans thought and felt two centuries ago just as we do today—allowing for the wigs and wooden shoes. We constantly need to be shaken out of a false sense of familiarity with the past, to be administered doses of culture shock.⁴

But one of the powerful dimensions of Judaism is the sense that despite the passing of time, of generations in fact, I am tied to those who have gone before me not by "thoughts and feelings" as Darnton puts it, but by the physical deeds that I do. If I wave the lulav and etrog at Sukkot, I know that my great-grandfather—no matter what his beliefs and worldview—would have done that very act as well.

I have said that part of the sense of integration comes from connection to the past, but, for me at least, that level of meaning only tells part of the story. To say "I do these deeds because they were done before me" ultimately seems to me like an insufficient, perhaps even circular argument. The actions in and of themselves have to resonate with a level of meaning.

In a way, some of that meaning does come out of their antiq-

uity. That is, doing the mitzvot is not just a matter of doing things that my ancestors did—it's doing things that my ancestors felt to be meaningful as they did them. And I'm sure that part of the weight of meaning my great-grandfather felt in, let's say once again, waving the lulav and etrog came because he knew that it was meaningful for *his* great-grandfather.

But beyond the chain of the generations, we want there to be something else for it to work. For Jews throughout history, and for some today as well, that something may have been the clear sense of obeying God's will and command. But although there are times in which I do feel that too, my own connection to the mitzvot comes mostly out of another sensibility.

In fact, classical Jewish literature abounds with interpretive explanation of why we do these deeds. Rarely are we left with no explanation, and the phrase "this is what God wants of you" tends to be the *beginning* of inquiry, rather than its conclusion. For an example we shall look at a set of rabbinic interpretations about the lulav and etrog. I have mentioned lulav and etrog in this chapter a number of times precisely because unlike, say, giving *tzedakah* (charity), it is a mitzvah that is hard to justify on the grounds of rationality or societal needs. *Tzedakah* in that sense is an easy case (though not always very easy in the doing!) because it is obvious that any community needs to find a way to take care of its poor. Now, of course, we know that societies—America today, for example—are not always committed to this task. But the case for *tzedakah* is not a difficult one to make.

In lulav and etrog, however, we have an example of a mitzvah that appears to be without an easy explanation. Obviously, as we can see in the midrashim below, the rabbis felt a similar need to understand this commandment. From the rabbinic period onward a considerable literature evolved concerning this particular practice. In one place in the Talmud, for example, waving the lulav and etrog was compared to the biblical⁵ waving of the sacrificial loaves:

In the Land of Israel they taught the following: Rav Hama b. Ukva stated in the name of Rav Yose the son of Rav Hanina—the priest

waves them [the loaves] to and fro in order to restrain harmful winds; up and down, in order to restrain harmful dews. . . . In connection with this Rava stated—And thus with the lulav.

(Talmud, *Sukkah* 37b-38a)

The comparison to the sacrificial "wave offering" is of less interest to us here than the underlying reason stated by these rabbis—the waving of the lulav has an almost magical significance. It affects the fall of rain and dew.

What is interesting about this reading is how close it seems to the most elemental dimension of the ritual and probably to its origins in prehistory. Even today when we watch or participate in the ceremony of lulav and etrog, there is that sense of the "primitive" that cannot be ignored. Shaking the palm and the citron in the classic four directions of the compass, as well as upward and downward, and chanting "Please, O Lord, deliver us" puts the worshiper in touch with an ancient human ritual.

And yet, of course, at the same time that elemental quality can easily make us uncomfortable too. The thought intrudes: What am I doing, a sophisticated modern man, shaking these plants and asking for salvation? After all, I don't really believe that I am going to effect the rain and dew by performing this ritual.

That that same self-consciousness was shared by our rabbinic forebears seems to be indicated by the enormous number of classical interpretations that are precisely *not* like the text quoted above. The rabbis developed a vast symbolic literature on lulav and etrog that undermined the more "primitive" dimension and emphasized instead the almost allegorical nature of the ritual. Since by biblical injunction the lulav and etrog are bound together with two other native plants of the Land of Israel—the willow and the myrtle—these four "kinds" or "species" form the basis of a vast array of symbolizing midrash. (During the ritual of "waving" itself the citron is held in one hand while the palm, to which willow and myrtle branches are attached, is held in the other. The four species are held right next to one another during the ritual.) For example:

Of the four plants two bear fruit and two do not. The ones that bear fruit must be bound closely to the ones that do not. The former represent disciples of the wise whose prayers . . . are meant to bear fruits of mercy for ordinary householders, delivering them from all degrees of poverty and kinds of affliction. . . . On the other hand, the plants that do not bear fruit must be bound close to those that bear fruit since the former represent those persons who are meant to provide a shelter of physical comfort for the Sages and their disciples.

(Pesikta Rabbati 51:2)*

This tendency to compare the four species to different kinds of Jews is typical of the symbolizing efforts of the rabbis, as we see in one of the most well known of such readings:

"On the first day you shall take the product of goodly trees, branches of lulav, boughs of leafy trees and willows of the brook, and you shall rejoice before the Lord your God for seven days."
(Leviticus 23:40)

Just as the etrog [understood by the phrase "fruit of goodly trees"] has taste as well as fragrance, so Israel has among them those who possess both learning and good deeds. As the lulav has taste but not fragrance, so Israel has among them those who possess learning but no good deeds. Just as the myrtle [understood by the phrase "leafy trees"] has fragrance but no taste, so Israel has among them those who possess good deeds, but not learning. And just as the willow has no taste and no fragrance, so Israel has among them those who possess neither learning nor good deeds.

What then does the Holy One, blessed be He, do to them? To destroy them is impossible. But, He says, let them all be tied together in one band and they will atone for one another.

(Leviticus Rabbah 30:12)

But this is not the only interpretive tradition. In other rabbinic texts the four species are compared to God or to the great biblical heroes and heroines or to the limbs and organs of a human being or to the scholars and judges of Israel. And there are more. In fact, it seems that the example of lulav and etrog is an almost unparalleled opportunity for symbolic explication in Jewish religious literature. Perhaps this results from the rabbis' discomfort with these "primitive" ritual devices, or perhaps the very physi-

cality and richness of the objects inspired them to new heights of interpretation. But for whatever reason, we have an enormous body of material that deals with the reasons behind the ritual. And these texts about lulav and etrog provide only one example of a whole bookcase, as it were, within the classic Jewish library, the literature of *taamei hamitzvot*—"reasons for the commandments."

The *taamei hamitzvot* literature clearly shows that the rabbis believed there was a legitimacy in pursuing the reasons behind the commandments. It may be that absolute obedience to God was the most fundamental "reason" of them all, but the rabbinic interpretive imagination—as evidenced by the example of lulav and etrog—was not inhibited by that fact.

And yet I wonder about *taamei hamitzvot*. In the long run, what is the relationship in real life between the *taamei*, the reason, and the mitzvah? What, if anything, does the reason do for the person actually performing the prescribed act?

While I am waving the lulav and etrog, am I really thinking about the four kinds of Jews or the four limbs of the body or anything else? The connection between the experiential dimension of performing a mitzvah and *taamei hamitzvot*—the intellectual reasons behind the mitzvah—is what I am trying to get at here, and I suspect in real life the link is not very strong.

In fact, I suspect that *taamei hamitzvot* are effective really not *during*, but *before* the actual mitzvah: the "reason" may be what gets me to do the mitzvah in the first place. Thus, waving a palm branch and citron may seem rather silly at first blush, but once I am convinced that there is indeed a symbolic dimension to what I am about to do, I can then go ahead in good conscience and perform the deed. It is a kind of antidote to my own self-consciousness if I can see that, yes, very rational people can perform ritual acts such as these.

Taamei hamitzvot work in the realm of rationality, but mitzvot themselves, I think, tend to affect us in some other aspect of our nature. When I myself am actually waving the lulav and etrog, do I really think much about that whole library of explanation? To be fair—only sometimes. On occasion, it does slip into my head: "Ah yes, the four types of Jews. As I am doing this, I am sym-

bolizing my aspirations for a Jewish community bound together in common purpose." But mostly I am not experiencing the "waving" as allegorical. Now of course if you stop me in the street and ask, why do you Jews wave those silly plants on Sukkot, I would have a ready answer: "Silly? They certainly are not silly. Let me tell you about some of the symbolic reasons. . . ." And off I'd go with my *taamei hamitzvot*.

But that is more for public, or at any rate rational, consumption. The *experience* of the ritual is something very different. The deed as it is performed is far more than the explanatory reasons, whether they be the classic allegories or the ones that I have invented this morning. The deed includes my rationality, of course. I certainly have not expunged those *taamim* from at least the level of my subconscious. And a new "reason" that I might create or hear will have the power to engage me. Living interpretation is always fascinating. But as I perform the actual ritual, the reasons may only float occasionally into mind, if at all.

Along with rationality, waving the lulav also carries with it a sense of the ancient and the nonrational that is missing from most of my modern existence. It also gives me the simple and incommunicable pleasure of the ritual and its physicality. I am taken back to some ancient form, but I differ from those ancestors (I suppose, although who can tell?) because often I am both performing the ritual and watching myself perform it at the same time. The thought intrudes: "Hm. Here I am waving the lulav and etrog. Strange ritual, isn't it." Such it is with modernity: Ritual is not an easy thing for any of us.

But what's interesting is that *despite* this self-consciousness, I continue to wave the lulav. Of course, there are times in which the ritual does not seem strange at all. I am on occasion struck by how interesting this ritual is, how the symbolism seems so right. And there are other times still: times when I am not *thinking* about the ritual at all. I am just doing it. And I experience a kind of consonance between the interpretative reasons that I carry with me and the actual performance of the ritual act.

I suspect, however, that despite the nonrational heart of ritual that I have been trying to describe, the rational *taamei hamitzvot*

still may play a crucial role in all of this. Because of my modernity not only do I need that rational substructure, that introductory push that allows me to throw off my rational inhibitions, but I also need to be *educated into ritual*. I need to learn to enjoy the ritual, to love the ritual, we could even say. And that affection comes first through the route of reason, bolstered over time by habit. It may be that Jewish rituals, like any difficult discipline, only make sense and come alive after years of concentrated practice. In its own way waving the lulav and etrog is like being the Zen archer or the practitioner of other arcane and demanding arts: At first it just doesn't make too much sense, but over the years one finally comes to see the depth of the experience.⁷

For some, of course, the path takes a different route. For those raised with the early habit of the mitzvot, the role of the "reasons" may be different. In that case *taamei hamitzvot* may become the intellectual bulwark to bolster those habits of childhood acquired long ago. Of course, a person raised with the mitzvot has the advantage of long practice and practical knowledge. Knowing the rudiments of Jewish practice is in itself an accomplishment; after all, even waving the lulav and etrog is a complex and minutely regulated ritual. In addition, such a person has the psychological connection to ritual that goes back into the world of the pre-rational. If you cannot even remember a time in which you didn't experience lulav and etrog on Sukkot or see the candles being lit before the Sabbath, the mitzvot are in some sense part of your deepest self, an inner world older than memories.

But there are prices to be paid even there. For some the connection to childhood means never coming to see the adult dimension of ritual. For those people the meaning of ritual is always stuck in the past. They may never outgrow the understanding of their youth, and as time passes that fact may inhibit the ritual from growing with them as they get older. And for others the associations with childhood are too tied up with the other things of youth that we all throw off as we get older. Ritual in that case is tied to the psychological constraints of the past—to parents and home and family. To be free of ritual becomes symbolic of being free in general. (In my mind this resembles the story of the

second-generation Jews in America who in throwing off their parents' East European ways for the attractions of the Golden Land saw Jewish ritual practice as intricately tied to that "Old World." They felt that in throwing out the past, they had to throw out *all* of the past—the accents, the ways of dress, *and* the Jewish ritual life as well.) Yet despite these impediments, the person raised in Jewish ritual practice enters adulthood with great advantages of knowledge and familiarity.

This is assuming, of course, that one wants to enter into any of this at all. I have said above that the literature of *taamei hamitzvot* can provide a way into ritual practice or a rational substructure upon which to base such practice, but what gets a person to want to open up those books of interpretation to begin with? Most people living in secular modernity live very far away from the world of ritual and religion, and, unlike the situation of our great-grandparents, we can easily choose to opt out of ritual life. Indeed, most people have. It is this reality that is captured by the sociologist Peter Berger in his book *The Heretical Imperative*. Here is how Berger describes the change from the world of the past to the religious situation of today:

Sociologically speaking, premodern societies are marked by the fact that their institutions have a very high degree of taken-for-granted certainty. This is not to say that this certainty is total; if it were, there would never have been any social change. But the degree of certainty, when compared to that of modern society, is very high indeed. . . .

The modern individual . . . lives in a world of choice, in sharp contrast with the world of fate inhabited by traditional man. He must choose in innumerable situations of everyday life, but this necessity of choosing reaches into the areas of beliefs, values, and world views.*

I have said before that I believe that the mitzvot offer an opportunity to give one's life a sense of wholeness and meaning. Such rituals can give one a sense of personal integration within the context of a larger history of one's people and one's past. They offer the power of tradition. I am not saying that this is guaran-

teed; I am not saying that this works all the time or that it's easy to do. Nor have I yet tried to spell out in detail how this sense of the mitzvot may relate both to the classic demands of the tradition and to our desire to remain part of the modern world. But I do believe that the many achievements of modernity—most of which we would find very difficult to give up—may not offer the final answer to the deepest desires of human beings for meaning, continuity, and wholeness. And I believe that some of that meaning can be found within Judaism's own approach to living in the world. Or at least to the way we can interpret that approach for a contemporary consciousness.

But I think it's clear that despite my own assumptions about the mitzvot and their contemporary power, not everyone will agree. Not everyone will want to begin to explore those rituals or will find them to be meaningful even if they do give them a try. To use an image that I've suggested elsewhere,⁹ sometimes I think about the Jewish world today as one traversed by a kind of imaginary line. I picture a large group of people assembled around a swimming pool. On one side of the line are those—by far the larger majority—for whom Jewish symbols, rituals, and literary sources mean very little. Perhaps out of a kind of nostalgia they may attend a Seder or even light candles for Shabbat, but aside from that Judaism does not speak to them in a meaningful way. They are standing around the swimming pool fully dressed; they never really take the plunge.

The other group, considerably smaller, is already in the pool. Sometimes as they splash around in the ambience of Jewish content that is their world, they are aware of that larger group, sitting by the sidelines occasionally peeking in but by and large taking little notice of the swimmers.

For a long time as I thought about the people standing around that pool, I think I operated under a particular delusion—something that could be called perhaps "educator's optimism." I believed that all one had to do was teach people the extraordinary symbolic significance of the mitzvot—*taamei hamitzvot*, the reasons behind practice—and with little hesitation they would leap to embrace them. Of course, in retrospect this seems very naive.

Mezuzah Background Information

1. Encyclopaedia Judaica: Mezuzah

Rabinowitz, Louis Isaac. "Mezuzah." *Encyclopaedia Judaica: CD Rom Edition*.
Judaica Multimedia, 1997.

Encyclopaedia Judaica: Mezuzah

MEZUZAH parchment scroll affixed to the doorpost of rooms in the Jewish home. The original meaning of the word *mezuzah* is "doorpost" (cf. Ex. 12:7). Its etymology is obscure; it has been suggested that it is derived from the Assyrian *manzazu*, but this is by no means certain. The Bible twice enjoins (Deut. 6:9 and 11:20) "and ye shall write them (the words of God) upon the *mezuzot* of thy house and in thy gates"; by transference, the word was made to apply not to the doorpost, but to the passages which were affixed to the doorpost in accordance with this injunction. The *mezuzah* consists of a piece of parchment, made from the skin of a clean animal, upon which the two passages in which the above-mentioned verses occur (Deut. 6:4–9 and 11:13–21) are written in square (Assyrian) characters, traditionally in 22 lines. The parchment is rolled up and inserted in a case with a small aperture. On the back of the parchment the word yVQ ("Almighty," but also the initial letters of *ladRy* *TvTIV* *dmvQ* "Guardian of the doors of Israel" (Kol Bo 90, 101:4)), is written, and the parchment is so inserted that the word is visible through the aperture. It is affixed to the right hand doorpost of the room, or house, or gate, where it is obligatory (see below), in the top third of the doorpost and slanting inward. A blessing "Who hast commanded us to fix the *mezuzah*" is recited when affixing it. The earliest evidence for the fulfillment of the commandments of the *mezuzah* dates from the Second Temple period. A *mezuzah* parchment (6.5 cm. X 16 cm.) has been found at Qumran (Cave 8) in which are written some sentences from Deuteronomy (10:12–11:21) but not from the *Shema* (*Discoveries in the Judean Desert of Jordan* (1962), 158–61). The Samaritans make their *mezuzot* out of large stones and attach them to the lintel of the main door of their houses or place them near the doorway. They carve on them the Ten Commandments or the "ten categories by which the world was created." Sometimes they use abbreviations and initial letters of the ten or single verses in praise of God. *Mezuzah* stones of this sort are found in Israel dating from the early Arab and perhaps even Byzantine era. The Karaites do not make the *mezuzah* obligatory. Nevertheless, the *mezuzot* that they do attach are made of a tablet of blank plate in the form of the two tablets of the law but without writing on them and they fix them to the doorways of their public buildings and sometimes to their dwelling places.

In the Middle Ages the custom obtained of making kabbalistic additions, usually the names of angels, as well as symbols (such as the *magen david*) to the text. The custom was vigorously opposed by Maimonides. He declared that those who did so "will have no share in the world to come." With their "foolish hearts" "they turn a commandment" whose purpose is to emphasize the love of God "into an amulet" (Yad, Tefillin 5:4). Despite this, there is one clear reference in the Talmud to the efficacy of the *mezuzah* as an amulet, though from the context it need not be regarded as doctrine. In return for a material gift sent by Ardavan to Rav, the latter sent him a *mezuzah*, and in answer to his surprised query replied that it would "guard him" (TJ, Pe'ah 1:1, 15d; Gen. R. 35:3). To a similar context belongs the story of the explanation of the *mezuzah* given by Onkelos the proselyte to the Roman soldiers who came to arrest him: "In the case of the Holy One, blessed be He, His servants dwell within, while He keeps guard on them from without" (Av. Zar. 11a).

Maimonides' decision prevailed, and the *mezuzah* today contains only the two biblical passages. However, at the bottom of the obverse side there is written the formula *vlvk* *Iskvmb* *vlvk*, a cryptogram formed by substituting the next letter of the alphabet for the original, it thus being the equivalent of *hvhy* *vnyhla* *hvhy* ("the Lord, God, the Lord"). This is already mentioned by Asher b. Jehiel in the 13th century in his commentary to the *Hilkhot Mezuzah* of Alfasi (Romm-Vilna ed. p. 6b).

The *mezuzah* must be affixed to the entrance of every home and to the door of every living room of a house, thus excluding storerooms, stables, lavatories, and bathrooms, and must be inspected periodically (twice in seven years) to ensure that the writing is still readable. The custom has become widespread and almost universal at the present day to affix the *mezuzah* to the entrance to public buildings (including all government offices in Israel) and synagogues. There is no authority for this, unless the building or room is also used for residential purposes (Levi ibn Habib, Resp. no. 101), and the Midrash (Deut. R. 7:2) actually asks the rhetorical

question, "Is then a *mezuzah* affixed to synagogues?" As the scriptural verse states, it is also to be affixed to "thy gates." It is thus obligatory for the entrances to apartment houses. On the gates of the suburb Yemin Moshe in Jerusalem, which stand since their erection in 1860, the *mezuzot* are still to be seen. After the Six-Day War *mezuzot* were affixed to the gates of the Old City of Jerusalem. In the responsa *Sha'ali Ziyyon* of D. Eliezrov (1962, pt. 2, nos. 9–10), who served as rabbi to the Jewish political prisoners at Latrun during the British Mandate, there are two responsa from him and Rabbi Ouziel, Sephardi chief rabbi of Israel, as to whether *mezuzot* were obligatory for the rooms and cells of the camp.

In the Diaspora the *mezuzot* must be affixed after the householder has resided in the home for 30 days; in Israel, immediately on occupation. If the house is sold or let to a Jew the previous occupier must leave the *mezuzah*. It is customary, among the pious, on entering or leaving to kiss the *mezuzah* or touch it and kiss the fingers (Maharil, based on the passage from Av. Zar. 11a quoted above).

The Talmud enumerates the *mezuzah* as one of the seven precepts with which God surrounded Israel because of His love for them. Of the same seven (the *zizit* being regarded as four) R. Eliezer b. Jacob stated, "Whosoever has the *tefillin* on his head, the *tefillin* on his arm, the *zizit* on his garment and the *mezuzah* on his doorpost is fortified against sinning" (Men. 43b). The *mezuzah* is one of the most widely observed ceremonial commandments of Judaism. In modern times the practice developed of wearing a *mezuzah* around the neck as a charm. Some of the cases in which the *mezuzah* is enclosed are choice examples of Jewish art, and the artistic *mezuzah* case has been developed to a considerable extent in modern Israel.

[Louis Isaac Rabinowitz]

Encyclopaedia Judaica: CDRom Edition. Judaica Multimedia, 1997.

Suggested Activity 5: On the Doorposts of Your House

1. Mezuzah Text: Deuteronomy 6:4-9, 11:13-21

JPS Hebrew-English Tanakh: The Traditional Hebrew Text and The New JPS Translation. Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 2003.*

* All translations of the Hebrew Bible found in the resources are from this source.

Mezuzah Text: Deuteronomy 6:4-9, 11:13-21

שִׁמְעוּ יִשְׂרָאֵל, יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ, יְיָ אֶחָד:
 וְאָהַבְתָּ אֶת יְיָ אֱלֹהֶיךָ, בְּכָל-לִבְבְּךָ, וּבְכָל-נַפְשְׁךָ, וּבְכָל-מְאֹדְךָ. וְהָיוּ
 הַדְּבָרִים הָאֵלֶּה, אֲשֶׁר אֲנֹכִי מְצַוְּךָ הַיּוֹם, עַל-לִבְבְּךָ: וְשָׁנַנְתָּם לְבִנְיָךְ,
 וְדַבַּרְתָּ בָם בְּשַׁבְתְּךָ בְּבֵיתְךָ, וּבְלַכְתְּךָ בַדֶּרֶךְ וּבְשֹׁכְבְךָ, וּבְקוּמְךָ.
 וְקָשַׁרְתָם לְאוֹת עַל-יָדְךָ, וְהָיוּ לְטוֹטְפוֹת בֵּין עֵינֶיךָ, וְכָתַבְתָּם עַל מְזוֹזֹת
 בֵּיתְךָ וּבְשַׁעְרֶיךָ:
 וְהָיָה אִם-שָׁמַעַתְּ שְׁמֵעוּ אֶל-מִצְוֹתַי, אֲשֶׁר אֲנֹכִי מְצַוֶּה אֶתְכֶם הַיּוֹם,
 לְאַהֲבָה אֶת יְיָ אֱלֹהֵיכֶם, וּלְעַבְדוֹ בְּכָל-לִבְבְּכֶם וּבְכָל נַפְשְׁכֶם. וְנָתַתִּי
 מָטָר-אֲרָצְכֶם בְּעֵתוֹ, יוֹרֵה וּמְלַקוֹשׁ, וְאֶסְפַּתְּ דָגָנְךָ וְתִירְשֶׁךָ וַיִּצְהַרְךָ.
 וְנָתַתִּי עֵשֶׂב בְּשָׂדֶךָ לְבַהֲמֹתֶךָ, וְאָכְלֹת וּשְׂבֵעֹת. הִשְׁמַרוּ לָכֶם פֶּן-יִפְתָּה
 לְבַבְכֶם, וְסָרְתֶם וְעַבַדְתֶּם אֱלֹהִים אֲחֵרִים וְהִשְׁתַּחֲוִיתֶם לָהֶם. וְחָרָה
 אַף-יְיָ בְּכֶם, וְעָצַר אֶת-הַשָּׁמַיִם וְלֹא-יְהִי מָטָר, וְהִיאֲדָמָה לֹא תִתֶּן
 אֶת-יְבוּלָהּ וְאֲבַדְתֶּם מְהֵרָה מֵעַל הָאָרֶץ הַטֹּבָה אֲשֶׁר יְיָ נָתַן לָכֶם:
 וְשָׁמַתֶּם אֶת דְּבָרֵי אֱלֹהֵי עַל-לִבְבְּכֶם וְעַל-נַפְשְׁכֶם וְקָשַׁרְתֶּם אֹתָם
 לְאוֹת עַל-יָדְכֶם, וְהָיוּ לְטוֹטְפוֹת בֵּין עֵינֵיכֶם: וְלִמַּדְתֶּם אֹתָם
 אֶת-בְּנֵיכֶם, לְדַבֵּר בָּם, בְּשַׁבְתְּךָ בְּבֵיתְךָ, וּבְלַכְתְּךָ בַדֶּרֶךְ, וּבְשֹׁכְבְךָ
 וּבְקוּמְךָ: וְכָתַבְתֶּם עַל-מְזוֹזוֹת בֵּיתְךָ וּבְשַׁעְרֶיךָ: לְמַעַן יִרְבוּ יְמֵיכֶם
 וַיְמִי בְנֵיכֶם עַל הָאֲדָמָה אֲשֶׁר נִשְׁבַּע יְיָ לְאַבְרָהָם לֵאמֹר לָתֵת לָהֶם, כִּימֵי
 הַשָּׁמַיִם עַל-הָאָרֶץ:

⁴Hear, O Israel! The Lord is our God, the Lord alone. ⁵You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might. ⁶Take to heart these instructions with which I charge you this day. ⁷Impress them upon your children. Recite them when you stay at home and when you are away, when you lie down and when you get up. ⁸Bind them as a sign on your hand and let them serve as a symbol on your forehead; ⁹Inscribe them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates.

¹³If, then, you obey the commandments that I enjoin upon you this day, loving the Lord your God and serving Him with all your heart and soul, ¹⁴I will grant the rain for your land in season, the early rain and the late. You shall gather in your new grain and wine and oil – ¹⁵I will also provide grass in the fields for your cattle – and thus you shall eat your fill. ¹⁶Take care not to be lured away to serve other gods and bow to them. ¹⁷For the Lord's anger will flare up against you, and He will shut up the skies so that there will be no rain and the ground will not yield its produce; and you will soon perish from the good land that the Lord is assigning to you.

¹⁸Therefore impress these My words upon your very heart: bind them as a sign on your hand and let them serve as a symbol on your forehead, ¹⁹and teach them to your children – reciting them when you stay at home and when you are away, when you lie down and when you get up; ²⁰and inscribe them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates – ²¹to the end that you and your children may endure, in the land that the Lord swore to your fathers to assign to them, as long as there is a heaven over the earth.

Suggested Activity 6: Evolution Through History and Across Geography

1. Key to Mezuzot Across Time and Space

Rabinowitz, Louis Isaac. "Mezuzah." *Encyclopaedia Judaica: CD Rom Edition*. Judaica Multimedia, 1997.

www.jewishmuseum.net

www.jewishmuseum.org.uk/

www.pasarel.org

www.russiansamovars.com

2. Mezuzot Across Time and Space

3. Condensed Jewish History Timeline

Cohn-Sherbok, Dan. *A Concise Encyclopedia of Judaism*. Oxford: Oneworld, 1998.

Leiman, Sondra. *The Atlas of Great Jewish Communities*. New York: UAHC Press, 2002.

4. World Map

Key to Mezuzot Across Time and Space

1. Embroidered velvet cover for a mezuzah. Morocco, 19th c.
2. Wooden Fish mezuzah. Eastern Europe, 19th c.
3. Silver mezuzah. Russia, 19th c.
4. Brass and Inlaid Silver mezuzah. Syria, 20th c.
5. Bone mezuzah. Italy, 15th-16th c.
6. Copper. United States, 20th c.
7. Material Unknown. Netherlands, 19th c.

Sources of Photos:

"Mezuzah." *Encyclopaedia Judaica*.

www.jewishmuseum.net

www.jewishmuseum.org.uk/

www.pasarel.org

www.russiansamovars.com

Mezuzot Across Time and Space

1.



3.



2.

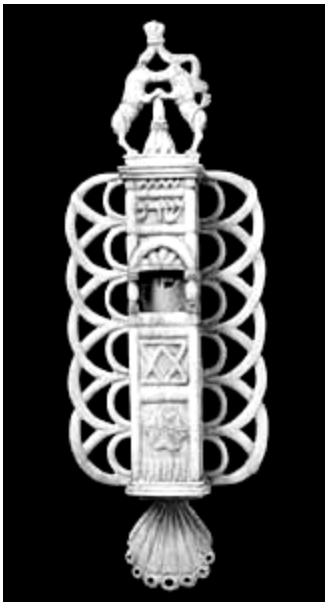


Mezuzot Across Time and Space

4.



5.



6.



7.



Condensed Jewish History Timeline

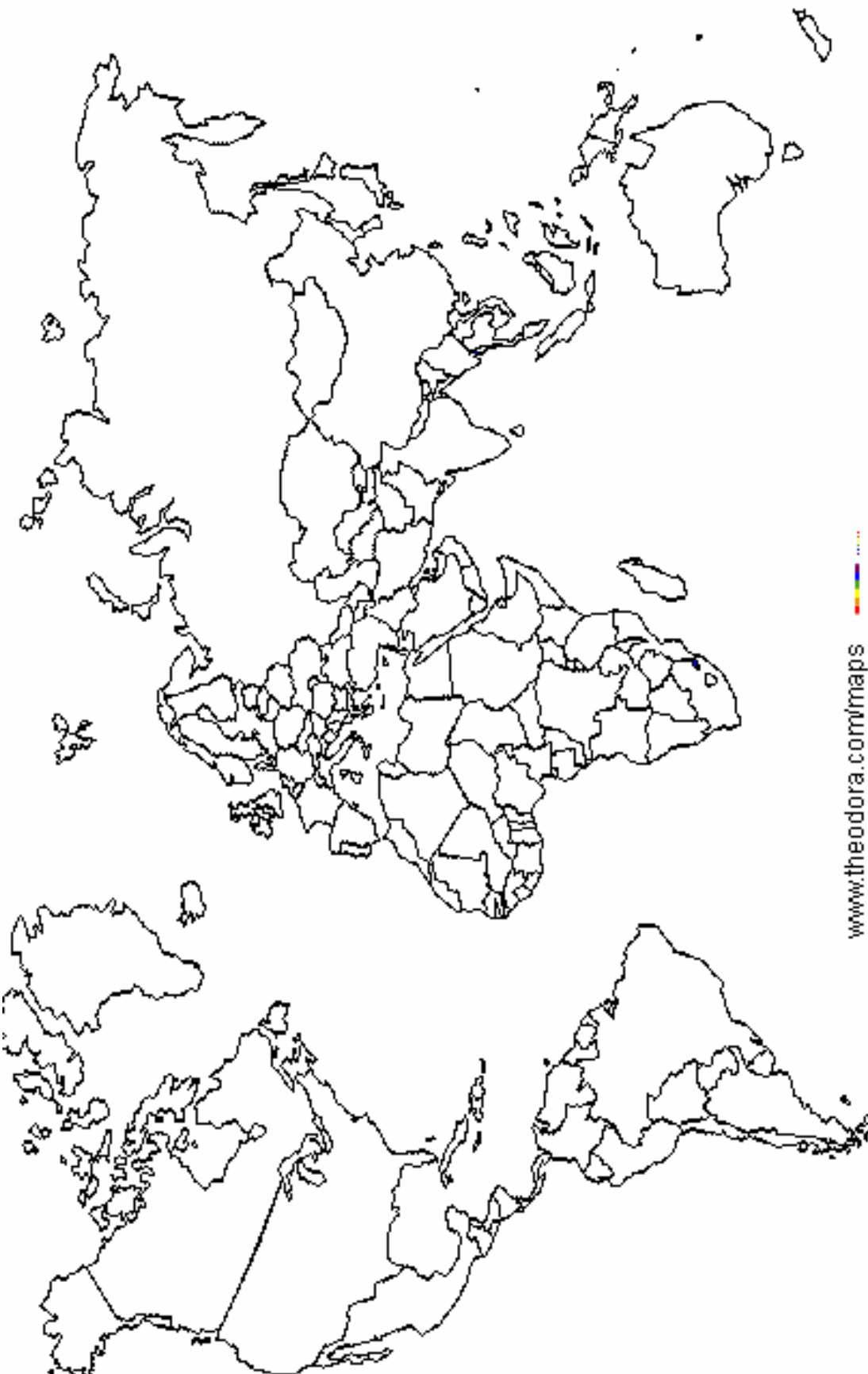
BCE	c. 1900-1600	Age of the Patriarchs and Matriarchs	
	c. 1250-1230	Exodus from Egypt	
	c. 1200-1000	Period of the Judges	
	c. 1030-930	United Monarchy	
	c. 950	First Temple	
	c. 930	Division of the Kingdom	
	722	Destruction of Northern Kingdom by Assyrians	
	586	Destruction of Southern Kingdom by Babylonians / Babylonian Exile begins	
	538	Return of some exiles	
	c. 520-515	Building of Second Temple	
	333-63	Hellenistic Period	
	167-164	Hasmonean revolt	
	CE	c. 146-400 CE	Roman period
		c. 100-200	Mishnaic period
		66-70	Jewish rebellion against Rome
70		Destruction of Second Temple	
132-5		Bar Kochba Revolt	
c. 200-600		Talmudic period	
882-942		Saariah Gaon	
900-1000		Golden Age of Spain	
1040-1105	Rashi		

1135-1204	Maimonides
c. 1286	Zohar
1492	Expulsion of Jews from Spain
1626-1676	Shabbetai Zevi
1700-1800	Rise of Hasidism
1750-1800	Beginning of the Haskalah
c. 1850	Reform Judaism founded
1860-1904	Theodor Herzl
1880-1900	Mass emigration to the United States
1881-1983	Mordecai Kaplan
1894	Dreyfus Affair
c. 1895	Conservative Judaism founded
1897	First Zionist Congress
1900-1920	Mass emigration from Eastern Europe Jewish settlement in Palestine
c. 1935	Reconstructionist Judaism founded
1942-5	Holocaust
1948	Founding of the State of Israel
1967	Six Day War
1973	Yom Kippur War
1979	Peace treaty between Israel and Egypt
1994	Peace treaty between Israel and Jordan

Sources:

Cohn-Sherbok, Dan. *A Concise Encyclopedia of Judaism*. Oxford: Oneworld, 1998.

Leiman, Sondra. *The Atlas of Great Jewish Communities*. New York: UAHC Press, 2002.



www.theodora.com/maps

Suggested Activity 7: Amulet

1. Trachtenberg on Mezuzot, pages 146-152.

Trachtenberg, Joshua. *Jewish Magic and Superstition*. Cleveland: World Publishing, 1961.

2. Maimonides' Ruling Against Altered Mezuzah Texts: *Mishneh Torah: Hilchot Mezuzah 5:4*.

Touger, Eliyahu. *Maimonides Mishneh Torah: The Laws Governing Tefillin, Mezuzah, and Torah Scrolls and The Laws of Tzitzit*. New York: Moznaim Publishing, 1990.

JOSHUA TRACHTENBERG

JEWISH MAGIC AND SUPERSTITION

A Study in Folk Religion

Meridian Books

THE WORLD PUBLISHING COMPANY
CLEVELAND AND NEW YORK

THE JEWISH PUBLICATION SOCIETY OF AMERICA
PHILADELPHIA

POPULAR MEDIEVAL AMULET TO PROTECT THE MOTHER AND CHILD AGAINST ATTACK BY LILIT DURING
CHILD-BIRTH.—From *Sefer Raziel*, AMSTERDAM, 1701.

Courtesy of the Jewish Theological Seminary Library, New York

לפי המנהגים אשר נהגו בארצנו ובעירנו ובעירי ארצות אחרות ובעירי ארצות אחרות ובעירי ארצות אחרות
והנהגות אלו הן אשר נהגו בארצנו ובעירנו ובעירי ארצות אחרות ובעירי ארצות אחרות
והנהגות אלו הן אשר נהגו בארצנו ובעירנו ובעירי ארצות אחרות ובעירי ארצות אחרות
והנהגות אלו הן אשר נהגו בארצנו ובעירנו ובעירי ארצות אחרות ובעירי ארצות אחרות



והנהגות אלו הן אשר נהגו בארצנו ובעירנו ובעירי ארצות אחרות ובעירי ארצות אחרות
והנהגות אלו הן אשר נהגו בארצנו ובעירנו ובעירי ארצות אחרות ובעירי ארצות אחרות
והנהגות אלו הן אשר נהגו בארצנו ובעירנו ובעירי ארצות אחרות ובעירי ארצות אחרות
והנהגות אלו הן אשר נהגו בארצנו ובעירנו ובעירי ארצות אחרות ובעירי ארצות אחרות

ON THE UNWELCOME IMITATIONS OF SATAN—but the sense is narrative: the pious man who fulfills the minutiae of ritual need not fear the powers of evil.¹⁸

The *mezuzah*, on the contrary, retained its original significance as an amulet despite rabbinic efforts to make it an exclusively religious symbol. Descended from a primitive charm, affixed to the door-post to keep demons out of the house, the rabbinic leaders gave it literally a religious content in the shape of a strip of parchment inscribed with the Biblical verses, Deut. 6:4-19, 11:13-20, in the hope that it might develop into a constant reminder of the principle of monotheism—a wise attempt to re-interpret instead of an unavailing prohibition. But the whitewash never adhered so thickly as to hide the true nature of the device. In the Middle Ages it is a question whether its anti-demonic virtues did not far outweigh its religious value in the public mind. Even as outstanding an authority as Meir of Rothenburg was wary enough to make this damaging admission: "If Jews knew how serviceable the *mezuzah* is, they would not lightly disregard it. They may be assured that no demon can have power over a house upon which the *mezuzah* is properly affixed. In our house I believe we have close to twenty-four *mezuzot*." Solomon Luria reports that after R. Meir had attached a *mezuzah* to the door of his study, he explained that "previously an evil spirit used to torment him whenever he took a nap at noon, but not any longer, now that the *mezuzah* was up." With such weighty support it cannot be wondered at that the masses followed R. Meir's way of thinking. Isaiah Horowitz further dignified the proceeding by making it emanate from God Himself. "I have set a guardian outside the door of My sanctuary [the Jewish home]," the deity proclaims, "to establish a decree for My heavenly and earthly households; while it is upon the door every destroyer and demon must flee from it."¹⁹

So potent did the *mezuzah* become in the popular imagination that its powers were extended to cover even life and death. A Talmudic statement, expounding the Biblical promise, "that your days may be multiplied," has it that premature death will visit the homes of those who fail to observe the law of the *mezuzah* meticulously; in the Middle Ages the literal-minded took the Talmud at its word, and seized upon the pun in the *Zohar* which split *mezuzot* into two words, *zaz mavet*, "death departs," as ample authority for their view that every room in a house should be guarded by a *mezuzah*.

In more recent times, when a community was wasted by plague, its leaders inspected the *mezuzot* on the doorposts to discover which was improperly written and therefore responsible for the visitation. The *mezuzah* has even come off the doorposts; during the World War many of the Jewish soldiers carried *mezuzot* in their pockets to deflect enemy bullets; it has today become a popular watch-charm among Jews.²⁰ I have even been told of a nun who dropped her purse one day, and among its contents, scattered on the ground, was—a *mezuzah*!

Non-Jewish recognition of the magic powers of the *mezuzah* is not, however, a modern phenomenon. According to Rashi, pagan rulers long ago suspected Jews of working magic against them when they affixed the little capsules to their doors. And, as we have seen, some Christian prelates in the Middle Ages were eager to place their castles, too, under the protection of the humble *mezuzah*.²¹

If we turn now to the *mezuzah* itself,²² the rules relating to its preparation, and its contents, we are confronted with striking evidence of the extent to which it had become an amulet, pure and simple, in the Middle Ages. The prescription of a high degree of cleanliness and ritual purity preparatory to writing it, while pertinent to its sacred character as an extract from Holy Writ, was none the less of the same nature as that which appertained to the amulet. It was to be transcribed preferably on deer parchment, and the hours which were best suited for its successful preparation correspond with the amulet table given in *Sefer Raziel*, as well as the astrological and angelic influences which were called into play at these times. According to a frequently quoted passage attributed to the Gaon Sherira (tenth century): "It is to be written only on Monday, in the fifth hour, over which the Sun and the angel Raphael preside, or on Thursday, in the fourth hour, presided over by Venus and the angel Anael." This passage, and many others, lumped together *mezuzot*, *tefillin*, and amulets—indicating that the three were generally regarded as possessing the same essential character.

Rashi stated that both *mezuzot* and amulets contained in common a special type of "large letters," which were peculiar to them. A later commentator suggested that these were in the ancient Hebrew script, but we have no text of an amulet or *mezuzah* containing such letters. Rashi may have meant that certain important elements of the *mezuzah* were written in larger characters than the

rest, which indeed we find to be the case with the magical names in many amulets, or he may have referred to the mystical figures, favored in both amulets and *mezuzot*.²³ What is more, we find included in the *mezuzah* verses which speak of God's protection, names of God and of angels (usually written in large letters), and various magical figures of the type mentioned. In brief—the *mezuzah* was actually transformed into an amulet, by embodying in it the features which we discovered to be characteristic of these charms.

We may discern a gradual process at work here. Originally, according to Jewish law, the *mezuzah* was to contain only the prescribed verses; the slightest change, whether of addition or omission, even of a single letter, invalidated the whole. Then, toward the end of the Geonic period the first move to introduce amulet features into the *mezuzah* was made. The face of the *mezuzah* was not invaded, but innovations were introduced upon the back of the parchment, concerning which there was no prohibition. The name Shaddai was inscribed there and a tiny window opened in the case so that the name was visible. This name was considered especially powerful to drive off demons, and by the method of *notarikon* it was read as "guardian of the habitations of Israel." The custom spread rapidly throughout the Jewish world and was adopted everywhere, without a word of censure from the authorities, even the mighty Maimonides agreeing that there was no harm in it, since the name was written on the outside of the parchment.²⁴

At the same time, or perhaps subsequent to this first act of daring, another name was added to the *mezuzah*, still on its reverse: the 14-letter name of God, *Kozu Bernochaz Kozu*, a surrogate for the words *Yhvh Elohenu Yhvh* of the *Shema*, with which the text of the *mezuzah* opens. The earliest reference to this practice was attributed in a fourteenth-century manuscript, *Sefer Asufot*, to the Gaon Sherira; the earliest literary occurrence of this name is in *Eshkol HaKofer*, by the Karaite, Judah Hadassi (middle of the twelfth century). Maimonides (in the same century) fails to speak of it, though he refers in detail to other features of the *mezuzah*. It is likely that he was not acquainted with the practice, or at least that it was not followed by southern Jewry, for Asher b. Jehiel (1250-1327), an eminent German scholar who spent the latter part of his life in Spain, stated specifically that it was observed in France and Germany, but not in Spain.²⁵ From this we may judge that there grew up in the Orient two distinct traditions; one, which pre-

scribed the addition of the name Shaddai alone, made its way to Southern Europe, where it was adopted; the second, adding both names, was introduced in the North (the northern codes all mention both names). This is not unlikely, for we know that the Kalonymides brought with them to the Rhineland a private fund of mystical tradition of Oriental origin, of which this may well have been a constituent. In time the northern practice invaded the South as well. The 14-letter name also possessed highly protective virtues; before leaving on a journey one would place his hand on the *mezuzah* and say, "In Thy name do I go forth," thus invoking its guardianship, for the Aramaic word employed equalled numerically the name *Kozu*.²⁶

The next step marked a decided advance. Despite the stringent prohibition against altering in any way the face of the *mezuzah*, and the active and justified opposition of most of the authorities, names, verses, and figures were added. The original impetus here too seems to have been Geonic, though the earliest reference to the change was again in Judah Hadassi's work. During the succeeding two centuries *mezuzah*-amulets achieved a wide popularity; several examples of them have been published by Aptowitzer. Some authorities deviated from the conventional opposition. R. Eliezer b. Samuel of Metz (after 1150 c.e.) voiced only half-hearted disapproval; the *Maḥzor Vitry* regarded the innovations not merely as private usage, or even customary (as distinguished from the legally required form), but as an integral part of the *mezuzah*; while the *Sefer HaPardes* made the additions obligatory, as important, even, as the *halachic* prescriptions.²⁷ But most of the rabbinic authors unanimously seconded Maimonides' vigorous and uncompromising condemnation of such tampering with the words of Scripture. By the fifteenth century this attitude had triumphed, and even the mystics and Kabbalists of first rank omitted all reference to the magical *mezuzah*, or expressly rejected it. From then on we hear no more of it.

Aptowitzer distinguishes three main types of *mezuzah*-amulets, Palestinian, French and German; the last two are so closely alike that we may regard them as essentially one, but the first is altogether distinct and different. It is interesting that though such *mezuzot* were known in Southern Europe and Northern Africa, we have no extant examples from these regions. Instead of describing these *mezuzot* in detail I give here the text of two of them from the

manuscript work *Sefer Gematriaot*,²⁸ which were unknown to Aptowitz, and which differ somewhat from those he published. They illustrate clearly the distinctive features of these charms.

I

- | | |
|--------------|-----------------------|
| פסחם | 1. יברך יהוה |
| אנקתם | 2. וישמך יאר |
| | 3. יהוה פניו |
| | 4. אליך ויהנך |
| | 5. ישא יהוה פניו וחרה |
| | 6. אליך וישם |
| | 7. לך שלום |
- (sic) **היוסנים** **פספסם**

On the back of this *mezuzah*, behind the word יהוה of line 3, appears the name שדי.

II

- | | |
|--------|--|
| יה | 1. שמע ישראל יהוה אלהינו יהוה אחד: ואהבת את |
| יה | 2. יהוה אלהיך בכל לבבך וכל נפשך וכל מאודך והיו |
| מכאל | 3. הדברים האלה אשר אנכי מצוך היום על לבבך: ושננתם. |
| יהוה | 4. לבניך ודברת בם כשבתך בביתך ובלכתך בדרך |
| גבריא | 5. ובשכבך ובקומך וקשרתם לאות על ירך והיו לטטפת |
| שמור | 6. בין עיניך וכתבתם על מזוזת ביתך ובשערך: • |
| ☆ | 7. והיה אם שמע תשמעו אל מצותי אשר אנכי |
| עזריאל | 8. מצוה אתכם היום לאהבה את יהוה אלהיכם ולעבדו |
| יהוה | 9. בכל לבבכם וכל נפשכם ונתתי מטר ארצכם כעתו |
| ☆ | 10. יורה ופלוקש ואפפת דגנך ותירשך ויצהרך ונתתי |
| צדקיא | 11. עשב כשדך לבהמתך ואכלת ושבעת השכרו לכם |
| ☆ | 12. פן יפתה לבבכם ופרתם ועבדתם אלהים אחרים |
| צלך | 13. והשתחיתם להם: וחרה אף יהוה בכם ועצר את |
| ☆ | 14. השמים ולא יהיה מטר והאדמה לא תתן את יבולה |

- | | |
|-------|---|
| שרפאל | 15. ואברתם מהרה מעל הארץ הטובה אשר יהוה נתן לכם |
| על | 16. ושמתם את דברי אלה על לבבכם ועל נפשכם וקשרתם |
| רפאל | 17. אתם לאות על ידכם והיו לטטפת בין עיניכם: ולאדמתם |
| יד | 18. אתם את בניכם לזכר בם כשבתך בביתך ובלכתך • |
| ☆ | 19. בדרך ובשכבך ובקומך: וכתבתם על מזוזת ביתך |
| ענאל | 20. ובשערך: למען ירבו ימיכם וימי בניכם על האדמה |
| ימינך | 21. אשר נשבע יהוה לאבותיכם לתת להם כימי השמים ••• |
| ☆ | 22. על הארץ ••• |



These names and figures are to be inscribed on the back of the *mezuzah*: **שדי** behind יהוה of line 7, **גבריא** behind **במוכמו כוון** at the bottom, and **צדקיא** in positions which the text does not clearly identify.

The first, a "Palestinian" *mezuzah*, contains the names of 14 and 22 letters (the former on the face instead of the back of the parchment), as well as six other names of God (El, Elohim, yhvH, Shaddai, Yah, Ehyeh), seven names of angels (Michael, Gabriel, 'Azriel, Zadkiel, Sarfiel, Raphael, 'Anael), and the Priestly Benediction. The second, of the "German" type, contains the same seven angel names and three more at the end (Uriel, Yofiel, Hasdiel), the name Yah, twice, the words of Ps. 121:5, the pentagram and other mystical signs, with Shaddai and the 14-letter Kozu, and more figures on the back.

It would take us too far afield to discuss in detail the minor differences between these versions and those of Aptowitz, which similarly vary from one another: These variations are apparently idiosyncratic, involving the choice and position of the angel-names and of the names of God, the particular magical figures used, the choice of pentagram or hexagram, etc. The general outline was fixed, the details were apparently subject to the whim and esthetic taste of the scribe. While these two *mezuzot* are less elaborate than some of the others, they do possess one striking distinction, namely the insertion of circles and once of a \emptyset in the body of the text. The

others were careful at least not to corrupt the Scriptural citation, in which respect they were more closely observant of the prohibition against tampering with the *mezuzah*.

*Sefer Gematriot*²⁹ offers also a detailed mystical apologia for the various unauthorized features, of this nature: the 22 lines correspond to the 22 letters of the alphabet, the ten pentagrams to the ten commandments, and their fifty points to the fifty "gates of understanding" and also to the fifty days between Passover and Pentecost (the "days of the giving of the Law"), the seven angel-names to the seven planets and the seven days of the week, the ten circles to the ten elements of the human body, blood, flesh, bones, etc., five of them to the five names of the soul, the three at the end to the three faculties, hearing, sight and speech, or to heaven, earth and atmosphere, etc. But this rigmarole didn't obscure the true significance of the innovations.

These features make it sufficiently evident that during the Middle Ages the *mezuzah* acquired all the trappings of the legitimate amulet, becoming one in actuality as well as by reputation. No wonder that Jews regarded it with such respect. No wonder that Gentiles envied them its possession.

THE WAR WITH THE SPIRITS

IT IS erroneous to assume that magic is practiced exclusively by professionals, or that it represents always a conscious, deliberate act. As Karl Goldmark once said, "Civilized people lose their religion easily, but rarely their superstitions." There is an anecdote of a well-known actress who, when asked by a zettetic reporter what was her favorite superstition, replied, "Thank Heaven, I have none!"—and unconsciously "knocked wood" as she spoke. How many of us still "knock wood" when we hear or utter a word of praise, without in the least being aware that we are repeating an age-old magical act whose purpose is to distract or frighten away the jealous spirits? Fear of the supernatural has been productive of the greatest number and variety of magical protective devices; and just as the fear has vividly colored man's consciousness of the universe, so these devices have become automatic responses to it. In this sense magic was, and still is, an integral pattern in the fabric of social usage, having influenced profoundly not alone folk-habits, but equally as much religious ceremonial and rite.

RELIGIOUS DEFENSES

The methods of warding off the spirits fell into three general categories: 1. to drive them away, or at least to render them powerless by the application of certain approved means; 2. to buy them off with gifts, to bribe them and thus conciliate them; 3. to deceive them by disguising their intended victims, or by pretending that the situation was other than it actually was. Each of these methods, and often two or all three of them combined, was known and employed by Jews and even found expression in special ceremonies which have become part and parcel of Jewish ritual.

The first category comprised by far the greatest number and variety of procedures. Foremost among these is the power of the

Maimondes' Ruling Against Altered Mezuzah Texts:
Mishneh Torah: Hilchot Mezuzah 5:4.

רמב"ם - הלכות מזוזה פרק ה

ד מנהג פשוט שכותבים על המזוזה מבחוץ כנגד הריוח שבין פרשה לפרשה שדי ואין בזה הפסד לפי שהוא מבחוץ, אבל אלו שכותבין מבפנים שמות המלאכים או שמות קדושים או פסוק או חותמות הרי הן בכלל מי שאין להם חלק לעולם הבא, שאלו הטפשים לא די להם שבטלו המצוה אלא שעשו מצוה גדולה שהיא יחוד השם של הקב"ה ואהבתו ועבודתו כאילו הוא קמיע של הניית עצמן כמו שעלה על לבם הסכל שזהו דבר המהנה בהבלי העולם.

It is a common custom to write [God's name,] *Shaddai*, on the outside of a mezuzah opposite the empty space left between the two passages. There is no difficulty in this, since [the addition is made] outside.

Those, however, who write the names of the angels, other sacred names, verses, or forms, on the inside [of a mezuzah] are among those who do not have a portion in the world to come. Not only do these fools nullify the mitzvah, but furthermore, they make from a great mitzvah [which reflects] the unity of the name of the Holy One, blessed be He, the love of Him, and the service of Him, a talisman for their own benefit. They, in their foolish conception, think that this will help them regarding the vanities of the world.

Touger, Eliyahu. *Maimonides Mishneh Torah: The Laws Governing Tefillin, Mezuzah, and Torah Scrolls and The Laws of Tzitzit*. New York: Moznaim Publishing, 1990.

Suggested Activity 8: Mezuzahs for you...

1. Car Mezuzot

All things Jewish.com

Jerusalem-gifts.com

JewishBazaar.com

Car Mezuzot

Slogans Selling Car Mezuzot:

“For Good Luck and Protection
Great gift for a new car - Excellent gift for a new driver!”

“Hang one in your car as a constant reminder of the higher things as you travel
life's highways.”

“This small symbol of security will be with you *Uvelechtech Ba'derech* 'When
you are upon your way'.”



Sources of quotations and pictures:
All things Jewish.com
Jerusalem-gifts.com
JewishBazaar.com

Suggested Activity 10: Hanukat Bayit

1. Hanukat Bayit from *On the Doorposts of Your House*.
On the Doorposts of Your House. Ed. Chaim Stern. New York: Central
Conference of American Rabbis, 1994.

Other Personal Occasions

Consecration of a House

☛ *For the ceremony of Consecration, a Mezuzah, a Bible, wine or grape juice, Challah, and salt are required. Members of the household and guests participate in the ritual.*

☛ *To affix a Mezuzah to a room (the house having already been consecrated) begin on page 141.*

In the spirit of our Jewish faith, we consecrate this house with prayers of thanksgiving and invoke upon it God's blessing.

שְׁמַע יִשְׂרָאֵל: יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ יְהוָה אֶחָד

Hear, O Israel: the Eternal One is our God,
the Eternal God alone!

בָּרוּךְ שֵׁם כְּבוֹד מַלְכוּתוֹ לְעוֹלָם וָעֶד

Blessed is God's glorious majesty for ever and ever!

☛ *Transliteration of the V'havta is on page 5.*

וְאַהֲבַתְּ אֶת יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ בְּכָל-לִבְבְּךָ וּבְכָל-נַפְשְׁךָ וּבְכָל-מְאֹדְךָ: וְהָיוּ
הַדְּבָרִים הָאֵלֶּה אֲשֶׁר אָנֹכִי מְצַוֶּה הַיּוֹם עֲלֶיךָ לְבַנְיֶיךָ וְשִׁנַּנְתָּם לְבְנֵיךָ
וְדִבַּרְתָּ בָּם בְּשִׁבְתְּךָ בְּבֵיתְךָ וּבְלִכְתֶּךָ בְּדֶרֶךְ וּבְשֹׁכְבְּךָ וּבְקוּמְךָ: וְקִשְׁרָתָם
לְאוֹת עַל-יָדְךָ וְהָיוּ לְטֹטְפֹת בֵּין עֵינֶיךָ: וְכָתַבְתָּם עַל-מְזוּזֹת בֵּיתְךָ
וּבְשַׁעְרֶיךָ:

You shall love your Eternal God with all your heart, with all your mind, with all your being. Set these words, which I command you this day, upon your heart. Teach them faithfully to your children; speak of them in your home and on your way, when you lie down and when you rise up. Bind them as a sign upon your hand; let them be a symbol before your eyes; inscribe them on the doorposts of your house, and on your gates.

למען תזכרו ועשיתם את כל מצותי והייתם קדשים לאלהיכם: אני יהוה אלהיכם אשר הוצאתי אתכם מארץ מצרים להיות לכם לאלהים. אני יהוה אלהיכם:

Be mindful of all My Mitzvot, and do them: so shall you consecrate yourselves to your God. I am your Eternal God who led you out of Egypt to be your God; I am your Eternal God.

Our homes have always been the dwelling place of the Jewish spirit. Our tables have been altars of faith and love. It is written: 'When words of Torah pass between us, the Divine Presence is in our midst.' Our doors have been open to the stranger and the needy. May this home we now consecrate keep alive the beauty of our heritage.

CHALLAH IS DIPPED IN SALT AND DISTRIBUTED

Ba-ruch a-ta Adonai,

Eh-lo-hei-nu meh-lech ha-o-lam,

ha-mo-tzi leh-chem min ha-a-retz.

ברוך אתה יי

אלהינו מלך העולם,

המוציא לחם מן הארץ.

We praise You, Eternal God, Sovereign of the universe, for You cause bread to come forth from the earth.

WINE OR GRAPE JUICE IS GIVEN TO EACH GUEST

☞ *Wine and grape juice are equally "fruit of the vine."*

Ba-ruch a-ta Adonai,

Eh-lo-hei-nu meh-lech ha-o-lam,

bo-rei p'ri ha-ga-fen.

ברוך אתה יי

אלהינו מלך העולם,

בורא פרי הגפן.

We praise You, Eternal God, Sovereign of the universe, Creator of the fruit of the vine.

THE OPEN BIBLE IS RAISED

The Torah has been our life; it has taught us how to live. May this home be a place for learning and doing. May the hearts of all who dwell here be filled with a love of Torah and its teachings.

*Ba-ruch a-ta Adonai,
Eh-lo-hei-nu meh-lech ha-o-lam,
a-sher ki-d'sha-nu b'mitz-vo-tav
v'tzi-va-nu la-a-sok b'di-v'rei To-rah.*

ברוך אתה יי
אלהינו מלך העולם,
אשר קדשנו במצותיו
וצונו לעסוק בדברי תורה.

We praise You, Eternal God, Sovereign of the universe: You hallow us with Your Mitzvot, and command us to immerse ourselves in Your teachings.



יהוה מי־יגור באֵהֶלֶךְ?
מי־ישכן בהר קדִשְׁךָ?
הולך תמים ופֵעֵל צְדָק,
ודבר אִמֶת בִּלְבָבו.
לא־רָגַל עַל־לִשְׁנוֹ,
לא־עָשָׂה לְרַעְהוּ רָעָה,
וחרפה לא־נָשָׂא עַל־קִרְבוֹ.
נִשְׁבַע לְהִרְעוֹ וְלֹא יִמִּיר,
כִּסְפוֹ לֹא־נָתַן בְּנִשְׁךְ,
וְשָׁחַד עַל־נֶקִי לֹא לָקַח.
עֲשֵׂה־אֱלֹהִים לֹא יִמוּט לְעוֹלָם.

Eternal God:

Who may abide in Your house?

Who may dwell in Your holy mountain?

Those who are upright; who do justly,
all whose hearts are true.

Who do not slander others, nor wrong them,
nor bring shame upon their kin.

Who give their word and, come whay may, do not retract it.

Who do not exploit others, who never take bribes.

Those who live in this way shall never be shaken.

[From Psalm 15]

☞ An additional Scriptural passage, such as First Kings 8:54-61, might be read here.



THE MEZUZAH IS RAISED

This ancient symbol speaks to us of our need to live by the words of the Eternal One. We affix the Mezuzah to the doorposts of this house with the hope that it will always remind us of our duties to one another as members of the Household of Israel. May the divine spirit fill this house—the spirit of love and kindness and consideration for all people.

*Ba-ruch a-ta Adonai,
Eh-lo-hei-nu meh-lech ha-o-lam,
a-sher ki-d'sha-nu b'mitz-vo-tav
v'tzi-va-nu lik-bo-a m'zu-zah.*

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יי
אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם,
אֲשֶׁר קִדְּשָׁנוּ בְּמִצְוֹתָיו
וְצִוָּנוּ לְקַבֹּעַ מְזוּזָה.

We praise You, Eternal God, Sovereign of the universe: You hallow us with Your Mitzvot, and command us to affix the Mezuzah.

☞ *The Mezuzah, its top inclining inward, is affixed to the upper part of the doorpost on the right, as one enters the house. If desired, a Mezuzah may be affixed to the right doorpost of the principal rooms.*

*Ba-ruch a-ta Adonai,
Eh-lo-hei-nu meh-lech ha-o-lam,
sheh-heh-cheh-ya-nu, v'ki-y'ma-nu,
v'higi-a-nu la-z'man ha-zeh.*

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יי
אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם,
שֶׁהֵחֵינּוּ וְקִיְּמָנוּ
וְהִגִּיעָנוּ לְזְמַן הַזֶּה.

☞ We praise You, Eternal God, Sovereign of the universe, for giving us life, for sustaining us, and for enabling us to reach this season.

THE PATH OF LIFE



אִם־יְהוָה לֹא יִבְנֶה בַּיִת, שׁוֹא עֲמָלָם בּוֹנֵי בּוֹ.

Unless the Eternal One builds the house,
its builders labor in vain.

[Psalm 127:1]

In this awareness we pray that our home be blessed by the sense of God's presence.

We offer thanksgiving for the promise of security and contentment this home represents, and express our resolve to make it a temple dedicated to godliness. Let it be filled with the beauty of holiness and the warmth of love. May the guest and stranger find within it welcome and friendship. So will it ever merit the praise: 'How lovely are your tents, O Jacob, your dwelling places, O Israel!'

For all who are assembled here, and for all who will enter these doors, we invoke God's blessing:

יְהוָה יִשְׁמְרֶ־צֵאתְךָ וּבּוֹאֶךָ מֵעַתָּה וְעַד־עוֹלָם.

May the Eternal One guard your going out and your coming in, now and always. Amen.

[Psalm 121:7]

Unit 2: Tallit

Resources

1. Encyclopaedia Judaica: Tallit

"Tallit." *Encyclopaedia Judaica: CD Rom Edition*. Judaica Multimedia, 1997.

2. Encyclopaedia Judaica: Tzitzit

"Tzitzit." *Encyclopaedia Judaica: CD Rom Edition*. Judaica Multimedia, 1997.

Encyclopaedia Judaica: Tallit

TALLIT (pl. *tallitot*; Yid. *tales*, pl. *talesim*), prayer shawl. Originally the word meant "gown" or "cloak." This was a rectangular mantle that looked like a blanket and was worn by men in ancient times. At the four corners of the *tallit* tassels were attached in fulfillment of the biblical commandment of *zizit* (Num. 15:38–41). The *tallit* was usually made either of wool or of linen (Men. 39b) and probably resembled the *abbayah* ("blanket") still worn by Bedouin for protection against the weather. The *tallit* made of finer quality was similar to the Roman *pallium* and was worn mostly by the wealthy and by distinguished rabbis and scholars (BB 98a). The length of the mantle was to be a handbreadth shorter than that of the garment under it (BB 57b). After the exile of the Jews from Erez Israel and their dispersion, they came to adopt the fashions of their gentile neighbors more readily. The *tallit* was discarded as a daily habit and it became a religious garment for prayer; hence its later meaning of prayer shawl.

The *tallit* is usually white and made either of wool, cotton, or silk, although Maimonides and Alfasi objected to the use of the latter. Strictly observant Jews prefer *tallitot* made of coarse half-bleached lamb's wool. In remembrance of the blue thread of the *zizit* (see *tekhelet*), most *tallitot* have several blue stripes woven into the white material (see Zohar, Num. 227a). Until recently, however, they only had black stripes.

Frequently the upper part of the *tallit* around the neck and on the shoulders has a special piece of cloth sewn with silver threads (called *atarah*, "diadem"), to mark the upper (i.e., the "collar") and the outer parts of the four-cornered prayer shawl. Some *tallitot* have the benediction, recited when putting on the *tallit*, woven into the *atarah*. Others, especially those made of silk, are often richly embroidered and some have the benediction woven into the entire cloth of the *tallit*. The minimum size of a *tallit* is that which would suffice to clothe a small child able to walk (Sh. Ar., OH 16:1).

The *tallit* is worn by males during the morning prayers (except on the Ninth of Av, when it is worn at the afternoon service), as well as during all Day of Atonement services. The *hazzan*, however, according to some rites, wears the *tallit* also during the afternoon and evening services (as does the reader from the Torah during the *Minhah* prayer on fast days). Before putting on the prayer shawl the following benediction is said: "Blessed art Thou, O Lord, our God, King of the universe, Who hast sanctified us by Thy commandments, and hast commanded us to wrap ourselves in the fringed garment." When the *tallit* is put on, the head is first covered with it and the four corners thrown over the left shoulder (a movement called *atifat Yishme'elim*, "after the manner of the Arabs"). After a short pause, the four corners are allowed to fall back into their original position: two are suspended on each side. On weekdays, the *tallit* is donned before putting on the *tefillin*. Among strictly observant Jews, it was the custom to put on *tallit* and *tefillin* at home and to walk in them to the synagogue (Isserles, to Sh. Ar., OH 25:2). They also pray with the *tallit* covering their head; to be enfolded by the *tallit* is regarded as being enveloped by the holiness of the commandments of the Torah, denoting a symbolic subjection to the Divine Will (see also RH 17b). Generally, however, people pray with the *tallit* resting on their shoulders only. The *kohanim*, however, cover their heads with the *tallit* during their recital of the Priestly Blessing. It is customary in the morning service to press the fringes to the eyes and to kiss them three times during the recital of the last section of the *Shema* (Num. 15:37–41) which deals with the commandment of *zizit* (Sh. Ar., OH 24:4).

The custom of wearing the *tallit* differs in many communities. In the Ashkenazi ritual, small children under *bar mitzvah* age dress in *tallitot* made according to their size, whereas in the Polish-*Sephardi* ritual only married men wear them (Kid. 29b). In most oriental rites, unmarried men wear *tallitot*.

In Reform synagogues, the *tallit* is part of the synagogue service garments of the rabbi and the cantor. For male congregants, the wearing of a small prayer shawl, resembling a scarf and worn around the neck, is optional. Those called to the reading from the Torah, however, always don a *tallit*. In some communities, it is customary for the bridegroom to dress in a *tallit* during the

huppah ceremony. It is likewise customary to bury male Jews in their *tallit* from which the fringes have been removed or torn (see Burial).

The *zizit* worn by men with their daily dress is known as *tallit katan* ("small *tallit*").

[Editorial Staff Encyclopaedia Judaica]

Encyclopaedia Judaica: CDROM Edition. Judaica Multimedia, 1997.

Encyclopaedia Judaica: Tzitzit

(Spelled zitzit in EJ)

ZIZIT (pl. *ziziyyot*; "fringes"), name of the tassels attached to the four corners of special (four-cornered) garments worn by men in fulfillment of the biblical commandment in Numbers 15:37–41 and Deuteronomy 22:12. It has been suggested that the *zizit* served as a talisman (amulet) or that it was instituted in order to distinguish between male and female garments which were very similar in biblical times. In the latter case it served as a protection against immoral conduct (an interpretation derived from Numbers 15:39). Talmudic literature invests the commandment of *zizit* with exalted symbolism. The rabbis regarded the *zizit* as a reminder to the Jew to observe the religious duties, giving it a function similar to that of the *mezuzah* on the doorposts and to the *tefillin* on the head and arm. The Talmud brings the parable how a person was saved from sensual sin because he wore fringes (Men. 44a).

The biblical commandment prescribing the entwining of a blue cord in the fringes is regarded as essential because blue, the color of the sky, was also supposed to be the color of the "throne of glory" (Men. 43b). Difficulties in obtaining the dyeing material for this purpose caused rabbinic authorities in the second century C.E. to waive this requirement.

In modern times, each *zizit* consists of one long and three short white threads which are passed through the holes in the four corners of the garment and folded so as to make eight threads. They are then fastened with a double knot. The long thread (called *shammash*) is wound around the other threads seven, eight, 11, and 13 times and the four joints are separated from one another by a double knot. The *zizit* thus consists of five double knots and eight threads (a total of 13). This number, together with the Hebrew numerical value of *zizit* (600), amounts to 613, the number of the biblical commandments of which the *zizit* are to remind the wearer (Num. 15:39). *Ziziyyot* of wool or linen are ritually fit for a *tallit* of whatever material. A silk or cotton *tallit*, however, should have *ziziyyot* of only the same fabric. The minimum length of the *zizit* threads should be four thumb lengths. If one of the *zizit* threads is torn, it is customary to replace the whole fringe. A person not wearing a four-cornered garment is exempt from the *mitzvah* of *zizit* since the religious duty of wearing *zizit* is not a personal one (*hovat gavra*). In order to fulfill this biblical commandment, however, pious Jews always wear a (*tallit katan*) "small four-cornered garment."

Women are exempt from the duty of *zizit* as the fulfillment of this commandment relates to a specific time and women are exempt from such obligations: *ziziyyot* have to be worn only during the day, based on the Bible verse "ye may look upon it" (Num. 15:39 which excludes the night).

It is customary to kiss the *ziziyyot* while reciting the last section of the *Shema* (Num. 15:37–41) in the morning service. The *ziziyyot* of the *tallit* in which males are buried are torn to make them ritually unfit.

[Editorial Staff Encyclopaedia Judaica]

Encyclopaedia Judaica: CDROM Edition. Judaica Multimedia, 1997.

Suggested Activity 1: A Reminder of God's Commandments

1. Numbers 15:37-40

2. Deuteronomy 22:12

3. Biblical Definitions of *G'dalim* and *Tzitzit*

Brown, F., S. Driver, and C. Briggs. *The Brown-Driver-Briggs Hebrew and English Lexicon*. Peabody: Hendrickson, 2001.

Numbers 15:37-40

ספר במדבר: טו:לז-מ

לֹא וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוָה אֶל־מֹשֶׁה לֵאמֹר: לַח דִּבֶּר אֶל־בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל וְאָמַרְתָּ אֲלֵהֶם
 וַעֲשׂוּ לָהֶם צִיצִית עַל־כַּנְפֵי בְגָדֵיהֶם לְדֹרֹתָם וְנָתַנּוּ עַל־צִיצִית הַכֶּנֶף פִּתְּלֵל
 תִּכְלֶת: לֹט וְהָיָה לָכֶם לְצִיצִית וּרְאִיתֶם אֹתוֹ וּזְכַרְתֶּם אֶת־כָּל־מִצְוֹת יְהוָה
 וַעֲשִׂיתֶם אֹתָם וְלֹא תִתּוּרוּ אַחֲרָי לְבַבְכֶם וְאַחֲרַי עֵינֵיכֶם אֲשֶׁר־אֲתֶם זֵנוּס
 אַחֲרֵיהֶם: מ לְמַעַן תִּזְכְּרוּ וַעֲשִׂיתֶם אֶת־כָּל־מִצְוֹתַי וְהֵייתֶם קְדוֹשִׁים
 לֵאלֹהֵיכֶם:

³⁷ The LORD said to Moses as follows: ³⁸ Speak to the Israelite people and instruct them to make for themselves fringes on the corners of their garments throughout the ages; let them attach a cord of blue to the fringe at each corner. ³⁹ That shall be your fringe; look at it and recall all the commandments of the LORD and observe them, so that you do not follow your heart and eyes in your lustful urge. ⁴⁰ Thus you shall be reminded to observe all My commandments and to be holy to your God.

Deuteronomy 22:12

ספר דברים: ביב

יב ובשעיר יִשְׁבְּנוּ הַחֲרִיטִים לְפָנִים וּבְנֵי עֵשׂוֹ יִירָשׁוּם וַיִּשְׁמִידוּם מִפְּנֵיהֶם
וַיִּשְׁבְּנוּ תַחְתָּם כְּאֲשֶׁר עָשָׂה יִשְׂרָאֵל לְאֶרֶץ יִרְשָׁתוֹ אֲשֶׁר־נָתַן יְהוָה לָהֶם:

¹²You shall make tassels on the four corners of the garment with which you cover yourself.

A
HEBREW AND ENGLISH LEXICON
OF THE
OLD TESTAMENT

WITH AN APPENDIX CONTAINING THE BIBLICAL ARAMAIC

BASED ON THE LEXICON OF

WILLIAM GESENIUS

AS TRANSLATED BY

EDWARD ROBINSON

LATE PROFESSOR IN THE UNION THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY, NEW YORK

*Edited with constant reference to the Thesaurus of Gesenius as completed by E. Rödiger, and
with authorized use of the latest German editions of Gesenius's
Handwörterbuch über das Alte Testament*

BY

FRANCIS BROWN, D.D., D.LITT.

DAVENPORT PROFESSOR OF HEBREW AND THE COGNATE LANGUAGES IN THE UNION THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

WITH THE CO-OPERATION OF

S. R. DRIVER, D.D., LITT.D.

REGIUS PROFESSOR OF HEBREW, AND CANON OF
CHRIST CHURCH, OXFORD

AND

CHARLES A. BRIGGS, D.D., D.LITT.

EDWARD ROBINSON PROFESSOR OF BIBLICAL THEOLOGY
IN THE UNION THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

OXFORD
AT THE CLARENDON PRESS

assigned to Manasseh I K 4¹² 9¹⁵ 2 K 9²⁷ 23^{29,30}; מ' מלך Jos 12²¹; מ' ישבי מ' Jos 17¹¹ = Ju 1²⁷; מ' מ' Ju 5¹⁹; מ' בקעת מ' Zc 12¹¹ 2 Ch 35²²;—mod. *Lejjûn* (= *Legio*) Rob BR II. 529 f. 364 Bd Pal 229.

גרה (*cut, cut or tear away*?).

† גרה] n.f. bank of river (cf. Ar. جَدَّة, جَدَّة id., Aram. גרה, wall), Jos 3¹⁵ 4¹⁸ I Ch 12¹⁶ Is 8⁷.

[גריה] only pl. sf. I Ch 12¹⁶ Kt, v. foregoing.

† גרי n.m. Gn 27.9 kid (NH id., Ar. جَدَى, Ph. גרא, Aram. גרה, מ; cf. As. *gadû, gadiia*, Meissner ZA IV. 1839, 286 Zehnpfund BAS I. 505)—גרי Gn 38¹⁷ + 12 t. (abs. Gn 38²³ +, & (generally) cstr. Gn 38¹⁷ +); pl. גריים I S 10³, cstr. גריי Gn 27^{9,16};—kid, almost always ג עינים Gn 27^{9,16} 38^{17,20} Ju 6¹⁹ 13^{15,19} 15¹ I S 16²⁰; abs. Ex 23¹⁹ 34²⁶ Dt 14²¹ (all I S 15¹⁹ 15¹ I S 16²⁰; abs. Ex 23¹⁹ 34²⁶ Dt 14²¹ (all Ju 14⁶; abs. pl. I S 10³;—cf. also גרי עין.

† גריה] n.f. only pl. kids sf. גריה Ct 1⁸ (|| הצאן ||).

† גדל vb. grow up, become great (Aram. גדל (Ithpe.), twist, twine, Ar. جَدَل twist a cord, make firm, strong, become strong, so NH)—

Qal Pf. גדל etc. Gn 38¹⁴ + 14 t.; sf. גדלי Jb 31¹⁸; Impf. גדל etc. ψ 35²⁷ + 34 t.;—1. grow up, a. child Gn 21^{8,20} 25²⁷ 38^{11,14} Ex 2^{10,11} (JE) Ju 11² 13² Ru 1¹³ I S 2²¹ 3¹⁹ I K 12^{8,10} (= 2 Ch 10^{8,10}) 2 K 4¹⁸; b. lamb 2 S 12³. 2. become great, a. in extent, wealthy Gn 26^{13,13} 41⁴⁰ (JE) Je 5²⁷; b. in value, גדלה נפש בעיני, prized by I S 26^{24,24}; c. in intensity, grief Jb 2¹³, mourning Zc 12¹¹, punishment La 4⁸, trespass Ezr 9⁶; d. in sound, loud cry Gn 19¹⁹ (J); e. in importance, of a king Ec 2⁹ I K 10²³ (= 2 Ch 9²²) Dn 8^{9,10} (under fig. of horn), chief Gn 24³⁵ 48¹⁹ (J), Messiah Mi 5³, Jerusalem Ez 16⁷; f. of God 2 S 7²² ψ 104⁴, his works ψ 92⁶, his power Nu 14¹⁷ (J). 3. to be magnified, a. house of David Zc 12⁷; b. Yahweh ψ 35²⁷ 40¹⁷ 70⁵ Mal 1⁵, his name 2 S 7²⁶ (= I Ch 17²⁴). Pi. Pf. גדל Jos 4¹⁴ Est 3¹; גדל Is 49²¹; גדלה Is 51¹⁸, etc.; Impf. גדל Is 44¹⁴ + 8 t.; Imv. גדלי ψ 34⁴; Inf. גדל Nu 6⁵ + 3 t.; Pt. מגדלים 2 K 10⁶ (מגדלות) Ct 5¹⁵ © Hi Bô De);—1. cause to grow, e.g. hair Nu 6⁵ (P), plants Jon 4¹⁰ Is 44¹⁴ Ez 31⁴ Ct 5¹³; bring up children 2 K 10⁶ Is 1² 23⁴ 49²¹ 51¹⁸ Dn 1⁶ Ho 9¹². 2. make great, powerful Gn 12² (J) Jos 3⁷ 4¹⁴ (D) I K 1^{37,47} I Ch 29^{12,25} 2 Ch

1¹ Est 3¹ 5¹¹ 10². 3. magnify, a. man Jb 7¹⁷; b. God ψ 34⁴ w. ל, 69³¹. Pu. Pt. pl. מגדלים brought up ψ 144¹². Hiph. Pf. הגדיל ψ 41¹⁰ +, etc.; Impf. הגדיל Is 42²¹ Dn 8²⁵, etc.; Inf. הגדיל I Ch 22⁹ Am 8⁵; Pt. מגדיל ψ 18⁵¹ (= מגדיל in || 2 S 22⁵¹); pl. מגדילים ψ 35²⁶;—1. make great, e.g. shekel Am 8⁵, pile for fire Ez 24⁹, joy Is 9², counsel Is 28²⁹, wisdom Ec 1¹⁶, works Ec 2⁴, house of Yahweh I Ch 22⁵; the heel ψ 41¹⁰ either lifted high (Ges) or (cf. De Now) gave me insidiously a great fall; cf. פיקר ג Ob 1² i.e. utter proud words (v. רחב Hiph.). 2. magnify, salvation ψ 18⁵¹, * mercy Gn 19¹⁹ (J), teaching Is 42²¹, the word of Yahweh ψ 138². 3. do great things לעשות הגדיל, a. in a good sense, of God ψ 126³ Jo 2²¹, also pregn. without Inf. I S 12²⁴. b. in bad sense, of 'the northern one' Jo 2²⁰, also pregn. without Inf. La 1⁹ Zp 2^{8,10} Dn 8^{4,8,11,25}; with על, of enemies ψ 35²⁶ 38¹⁷ 55¹³ Jb 19⁵ Je 48^{26,42}; Ez 35¹³ of speaking בפיכם גדל ג. c. also, with Inf. implied, wept greatly I S 20¹¹.

Hithp. Pf. הגדילתי Ez 38²³ I will magnify myself, shew myself great and powerful (of God); Impf. יתגדל, with על in a bad sense, magnify oneself against Is 10¹⁵ Dn 11³⁶; יתגדל Dn 11³⁷.

† גדל pt.m. or adj. verbal. becoming great, growing up, Gn 26¹³ (J) I S 2²⁶ (cf. Dr) 2 Ch 17¹²; also great, pl. cstr. גדלי בשר Ez 16²⁶ great of flesh.

† גדל n.m. greatness—Dt 32³ + 5 t.; sf. גדלו Dt 5²¹ + 5 t.; גדלו ψ 150¹¹;—1. greatness, magnitude, tree Ez 31⁷, arm of God ψ 79¹¹, mercy of God Nu 14¹⁹. 2. magnificence, a. king Ez 31^{2,18}; b. God Dt 3²⁴ 5²¹ 9²⁶ 11² 32³ ψ 150². 3. in a bad sense, גדל לבב = pride, insolence of heart Is 9⁸ 10¹².

† גדלים n.[m.]pl. twisted threads (NH גדיל, Bab. gidlu, cord on which onions were strung, a string of onions, Zehnpfund BAS I. 511; Aram. גדילא, גדילא thread, cord, rope, also plaited locks, גדילא id.)—1. tassels Dt 22¹² on border of garment (|| ציצית Nu 15^{38,39}). 2. festoons, on capitals of columns I K 7¹⁷.

גדול adj. great—ג Gn 4¹³ + 279 t.; גדול Dt 26⁸ + 22 t.; cstr. גדול Ez 17^{3,7} גדול Ex 15^{16*} Je 32¹⁹, גדול Pr 19¹⁹, גדול ψ 145⁵ Na 1³; sf. גדולם גדולם Je 6¹³ + 2 t.; pl. גדולים Ex 7⁴ + 11 t., גדולים Gn 12¹⁷ + 22 t.; cstr. גדולי 2 K 10⁶; sf. גדוליו 2 K 10¹¹ Jon 3⁷; גדוליה Na 3¹⁰; f. גדוליה Nu 22¹⁸ + 96 t.; גדולה Gn 15¹² + 31 t.; pl. גדולות Neq 26 12³¹, גדולות

Canaan Gn 10¹⁵ = 1 Ch 1¹³; northern limit of Canaanite Gn 10¹⁹, cf. 49¹³; defined as רְפָה (אֲלֵהֵי צ'), Jos 11⁸ (so 19²⁸ infr.); also Ju 1³¹ 10⁶ (אֲלֵהֵי צ'), 18²⁸ 1 K 17⁹; named with Tyre Jos 19²⁸ (cf. v²⁹), 2 S 24⁶ (cf. v⁷), Is 23^{2,4} and בְּתוּלַת בְּתַרְצָא (cf. v⁵, etc.), Je 25²² 27³ 47⁴ Ez 27⁸ 28^{21,22} (cf. v^{2,12}), Zc 9² Jo 4⁴.—Vid. Pietsch^{Phönlz. 64 ff.} Prutz^{Aus Phönicien (1876). 98 ff.} Rob^{BR II. 478 ff.} de Luynes^{Voyage à la Mer Morte I. 18 ff., and Pl. v. 21.} Bd^{Pal 3 (1898), 513 ff.}

† צִירְנִי **adj. gent.** of foregoing;—צ' Ju 3³ Ez 32³⁰; elsewhere pl. צִירְנִים Dt 3⁹ +, צִירְנִים Ju 10¹², 18⁷ + 3 t.; fpl. צִירְנֵית 1 K 11¹;—as subst. = Sidonians, coll. c. art. Ez 32³⁰ Ju 3³; in earlier lit. appar. = Phoenicians Dt 3⁹ Jos 13^{4,6} Ju 3³ 10¹² 18^{7,7} 1 K 5²⁰ (= Tyre v¹⁵), 16³¹ (if, [Jos^{Ant. VIII. 13, 1}] Ethb. was king of Tyre also), Ez 32³⁰; also צ' עֲשֵׂתָרֶת אֲלֵהֵי צ' 1 K 11^{5,33}, cf. 2 K 23¹³; named with Tyrians 1 Ch 22⁴ Ezr 3⁷.

צִירָה, צוּרָה (√ of foll.; Ar. ^ص be parched, so Aram. צִירָה, צִירָה (not צ), צִירָה (chiefly in Lexx)).

† צִירָה **n.f.** dryness, drought;—abs. צ' Ho 2⁵ +; pl. צִירָתֵי ψ 105⁴¹;—drought Jb 24¹⁹ (|| חֹם); elsewh. of land (oft. || עֲרֵבָה, מְדִבְרָה, etc.): צִירָה land of drought, desert Ho 2⁵ (sim.), Je 2⁶ 50¹² (fig.), 51⁴³ Is 41¹⁸ 53² (in sim.), ψ 107³⁵; + צִירָה Ez 19¹³ (fig.), Jo 2²⁰, + צִירָה ψ 63² (fig.); צ' = desert Is 35¹ Zp 2¹³ Jb 30³ ψ 78¹⁷; pl. 105⁴¹.

† צִירָה **n.[m.]** dryness, parched ground (on format. v. Lag^{BN 204});—בְּצִירָה Is 25⁵, בְּצִירָה 2² (|| אֶרֶץ עֵבָרָה || both in sim.).

† צִירָה **n.pr.loc.** Σ(ε)ιωον; Συριών, Zion (Syr. ¹⁵⁴ צִירָה, older form, acc. to Lag^{BN 84, cf. 198});—צ' 2 S 5⁷ +; צִירָה Je 4⁶;—stronghold (of Jebusites), captured by David, and made his residence 2 S 5⁷ = 1 Ch 11⁵ (both + הַר הַיְהוָה), on S. part of E. hill of Jerusalem, distinct from site of temple 1 K 8¹ = 2 Ch 5² (both צ' הַיְהוָה), not elsewh. in narrative, but often in poets and proph.: as name of Jerus., from political point of view (sts. = inhabitants), Am 6⁷ (|| הַר-שִׁמְרוֹן ||), || ירוּשָׁלַם Mi 3^{10,12} = Je 26¹⁸, Is 4³ 30¹⁹ 40⁹ 41²⁷ 52¹ 62¹ 64⁹ Zp 3¹⁶ Zc 1^{14,17} ψ 51²⁰ and (בְּתַרְצָא) Is 52² Mi 4⁸ (|| בְּתַרְצָא ||), La 2¹³ (|| id. ||), also (יוֹשְׁבֵי צ') Je 51³⁵; = Jerus. also Is 14²² 33⁵ +, so esp. in phr. בְּנוֹת צ' Is 16¹⁷ 4⁴ Ct 3¹¹, בְּנֵי צ' La 4² Jo 2²³ ψ 149² (|| יִשְׂרָאֵל ||), cf. Zc 9¹³, אֲחַת-בְּנֵיהֶן Is 66⁸, and even הַר-צ' 2 K 19³¹ = Is 37³² (both || ירוּשָׁה ||), Is 29⁸ (|| הַר אֲרִיאל ||), Ob 17²¹ ψ 48¹² (|| בְּנוֹת צ' ||), 125¹; so also הַר-בֵּית צ' Is 16¹ and 10³² (יהוּדָה);

Qr (Kt בית ירוּשָׁה || בְּבַעַת-ירוּשָׁה); cf. מְרוֹם-צ' Je 31¹²; in foll. הַר-צ' might refer to temple-hill Is 10¹² (+ ירוּשָׁה), 31⁴ (+ גְּבַעְתָּהּ = ירוּשָׁה v⁵), La 5¹⁸ Jo 3⁵ (+ ירוּשָׁה); specif. of Jerus. as abode of ' and place of his worship Am 1² Is 31⁹ Zc 8⁵ Mi 4² = Is 2³, Jo 4¹⁶ ψ 102²² 135²¹ 147¹² (all || ירוּשָׁה ||), 76³ (|| יְשָׁלֵם ||); partic. of sanctuary 20³ (|| קְדֵשׁ ||), 14⁷ = 53⁷ +; of Jerus. הַר-צ' ψ 48³ (|| קְרִיַת מְלָךְ ||), 78⁶⁸ (|| יְשֻׁבֵי יְהוּדָה ||), Is 24²³ (|| ירוּשָׁה ||), etc.; צ' הַר in same sense ψ 133³; particularly of sanctuary Is 4⁵ and (הַר-קְדֵשׁ) Jo 2¹ 4¹⁷; הַר-צ' ψ 2⁵ is seat of king.—Vid. also בְּתַרְצָא, הַר-צ', יְשֻׁבֵי הַר, בֵּית הַר, יְשֻׁבֵי צ'.

צוּרָה v. צִירָה. צִירָה v. צִירָה.

† צִירְהָא **n.pr.m.** an overseer of Nethinim Ne 11²¹, who are called בְּנֵי צִירְהָא Ezr 2⁴³ = בְּנֵי צִירְהָא Ne 7⁴⁶; Σηα, Σιααυ, Σιαλα, Σουλατ, etc.

צִירָה v. I, II. צִירָה **n.pr.loc.** v. צִירָה.

צִירָה v. צִירָה. צִירָה v. צִירָה.

צִירָה v. II. צִירָה. צִירָה v. I. [צִירָה].

† II. צִירָה **n.[m.]** meaning dubious; only in Je 48⁹ usu. (after AW Ra Ki al.) wings (coll.) (cf. Aram. צִירָה wing, fin, Thes Gf al.);* cf. Perles^{Anal. 46}, who reads נוֹצִיָּה (wing-) feathers (as in Aram.); Ⓜ σσημια, whence Gie sign-post, rdg. צִירָה, —or Ⓜ Ⓜ, —(indicating flight).

† III. צִירָה **n.pr.loc.** in מְעֵלָה הַצ' 2 Ch 20¹⁶; perh. radical, cf. Wady Hasāšā, and plateau Hasāšā, N. of Engedi, Buhl^{Geogr. 97}; Ⓜ Ασαε, Ⓜ Li τῆς ἐξέοχης Ασισα.

† צִירָה **n.f.** tassel, lock (√ dub.; NH id., so צִירָה, Syr. ¹⁵⁴ צִירָה; cf. Ar. ¹⁵⁴ צִירָה hair on forehead);—צ' abs. Nu 15^{38,39} tassel on flowing ends (בְּנֵי) of garments, cstr. הַבְּנֵי צ' v³⁸ (v. Kennedy^{Hast. DE II. 69, FRINGS}); Ez 8³ lock of hair on forehead.

צִירָה v. צִירָה.

I. צִירָה (√ of foll.; cf. ¹⁵⁴ צִירָה become, attain to, go; perh. Sab. (Min.) צִירָה (cause to become), form Hom^{Christ. 126}); on Hithp. Jos 9⁴ v. [צִירָה] sub II. צִירָה.

† II. צִירָה **n.m.** Pr 25¹³ envoy, messenger;—צ' abs. Je 49¹⁴ +, cstr. Pr 13¹⁷; pl. צִירָה Is 18²; sf. צִירָה 57⁹;—envoy, from Cush Is 18², from apostate Isr. 57⁹; from ' Je 49¹⁴ = Ob¹; messenger in gen. צִירָה אֲמַנִּים Pr 13¹⁷, צִירָה אֲמַנִּים 25¹³.—צִירָה v. IV. צִירָה.

Suggested Activity 2: From Priestly Robes to a Kingdom of Priests

1. Exodus 28
2. Exodus 19:6
3. Reuven Hammer: Garments of Prayer as Priestly Dress
Hammer, Reuven. *Entering Jewish Prayer*. New York: Schocken Books, 1994, 250.
4. Jacob Milgrom's "The Tassels 'Tsitsit'"
Milgrom, Jacob. *The JPS Torah Commentary: Numbers*. Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1990, 410-414.

Exodus 28

ספר שמות: כח

א וְאֶתְּהָה הַקָּרֵב אֵלַיִךְ אֶת־אֶהְרֹן אַחִיךָ וְאֶת־בָּנָיו אִתּוֹ מִתּוֹךְ בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל לְכַהֲנוֹ לִי אֶהְרֹן נָדָב וְאָבִיהוּא אֶלְעָזָר וְאִיתָמָר בְּנֵי אֶהְרֹן: ב וְעָשִׂיתָ בְּגָדֵי־קֹדֶשׁ לְאֶהְרֹן אַחִיךָ לְכַבֹּד וּלְתַפְאֶרֶת: ג וְאֶתְּהָה תִּדְבֹר אֶל־כָּל־חַכְמֵי־לֵב אֲשֶׁר מִלְּאֲתֵינוּ רוּחַ חֲכָמָה וְעָשׂוּ אֶת־בְּגָדֵי אֶהְרֹן לְקֹדֶשׁוֹ לְכַהֲנוֹ־לִי: ד וְאֵלֶּה הַבְּגָדִים אֲשֶׁר יַעֲשׂוּ חֹשֶׁן וְאַפֹּדִי וּמַעֲלִיל וְכַתְּנֹת תִּשְׁבֹּץ מִצְנֻפֹת וְאַבְנֵט וְעָשׂוּ בְּגָדֵי־קֹדֶשׁ לְאֶהְרֹן אַחִיךָ וּלְבָנָיו לְכַהֲנוֹ־לִי: ה וְהֵם יִקְחוּ אֶת־הַזָּהָב וְאֶת־הַתְּכֵלֶת וְאֶת־הָאַרְגָּמָן וְאֶת־תּוֹלַעַת הַשָּׁנִי וְאֶת־הַשֵּׁשׁ: ו וְעָשׂוּ אֶת־הָאַפֹּדִי זָהָב תְּכֵלֶת וְאַרְגָּמָן תּוֹלַעַת שָׁנִי וְשֵׁשׁ מְשֻׁזָּר מַעֲשֵׂה חֹשֶׁב: ז שְׁתֵּי כַתְּפֹת חִבְרֹת יִהְיֶה־לּוֹ אֶל־שְׁנֵי קְצוֹתָיו וְחִבְרָ: ח וְחֹשֶׁב אֶפְדָּתוֹ אֲשֶׁר עָלָיו כַּמַּעֲשֵׂהוּ מִמֶּנּוּ יִהְיֶה זָהָב תְּכֵלֶת וְאַרְגָּמָן וְתּוֹלַעַת שָׁנִי וְשֵׁשׁ מְשֻׁזָּר: ט וְלִקְחוּ אֶת־שְׁתֵּי אַבְנֵי־שֹהַם וּפְתַחְתָּ עֲלֵיהֶם שְׁמוֹת בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל: י שֵׁשֶׁה מְשֻׁמֹתֶם עַל הָאֲבֹן הָאֶחָת וְאֶת־שְׁמוֹת הַשֵּׁשֶׁה הַנּוֹתָרִים עַל־הָאֲבֹן הַשֵּׁנִית כְּתוֹלְדֹתֶם: יא מַעֲשֵׂה חֹרֵשׁ אֲבֹן פְּתוּחֵי חוֹתֶם תִּפְתַּח אֶת־שְׁתֵּי הָאֲבָנִים עַל־שְׁמוֹת בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל מִסִּבַּת מִשְׁבָּצוֹת זָהָב תַּעֲשֶׂה אֹתָם: יב וְשִׁמְתָּ אֶת־שְׁתֵּי הָאֲבָנִים עַל כַּתְּפֹת הָאַפֹּדִי אַבְנֵי זָכָרֹן לְבָנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל וְנָשָׂא אֶהְרֹן אֶת־שְׁמוֹתֶם לִפְנֵי יְהוָה עַל־שְׁתֵּי כַתְּפָיו לְזִכְרוֹן: יג וְעָשִׂיתָ מִשְׁבָּצַת זָהָב: יד וְשְׁתֵּי שְׂרָשְׁרוֹת זָהָב טְהוֹר מְגַבְּלוֹת תַּעֲשֶׂה אֹתָם מַעֲשֵׂה עֵבֶת וְנִתְּתָה אֶת־שְׂרָשְׁרוֹת הָעֵבֶתֹת עַל־הַמִּשְׁבָּצַת: טו וְעָשִׂיתָ חֹשֶׁן מִשְׁפָּט מַעֲשֵׂה חֹשֶׁב כַּמַּעֲשֵׂה אֶפֶדִי תַעֲשֶׂנוּ זָהָב תְּכֵלֶת וְאַרְגָּמָן וְתּוֹלַעַת שָׁנִי וְשֵׁשׁ מְשֻׁזָּר תַּעֲשֶׂה אֹתוֹ: טז רְבוּעַ יִהְיֶה כְּפוֹל זֶרֶת אַרְכּוֹ וְזֶרֶת רַחְבּוֹ: יז וּמִלְּאֵת בּוֹ מִלְּאֵת אֲבֹן אַרְבָּעָה טוּרִים אֲבֹן טוּר אָדָם פֶּטָדָה וּבְרָקֶת הַטּוּר הָאֶחָד: יח וְהַטּוּר הַשֵּׁנִי נֶפֶדֶ סַפִּיר וְיָהֳלָם: יט וְהַטּוּר הַשְּׁלִישִׁי לָשֵׁם שָׁבוּ וְאַחֲלָמָה: כ וְהַטּוּר הָרְבִיעִי תְּרִשִׁישׁ וְשֹהַם וַיִּשְׁפָּה מִשְׁבָּצִים זָהָב יִהְיוּ בְּמִלּוֹאֹתָם: כא וְהָאֲבָנִים תִּהְיֶינָּה עַל־שְׁמוֹת בְּנֵי־יִשְׂרָאֵל שְׁתֵּים עָשָׂרָה עַל־שְׁמוֹתֶם פְּתוּחֵי חוֹתֶם אִישׁ עַל־שְׁמוֹ תִּהְיֶינָּה לְשְׁנֵי עֶשֶׂר שָׁבֵט: כב וְעָשִׂיתָ עַל־הַחֹשֶׁן שְׂרָשֹׁת גְּבֻלוֹת מַעֲשֵׂה עֵבֶת זָהָב טְהוֹר: כג וְעָשִׂיתָ עַל־הַחֹשֶׁן שְׁתֵּי טְבָעוֹת זָהָב וְנִתְּתָ אֶת־שְׁתֵּי הַטְּבָעוֹת עַל־שְׁנֵי קְצוֹת הַחֹשֶׁן: כד וְנִתְּתָה אֶת־שְׁתֵּי עֵבֶתֹת הַזָּהָב עַל־שְׁתֵּי הַטְּבָעוֹת אֶל־קְצוֹת הַחֹשֶׁן: כה וְאֵת שְׁתֵּי קְצוֹת שְׁתֵּי הָעֵבֶתֹת תִּתֵּן עַל־שְׁתֵּי הַמִּשְׁבָּצוֹת וְנִתְּתָה עַל־כַּתְּפֹת הָאַפֹּדִי אֶל־מוֹל פָּנָיו: כו וְעָשִׂיתָ שְׁתֵּי טְבָעוֹת זָהָב וְשִׁמְתָ אֹתָם עַל־שְׁנֵי קְצוֹת הַחֹשֶׁן עַל־שְׁפָתוֹ אֲשֶׁר אֶל־עֵבֶר הָאַפֹּדִי בֵּיתָה:

כּוּ וְעָשִׂיתָ שְׂתֵי טַבְעוֹת זָהָב וְנָתַתָּה אֹתָם עַל־שְׁתֵּי כַתְּפוֹת
 הָאֶפֶוד מִלְמַטָּה מִמּוֹל פְּנֵיו לְעִמַּת מַחְבְּרָתוֹ מִמַּעַל לְחֹשֶׁב הָאֶפֶוד:
 כַּח וַיִּרְכְּסוּ אֶת־הַחֹשֶׁן מִטַּבְעוֹתָיו אֶל־טַבְעַת הָאֶפֶוד בְּפִתִּיל תְּכֵלֶת לְהִיּוֹת
 עַל־חֹשֶׁב הָאֶפֶוד וְלֹא־יִזַּח הַחֹשֶׁן מֵעַל הָאֶפֶוד: כֵּט וְנָשָׂא אֶהְרֹן
 אֶת־שְׂמוֹת בְּנֵי־יִשְׂרָאֵל בְּחֹשֶׁן הַמִּשְׁפָּט עַל־לְבוֹ בָּבֹאוּ אֶל־הַקֹּדֶשׁ לְזַכְּרֹן
 לִפְנֵי־יְהוָה תָּמִיד: ל וְנָתַתָּ אֶל־חֹשֶׁן הַמִּשְׁפָּט אֶת־הָאוּרִים וְאֶת־הַתְּמִיּוֹם
 וְהָיוּ עַל־לֵב אֶהְרֹן בָּבֹאוּ לִפְנֵי יְהוָה וְנָשָׂא אֶהְרֹן אֶת־מִשְׁפָּט בְּנֵי־יִשְׂרָאֵל
 עַל־לְבוֹ לִפְנֵי יְהוָה תָּמִיד: לֹא וְעָשִׂיתָ אֶת־מַעֲוֵל הָאֶפֶוד כָּלִיל תְּכֵלֶת:
 לִב וְהָיָה פִּירְאֵשׁוֹ בְּתוֹכוֹ שָׁפָּה יְהִיָּה לִפְּיוֹ סָבִיב מַעֲשֵׂה אֹרֶג כַּפֵּי תַחְרָא
 יְהִיָּה־לוֹ לֹא יִקְרָע: לֵג וְעָשִׂיתָ עַל־שׁוּלְיוֹ רִמְלֵי תְּכֵלֶת וְאַרְגָּמָן וְתוֹלַעַת שָׁנִי
 עַל־שׁוּלְיוֹ סָבִיב וּפְעָמָנִי זָהָב בְּתוֹכָם סָבִיב: לֵד פְּעָמָן זָהָב וְרִמּוֹן פְּעָמָן
 זָהָב וְרִמּוֹן עַל־שׁוּלְיֵי הַמַּעֲוֵל סָבִיב: לֵה וְהָיָה עַל־אֶהְרֹן לְשָׂרֵת וְנִשְׁמַע
 קוֹלוֹ בָּבֹאוּ אֶל־הַקֹּדֶשׁ לִפְנֵי יְהוָה וּבְצִאתוֹ וְלֹא יָמוּת: לוּ וְעָשִׂיתָ צִיץ
 זָהָב טָהוֹר וּפְתִיחַתָּ עָלָיו פְּתוּחֵי חוֹתָם קֹדֶשׁ לִיהוָה: לז וְשָׂמַתָּ אֹתוֹ
 שָׂרָאֵל עַל־פְּתִיל תְּכֵלֶת וְהָיָה עַל־הַמְּצַנְפֹת אֶל־מּוֹל פְּנֵי־הַמְּצַנְפֹת יְהִיָּה: לח וְהָיָה
 עַל־מִצַּח אֶהְרֹן וְנָשָׂא אֶהְרֹן אֶת־עֵוֹן הַקֹּדְשִׁים אֲשֶׁר יִקְדִּישׁוּ בְּנֵי י
 לְכָל־מִתְּנַת קֹדְשֵׁיהֶם וְהָיָה עַל־מִצְחוֹ תָּמִיד לְרָצוֹן לָהֶם לִפְנֵי יְהוָה:
 לט וְשַׁבְּצָתָּ הַכְּתָנִת שֵׁשׁ וְעָשִׂיתָ מְצַנְפֹת שֵׁשׁ וְאַבְנֵי תַעֲשֶׂה מַעֲשֵׂה רִקְמָה:
 מ וְלִבְנֵי אֶהְרֹן תַּעֲשֶׂה כְּתָנִת וְעָשִׂיתָ לָהֶם אַבְנֵיטִים וּמַגְבְּעוֹת תַּעֲשֶׂה לָהֶם
 לְכַבֹּד וּלְתַפְאֵרֶת: מֵא וְהַלְבַּשְׁתָּ אֹתָם אֶת־אֶהְרֹן אַחִיד וְאֶת־בָּנָיו אֹתוֹ
 וּמִשְׁחַתָּ אֹתָם וּמִלַּאתָ אֶת־יָדָם וְקֹדַשְׁתָּ אֹתָם וְכִהְנוּ־לִי: מֵב וְעָשִׂה לָהֶם
 מְכַנְסֵי־בָד לְכִסּוֹת בָּשָׂר עָרְוָה מִמִּתְּנִים וְעַד־יִרְכָּסִים יְהִיוּ: מֵג וְהָיוּ
 עַל־אֶהְרֹן וְעַל־בָּנָיו בְּבֹאֵם | אֶל־אֶהְל מוֹעֵד אִן בְּגִשְׁתֶּם אֶל־הַמִּזְבֵּחַ
 לְשָׂרֵת בְּקֹדֶשׁ וְלֹא־יִשְׂאוּ עוֹן וּמִתּוֹ חֲקַת עוֹלָם לוֹ וּלְזָרְעוֹ אַחֲרָיו:

¹You shall bring forward your brother Aaron, with his sons, from among the Israelites, to serve Me as priests: Aaron, Nadab and Abihu, Eleazar and Ithamar, the sons of Aaron. ² Make sacral vestments for your brother Aaron, for dignity and adornment. ³ Next you shall instruct all who are skillful, whom I have endowed with the gift of skill, to make Aaron's vestments, for consecrating him to serve Me as priest. ⁴ These are the vestments they are to make: a breastpiece, an ephod, a robe, a fringed tunic, a headdress, and a sash. They shall make those sacral vestments for your brother Aaron and his sons, for priestly service to Me; ⁵ they, therefore, shall receive the gold, the blue, purple, and crimson yarns, and the fine linen. ⁶ They shall make the ephod of gold, of blue, purple, and crimson yarns, and of fine twisted linen, worked into designs. ⁷ It shall have two shoulder-pieces attached; they shall be attached at its two ends. ⁸ And the decorated band that is upon it shall be made like it, of one piece with it: of gold, of blue, purple, and

crimson yarns, and of fine twisted linen.⁹ Then take two lazuli stones and engrave on them the names of the sons of Israel:¹⁰ six of their names on the one stone, and the names of the remaining six on the other stone, in the order of their birth.¹¹ On the two stones you shall make seal engravings -- the work of a lapidary -- of the names of the sons of Israel. Having bordered them with frames of gold,¹² attach the two stones to the shoulder-pieces of the ephod, as stones for remembrance of the Israelite people, whose names Aaron shall carry upon his two shoulder-pieces for remembrance before the LORD.¹³ Then make frames of gold¹⁴ and two chains of pure gold; braid these like corded work, and fasten the corded chains to the frames.¹⁵ You shall make a breastpiece of decision, worked into a design; make it in the style of the ephod: make it of gold, of blue, purple, and crimson yarns, and of fine twisted linen.¹⁶ It shall be square and doubled, a span in length and a span in width.¹⁷ Set in it mounted stones, in four rows of stones. The first row shall be a row of carnelian, chrysolite, and emerald;¹⁸ the second row: a turquoise, a sapphire, and an amethyst;¹⁹ the third row: a jacinth, an agate, and a crystal;²⁰ and the fourth row: a beryl, a lapis lazuli, and a jasper. They shall be framed with gold in their mountings.²¹ The stones shall correspond *in number* to the names of the sons of Israel: twelve, corresponding to their names. They shall be engraved like seals, each with its name, for the twelve tribes.²² On the breastpiece make braided chains of corded work in pure gold.²³ Make two rings of gold on the breastpiece, and fasten the two rings at the two ends of the breastpiece,²⁴ attaching the two golden cords to the two rings at the ends of the breastpiece.²⁵ Then fasten the two ends of the cords to the two frames, which you shall attach to the shoulder-pieces of the ephod, at the front.²⁶ Make two rings of gold and attach them to the two ends of the breastpiece, at its inner edge, which faces the ephod.²⁷ And make two other rings of gold and fasten them on the front of the ephod, low on the two shoulder-pieces, close to its seam above the decorated band.²⁸ The breastpiece shall be held in place by a cord of blue from its rings to the rings of the ephod, so that the breastpiece rests on the decorated band and does not come loose from the ephod.²⁹ Aaron shall carry the names of the sons of Israel on the breastpiece of decision over his heart, when he enters the sanctuary, for remembrance before the LORD at all times.³⁰ Inside the breastpiece of decision you shall place the Urim and Thummim, so that they are over Aaron's heart when he comes before the LORD. Thus Aaron shall carry the instrument of decision for the Israelites over his heart before the LORD at all times.³¹ You shall make the robe of the ephod of pure blue.³² The opening for the head shall be in the middle of it; the opening shall have a binding of woven work round about -- it shall be like the opening of a coat of mail -- so that it does not tear.³³ On its hem make pomegranates of blue, purple, and crimson yarns, all around the hem, with bells of gold between them all around:³⁴ a golden bell and a pomegranate, a golden bell and a pomegranate, all around the hem of the robe.³⁵ Aaron shall wear it while officiating, so that the sound of it is heard when he comes into the sanctuary before the LORD and when he goes out -- that he may not die.³⁶ You shall make a frontlet of pure gold and engrave on it the seal inscription: "Holy to the LORD."³⁷ Suspend it on a cord of blue, so that it may remain on the headdress; it shall remain on the front of the

headdress.³⁸ It shall be on Aaron's forehead, that Aaron may take away any sin arising from the holy things that the Israelites consecrate, from any of their sacred donations; it shall be on his forehead at all times, to win acceptance for them before the LORD.³⁹ You shall make the fringed tunic of fine linen. You shall make the headdress of fine linen. You shall make the sash of embroidered work.⁴⁰ And for Aaron's sons also you shall make tunics, and make sashes for them, and make turbans for them, for dignity and adornment.⁴¹ Put these on your brother Aaron and on his sons as well; anoint them, and ordain them and consecrate them to serve Me as priests.⁴² You shall also make for them linen breeches to cover their nakedness; they shall extend from the hips to the thighs.⁴³ They shall be worn by Aaron and his sons when they enter the Tent of Meeting or when they approach the altar to officiate in the sanctuary, so that they do not incur punishment and die. It shall be a law for all time for him and for his offspring to come.

Exodus 19:6

ספר שמות: יט:ו

וְאַתֶּם תִּהְיוּ־לִי מְמַלְכֶת כֹּהֲנִים וְגוֹי קְדוֹשׁ אֵלֶּה הַדְּבָרִים אֲשֶׁר תִּדְבֹר
אֶל־בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל:

⁶ but you shall be to Me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.' These are the words that you shall speak to the children of Israel."

Reuven Hammer: Garments of Prayer as Priestly Dress

Garments are also an integral part of our approach to God. The descriptions of the clothing worn by the priests who officiated in the Temple and especially the garb of the High Priest, which included such items as a breastplate with twelve precious stones representing the twelve tribes and a golden plate worn on the forehead with the words "Holy to the Lord" cut out of it, are elaborately detailed in Exodus 28:6-43 and 39:2-31. What was important for the priests is also important for the individual Jew. The entire people of Israel is considered "a kingdom of priests and a holy nation" (Exod. 19:6), and this is expressed both through our high standards of ethics and morality and through ritual actions and garments. These garments are in themselves statements concerning our relationship with God.

Hammer, Reuven. *Entering Jewish Prayer*. New York: Schocken Books, 1994, 250.

THE JPS TORAH COMMENTARY

NUMBERS

The Traditional Hebrew Text with the New JPS Translation
Commentary by JACOB MILGROM



THE JEWISH PUBLICATION SOCIETY
PHILADELPHIA · NEW YORK

5750 / 1990

(vv. 30–31) but also stoned to death (vv. 35–36). That is to say, whereas brazen violations of God’s commandments are punished by *karet*, the brazen violator of the Sabbath is executed judicially. Of course, the assumption must be made that the wood gatherer acted in open defiance of the prohibition. Had his act been committed inadvertently then would have been allowed sacrificial expiation (vv. 27–29). Indeed, even the sectaries of Qumran, despite their harsher code of Sabbath observance, also declared: “However anyone who mistakenly profanes the Sabbath and the festivals shall not be put to death.”

EXCURSUS 38

The Tassels “Tsitsit” (15:37–40)

In his commentary on *tsitsit* (Num. 15:37–41), Ibn Ezra writes: “In my opinion one is more obligated to wear the *tsitsit* when not in prayer so that one will remember not to go astray in sin at any time, for in the time of prayer one surely will not sin.” Ibn Ezra’s comment is a reminder that the *tsitsit* commandment enjoins—and early practice attests—the attachment of the *tsitsit* to the outer garment. They were worn all day long. Indeed, the term *tallit*—the prayer shawl containing the *tsitsit*, which the Jew wraps about himself each morning in prayer—is actually the rabbinic term for outer garment, again alluding to the fact that *tsitsit* were worn throughout the day.

The nature of *tsitsit* is illuminated by the literature and art of the ancient Near East, which shows that the hem was ornate in comparison with the rest of the outer robe. The more important the individual, the more elaborate the embroidery of his hem. Its significance lies not in its artistry but in its symbolism as an extension of its owner’s person and authority. Its use is best illustrated by the Akkadian *sisikta batāqu*, “to cut off the hem.” For example, an exorcist pronounces an incantation over the detached hem of a patient’s garment; a husband who cuts off the hem of his wife’s robe thereby divorces her.

A reflex of this practice is found in the Bible in what heretofore was a puzzling dialogue. King Saul has pursued David into the Judean hills. Saul enters a cave and removes his cloak to relieve himself, unaware that David and his men are hiding in the cave. David sneaks up on the unsuspecting Saul and cuts off the hem from his cloak. The text then relates that “afterward David reproached himself for cutting off part of the hem of Saul’s cloak. He said to his men, ‘The LORD forbid that I should do such a thing.’” When Saul realizes what David has done, he responds: “I know now that you will become king” (1 Sam. 24:6,20). What was the reason for David’s remorse and for Saul’s response? The answer rests in the meaning of the hem: It was an extension of Saul’s person and authority. David felt remorse in taking it because God had not so ordered. Saul, however, regarded it as a sign from God that his authority had been transferred to David: He was now cut from the throne.

The legal force of the hem in ancient Mesopotamia is evidenced in other ways. At ancient Mari, a professional prophet or dreamer would enclose with his report to the king a lock of his hair and a piece of his hem. They served both as his identification, and more important, as a guarantee that his prediction was true. In effect, these articles gave the king legal control over their owner. Another legal context of the hem is illustrated by legal documents, on which the impression of a hem replaces a signature. Today a nonliterate

might sign with his fingerprints; in ancient Mesopotamia, however, it was the upper class that might use the hem.

E. A. Speiser has made the attractive suggestion that the practice in the synagogue to this day of pressing the edge of the *tallit* to the Torah scroll is a survival of this ancient custom.¹ This act followed by the recital of blessings may well have originated as a dramatic reaffirmation of the participant's commitment to the Torah. He thereby pledges both in words (blessing) and in deed (impressing his "signature" on the scroll) to live by the Torah's commandments.

That *tsitsit* are an extension of the hem is profusely illustrated in ancient Near Eastern art. In one picture, a pendant *tsitsit* is clearly evident, taking the form of a flower head or tassel, thus supporting the rendering "tassel" for *tsitsit*. Our biblical text, moreover, enjoins that *tsitsit* be attached to the corners of the garment. But how can a closed robe or skirt have corners? There are two possibilities. One figure shows that the *tsitsit* are only the extended threads of the embroidered vertical bands, which, instead of being cut off at the hem, are allowed to hang free. These bands terminate at quarter points of the hem, thereby forming four "corners." Another figure illustrates a second possibility. Here the skirts are scalloped and the tassels are suspended where the scallops meet. Our text validates this mode of dress. It prescribes that the *tsitsit* be attached to the *kanaf*, a term that does not mean "corner" but "extremity" or "wing"; and, strikingly, a scalloped hem is the winged extremity of the garment. Thus the significance of the *tsitsit* (as well as of the elaborate hem) lies in this: It was worn by those who counted; it was the identification tag of nobility.

The requirement of the *tekhelet*, the violet cord, gives further support to the notion that *tsitsit* signified nobility. The violet dye was extracted from the gland of the murex snail (*hilazon*; Sif. Deut. 354, Shab. 26a, Men. 42b). There are three relevant varieties of the murex snail. The *Murex trunculus* gives a blue-purple or violet color, and the *Thais haemastoma* (also called *Purpura haemastoma*) and *Murex brandaris* give a red-purple color.² Both the red-purple dye (Heb. *'argaman*; Akk. *argamannu*) and the blue-purple (Heb. *tekhelet*; Akk. *takiltu*) were used in the manufacture of the inner curtain of the Tabernacle (Exod. 26:1) and of the garments of the High Priest (Exod. 28:6,15,31,33).

The industry based on the dye of the murex snail may have originated in the Greek world rather than in the Phoenician world, as previously supposed. Accumulations of these snail shells have been found in Knossos, Troy, and the Attic coast, dating to the early second millennium B.C.E.³ On the other hand, similar accumulations of snail shells from the fifteenth century have been found at Ugarit on the Phoenician coast of the Mediterranean.

The *Murex trunculus* can be gathered by hand in the shallow waters off the coast of Lebanon and northern Israel (ancient Phoenicia). Apparently the production of dye from these snails was so important that the city of Haifa in Hellenistic times was called Porphurion (purple). The other two varieties of murex snails used to make the required dye had to be harvested from deeper waters with the use of nets or traps.

The manufacture of the dye is minutely described by Pliny, the Roman historian and naturalist of the first century C.E., in his *Historia Naturalis*. However, his data are insufficient to reproduce the process. Since the mid-nineteenth century, European chemists have attacked the problem but without success.⁴ Recently a group from Lebanon has reported success in reproducing the dye.⁵ The Center for Maritime Studies of the University of Haifa has been studying the living habits of the snails and simultaneously conducting archaeo-

logical research at several installations where the dye was manufactured: Tell Acre; Tel Mor; Shikhmona; and Tell Keisan, where the dye may have been imported,⁶ so we may be very close to solving the mystery of the dye's production.

The method of extracting the dye can be deduced from observing the many ancient shells containing single holes expertly drilled over the locations of the snails' hypobranchia glands. Many others of these ancient shells had been broken at their apex, which also releases the dye.⁷

Though the snails are plentiful, the amount of dye each yields is infinitesimal. In 1909 tests by the Austrian chemist Paul Friedländer⁸ demonstrated that 12,000 snails were needed to provide 1.4 grams of pure dye. No wonder that during the reign of Nabonidus the last king of Babylon (555–539 B.C.E.), purple wool was forty times more expensive than wool dyed with other colors. In 200 B.C.E. one gram of the dye cost \$84, or \$36,000 per pound. Diocletian paid the equivalent of \$8,460 for 328 grams of purple silk from Sidon, or \$11,724 per pound. In 300 C.E. the demand raised the price of this Sidonian silk to \$98,700 per pound (all figures are in 1984 dollars).⁹

The Bible apparently assumed that even the poorest Israelite could afford at least four violet threads, one for each tassel. Indeed, by using crude instead of pure dye, it is possible to attain ten times the yield.¹⁰ Thus one violet thread would require fewer than fifteen snails. However, only the very rich could afford large quantities of this dye. Indeed, Roman emperors retained for themselves the exclusive privilege of wearing purple mantles, thus giving rise to the color names still used today, "royal blue" and "royal purple." Byzantine emperors were born in purple rooms, that is, "born to the purple," and the title *Porphyrogenitus* was added to their names. The Bible also affirms that violet cloth was worn by nobility (Ezek. 23:6; Esther 1:6). Thus weaving a violet thread into the *tsitsit* enhances its symbolism as a mark of nobility. Further, since all Jews are required to wear it, it is a sign that Jews are a people of nobility. Their sovereign, however, is not mortal: Jews are prince of God.

Tsitsit have undergone many changes in Jewish practice, and a brief review of their history is indicated. The requirement of the violet cord was suspended in rabbinic time (Mish. Men. 4:1, Num. R. 17:5). The Jewish community following the two Roman wars was so impoverished that many could not afford even the one violet-dyed cord required for each *tsitsit*. Moreover, the dye industry apparently declined and the *tekhelet* became scarce (Men 42b). To be sure, a cheap counterfeit violet had been developed from the indigo plant but the rabbis disqualified it as *tekhelet* (Sif. Num. 115, BM 61b, Men. 42b–43a). These factors contributed to the suspension of the violet cord requirement, and since then *tsitsit* have been totally white.

Another historical fact revealed by early rabbinic sources is that *tsitsit* were worn by women. In fact, some of the rabbis actually affirmed that *'af ha-nashim be-mashma'*, that is women are *required* to wear *tsitsit* (Sif. Num. 115, Men. 43a) because they fall into the category of a commandment whose observance is not limited to a fixed time (*she-'ein ha zeman gerama'*; Tosef. Kid. 1:10).

Finally, because the *tsitsit* marked their wearer as a Jew and because, as a powerless minority within a hostile majority, it might single him out for persecution, it was then ordained that the *tsitsit* should be transferred to an inner garment (*tallit katan*). Nevertheless, among pious Ashkenazi Jews to this day the *tsitsit* are still visible, in fulfillment of the commandment: "and you shall see them" (v. 39).

The purpose of the *tsitsit* is set out by a series of verbs: “look . . . recall . . . observe” (v. 39). These three verbs effectively summarize and define the pedagogic technique of the ritual system of the Torah: sight (i.e., the senses) combined with memory (i.e., the intellect) are translated into action (i.e., good deeds). Thus the experience of rituals and the comprehension of their values lead to loftier ethical behavior. The text also adds a negative purpose: to bridle the passions (v. 39) and thereby, according to the rabbis, prevent heresy and harlotry (Sif. Num. 115).

The final purpose of the *tsitsit* is indicated in verse 40, the conclusion of the pericope: “Thus you shall be reminded to observe all my commandments and to be holy to your God.” The ultimate goal of seeing the *tsitsit*, reminding oneself of God’s commandments and fulfilling them, is to attain holiness. The nobility to which Israel belongs is not like other power structures characterized by corruption and self-indulgence. Israel is commanded to be “a kingdom of priests and a holy nation” (Exod. 19:6).

But what is there about the *tsitsit* that would remind its wearer of holiness? The earliest rabbinic sources, perhaps dating back to biblical days, taught that the *tsitsit* are *sha’atnez*, a mixture of wool and linen (LXX, Targ. Jon. to Deut. 22:12; cf. Rashi, Ibn Ezra on Deut. 22:12, Men. 39b–40a, 43a, Lev. R. 22:10). In fact white linen cords and dyed woolen cords were found in the Bar Kockba caves, proving that the rabbinic teaching was actually observed. Now the wearing of *sha’atnez* is forbidden to the Israelite (Lev. 19:19; Deut. 22:11), patently because it would resemble some of the priestly garments made from a blend of linen and wool (e.g., Exod. 28:6; 39:29; the colored cloths are wool). In fact, the High Priest’s linen turban (Exod. 28:39) is bound by a *petil tekhelet*, a violet woolen cord (Exod. 28:37). Thus *sha’atnez* is forbidden because it is a holy mixture, reserved exclusively for priests and forbidden to nonpriests. That *sha’atnez* is forbidden because it is holy can be derived from the injunction: “You shall not sow your vineyard with a second kind of seed, else the crop—from the seed you have sown—and the yield of the vineyard (literally) will become sanctified (*yikdash*)” (Deut. 22:9); that is, it will belong not to you but to the sanctuary. However, early in the rabbinic period it was taught—perhaps stemming from a biblical practice—that every Israelite should wear *tsitsit* made of *sha’atnez*. (Cf. also Tosafot on Deut. 22:11.) Thus the *tsitsit*, according to the rabbis, are modeled after a priestly garment that is taboo for the rest of Israel!

The *tsitsit*, then, are an exception to the Torah’s general injunction against wearing garments of mixed seed. But, in actuality, inhering in this paradox is its ultimate purpose. The resemblance to the High Priest’s turban and other priestly clothing can be no accident. It is a conscious attempt to encourage all Israel to aspire to a degree of holiness comparable to that of the priests. Indeed, holiness itself is enjoined upon Israel: “You shall be holy, for I, the LORD your God, am holy” (Lev. 19:2; cf. 11:44; 20:26). True, Israelites not of the seed of Aaron may not serve as priests (cf. 17:5) but they may—indeed, must—strive for a life of holiness by obeying God’s commandments. Hence, they are to attach to their garments tassels containing one violet cord, a woolen thread among the threads of linen. Indeed, the use of mixed seed in the prescribed garments reveals a gradation in holiness. The outer garments of the High Priest are *sha’atnez*; the belt of the ordinary priest is *sha’atnez* (Exod. 39:29; cf. Yoma 12b); and the fringes of the Israelite are *sha’atnez* by virtue of one violet woolen thread. The fact that the cord is woolen and violet marks it as a symbol of both priesthood and royalty, thereby epitomizing the divine imperative that Israel become “a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.”

It was Aimé Pallière, a French Catholic preparing for the priesthood, who sensed the true significance of the *tsitsit* when he chanced to enter the synagogue on Yom Kippur. He describes his experience in these words:

That which revealed itself to me at that moment was not at all the Jewish religion. It was the Jewish people. The spectacle of that large number of men assembled, their shoulders covered by the tallit, suddenly disclosed to my eyes a far-off past. . . . At first on seeing the prayer-shawls uniformly worn by all the participants in the service, I felt that in a way they were all officiating. . . . It seemed to me that this silent assembly was in expectancy of something to happen . . . a spirit of expectancy and faith in the future which stamps its entire cult with a special seal. In fact, in the synagogue service all Jews are equal, *all are priests* [italics mine], all may participate in the holy functions, even officiate in the name of the entire community, when they have the required training. The dignity which distinguished the Hakham, the doctor, the sage, is not a clerical degree but rather one of learning, and of piety quickened through knowledge. The tallit would have given me the understanding of that peculiarity of Judaism which would have escaped me, had my attention not been captured from the first by this spectacle so new to me, of a multitude of men in white shawls at prayer. It is thus that rites and symbols often constitute a more expressive language than the best of discourses.¹¹

To recapitulate: The *tsitsit* are the epitome of the democratic thrust within Judaism which equalizes not by leveling but by elevating. All of Israel is enjoined to become a nation of priests. In antiquity, the *tsitsit* (and the hem) were the insignia of authority, high breeding, and nobility. By adding the violet woolen cord to the *tsitsit*, the Torah qualified nobility with priesthood: Israel is not to rule man but to serve God. Furthermore, *tsitsit* are not restricted to Israel's leaders, be they kings, rabbis, or scholars. It is the uniform of all Israel.¹²

EXCURSUS 39

Korah's Rebellion: A Study in Redaction (chap. 16)

Numbers 16 is a composite. As such, it is riddled with difficulties. Merely to scan the chapter projects the more obvious ones: In the difficult text of verses 1–2, Korah, Dathan and Abiram, and the chieftains oppose Moses. In verse 3 they oppose Aaron as well as Moses, attacking their exclusive priestly (*kedoshim*) and civil (*titnase'u-nasi*) power. Moses' response in verses 4–7 predicates that the attack is only against Aaron; he devises an incense test so that God will choose His priest. Moses, however, has been addressing a fourth group of mutineers, the Levites (which implies that 'adato in v. 5 refers to Levites). Verses 8–11 contain Moses' second response to the Levites: Your sanctuary job is honorable enough; in craving the priesthood you defy not Aaron but God. (Again, 'adatekha means Levites.) In verses 12–15 Dathan and Abiram refuse to answer Moses' summons. (They were not among the cohorts of Korah who massed against Moses in v. 3.) The murmur not against Aaron's priesthood but against Moses' authority (*tistarar/sar*, v. 13; cf. Exod. 2:14), which they patently crave (v. 15a). The scene in verse 16 shifts back to Korah and his cohorts. The incense test criteria are repeated (vv. 16–17; cf. vv. 6–7), but it is the chieftains and not the Levites who are the antagonists ('adatekha in v. 16 means chieftains). Korah then incites the whole community ('edah) against Moses and Aaron. The latter

Suggested Activity 3: Dress as a Symbol of Our Relationship with God

1. Psalm 104

2. In Imitation of God

Martin Cohen, "The Tallit," *Conservative Judaism*. Vol. 44, 1992. 3-16.

3. In the Presence of God: Sifre to Numbers 115:2:8

Neusner, Jacob. *Sifre to Numbers: An American Translation and Explanation*. Vol. 2. Atlanta, Scholars Press, 1986.

4. CLAL Tallit Ritual

The Book of Jewish Sacred Practices: CLAL's Guide to Everyday & Holiday Rituals and Blessings. Woodstock, Jewish Lights, 2001.

Psalm 104

ספר תהילים: קד

א בְּרַכֵּי נַפְשִׁי אֶת־יְהוָה יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵי גִדְלַת מְאֹד הוֹד וְהַדָּר לְבָשֶׁת: ב עֹטָה
אֹר כְּשֵׁלֶמָה נוֹטָה שָׁמַיִם כִּירִיעָה: ג הַמְקַרָּה בַּמַּיִם עֲלִיּוֹתָיו הַשָּׁמַיִם עֲבִים
רְכוּבוֹ הַמְהַלֵּךְ עַל־כַּנְפֵי־רוּחַ: ד עֲשֵׂה מְלֶאכֶיךָ רוּחוֹת מְשַׁרְתָּיו אִשׁ לַהֵט:
ה יָסַד אָרֶץ עַל־מְכוּנֶיהָ בַּל־תִּמּוּט עוֹלָם וְעַד: ו תְּהוֹם כָּלבוֹשׁ כְּסִיתוֹ
עַל־הָרִים יַעֲמְדוּ־מַיִם: ז מִן־גַּעְרָתְךָ יִנוּסוּן מִן־קוֹל רַעְמֶךָ יַחֲפֹזוּן: ח יַעֲלוּ
הָרִים יִרְדּוּ בַקְעוֹת אֶל־מְקוֹם זֶה | יִסְדַּת לָהֶם: ט גְּבוּל־שָׁמַיִת בַּל־יַעֲבְרוּן
בַּל־יָשׁוּבוּן לַכִּסּוֹת הָאָרֶץ: י הַמְשַׁלַּח מַעַיְנִים בַּנְּחָלִים בֵּין הָרִים יִהְלֹכוּ:
יא יִשְׁקוּ כָּל־חַיֹּתוֹ שָׂדֵי יִשְׁבְּרוּ פְּרָאִים צְמָאִם: יב עֲלִיהֶם עוֹף־הַשָּׁמַיִם
יִשְׁכּוּן מִבֵּין עֲפָאִים יִתְנוּ־קוֹל: יג מִשְׁקָה הָרִים מַעֲלִיּוֹתָיו מִפְּרִי מַעֲשֵׂיֶךָ
תִּשְׁבַּע הָאָרֶץ: יד מִצְמִיחַ חֲצִיר | לְבִהְמָה וְעֵשֶׂב לְעַבְדַּת הָאָדָם לְהוֹצִיא
לֶחֶם מִן־הָאָרֶץ: טו וַיֵּן | יִשְׁמַח לְבַב־אֲנוּשׁ לְהַצְהִיל פְּנִים מִשָּׁמֶן וְלַחֵם
לְבַב־אֲנוּשׁ יִסְעֵד: טז יִשְׁבְּעוּ עֵצִי יְהוָה אַרְזֵי לְבוֹן אֲשֶׁר נָטַע:
יז אֲשֶׁר־שָׁם צִפְרִים יִקְנְנוּ חֲסִידָה בְּרוֹשִׁים בֵּיתָה: יח הָרִים הַגְּבֵהִים
לִיעֲלִים סֹלְעִים מַחְסֵה לְשֹׁפְנִים: יט עֲשֵׂה יָרַח לְמוֹעֲדִים שָׁמֶשׁ יָדַע
מִבוֹאוֹ: כ תִּשָּׁת חֹשֶׁךְ וַיְהִי לַיְלָה בּוֹ־תִרְמָשׁ כָּל־חַיֹּתוֹ־יַעַר: כא הַכִּפְּיִרִים
שֹׁאֲגִים לְטָרֶף וּלְבִקֵּשׁ מֵאֵל אֲכָלִם: כב תִּזְרַח הַשָּׁמֶשׁ יִאֲסֹפוּן
וְאֶל־מַעוֹנֹתֶם יִרְבְּצוּן: כג יֵצֵא אָדָם לַפְּעֵלוֹ וּלְעַבְדָּתוֹ עַד־יַעֲרֹב:
כד מִה־רָבוּ מַעֲשֵׂיֶךָ | יְהוָה כָּלֶם בְּחֻכְמָה עֲשִׂיתָ מְלָאָה הָאָרֶץ קִנְיָנְךָ:
כה זֶה | הַיָּם גְּדוֹל וְרַחֵב יָדַיִם שָׁם רִמְשׁ וְאִין מִסַּפֵּר חַיּוֹת קִטְנוֹת
עַם־גְּדֹלוֹת: כו שָׁם אֲנִיּוֹת יִהְלֹכוּן לְוִיָּתוֹן זֶה יִצְרָתָ לְשַׁחֲקֵבּוּ: כז כָּלֶם
אֱלִידָה יִשְׁבְּרוּן לְתַת אֲכָלֶם בְּעֵתוֹ: כח תִּתֵּן לָהֶם יִלְקֻטוּן תִּפְתַּח יָדְךָ
יִשְׁבְּעוּן טוֹב: כט תִּסְתַּיֵּר פְּנִיֶךָ יִבְהַלּוּן תִּסְרֹף רוּחַם יִגּוּעוּן וְאֶל־עַפְרָרָם
יִשׁוּבוּן: ל תִּשְׁלַח רוּחְךָ יִבְרָאוּן וְתִחַדֵּשׁ פְּנֵי אֲדָמָה: לא יְהִי כְבוֹד יְהוָה
לְעוֹלָם יִשְׁמַח יְהוָה בְּמַעֲשָׂיו: לב הַמִּבְּיֵט לְאָרֶץ וּתְרַעַד יִגַע בְּהָרִים
וַיַּעֲשֶׂנוּ: לג אֲשִׁירָה לִיהוָה בְּחַיֵּי אֲזַמְרָה לְאֱלֹהֵי בְּעוֹדֶי: לד יַעֲרֹב עֲלוּ
שִׁיתִי אֲנֹכִי אֲשַׁמַּח בִּיהוָה: לה יִתְמוּ חֲטָאִים | מִן־הָאָרֶץ וּרְשָׁעִים | עוֹד
אִינִם בְּרַכֵּי נַפְשִׁי אֶת־יְהוָה הַלְלוּיָהּ:

¹Bless the LORD, O my soul; O LORD, my God, You are very great; You are clothed in glory and majesty, ²wrapped in a robe of light; You spread the heavens like a tent cloth. ³He sets the rafters of His lofts in the waters, makes the clouds His chariot, moves on the wings of the wind. ⁴He makes the winds His messengers, fiery flames His servants. ⁵He established the earth on its foundations, so that it shall never totter. ⁶You made the deep cover it as a garment; the waters stood above the mountains. ⁷They fled at Your blast, rushed

away at the sound of Your thunder, ⁸ -- mountains rising, valleys sinking -- to the place You established for them. ⁹ You set bounds they must not pass so that they never again cover the earth. ¹⁰ You make springs gush forth in torrents; they make their way between the hills, ¹¹ giving drink to all the wild beasts; the wild asses slake their thirst. ¹² The birds of the sky dwell beside them and sing among the foliage. ¹³ You water the mountains from Your lofts; the earth is sated from the fruit of Your work. ¹⁴ You make the grass grow for the cattle, and herbage for man's labor that he may get food out of the earth -- ¹⁵ wine that cheers the hearts of men oil that makes the face shine, and bread that sustains man's life. ¹⁶ The trees of the LORD drink their fill, the cedars of Lebanon, His own planting, ¹⁷ where birds make their nests; the stork has her home in the junipers. ¹⁸ The high mountains are for wild goats; the crags are a refuge for rock-badgers. ¹⁹ He made the moon to mark the seasons; the sun knows when to set. ²⁰ You bring on darkness and it is night, when all the beasts of the forests stir. ²¹ The lions roar for prey, seeking their food from God. ²² When the sun rises, they come home and couch in their dens. ²³ Man then goes out to his work, to his labor until the evening. ²⁴ How many are the things You have made, O LORD; You have made them all with wisdom; the earth is full of Your creations. ²⁵ There is the sea, vast and wide, with its creatures beyond number, living things, small and great. ²⁶ There go the ships, and Leviathan that You formed to sport with. ²⁷ All of them look to You to give them their food when it is due. ²⁸ Give it to them, they gather it up; open Your hand, they are well satisfied; ²⁹ hide Your face, they are terrified; take away their breath, they perish and turn again into dust; ³⁰ send back Your breath, they are created, and You renew the face of the earth. ³¹ May the glory of the LORD endure forever; may the LORD rejoice in His works! ³² He looks at the earth and it trembles; He touches the mountains and they smoke. ³³ I will sing to the LORD as long as I live; all my life I will chant hymns to my God. ³⁴ May my prayer be pleasing to Him; I will rejoice in the LORD. ³⁵ May sinners disappear from the earth, and the wicked be no more. Bless the LORD, O my soul. Hallelujah.

In Imitation of God

On the most basic level of symbol and myth, the Jew who wraps himself in his tallit is acting in direct imitation of God, thereby fulfilling the most primary longing of religious man: to be holy and to be like God. By so doing, he demonstrates his faith in the doctrine of God the Creator, and willingness and intent to create a private universe of symbol, metaphor and myth, with and in which to serve the divine paradigm.

Martin Cohen, "The Tallit," *Conservative Judaism*. Vol. 44, 1992. 3-16.

In the Presence of God: Sifre to Numbers 115:2:8

ספרי פרשת שלח פיסקא ט

ר' מאיר אומר וראיתם אותם לא נאמר אלא וראיתם אותו מגיד
הכתוב שכל המקיים מצות ציצית מעלים עליו כאלו הקביל פני
שכינה שהתכלת דומה לים וים דומה לרקיע והרקיע דומה לכסא
הכבוד שנאמר (יחזקאל א) וממעל לרקיע אשר על ראשיהם.

R. Meir says, "What is said is not, 'You shall see them,' but 'You shall see *it*.' Scripture thereby indicates that whoever carries out the religious duty of wearing show-fringes is credited as if he had received the face of the Presence of God, for the blue of the fringes is like the blue of the sea, and the blue of the sea is like the blue of the firmament, and the blue of the firmament is like the blue of the throne of glory, as it is said, 'And above the firmament over their heads there was the likeness of a throne, in appearance like sapphire' (Ezekiel 1:26)."

Neusner, Jacob. *Sifre to Numbers: An American Translation and Explanation*. Vol. 2. Atlanta, Scholars Press, 1986.

CLAL Tallit Ritual

Like paratroopers who always take their parachutes with them when they jump from planes, those who have begun wearing a *tallit* as they pray discover just how essential it is. As a parachute catches the breath of the wind, protecting those who dare to jump into the air, the *tallit* ensures God's embrace for those who dare to leap into prayer.

The Book of Jewish Sacred Practices: CLAL's Guide to Everyday & Holiday Rituals and Blessings. Woodstock, Jewish Lights, 2001.

Suggested Activity 4: The Mathematics of Ritual Garb

1. Gematria List

Siegel, Richard and Michael and Sharon Stassfeld. *The Jewish Catalog*. Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1973.

2. Tallit Math Formula Sheet 1

3. Tallit Math Formula Sheet 2

the JEWISH OUTLOOK

a do-it-yourself kit
compiled and edited by

- Richard Siegel •
- Michael Strassfeld •
- Sharon Strassfeld •

ה'תש"ל יצא לאור חודש אדר ב' תשל"א
מס' 100
מחיר 1.50 \$
הוצאת 'העיתון' ירושלים

יצא לאור חודש אדר ב' תשל"א
מס' 100
מחיר 1.50 \$
הוצאת 'העיתון' ירושלים



Gematria

This is one of the haggadic hermeneutical rules for interpreting the Torah by which a word or phrase is explained on the basis of numerical equivalents. There is a basic kabbalistic myth that the essence of a thing is its name (in Hebrew) since the world was created through speech, i.e., as the name was spoken the thing came into being (see Genesis 1). Since at root the word is composed of letters, and since the letters have numerical equivalents, two words having the same value are considered integrally and fundamentally related.

The basic correspondence is:

70	60	50	40	30	20	10	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
ע	ס	נ	מ	ל	כ	י	ט	ח	ז	ו	ה	ד	ג	ב	א
400	300	200	100	90	80										
ת	ש	ר	ק	צ	פ										

There are several different ways of calculating numerical values, however.

1. The standard. Write out a word. Figure out its letter-by-letter equivalents. Compare the value to another word.

Example: אלהים —the name for God used in the creation story—is equal to הטבע —nature.

2. Variation. Sometimes when this does not work out exactly, you have the option to add "one" for the word itself.

Example: Why some do not eat nuts on Rosh ha-Shanah—because אנו (nuts) equals (almost) חטא (sin).

3. Eliminate zeros. Thus ב = 2, ר = 2. By reducing the number to its essential integer אדם (man) = אמת (truth).

4. Square the letter and add, or square the word.

Example: The four-letter Name of God squared $(5+6+5+10)^2 = 186 =$ מקום (Place—another Name of God).

5. Rather than take the simple value of the letter, spell out the name of each letter and take its value. Thus ב becomes בית and ל becomes למד. Some letters have various spellings—such as the ה, ה, הא, הה and ו, וו, וואו.

The last three are rarer forms. There are, however, even more specialized styles. Work with these for a while until you get a feel for the process. Try taking your Hebrew name and seeing what it is equivalent to.

A rare but fascinating form of letter play—virtually a code—is At-Bash. It simply involves substituting the letter at the other end of the alphabet for the letter of a word. Thus א exchanges with ת and ב exchanges with ש.

א ב ג ד ה ו ז ח ט י כ
ת ש ר ק צ פ ע ס נ מ ל

An example of using this in interpretation is in transferring the word מצוה (commandment) into the four-letter Name of God in that יה exchanges for מצ.

Both *The Jewish Encyclopedia* and *The Encyclopaedia Judaica* have excellent articles on gematria—virtually the only material on the subject written in English.

Tallit Math Formula Sheet 1

$$\begin{array}{c}
 Tzitzit \\
 + \\
 \text{the number of strands on each corner} \\
 + \\
 \text{the number of pairs of knots on each corner} \\
 = \\
 ?
 \end{array}$$

$$\aleph = \underline{\hspace{2cm}}$$

$$\beth = \underline{\hspace{2cm}}$$

$$\aleph = \underline{\hspace{2cm}}$$

$$\beth = \underline{\hspace{2cm}}$$

$$\aleph = \underline{\hspace{2cm}}$$

$$\underline{\hspace{2cm}} + \underline{\hspace{2cm}} + \underline{\hspace{2cm}} = \underline{\hspace{2cm}}$$

Tallit Math Formula Sheet 2

The Number of Times the tzitzit *shamash* is wrapped around the remaining strands

=

The Statement "God is One"

Wrappings: 7 times, 8 times, 11 times, 13 times

The Name of God: יהוה

One: אחד

$$י + ה = \underline{\quad} + \underline{\quad} = 7 + 8$$

$$ו + ה = \underline{\quad} + \underline{\quad} = 11$$

$$א + ח + ט = \underline{\quad} + \underline{\quad} + \underline{\quad} = 13$$

Suggested Activity 5: Tying Tzitzit

1. Instruction Sheet on Tying Tzitzit

Olitzky, Kerry and Isaacs, Ronald. *The How-To Handbook for Jewish Living*.
Hoboken: Ktav, 1993.

700
04
196

*The How-To
Handbook for
Jewish Living*

Rabbi Kerry M. Olitzky
and
Rabbi Ronald H. Isaacs

Illustrations by
Dorcas Gelabert

*KTAV Publishing House, Inc.
Hoboken, New Jersey*

Key words and phrases:

Atara אָטָרָה. The crown or neckpiece of the *tallit*.

Shamash שָׁמַשׁ. The longer strand in a *tzitzit* making kit used for the winding.

Tallit katan קָטָן טָלִית. Small *tallit* worn under the clothing during the day.

Techelet תְּכֵלֶת. The original blue color which was used in the making of *tzitzit*.

Tzitzit צִיצִית. Fringes on the four corners of the *tallit*.

If you want to know more:

Encyclopaedia Judaica (Jerusalem, 1971) 15:743.

Alfred J. Kolatch, *The Jewish Home Advisor* (Middle Village, N.Y., 1990).

Richard Siegel, Michael Strassfeld, and Sharon Strassfeld, *The First Jewish Catalogue* (Philadelphia, 1973).

More particulars:

I. Tying the *tzitzit*

1. Buy a *tzitzit*-making kit at your local Judaica store. There are sixteen strands in the pack. Separate them into four groups with one long strand and three short in each.

2. Even up the four strands at one end and push the group through one of the corners of the *tallit*.

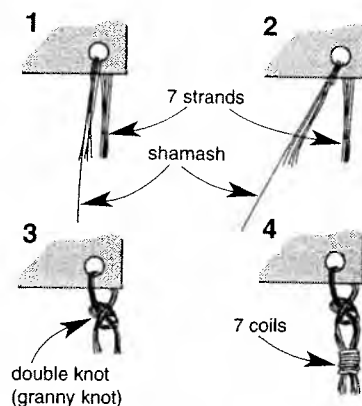
3. Even up seven of the eight strands (the original four were doubled) and leave the extra length of the *shamash* (the longest strand) hanging to one side.

4. With four strands in one hand and four in the other, make a double knot near the edge of the material. Take the *shamash* and wind it around the other seven strands in a spiral seven times. Make another double knot.

5. Next, spiral the *shamash* eight times around and make another knot.

6. Spiral the *shamash* eleven times around and make a double knot.

7. Finally, spiral the *shamash* thirteen times around and make one final double knot.



Suggested Activity 6: Laws of Intention: Maimonides 1:11

1. Encyclopaedia Judaica: Maimonides

“Maimonides.” *Encyclopaedia Judaica: CD Rom Edition*. Judaica Multimedia, 1997.

2. Maimonides on Tying Tzitzit: *Mishneh Torah: Hilchot Tzitzit 1:11*.

Touger, Eliyahu. *Maimonides Mishneh Torah: The Laws Governing Tefillin, Mezuzah, and Torah Scrolls and The Laws of Tzitzit*. New York: Moznaim Publishing, 1990.

Encyclopaedia Judaica: Maimonides

Also: Dalalat al-Ha`irin (wk.); Dux neutrorum (bk.); Guide of the Perplexed (wk. Maim.); Ha-Yad ha-Hazakah (code); Mishneh Torah (wk., Maim.); Moreh Nevukhim (bk.); Moses ben Maimon; Rambam; Yad ha-Hazakah (Maim. code)

MAIMONIDES, MOSES (Moses ben Maimon; known in rabbinical literature as "Rambam"; from the acronym Rabbi Moses Ben Maimon; 1135–1204), rabbinic authority, codifier, philosopher, and royal physician.

BIOGRAPHY

The most illustrious figure in Judaism in the post-talmudic era, and one of the greatest of all time, Maimonides was born in Cordoba, Spain, to his father Maimon, *dayyan* of Cordoba and himself a renowned scholar and pupil of Joseph ibn Migash. He continues his genealogy, "the son of the learned Joseph, son of Isaac the *dayyan*, son of Joseph the *dayyan*, son of Obadiah the *dayyan*, son of the rabbi Solomon, son of Obadiah" (end of commentary to Mishnah); traditions extend the genealogy to R. Judah ha-Nasi. Posterity even recorded the day and hour and even minute of his birth, "On the eve of Passover (the 14th of Nisan) which was a Sabbath, an hour and a third after midday, in the year 4895 (1135) of the Creation" (*Sefer Yuhasin*). Maimonides' grandson David gives the same day and year without the hour (at the beginning of his commentary to tractate *Rosh Ha-Shanah*).

As a result of the fall of Cordoba to the Almohads in May or June, 1148, when Moses had just reached his 13th birthday, and the consequent religious persecution, Maimon was obliged to leave Cordoba with his family and all trace of them is lost for the next eight or nine years, which they spent wandering from place to place in Spain (and possibly Provence) until in 1160 they settled in Fez. Yet it was during those years of wandering, which Maimonides himself describes as a period "while my mind was troubled, and amid divinely ordained exiles, on journeys by land and tossed on the tempests of the sea" (end of commentary to Mishnah) that he laid the strong foundations of his vast and varied learning and even began his literary work. Not only did he begin the draft of the *Siraj*, his important commentary on the Mishnah, in 1158, but in that same year, at the request of a friend, he wrote a short treatise on the Jewish calendar (*Ma'amar ha-Ibbur*) and one on logic (*Millot Higgayon*) and had completed writing notes for a commentary on a number of tractates of the Babylonian Talmud, and a work whose aim was to extract the *halakhah* from the Jerusalem Talmud (see below Maimonides as halakhist). According to Muslim authorities the family became formally converted to Islam somewhere in the period between 1150 and 1160. But Saadiah ibn Danan (Z. Edelmann (ed.), *Hemdah Genuzah* (1856), 16a) relates that the Muslims maintain the same about many Jewish scholars, among them Dunash ibn Tamim, Hasdai b. Hasdai, and others. In any case in the year 1160 Maimon and his sons, Moses and David, and a daughter, were in Fez. In his old age Abd al-Mu\$min, the Almohad ruler, somewhat changed his attitude to the Jews, becoming more moderate toward those who were living in the central, Moroccan, part of his realm. It was probably on account of this that in 1159 or early in 1160 Maimon deemed it worthwhile to emigrate with his family to Morocco and settle in Fez. Living in Fez at that time was R. Judah ha-Kohen ibn Susan, whose fame for learning and piety had spread to Spain, and Maimonides, then 25, studied under him. Many Jews had outwardly adopted Islam and their consciences were troubling them, and this prompted Maimon to write his *Iggeret ha-Nehamah* ("Letter of Consolation") assuring them that he who says his prayers even in their shortest form and who does good works remains a Jew (*Hemdah Genuzah*, pp. LXXIV–LXXXII). Meantime his son worked at his commentary on the Mishnah and also continued his general studies, particularly medicine; in his medical works he frequently refers to the knowledge and experience he gained among the Muslims in North Africa (see Maimonides as physician). Here also he wrote his *Iggeret ha-Shemad* ("Letter on Forced Conversion") also called *Iggeret Kiddush ha-Shem* ("Letter of the Sanctification of the Divine Name"). These letters of father and son, as well as Maimonides' utterances after leaving Morocco, do not point to outrages and bloody persecutions. Although Maimonides in the opening lines of the *Iggeret ha-Shemad* most strongly deprecates the condemnation of the forced converts by "the self-styled sage who

has never experienced what so many Jewish communities experienced in the way of persecution," his conclusion is that a Jew must leave the country where he is forced to transgress the divine law: "He should not remain in the realm of that king; he should sit in his house until he emigrates..." And once more, with greater insistence: "He should on no account remain in a place of forced conversion; whoever remains in such a place desecrates the Divine Name and is nearly as bad as a willful sinner; as for those who beguile themselves, saying that they will remain until the Messiah comes to the Maghreb and leads them to Jerusalem, I do not know how he is to cleanse them of the stigma of conversion" (*Iggeret ha-Shemad*, in: Z. Edelman (ed.), *Hemdah Genuzah*, 11b–12a).

Maimon and his sons acted in accordance with this advice, as certainly did many others. Maimonides' departure from the country of the Almohads is commonly assumed to have taken place in 1165; according to Saadiah ibn Danan (*Seder ha-Dorot*, in: *Hemdah Genuzah*, 30b.), it was promoted by the martyrdom of Judah ibn Susan, who had been called upon to forsake his religion and had preferred death to apostasy. R. Maimon and his family escaped from Fez, and a month later they landed at Acre. The day of his departure as well as that on which the ship was saved from a tempest were instituted as a family fast enjoined on his descendants, and that of his arrival in Erez Israel as a festival (E. Azikri (Azcar), *Sefer Haredim*; Maim. Comm. to *Rosh Ha-Shanah*, ed. Brill, end).

The family remained in Acre for some five months, striking up an intimate friendship there with the *dayyan* Japheth b. Ali. Together with him they made a tour of the Holy Land, visiting Jerusalem where Maimonides states, "I entered the [site of the] Great and Holy House and prayed there on Thursday the 6th day of Marheshvan." Three days later they paid a visit to the Cave of Machpelah in Hebron for the same purpose. Maimonides also appointed both these days as family festivals. The family then left Erez Israel and sailed for Egypt. After a short stay at Alexandria they moved to Cairo and took up residence in Fostat, the Old City of Cairo.

Maimon died at this time either in Erez Israel or in Egypt. It has been suggested that the reason for the choice of Alexandria was the existence at that time "outside the town" of "the academy of Aristotle, the teacher of Alexander" to which "people from the whole world came in order to study the wisdom of Aristotle the philosopher" mentioned by Benjamin of Tudela (ed. by M. N. Adler (1907), 75). It is not certain what prompted the move to Cairo. That Maimonides' influence was decisive in virtually destroying the hitherto dominating influence of the Karaites who were more numerous and wealthy than the Rabbanites in Cairo is beyond doubt (see below) and in the 17th century Jacob Faraji, a *dayyan* in Egypt, states that it was this challenge which impelled Maimonides to move to Cairo (see Azulai, letter M150).

For eight years Maimonides lived a life free from care. Supported by his brother David who dealt in precious stones, he was able to devote himself entirely to preparing his works for publication and to his onerous but honorary work as both religious and lay leader of the community. His *Siraj*, the commentary to the Mishnah, was completed in 1168. The following year he suffered a crushing blow. His brother David drowned in the Indian Ocean while on a business trip, leaving a wife and two children, and with him were lost not only the family fortune but moneys belonging to others. Maimonides took the blow badly. For a full year he lay almost prostrate, and then he had to seek a means of livelihood. Rejecting the thought of earning a livelihood from Torah (see his commentary on *Avot* 5:4, and especially his letter to Joseph ibn Sham'un in 1191, "It is better for you to earn a drachma as a weaver, or tailor, or carpenter than to be dependent on the license of the exilarch [to accept a paid position as a rabbi]"; F. Kobler (ed.), *Letters of Jews Through the Ages*, 1 (1952), 207) and he decided to make the medical profession his livelihood.

Fame in his calling did not come to him at once. It was only after 1185 when he was appointed one of the physicians to al-Fadil, who had been appointed vizier by Saladin and was virtual ruler of Egypt after Saladin's departure from that country in 1174, that his fame began to spread. It gave rise to a legend that Richard the Lionhearted "the King of the Franks in Ascalon" sought his services as his private physician. About 1177 he was recognized as the official head of the Fostat community. Ibn Danan says of him, "Rabbenu Moshe [b. Maimon] became very great in wisdom,

learning, and rank." In the so-called *Megillat Zuta* he is called "the light of east and west and unique master and marvel of the generation."

These were the most fruitful and busy years of his life. His first wife had died young and in Egypt he remarried, taking as his wife the sister of Ibn Almalī, one of the royal secretaries, who himself married Maimonides' only sister. To them was born their only son Abraham to whose education he lovingly devoted himself, and an added solace was his enthusiastic disciple Joseph ibn Sham'un (not Ibn Akinin, as often stated), whom he loved as a son, and for whom he wrote, and sent chapter by chapter, his *Guide of the Perplexed*. It was during those years, busy as he was with the heavy burden of his practice and occupied with the affairs of the community, writing his extensive correspondence to every part of the Jewish world (apart from the Franco-German area), that he wrote the two monumental works upon which his fame chiefly rests, the *Mishneh Torah* (compiled 1180) and the *Guide* (1190; according to Z. Diesendruck, in: *HUCA*, 12–13 (1937–38), 461–97, in 1185), as well as his *Iggeret Teiman* and his *Ma'amar Tehiyyat ha-Metim*.

The following passage in the letter to the translator of the *Guide*, Samuel b. Judah ibn Tibbon, in which he describes his multifarious cares and duties, with the aim of dissuading Ibn Tibbon from coming to visit him, has often been quoted:

I dwell at Miʿr [Fostat] and the sultan resides at al-Qahira [Cairo]; these two places are two Sabbath days' journey distant from each other. My duties to the sultan are very heavy. I am obliged to visit him every day, early in the morning; and when he or any of his children, or any of the inmates of his harem, are indisposed, I dare not quit al-Qahira, but must stay during the greater part of the day in the palace. It also frequently happens that one or two royal officers fall sick, and I must attend to their healing. Hence, as a rule, I repair to al-Qahira very early in the day, and even if nothing unusual happens, I do not return to Miʿr until the afternoon. Then I am almost dying with hunger... I find the antechambers filled with people, both Jews and gentiles, nobles and common people, judges and bailiffs, friends and foes—a mixed multitude who await the time of my return.

I dismount from my animal, wash my hands, go forth to my patients, and entreat them to bear with me while I partake of some slight refreshment, the only meal I take in the twenty-four hours. Then I go forth to attend to my patients, and write prescriptions and directions for their various ailments. Patients go in and out until nightfall, and sometimes even, I solemnly assure you, until two hours or more in the night. I converse with and prescribe for them while lying down from sheer fatigue; and when night falls, I am so exhausted that I can scarcely speak.

In consequence of this, no Israelite can have any private interview with me, except on the Sabbath. On that day the whole congregation, or at least the majority of the members, come to me after the morning service, when I instruct them as to their proceedings during the whole week; we study together a little until noon, when they depart. Some of them return, and read with me after the afternoon service until evening prayers. In this manner I spend that day.

The two major works will be described below, but something must be said of the two letters. The Arab ruler in Yemen, who, unlike the sultans in Egypt who were Sunnites, belonged to the sectarian Shiites, instituted a religious persecution, giving the Jews the choice of conversion to Islam or death. Not only did many succumb, but there arose among those Jews a pseudo-Messiah, or a forerunner of the Messiah who, seeing in these events the darkness before the dawn, preached the imminent advent of the Messianic Age. In despair the Jews of Yemen turned to Maimonides, who probably in 1172 answered their request with the *Iggeret Teiman* (*al-Risala al-Yamaniyya*). It was addressed to R. Jacob b. Nethanel al-Fayyumi, with a request that copies be sent to every community in Yemen. Deliberately couched in simple terms, "that men, women, and children could read it easily," he pointed out that the subtle attack of Christianity and Islam which preached a new revelation was more dangerous than the sword and than the attractions of Hellenism. As for the pseudo-Messiah, he was unbalanced and he was to be rejected. These trials were sent to prove the Jews.

The effect of the letter was tremendous. In gratitude for the message of hope, combined with the fact that Maimonides also used his influence at court to obtain a lessening of the heavy burden of

taxation on the Jews of Yemen, the Jews of Yemen introduced into the *Kaddish* a prayer for "the life of our teacher Moses b. Maimon" (Letter of Nahmanides to the rabbis of France, in: *Kitvei Ramban*, ed. by C. B. Chavel (1963), 341).

This remarkable tribute, usually reserved for the exilarch, has an indirect connection with the third of his public (as distinct from his private) letters, the *Ma'amar Tehiyyat ha-Metim* ("On Resurrection"; 1191). Maimonides wrote the letter with the greatest reluctance. It was the direct result of his *Mishneh Torah* and constituted his reply to the accusation leveled against him that in this work he denied, or did not mention, the doctrine of personal resurrection which was a fundamental principle of faith among the Jews of his time. An objective study of his work does lend a certain basis to the allegation. It is true, as he indignantly protests, that he included this doctrine as the last of his famous Thirteen Principles of Judaism, but in his *Mishneh Torah* the undoubted emphasis is on the immortality of the soul and not on individual bodily resurrection. That the allegation was not based upon mere malice or envy of his work is sufficiently proved by the fact that anxious queries were addressed to him from the countries in which he was most fervently admired, Yemen and Provence, and Maimonides answered them. Abraham b. David of Posquières wrote: "The words of this man seem to me to be very near to him who says there is no resurrection of the body, but only of the soul. By my life, this is not the view of the sages" (Comm. to Yad, Teshuvah 8:2). Some Jews from Yemen however, unsatisfied, wrote to Samuel b. Ali the powerful and learned *Gaon* in Baghdad who sent a reply, which although couched in terms of respect to Maimonides, vigorously denounced his views. It would appear that the vehemence of this reply was connected with Samuel's desire to assert his authority as *gaon* over Egypt, which he thought was being usurped by Maimonides. On the other hand, Maimonides held the exilarch Samuel (of Josiah b. Zakkai's line), the successor of the exilarch Daniel b. Hisdai, in higher esteem than the *gaon* Samuel b. Ali. Thus the relations between Maimonides and the *gaon* remained strained, although there was never open hostility. Joseph ibn Sham'un, in Baghdad, who had also queried Maimonides' views on resurrection, sent a copy of Samuel's reply to Maimonides and with great reluctance Maimonides felt himself compelled to write his *Ma'amar Tehiyyat ha-Metim* in which he asserted and confirmed his belief in the doctrine.

Maimonides was active as head of the community. He took vigorous steps to deal with the Karaites, and as a result brought about the supremacy of the Rabbanites in Cairo. On the one hand he emphatically maintained that they were to be regarded as Jews, with all the attendant privileges. They might be visited, their dead buried, and their children circumcised, their wine permitted; they were however not to be included in a religious quorum (Resp. ed. Blau, 449). Only when they flouted rabbinic Judaism was a barrier to be maintained. One was particularly to avoid visiting them on their festivals which did not coincide with the dates fixed by the rabbinic calendar. One of the inroads which they had caused in orthodox observance was with regard to ritual immersion for the *niddah*. Their view that an ordinary bath was sufficient had been widely adopted among the Rabbanites. Maimonides succeeded in restoring rabbinic practice in this matter, but generally his policy toward the Karaites was more lenient in his later years, and was continued by his son Abraham. (For an exhaustive treatment of this subject see C. Tchernowitz, *Toledot ha-Posekim* (1946), 197–208.)

Maimonides made various changes in liturgical custom, the most radical of which was the abolition of the repetition of the *Amidah* in the interests of decorum. With the completion of the *Guide* Maimonides' literary work, apart from his extensive correspondence, came to an end. In failing health he nevertheless continued his work as head of the Jewish community and as court physician. (It is doubtful whether he actually held the appointment of *nagid* as is usually stated; see M. D. Rabinowitz, Introduction to *Ma'amar Tehiyyat ha-Metim* in *Iggerot ha-Rambam*, 220–7.)

It was during this period however that he engaged in his correspondence with the scholars of Provence in general and with Jonathan of Lunel in particular. In some instances the border line between responsum and letter is not clearly defined (e.g., his letter to Obadiah the Proselyte, see below), but, as Kobler comments, the letters of Maimonides mark an epoch in letter writing. He is the first Jewish letter writer whose correspondence has been largely preserved. Vigorous and essentially personal, his letters found their way to the mind and heart of his correspondents, and he varied his style to suit them. But above all they reveal his whole personality, which is different

from what might be expected from his *Mishneh Torah* and the *Guide*. The picture of an almost austere and aloof intellectual above human passions and emotions derived from there is completely dispelled.

Maimonides died on December 13, 1204. There were almost universal expressions of grief. Public mourning was ordained in all parts of the Jewish world. In Fostat mourning was ordained for three days and in Jerusalem a public fast and the Scriptural readings instituted concluded with the verse "the glory is departed from Israel, for the Ark of the Lord is taken" (I Sam. 4:22). His remains were taken to Tiberias for burial, and his grave is still an object of pilgrimage.

(Article continues with other information on Maimonides and his works.)

[Editorial Staff Encyclopaedia Judaica]

Encyclopaedia Judaica: CDRom Edition. Judaica Multimedia, 1997.

Maimondes on Tying Tzitzit:
Mishneh Torah: Hilchot Tzitzit 1:11.

רמב"ם - הלכות ציצית פרק א

א חוטי הציצית בין לבן בין תכלת צריכין טויה לשם ציצית, ואין עושין אותן לא מן הצמר הנאחז בקוצים כשהצאן רובצין ביניהם, ולא מן הנימין הנתלשין מן הבהמה, ולא משיורי שתי שהאורג משייר בסוף הבגד, אלא מן הגזה של צמר או מן הפשתן, ואין עושין אותן מצמר הגזול ולא משל עיר הנדחת ולא משל קדשים ואם עשה פסול, המשתחוה לבהמה צמרה פסול לציצית, אבל המשתחוה לפשתן הנטוע הרי זה כשר שהרי נשתנה.

Both the white strands of the tzitzit and those dyed *techelet* must be spun for the sake of being used for [the mitzvah of] tzitzit.

[Tzitzit] may not be made from wool which becomes attached to thorns when sheep graze among them, nor from hairs which are pulled off the animal, and not from the leftover strands of the woof which the weaver leaves over when he completes a garment. Rather, they must be made from shorn wool or from flax.

[Tzitzit] may not be made from wool which was stolen, which came from an a city condemned to be destroyed for idolatry, or which came from a consecrated animal. If such wool was used, it is unacceptable. If a person bows down to an animal, its wool is not acceptable for use for tzitzit. If, however, one bows down to flax which is planted, it is acceptable, because it has been changed.

Touger, Eliyahu. *Maimonides Mishneh Torah: The Laws Governing Tefillin, Mezuzah, and Torah Scrolls and The Laws of Tzitzit*. New York: Moznaim Publishing, 1990.

Suggested Activity 7: Daywear or prayer-wear?

1. When to Wear Tzitzit

Strickman, H. Norman and Arthur M. Silver, trans. *Ibn Ezra's Commentary on the Pentateuch: Numbers*. New York: Menorah Publishing, 1999.

Touger, Eliyahu. *Maimonides Mishneh Torah: The Laws Governing Tefillin, Mezuzah, and Torah Scrolls and The Laws of Tzitzit*. New York: Moznaim Publishing, 1990.

2. Encyclopaedia Judaica: Tallit Katan

"Tallit Katan." *Encyclopaedia Judaica: CD Rom Edition*. Judaica Multimedia, 1997.

When to Wear Tzitzit

Ibn Ezra to Numbers 15:39

Now this commandment [to wear tzitzit] states that everyone who has a four-cornered garment shall always cover himself with it during the day. He shall not remove it so that he remembers the commandments. Those who pray with a *tallit* during the time of prayers do so because they read in the *shema*, *And it shall be unto you for a fringe* (v. 39) and *that they make them throughout their generations fringes* (v. 30)

However, I believe that one is more obligated to enwrap oneself in fringes when he is not in prayer than during the time of prayer, so that he remembers the commandments and does not err and trespass during the other hours of the day, for in the hour of prayer he will not sin.

Strickman, H. Norman and Arthur M. Silver, trans. *Ibn Ezra's Commentary on the Pentateuch: Numbers*. New York: Menorah Publishing, 1999.

Maimonides, Mishneh Torah: Hilchot Tzitzit 3:7, 8.

7 ...The obligation to wear tzitzit applies during the day, but not at night: "And you shall see them." [The mitzvah applies only] during a time when one can see...

8 A person is permitted to wear tzitzit at night, both during the weekdays and on the Sabbath, even though this is not the time when the mitzvah should be fulfilled, provided he does not recite a blessing...

Trager, Eliyahu. *Maimonides Mishneh Torah: The Laws Governing Tefillin, Mezuzah, and Torah Scrolls and The Laws of Tzitzit*. New York: Moznaim Publishing, 1990.

Encyclopaedia Judaica: Tallit Katan

TALLIT KATAN ("small *tallit*"; Yid. *tales koten*, *arba kanfot*, or *arba kanfes*; and *tsidekel*, from the Ger. *Leibzudeckel*), a rectangular garment of white cotton, linen, or wool with *ziziyot* ("fringes") on its four corners. Whereas the ordinary *tallit* is worn only at the morning service, strictly observant Jews wear the *tallit katan* under their upper garment the whole day, so as constantly to fulfill the biblical commandment of *zizit* (Num. 15:39), a reminder to observe all the commandments of the Torah. The *tallit katan* is, therefore, often worn in a manner that it may be seen; if not, that at least the *ziziyot* hang freely and are visible (Sh. Ar., OH 8:11). The minimum size of a *tallit katan* ought to be 3/4 ell long and 1/2 ell wide (15 in. X 10 in.). According to another opinion, it should be one square ell (20 in. X 20 in.). The *tallit katan* is put on in the morning, and the following benediction is said: "Blessed art Thou, O Lord our God, King of the universe, Who hast sanctified us by Thy commandments and commanded us [to wear] the *zizit*." The *tallit katan* must always be clean and, in reverence for its sanctity, should not be worn on the bare flesh but over an undershirt. If one of the *ziziyot* is torn, the whole *tallit katan* becomes ritually unfit (*pesulah*) until the torn *zizit* is replaced.

[Editorial Staff Encyclopaedia Judaica]

Encyclopaedia Judaica: CDROM Edition. Judaica Multimedia, 1997.

Suggested Activity 8: Married and Buried: The Use of the Tallit in Lifecycle Events

1. Birth – Excerpt on Sandek wearing a tallit

Diamant, Anita. *The New Jewish Baby Book*. Woodstock: Jewish Lights, 1994, 104-105.

2. B'nei Mitzvah – Excerpt on Traditional Attire

Weber, Vicki L.. *The Rhythm of Jewish Time*. West Orange: Behrman House, 1999, 64-65.

3. Wedding – Excerpt on the Chuppah

Diamant, Anita. *The New Jewish Wedding*. New York: Fireside, 1985, 97-101.

4. Death – Excerpt on Burial Dress

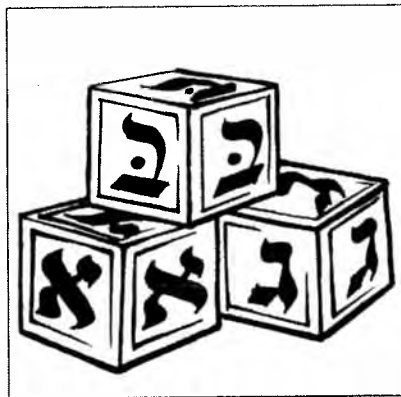
Isaacs, Ron and Kerry Olitzky. *Jewish Mourner's Handbook*. Hoboken: Ktav, 1991, 23-24.

The *NEW* Jewish Baby Book

NAMES
CEREMONIES
CUSTOMS

A Guide For Today's Families

ANITA DIAMANT



JEWISH LIGHTS Publishing
Woodstock, Vermont

Brit Milah – The Covenant of Circumcision

shawl. He is the only one who sits during the ceremony; everyone else stands. In some Sephardic communities fathers act as *sandek* for their own sons, though the custom in America has long been for grandfathers to fill this honored role.¹⁸ (If you are fortunate enough to have both grandfathers present, the two men can share the honors of *sandek*, with one holding the baby during the circumcision and the other one doing the honors during the naming.) The term *sandeket*, the feminine version, is used to honor a female guest or relative who participates in the ceremony.

Elijah

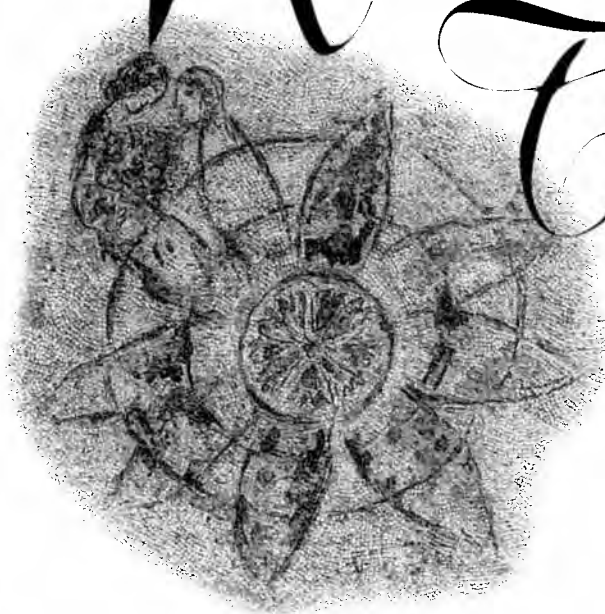
The prophet Elijah, who preached about the importance of *brit milah*, has been linked to the ritual since biblical times. His presence is invoked by the *kisei shel Eliyahu*, the chair of Elijah. By the Middle Ages, Elijah's chair was a well-established custom at *bris* celebrations. In many European communities, the synagogue owned an elaborate throne used at all circumcisions. Today, any chair may be decorated or draped for the purpose, or a special pillow for the baby is used.¹⁹

Non-Jews in the Ceremony

There are other ceremonial roles that may be distributed to family and friends. In general, it is considered a *mitzvah* to include as many people as possible, and it's a good way to affirm family unity. With the exception of the *sandek*, none of the roles or honors listed below need be limited to Jews. Non-Jewish grandparents, aunts, uncles, cousins, and friends can participate in many ways—depending on their comfort level, of course.

Among the honors you can give to guests at a *brit milah*, there are the roles of *kvatterin* (godmother) and *kvatter* (godfather), terms

THE
RHYTHM
OF JEWISH
TIME



An
Introduction
to Holidays
and Life-Cycle
Events

.....
Edited by Vicki L. Weber
.....



BEHRMAN HOUSE, INC.

Traditional Attire

Bar and Bat Mitzvah ceremonies involve all the elements of liturgical drama. The words and actions are carefully prepared and the music is thoughtfully planned. But these ceremonies should not be seen as “theatrical” performances. Rather they are religious moments shared with God—moments designed to enhance spiritual goals. Those seated in the synagogue are not an “audience” but a community of faith gathered in congregation.

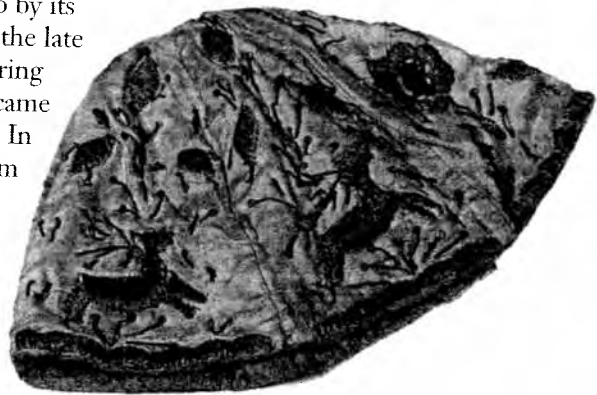
Careful attention is paid to two items of traditional attire: a skullcap, or *kippah*, and a prayer shawl, or *tallit*. They are worn by most Bar Mitzvah boys, and many Bat Mitzvah girls also wear them. While their use is optional in Reform practice, it is mandatory for men in Conservative and Orthodox synagogues. In fact, many Orthodox Jews keep their heads covered at all times.

The *kippah* is often referred to by its Yiddish name, *yarmulke*. During the late Middle Ages the practice of covering the head for prayer and study became universally accepted among Jews. In the nineteenth century the Reform Movement chose to leave heads uncovered in prayer, since contemporary society viewed the removal of head coverings as a sign of respect. Recently, however, more and more male Reform Jews have been choosing to wear the *kippah*. All Orthodox and many Conservative women wear a hat, a scarf, or a small lace kerchief on their head in the synagogue.

Some women wear a *kippah*. During the Bar and Bat Mitzvah ceremony, the celebrants and their families generally follow the custom of their congregation.

The *tallit* is a four-cornered garment which is draped around the shoulders. At each corner are knotted fringes called *tzitzit*. Their purpose is explained in the Torah: *God spoke to Moses saying: Speak to the children of Israel and enjoin them to make for themselves tzitzit on the corners of their garments throughout the generations. . . . Thus shall you be reminded to observe all My Commandments and be holy to your God.* (Numbers 15:37–40)

The *tallit* may be large or small, of any color, and made of any material, although wool and linen are never used together. (This mixture is forbidden in Deuteronomy 22:11.) The *tallit* has to meet only two requirements: it must have four corners, and each corner must have a white knotted fringe made of wool or of the same material as the *tallit*. Since the Torah commands that we be able to “see” the *tzitzit*, it is worn only in the daytime, although those who lead the prayer service may wear one in the evening. Once a year, on Yom Kippur, the *tallit* is worn in the evening as well. On this holiest day of the Jewish year, the prayers formally begin in the late afternoon before sunset, and so the *tallit* can remain on for the extended services, giving this service a special atmosphere of purity.



Embroidered silk *kippah*.
Poland, nineteenth century

The wearing of a *tallit* is a privilege and mark of adulthood, serving as a constant reminder of the commandments. A boy officially wears a *tallit* for the first time on the occasion of becoming a Bar Mitzvah. Where it is used by women, a girl officially dons this robe of honor for the first time at the Bat Mitzvah ceremony as well.

Tefillin

Tefillin consist of two black leather boxes attached to knotted leather straps. The use of *tefillin* is explained in the Torah: "You shall bind them [God's words] as a sign upon your hand, and they shall serve as symbols before your eyes" (Exodus 13:9, 13:16; Deuteronomy 6:8, 11:18). Each leather cube is known by the part of the body to which it is attached. One is called "(of the) hand," *shel yad*, the other is called "(of the) head," *shel rosh*. Each cube contains specific passages from the Torah (Deuteronomy 6:4-9; 11:13-21; Exodus 13:1-10, 11-16). The passages in each cube are the same, but their arrangement is different.

Tefillin are not widely used in the Reform Movement, but Orthodox and Conservative Jews continue to wear them during weekday services. They are never worn on Shabbat or other Jewish holidays, because the holidays already are signs of the covenant. For this reason, they are seldom in evidence at the Bat Mitzvah or Bar Mitzvah ceremony, although sometimes boys and girls practice putting them on as part of their formal training.



Tallit with embroidered initials.

Russia, nineteenth century

The Ceremony

The Order of the Prayer Service

A rabbi was once asked by his students, "What do you do before praying?" He answered, "I pray that I may be able to pray properly." For most of us, praying with devotion is a challenge. To help us, the morning Jewish prayer service begins with meditations, songs, and blessings designed to create the proper mood in the mind of the worshipper. The length of this introduction may vary from congregation to congregation.

The main portion of the service begins with a two-sentence "Call to Prayer," the *Barekhu* (translated as *Bless Adonai, Who is to be blessed!*). In ancient times the priests



THE NEW
**JEWISH
WEDDING**

Revised and Updated

ANITA DIAMANT

A FIRESIDE BOOK Published by Simon & Schuster
New York London Toronto Sydney Singapore

_____ and _____ agree to give each other an honorable divorce. We will convene and abide by the decision of a *bet hesed*, outlined in the separate document which we have signed, and so may no marriage among the children of Israel be bound by chains.

_____ and _____ pledge that one will protect the other from indignity at the time of death, offering tender presence with the beloved until they are separated by the grave.

All this is valid and binding.

By Debra Cash and David Fillingham¹⁷

The Huppah

The bridal canopy is a multifaceted symbol: it is a home, a garment, a bedcovering, and a reminder of the tents of nomadic ancestors. The fact that the *huppah* is open on all sides recalls in particular the tent of the biblical Abraham, a paragon of hospitality, who had doors on all four sides of his dwelling so that visitors would always know they were welcome.

In Talmudic times the groom's father set up a royal purple tent in the courtyard of his home where the marriage would be finalized by consummation. Over time, *nissuin* became a symbolic act, which the groom accomplished by covering the bride with a garment—a veil or his *tallis*—and the word *huppah* became identified with the act of “covering” or “taking” the bride.¹⁸

Long after tents vanished from the Jewish landscape, wedding ceremonies were held out of doors in the hope that the marriage would be blessed by as many children as “the stars of the heavens.” Some kind of covering was employed to create a more modest and sanctified space, separated from the “marketplace.” During the sixteenth century, probably in Poland, a portable canopy held aloft by four poles came into vogue, and over time the word *huppah* became identified more with this canopy than with its legal function of *nissuin*.

The Midrashists wrote that God created ten splendid *huppot* for the marriage of Adam and Eve. And the tabernacle built by the Israelites in the desert is also described as a bridal canopy.¹⁹ In some European communities, richly embroidered Torah ark coverings (*parochet*) were used for weddings, but a more common custom was to marry under a *tallis*, which was frequently a gift from the bride or her family to the groom. The *tzitzit* (ritual fringes) on the prayer shawl hanging above the couple's heads were regarded as talismans against evil spirits. According to Gematria, a numerical system in which every Hebrew letter has a numerical value, the thirty-two bunches of *tzitzit* mystically correspond to the total achieved by the Hebrew word for heart, which is *lev*.

The *huppah* is understood as a sign of God's presence at the wedding and in the home being established under the canopy. *Huppah* means "that which covers or floats above." It is said that the space beneath the canopy is spiritually charged because the divine Name floats above it.

The Canopy. The *huppah* should be a temporary, handmade structure. Trees do not count, nor are *huppot* made entirely of flowers strictly kosher. Despite the fact that the canopy has a legal function, there are no *halakic* requirements about its dimensions, shape, or decoration. Its appearance is entirely a matter of taste, another opportunity for personal expression and *hid'ur mitzva*—the beautification of piety.

Many synagogues own *huppot* they make available to marrying couples. Some of these are quite beautiful, embroidered or woven with quotations from the seven wedding blessings and decorated with familiar images—kiddush cups, doves, and scenes of Jerusalem. Synagogue *huppot* tend to be stationary structures that are set up on the *himah* in advance of the ceremony.

Recently the use of a prayer shawl as a canopy has made a big comeback. Marrying under *tzitzit*, which are reminders of the *mitzvo*, is seen as an affirmation of the couple's commitment to a shared Jewish life. Obviously, in order to function as a *huppah*, a *tallis* needs to be a full-sized

garment, one that covers two-thirds of the body. Using a grandparent's *tallis* can be very moving; if you have such a family heirloom you can use, make sure to share the story with guests.

If you will be using a stationary or floral *huppah*, another way to incorporate a *tallis* into the ceremony is to drape a prayer shawl over the heads of the couple under the canopy. This may be done just before the seven wedding blessings.

For people with the time and inclination, making a *huppah* can be a very satisfying project. Special talents are not necessary to create something of meaning. You can simply buy a special piece of fabric in colors and a pattern you like (three feet by five feet is a good size) and hem it. A *huppah* can be batiked, silk-screened, woven, appliquéd, or embroidered. Many needlecraft and embroidery books feature patterns that can be traced or ironed onto the fabric. (Judaica shops generally carry tablecloth patterns that can be adapted for use on a *huppah*.) The American friendship quilt has inspired some women to create individual squares that are then sewn together for the canopy.

For those who don't sew, words can be written in calligraphy or patterns hand-painted on fabric. Colorful pieces of felt can be cut and pasted in any shape or pattern. Or the *huppah* can be created at a prewedding party at which guests inscribe blessings onto a plain piece of canvas or linen with a rainbow of watercolor pens. One couple used this occasion to teach their friends some of the songs that were to be sung at the wedding. Another couple invited their nieces and nephews to decorate a *huppah* with handprints in colorful fabric paints.

The seven marriage blessings have inspired many *huppah* designs. Among the best known of these images is the "rejoicing voices": "Kol sasson v'kol simcha, kol kallah v'kol hatan" ("The voice of joy and the voice of gladness, the voice of the bride and the voice of the bridegroom"). Other traditional subjects suggested by the *sheva b'rachot* include the two cups of wine, Eden, and the streets of Jerusalem. The stars and the moon are often pictured on *huppot* as portents of children to

come.²⁰ But there is no rule that the *huppah* must be covered with publicly recognizable images and symbols. One bride and groom, who over many years had collected frog and elephant memorabilia, incorporated their “mascots” in a scene of Jerusalem.

For Jews-by-choice, the *huppah* can be a wonderful place to incorporate designs, materials, and symbols from your family and culture of origin. A Chinese silk, Scottish tartan, or family heirloom lace canopy are more than beautiful conversation pieces; they eloquently acknowledge and honor your ethnic or cultural heritage and family.

When planning a *huppah* cover, make sure to provide some means of hanging it securely from four poles. Eyelets, curtain rings, or clasps should be fastened to the canopy so there is no danger of its slipping during the ceremony. *Tallesim* are easily hung from the eyelets for the fringes. The poles should be long enough to stand on the ground supported rather than held by the *huppah* bearers during the ceremony. Wooden dowels, available at most lumberyards, can easily be cut to length, and bamboo is both lightweight and pretty. Wood can be carved and/or painted; ribbons, colored masking tape, crepe paper, flowers, and greenery can be used for decoration.

According to one custom, parents would plant a cypress tree on the birth of a son and a cedar on the birth of a daughter. At the time of the children’s marriage, branches from each would be cut and carved for poles. Today some couples spend a day in the woods looking for appropriate branches. And one couple fastened their *huppah* to brightly colored helium balloons!

The Huppah in the Ceremony. Stationary *huppot* are usually erected before the ceremony. If, however, the canopy is to be held by four honored guests, it can become part of the processional, with the pole bearers displaying the *huppah* as they walk down the aisle.

It is a special honor to be asked to hold a *huppah* pole. The four faces surrounding the couple represent the community that will help them es-

tablish a home.* In Orthodox communities it is still customary for all the guests—except the elderly and the ill—to remain standing throughout the ceremony to acknowledge the sanctity of the proceedings. However, since it is now customary for the entire company to sit, the *huppah* bearers act as representatives of the community in this regard as well.

Although most *huppot* are raised on the *bimah*, or platform, at one end of a synagogue or function room, some couples gather their guests around them in a circle or semicircle. In this way their new “home” is surrounded by the support and love of a community. This “*huppah*-in-the-round” arrangement also enables more guests to see the faces of the bride and groom.

There are many opinions and customs regarding who should and who should not stand under the *huppah* with the couple. Some believe that in order to ensure the validity of *nissuin*, only the bride and groom (not even the rabbi) should be covered by the canopy. Others feel that many family members and friends should stand with the couple to establish the tradition of *hachnasat orchim*—hospitality—in their home. Guests who participate in the ceremony—by reading a poem or chanting one of the wedding blessings—are often invited under the *huppah* when they address the couple.

The space beneath the *huppah* is sometimes described as a spiritually charged place, a place made sacred by the presence of love, community, and God. Thus, after the bride and groom leave it, some rabbis and cantors will invite guests—especially couples—to come “inside” for a blessing or a few moments of prayer.

A Family Heirloom. People who have spent time creating a *huppah* often display or use it again after the wedding. *Huppot* commonly appear as wall hangings in couples’ bedrooms. Some suspend the canopy over

* Since this is not a strictly religious duty, some rabbis suggest it as an appropriate way for non-Jewish friends to participate in the ceremony.

A JEWISH MOURNER'S HANDBOOK

BY
RABBI RON H. ISAACS
AND
RABBI KERRY M. OLITZKY

KTAV Publishing House, Inc.
Hoboken, N.J. 07030

most desirable, it is not always possible when some close mourners live great distances away. There are, however, exceptions to the general prohibition of embalming. They are when a lengthy delay in the funeral service seems mandatory, and when burial takes place overseas. Postponement is required when "within twenty-four hours" would mean Shabbat or a holiday on which funerals are not permitted (the High Holidays, Sukkot, Passover, Shavuot). There are also certain other times when delays may be permitted, such as when immediate family members are out of town or when the death occurs away from home. Convenience, however, is not sufficient reason to delay. When a funeral takes place just prior to a festival, if the family returns home and sits *shiva* for a brief period before that holiday, the *shiva* is cancelled. If, however, the funeral occurs during the intermediate days of Passover or Sukkot, *shiva* does not begin until the holiday is over. Consult your rabbi for an exact interpretation of these laws.

The Casket

Some mourners are tempted to purchase a casket that "will last forever," but in Jewish tradition we follow the lead in the text "For you are dust, and to dust you will return" (Genesis 3:19). In other words, whatever prevents the process of returning to dust is considered inconsistent with traditional Jewish practice. Thus, the coffin should be made entirely of wood.

While the cost of the casket should be determined by your financial ability, the casket should not be ostentatious. The rationale is that we came into the world as equals in the sight of God, and we should leave the world in the same way.

The Shroud

Shrouds (*tachrichim*) are simple white garments, generally made of linen (or sometimes muslin or cotton). They are all alike in order to ensure that everyone, regardless of socio-

economic status, is equal at death. Instead of frantically searching for the deceased's finest clothes, with everyone having an opinion or a favorite outfit, these simple garments are preferable, once again, in order to ensure the democratic principle and avoid potential problems. A deceased male (and any female whose family elects to do so) is also wrapped in a *tallit* (prayer shawl), with one *tzitzit* (ritual fringe) cut.

Where May the Funeral Take Place?

Historically, Jewish funerals took place at the home of the deceased or at the cemetery. Synagogues were used very rarely, and only for people of extraordinary distinction and stature in the community.

Today, some communities permit funeral services to be held in the synagogue. Where this is the case, you might want to consider it as an option. In this way, the entire celebration and sanctification of life throughout the life cycle is associated with the synagogue. Death is not segregated in an institution of its own but becomes a part of daily living.

On the other hand, funeral homes are designed to accommodate large numbers of people and make sure everything runs smoothly. If a Jewish funeral home is not available and you must use a Gentile funeral home, then all Christian religious symbols, such as crosses, should be removed.

Children at the Funeral

Children should be provided with the opportunity to grieve in their own way. Do not assume that because they do not fully comprehend "what's going on," they do not understand at all. In the face of death, we all need to be reminded of the promise of life which is present in front of us in the faces of children. As they grow older, they may be thankful for the opportunity you provided, since their memories of the deceased may fade over time.

Take your cue from the child. A child who wants to attend

Suggested Activity 11: Creative Ritual Use

1. Birth – Excerpt on Involving Guests

Diamant, Anita. *The New Jewish Baby Book*. Woodstock: Jewish Lights, 1994, 106.

2. Birth – Excerpt on Wimpels

Diamant, Anita. *The New Jewish Baby Book*. Woodstock: Jewish Lights, 1994, 173-174.

3. Birth – Excerpt on Brit Banot

Cardin, Nina Beth. *The Tapestry of Jewish Time*. Springfield: Behrman House, 2000, 199-201.

4. Birth – Excerpt of Simchat Bat by Rabbi Nina Beth Cardin

<http://www.ritualwell.org/Rituals/ritual.html?docid=111>

5. Birth – Excerpt from Awakening the Senses, a Brit Bat

<http://www.ritualwell.org/Rituals/ritual.html?docid=153>

6. Excerpt from a Weaning Ceremony...

<http://www.ritualwell.org/Rituals/ritual.html?docid=951>

7. Selected Excerpts from a Puberty Ritual

Adelman, Penina. *Miriam's Well: Rituals for Jewish Women Around the Year*. New York: Biblio Press, 1986.

8. Wedding – Excerpt on Wedding Gifts

Diamant, Anita. *The New Jewish Wedding*. New York: Fireside, 1985, 146-147.

9. Death – Memory of Joe and Others by Laurie Gross

<http://www.ritualwell.org/Rituals/ritual.html?docid=993>

Brit — Covenant

that come from eastern Europe. Unlike Christian godparents, the *kvatter* and *kvatterin* do not assume responsibility for the child's religious upbringing. Their roles are strictly ceremonial and limited to carrying the baby from the mother to the room where the *bris* takes place, and then to the ceremonial chair for Elijah, the legendary prophet who is a "guest" at every *bris*.

There are several other ways to include guests in the proceedings: Invite four friends to hold a prayer shawl on poles over the *bris*—a touch that recalls the parent's wedding canopy. (See *Hiddur Mitzvah—Beautiful Touches*.) Before the circumcision, pass the baby from the grandparents to the parents, or, if you are so blessed, from great-grandparents to grandparents to parents, a powerful visual tribute to your family's continuity. If a sibling is mature enough to participate, he or she might carry the baby into the room, light a candle, or read a blessing or poem. In some communities, it is customary to assign a role to a couple trying to conceive, invoking the luck and blessings of the new parents on them.

If these ideas sound too elaborate, it's fine to keep things very simple. You can always involve more people at the celebration afterward. (See *Simcha*.)

Women and Brit Milah

In the past, women had no active role in *brit milah*, and in some Orthodox communities, this is still the case. But women's participation in ritual life has widened across the spectrum of Jewish observance, and liberal Jews have expanded women's roles to include virtually all traditional honors. While some mothers participate fully, others find it too difficult to be in the room during the actual circumcision. Some women wait elsewhere, usually surrounded by supportive friends and family members, during the few minutes of the procedure. This is an entirely personal matter, and it is your choice.

A traditional prayer recited by new mothers at a *bris* is *birkat hagamel*, a blessing of thanks recited after recovering from an illness:

Hiddur Mitzvah – Beautiful Touches

CHUPAH. Sometimes parents will raise their own marriage canopy to welcome the newest member of the family. Family members and special friends can be honored by holding the poles during the *brit*. The presence of older siblings under the canopy can provide a much-needed moment of recognition for older brothers and sisters who might feel lost in all the commotion surrounding the new baby.

KIDDUSH CUP. *Hiddur mitzvah* applies to any object used in the ceremony. Because wine is blessed at virtually all *brit milah* and *brit bat* ceremonies, a cup will be necessary—the more beautiful the better. A distinctive goblet, a gift for the baby, might be unveiled at the ceremony, or the *kiddush* cup you used at your wedding might be filled as the following words are recited:

This cup is the vessel of our hopes. We first drank from it under our wedding *chupah*. Today, it is filled with the new wine of a life just begun and from it we taste the sweetness of the great joy that _____ has brought us.

WIMPELS. In Eastern Europe, the cloth used to wrap an infant at his *brit milah* was later cut and sewn into a long strip for use as a Torah binder—in Yiddish, *wimpel*, pronounced “vimpel.” (The Hebrew is *mappah*.)

The *wimpel* was presented as a family’s gift to the synagogue, usually in time for use on the *Shabbat* closest to the child’s first birthday. The Torah binder then belonged to the synagogue and would be used when the child reached *bar mitzvah*. In Germany and Italy, *wimpels* were painted or embroidered with the child’s name, his parents’ names, the date of birth, and a Hebrew inscription and were lavishly decorated with all sorts of images, including (in some communities) the baby’s zodiac sign.

The *wimpel* is enjoying a modest revival today, for daughters as well as for sons. To make one, use a piece of cotton, silk, linen, or wool as a swaddling blanket or as a covering for a table or pillow used at the *brit*. Later, create a strip seven to eight inches wide and nine to twelve feet long and decorate it as you wish, noting the child’s name and birth date.⁴

Covenants

Borrowing from the idea of the *wimpel*, a piece of fabric or clothing used during the *brit* ceremony can later be incorporated into an *atarah*, the neckpiece on a *tallit*, or prayer shawl. That *tallit* can be given to the child at the time of his or her *bar* or *bat mitzvah*, and perhaps (years later) even used for a *chupah*.

Music

Music, song, and dance are traditional at Jewish celebrations. Although the Ashkenazic repertoire is not nearly as rich as the Sephardic, there are particular melodies American Jews associate with baby rituals.

Siman Tov Umazal Tov (Good Fortune and Good Luck) is the all-purpose song of rejoicing, proclaiming the event as a source of joy for those gathered and for all Israel. Because of the prophet Elijah's association with *brit milah*, *Eliyahu Hanavi* is often sung during a *brit*. Now that Elijah's chair is a common feature at *brit bat*, it seems appropriate to sing the prophet's song there as well.

Hinnei Ma Tov Umah Na'im (How Good and Pleasant It Is) is another favorite at baby celebrations, because it extols the pleasure of community. *Yevarech'cha Adonai Mitzion* (May the Lord Bless You from Zion) is popular because it includes the line, "May you see your children's children." Cantors are probably your best resource when researching music for a ceremony. Even if you do not belong to a synagogue, many cantors are glad to share their expertise. You might also ask people you know for the names of Jewish music professionals in your community.⁵

Words

It is customary in some circles to offer a *d'var Torah*, a word of Jewish learning, on an occasion as important as a birth. Sometimes this is part of the ceremony and sometimes it is presented later, during the celebratory meal. Traditionally, such a *drashah* (teaching) is based on the baby's name, the weekly Torah portion, or a



The Tapestry of Jewish Time

*A Spiritual Guide to Holidays
and Life-Cycle Events*

Rabbi Nina Beth Cardin

Illustrated by Ilene Winn-Lederer



BEHRMAN HOUSE, INC.

sanctified this little one from the womb and had us mark the sign of the Holy Covenant on his flesh...Blessed are You, who established the Covenant."

The one who is given the honor of naming the child then recites:

Our God and God of our ancestors, protect this child and help his mother and father raise him well. Let his name be called in Israel... son of... [the father's name] and... [the mother's name]. May his father be delighted with his offspring and his mother be overjoyed with her baby....Praise God, for God is good; God's kindness endures forever. May this little child one day be great.

The ceremony is concluded. The guests are invited to a *se'udat mitzvah*, the meal of celebration. The child snuggles in his parents' arms. The tension is broken and the Jewish people have grown by one.

Brit Banot: Covenant of the Daughters

The ceremony to welcome a daughter into the Covenant is relatively new. The Bible does not prescribe the way in which to celebrate the birth of a daughter or welcome her into the Covenant. The rabbis do not offer a way either. It has been only in the last century or so that Jewish parents have begun to develop ways to name a daughter. And it has been only since the 1970s that Jewish parents have developed ceremonies to welcome a daughter into the Covenant.

In recent centuries in Ashkenazic (eastern European) communities, a newborn daughter, if formally named at all, was named in the synagogue. Days after the baby's birth, often while mother and daughter were still indisposed, the father would be honored with an *aliyah*. Afterward a special blessing thanking God for God's kindness would be recited. The daughter's name would then be announced. The men of the community capped the celebration with *schnapps*—whiskey.

Sephardic Jews created a somewhat more elaborate and formal way of celebrating the birth of a daughter. (The ritual can be found in the Sephardic prayer books.) The family would convene a *zeved habat* (the gift of the daughter), with the community gathering at

Time Flies

Immediately after the circumcision, while the baby is being quieted with a pacifier soaked in wine, everyone present responds, "Just as this child has entered into the Covenant, so may he be blessed with entrance into a life of study, marriage and deeds of lovingkindness." In a gesture that reminds us that those events are not as far away as we think, my husband's family has a tradition of selecting an unopened bottle of whiskey from among those used to make a *l'hayyim* (a toast) at the *brit*, writing on the label, "for the bar mitzvah of ... [the name of the child]" and putting it aside to be opened 13 years later.



Although the ceremonies for welcoming a daughter into the Covenant may vary, they all serve to sanctify the occasion of a new life begun in the family and Jewish community. ♡

Judaism Is an Evolving Tradition

Esther and Mordecai decreed the holiday of Purim. The Maccabees created the celebration of Hanukkah. The kabbalists created the liturgical tradition of *kabbalat Shabbat*, the Tu B'Shevat seder and *tikkun leil Shavuot*. The Israeli government added four new holidays to the calendar: Yom Hashoah, Yom Hazikaron, Yom Ha'atzma'ut, Yom Yerushalayim. The bar mitzvah celebration itself is probably not more than a few hundred years old. Today we live in one of the most fertile eras of Jewish ritual and liturgical creativity. Jewish girls and women are both the prime authors and the main beneficiaries of that creativity.

Raise the Cradle

In some towns, the neighbors would gather at the home of the newborn, encircle the cradle, raise it three times, and in unison ask, "What shall the baby be called?" The parents would then say the name of the baby, and sweets would be given out. That ceremony was called *hole kraasch*, a term generally thought to come from the French, *haute la crèche*, meaning "raise the cradle."

the baby's home. The daughter would be welcomed into the community, although not explicitly into the Covenant, with the coaxing, reassuring words from the Song of Songs: "Little dove hidden in the rocks of the cave, let me see your face, let me hear your voice, for your voice is sweet, and your face is lovely." Sweets would be eaten, and the baby would be blessed and given her name.

Today, many families are choosing to celebrate the birth of a daughter with a ceremony called *simhat bat* (joy of a daughter) or *brit habat* (covenant of the daughter). Like a *brit milah*, the ceremony is composed of two parts: the covenant and the naming.

Many families choose to hold their *brit habat* ceremony in the synagogue on a Shabbat morning soon after the baby's birth. During the Torah reading, the parents are honored with an *aliyah*. The child is brought forward and held in front of the open ark. The rabbi or cantor recites the blessings of Covenant and gives the baby her Hebrew name. The parents may speak words of gratitude and hope. They may also sponsor the *kiddush*—often a buffet with *hallah* and wine, cakes, fish, cheeses and fruits—in honor of their child.

Some parents hold the ceremony at home on a Sunday or during the week. The women of the family may light candles in honor of the newborn and recite biblical verses that contain or spell out the child's Hebrew name. The parents may then save the candlesticks that are used at the candlelighting to give to their daughter upon her becoming a bat mitzvah. Other parents wrap their daughter in a tallit, to symbolize the comforting arms of God, and then save the tallit to give to the daughter upon her becoming a bat mitzvah. Still other parents pour water over the child's feet in a symbolic gesture of welcome and as a suggestion of the connection between women and the life-giving attribute of water.

Each of these ceremonies reflects the tastes of the family and the community but every one has several elements in common. Each is constructed like a drama, for that is what it is. The daughter is ceremoniously brought in by grandparents or friends, presented with pageantry to the *kahal*, the community. Her parents stand at the front of the room, eager to receive the precious child. A song or a prayer of welcome is recited by the community, often the same one found in the Sephardic tradition. As in the *brit milah*, so here the

child is brought within reach of the parents, but they do not yet take her. First, she awaits her community's embrace.

My daughter assisted us at her covenant ceremony. When she was one month old, we gathered our community together for a ceremony that we called *hachnasat habat*. The sound itself is a poem, for all the vowels are pronounced "ah," the open sound of joy and amazement. The words mean "bringing in the daughter." More than just joy, they hint at the task of Covenant itself, for the Hebrew letters of *hachnasat* can also be read as *haknesset*, a reference to the gathering of Jews who welcomed our daughter into their covenant. The phrase also resonates with a phrase associated with Jewish women: The escorting and outfitting of a bride is called *hachnasat kallah*.

We chose to wrap our daughter in a tallit, believing that the transition into Covenant we wished to effect was best achieved by involving her whole body. From the moment she was brought into the synagogue by the *sandeket*, her godmother, to the moment before the final fold of the tallit was secured around her, she wailed. Through song and psalm, she wailed. But when the last fold of the tallit was around her, with the swaddling finally complete, when she was secure in the symbol that defines the Jewish people, she stopped crying. Here was a child with an inborn instinct for drama.

At any *brit habat*, after the covenanting, a guest is honored with the naming of the child. With a cup of wine in hand, the person recites words that declare the infant a participant in the pageantry of the matriarchs of Israel. This is one such blessing:

May the One who blessed our ancestors, Sarah, Rebecca, Rachel and Leah, Miriam the prophetess, Deborah, Abigail and Queen Esther, grace this sweet child with good fortune and abundant blessings. And may her name be called among the daughters of Israel... daughter of... [the father's name] and... [the mother's name]. May she be raised in good health, peace and tranquillity. Grant that her parents watch her grow in happiness, wisdom and prosperity. And may they be blessed with the merit of escorting her to her wedding canopy. May this be God's will, and let us say, "Amen."

Adding Drama

Many feel that despite the excitement of the birth of a daughter, the *simhat bat* ceremony often lacks the tension and the drama of a circumcision. Indeed, sometimes it does. When this rite was first performed, there was a suggestion to mark the sign of the Covenant on the body of the young girl, to bring parity to the two covenant ceremonies. Fortunately, those efforts failed. Still, some of the drama of the circumcision can be achieved through the use of music and song: A cantor or a lay musician can swell the emotions that are already present.

Choosing the Time

With no time-honored laws or traditions, the *brit habat* (singular of *brit banot*) is usually held anytime from eight days to a few months after birth.

Excerpt of Simchat Bat by Rabbi Nina Beth Cardin

Entering the Baby into the Covenant

All:

We come together to welcome this child into the Covenant of Abraham, our father, and Sarah, our mother. God said: "I will maintain My Covenant between Me and you and your offspring to come as an everlasting Covenant throughout the ages, to be good to you and your offspring to come." In becoming a welcomed member of the Jewish people, this child becomes a link in the Covenant of the people of Israel.

Parents:

The tallit is an embracing symbol of the Covenant between God and the Jewish people, and we are reminded of the mitzvot by the tzitzit on its corners. Today, we envelop our daughter into the folds of a tallit as a symbol of her entry into our Covenant with God and K'lal Yisrael.

Source:

Published by the Women's League of Conservative Judaism.

<http://www.ritualwell.org/Rituals/ritual.html?docid=111>

© 2005 ritualwell.org.

Excerpt from Awakening the Senses, a Brit Bat

We bring prayers and rituals that reflect the five senses, to awaken Rebecca to the world around her and to encourage her to experience life with her whole being.

...

2. Touch:

Be embraced by the tallit, under which your parents were wed and now lovingly held by your grandparents, as your family and community embrace you.

A Blessing on the Occasion of a Brit Bat

By Laila Berner (adaptation)

May the Shechinah spread her wings over you and protect you.

May you know great joy, happiness, and fulfillment in your life.

May you walk with your people Israel in pride, and may you understand that to be a Jew is a source of joy and meaning, and an important responsibility.

May you honor your parents, recognizing that they have brought you into the world in

love and in hope, and may you bring them great joy.

May you go from strength to strength, yet always be able to accept your own weaknesses and those of others.

May you judge yourself and others with fairness and compassion, and without harshness.

May you have the confidence and self-esteem to move towards whatever goals you choose for yourself, and may you have the wisdom and courage to change your mind if your original goals are replaced by newer and better ones.

May you allow yourself to dream your dreams and soar with flights of fancy and imagination.

May you always keep a precious part of yourself as "child" even as you move to adulthood.

May your ears be filled with music of every imaginable kind, and may the rhythms be of your own making, allowing yourself to march at your own pace.

May you experience the inevitable moments of sadness and pain in a way that will give these moments meaning and add value to your life.

May you live in a world blessed with peace and harmony, and may your future be as bright and as hopeful as the world's first rainbow.

And let us all say: Amen.

From the Brit Bat of Rebecca Yael Morrow-Spitzer, RRC files.

Source:

<http://www.ritualwell.org/Rituals/ritual.html?docid=153>

© 2005 ritualwell.org.

Excerpt from A Weaning Ceremony for Joshua Reuben and Eli Nathaniel And For Me by Deborah Burg-Schnirman

I am prepared and ready to hold on and to let go -- to fulfill the mitzah of rearing these children.

I spend a little time nursing each of the boys separately with each wrapped in a family treasure: the fabric of our Chuppah canopy. Our huppah was created as a family heirloom that would connect each life cycle event: we have subsequently used it to wrap each boy for his brit, it is being used now, part of it will be transformed into tallitot for their B'nai Mitzvah, and who knows what else. During this time, I talk to Joshua and to Eli each about how they have grown and affirm that they too are ready to let go. I repeat our hopes for them: the words taken from their namings during their brit.

Sources:

<http://www.ritualwell.org/Rituals/ritual.html?docid=951>

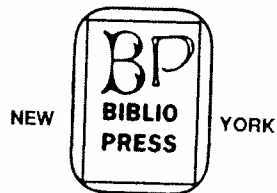
© 2005 ritualwell.org.

Miriam's Well

Rituals for Jewish Women
Around the Year

SECOND EDITION

PENINA V. ADELMAN





S I V A N
MAY/JUNE
A Time To Honor
The Fruit Of The Seed



From Jewish Girl to Jewish Woman

This month's ritual requires more preparation than other months. The girl who has just experienced her first menstrual period and her mother who is a member of the group should plan together to create a *bagrut*, "Coming of Age" ceremony.

Should the mother attempt to fulfill all her dreams of a Coming of Age ceremony through her daughter, this might become difficult for the young woman. However, when both collaborate in this event, a possible model for later relationships is presented. Further, if the girl menstruates before her bat mitzvah, then the *bagrut* becomes a *kavannah* for her public Coming of Age, the bat mitzvah. However, if she becomes bat mitzvah first, then that provides the *kavannah* for her *bagrut*.¹

The mother of the *bogeret*, the girl who has "come of age," must be deeply sensitive to the wishes of her daughter in marking this occasion. The mother should be willing to offer support and direction. If the girl is especially shy, this must be taken into account. She should not be urged to do more than what is comfortable. On the other hand, if she is inclined to participate, the mother should encourage the daughter to take the lead. With the help of another mature woman—a best friend, sister, aunt—as an additional mentor, the mother may allow her daughter's creativity free reign.

The Coming of Age ritual is a universal opportunity for the young woman to have her adult status sanctioned.² In the confusing stage of adolescence, the young girl's task is to begin to form an identity separate from her family, while not rejecting them altogether. The *bagrut* ceremony allows her to do this—to leave behind her "little girl" status, assume a role in the community of women, and accept the wealth of Jewish tradition.

Bring: The *Book of Ruth*.³ (During *Sivan* on the holiday of Shavuot, the Giving of the Law, we read the story of Ruth and Naomi.) Mother and *bogeret* should let all know beforehand what will be needed. In this instance, all have been asked to bring a favorite fragrance. Flowers, in the form of a bouquet or a crown, may be used, or a prayer shawl or other ritual object.

Setting: If possible, *Rosh Hodesh Sivan* should be held outdoors during the day, in or near a forest, meadow or park. The group may decide to have this event take the form of a hike and picnic with various stopping points along the way. This is in keeping with Naomi and Ruth who, thousands of years ago, traveled on foot from the fields of Moab to the hills of Bethlehem.

If the group prefers an indoor location, the room can be decorated with Holy Land pictures of Judaeen Hills, of Bethlehem, of flowers and trees that grow in Israel, etc. A rug for sitting and greens and flowers can also be added, a custom of Shavuot, the Spring harvest festival.

Woman: I will add a reason which has been excluded. As women, we instinctively understand Torah. We "hear" it before the men. We bear the Law of Being within us, for we have the potential to bear life. Soon after a boy is born, it is necessary to circumcise him, to put an *ot brit*, a sign of the covenant on his body. A girl needs no such sign put on her. She already bears one within—it is her womb.

The womb symbolizes the repository of the life force, the Holy of Holies where life is sanctified. A baby girl is born with this "covenant of life" in her body. The covenant reaches its literal potential when she bears a child. However, the fact that she has a womb inside her is a constant reminder to her of the equal potential of her physical, spiritual, and intellectual fruitfulness.

Today we are celebrating with Keturah the first tangible sign that her womb is ready to bear children, that she is ready to transmit Torah to the next generation. Today we acknowledge Keturah as a Bearer of Life and a Bearer of Torah. We women are particularly known for our role as teachers of Torah.⁷ The majority of teachers in Jewish day schools and Hebrew schools are women.

Sign of the Month

Teomim, twins, is the astrological sign of *Sivan*. There are many pairings at this time, in keeping with this theme. The first is signified by *Matan Torah*, for the sages say that the Torah was God's *ketubah*, wedding contract, with Israel. *Shekhinah*, or the community of Israel as many call her, was "married to God" in this month.

A sacred pairing occurs in human dimensions in the story of Ruth. She weds her fate first to her mother-in-law, Naomi, and then to Boaz.

The twins of *Sivan* are also an emblem of fertility, reflected in the person of Ruth. She produces a child, an heir for Naomi whose sons and husbands have died. She echoes the fertility of the land, productive at this time of harvest.

Puberty Rites at Rosh Hodesh:

The mother of the *bogeret* sets the tone for the day in her own words.

Keturah's mother: Today we celebrate Keturah's coming of age as a Jewish woman. At her bat mitzvah in a few months, we'll celebrate her entrance as an adult into the Jewish community where she will take on the *mitzvot* of learning and teaching Torah, celebrating the holidays, observing the Sabbath. Today, on *Rosh Hodesh Sivan*, we welcome her into the community of Jewish women of the past, present and future.

As the kabbalist, Joseph Gikatilla said:

... in the days of Abraham the *Shekhinah* was called Sarah, in the days of Isaac—Rebecca, and in the days of Jacob—Rachel.⁸

In the days of the Judges, the *Shekhinah* was known as Ruth and Naomi. Here in our community we believe that the month in which a girl's first men-

strual flow occurs marks her initiation into womanhood. In the month of *Sivan*, the way Ruth, Naomi and Boaz interacted with each other was thought by the Rabbis to demonstrate the relationship between God and the people Israel, one characterized by mutual caring and trust, by *hesed* or loving-kindness.⁹

This *bagrut* ceremony is also an opportunity for us to reclaim the positive aspects of our monthly flow. It is a time when women separate themselves from the rest of society to experience the vigorous flow of creative energy within.¹⁰ In some societies, women reside in a special hut for the duration of their periods—a way to show respect and awe for the sacred life blood as it passes through their bodies. It is an opportunity for women to share experience and wisdom; to pause in the midst of their daily lives; to reaffirm their sacred capacity each month to bear a child; to recognize their connection with the cycles of life and death which permeate all beings.

A young woman coming of age was probably a major impetus for the celebration of *Rosh Hodesh* in ancient times, before the Rabbis sanitized it by calling it a “reward” for the women at Mount Sinai who refused to donate their gold for the making of the Golden Calf.¹¹ In our tradition and in our use of a lunar calendar, the link between the cycles of the moon and the cycles of women is understood.

Legend confirms this, telling us that the Israelite women suffered no menstrual pain during the entire time in the desert because they were the first to claim willingness to receive the Torah.¹²

Today we want to change the negative self-image which most of us have known all our lives, the image which the blood taboo has perpetuated. We discard and expel the old notions that we suffer “Eve’s curse,” that we are unclean, profane and contaminated during the time of our menstrual flow. Today we celebrate our part in the life process as Keturah formally enter our *Rosh Hodesh* circle.

She addresses the *bogeret*.

From this month on, Keturah, we invite you to celebrate the New Moon with us as our female ancestors have done for centuries in different ways.¹³ We hope this monthly meeting will remind you that your period is a sacred time of contemplation and rejuvenation. We hope that as you move within the rhythms of *Rosh Hodesh*, you will resist the negativity with which society regards your monthly blood and your womanhood.¹⁴

Keeper of Sivan: Let’s share experiences about our first periods, followed by words of Torah from the *bogeret* and her mother. We’ll give special blessings to Keturah along with our gifts followed by singing and refreshments.

Story Sharing:

The Keeper begins with questions:

What do you remember about the first time you menstruated? What had you been expecting? What had you been told? How did your mother, father, siblings, friends react? How did you feel?

The women share anecdotes and stories about their first periods. They remember their mothers’ reactions as well as those of people close to them. They remember

Keeper: Keturah, now that you are woman, you need a tallit, a prayer shawl. When you become bat mitzvah in a few months, you will be able to use this whenever you pray, whenever you want to feel the strength of your Jewish ancestors wrapped around you.²⁴

This prayer shawl depicts the thirteen female tribes. With each of the twelve tribes was born a twin sister, and with Benjamin were born two sisters.²⁵ We each chose a woman and embroidered her into a square—there's Deborah sitting under a palm tree, and Sarah laughing and Rebecca at the well, and Miriam dancing by the sea, and Eve eating the fruit, and Judith with the dagger poised, and Esther seated on her throne and Hannah deep in prayer, and Ruth and Naomi embracing, and Lilith flying through the night, and Rachel weeping for her children and Tamar bearing a child who is the ancestor of the Messiah. The only square left, the thirteenth one, is for you, Keturah, to design and stitch into the center.

If the *bogeret* has already been bat mitzvah, it is appropriate to recite blessings for placing the tallit on her shoulders.²⁶

Keturah: Thank you all. I'll treasure this tallit forever.

If the group wishes, they can leave the *tsitit*, the ritual fringes which hang from the four corners of the tallit, until the shawl is presented to the *bogeret*. Then all can participate in tying the knots, an activity which is symbolic of the "tying up" or completion of childhood.²⁷

Singing:

Two women from the group take the tallit and, holding it over Keturah, they sing and dance around her. All then sing *V'Anu Matsanu Menuchah*,²⁸ and then songs of childhood and womanhood, cycles and circles.

Sung to the tune of "It Ain't Necessarily So" (from Gershwin, *Porgy and Bess*.)

Eve pulled it down
from the Tree,
Yes, she pulled it right
off the Tree.
She knew that by
eatin'
God's plan she was
completin'
So she pulled it right
off the Tree.

Chorus:
It ain't necessarily so,
It ain't necessarily so,
The things that you're
liable
To read in the Bible
They ain't necessarily
so.

Sarah, she laughed when
she heard,
Yes, Sarah she laughed
when she heard.
A witherin' lady
Could carry a baby,
Sarah she laughed when
she heard.

Chorus.

Tamar was a lady of the
night,
Yes, Tamar was a lady of
the night.
She used all her powers
And worked after hours,
To bring the Messiah to
light.

Chorus.

Women in these photos are:
Penina V. Adelman, Matia Angelou,
Miriam Bronstein, Betsy Cohen,
Benji Jackson, Reena Kling,
Elana Klugman, Elyse Landesberg,
Stephanie Loo Ritari.

Making the sign of "Shma" at the
Bagrut, Coming of Age ritual (Sivan)



Celebrating the big *Rosh Hodesh*—*Rosh HaShanah* (Tishre)



held on the Saturday night preceding a Sunday wedding, a beautiful way of beginning the celebration is by making *havdalah*, the ceremony that marks the end of Shabbat.

A traditional and very effective icebreaker is singing. In the *shiret* the prenuptial party was called *zaires*, or songs, and wedding musicians were hired to play then as well as after the *huppah*. Some families have a tradition of writing humorous lyrics to popular songs for family occasions, and the bride and groom expect to be melodically "roasted," with special attention paid to how they met, their shared interests, and their not-shared interests. The bride and groom can also write songs about their families, about how the printer messed up the invitations, about the trials and tribulations of renting a dance floor, et cetera. Songs don't have to be "Jewish"; camp songs, show tunes, anything catchy will do.

At a sizable family gathering a master of ceremonies can also be very helpful in loosening people up with jokes and toasts. (The tradition of the *bachchan*, or wedding jester, is described in the section "Laughter, Music, and Dance.") The emcee at a family party can encourage toasts and blessings, and roasting and singing from both sides, and, finally, announce when the party is over and it's time to leave.

Another way of forging bonds between families is through the ceremonial presentation of special gifts. Although the giving of wedding gifts is thought of mostly as the obligation of guests, for many centuries grooms and brides and their families exchanged presents, prescribed by local custom, as a way of welcoming a new son or daughter into the family. Gifts such as these commonly have some part to play in the wedding and/or for the couple's Jewish life together: candlesticks for Shabbat, a kiddush cup, challah cover, a Seder plate, and works of art with Jewish themes.

In some communities men didn't wear a *tallis* until after marriage, so a traditional gift is for the bride and/or her parents to give the groom a prayer shawl. Since many women wear *tallesim*, a prayer shawl may be a thoughtful gift for the bride from her groom and his family. Families might even collaborate on hers-and-his *tallesim*. A *huppah* made of the

tallis given by a bride to her groom, a groom to his bride, or by the two families to "their" children adds a personal dimension to the canopy, which symbolizes the new home being established.

A *tallis* can be commissioned by a weaver or handmade in one of a number of simple ways. You can, for example, just purchase a beautiful piece of cloth (traditionally either wool or linen and, according to Leviticus, never a combination of the two), hem it, and then attach the ritual fringes, or *tzitzit*. It is the fringes that transform a four-cornered piece of fabric into a *tallis*. A simple piece of fabric can be embroidered or appliquéd with a design of your choosing. If you purchase a *tallis*, a personalized *atarah*—literally, "crown"—or neckpiece, can be embroidered with a blessing, the name of the groom or bride, or a decorative design.³

Rehearsal Dinners. Some rabbis advise against this custom, and some even refuse to take part in wedding rehearsals. They report that it is a time-consuming, usually stressful, and virtually unnecessary step. Besides, the moment a bride and groom enter the *huppah* is unique, one that cannot and should not be practiced. The ceremony itself is very simple, and the order of processionals and recessionals can easily be left to the care of a wedding accomodator or to a trusted friend who will not be walking down the aisle and can act as the processional "starter." (The rabbi will give that person the cue for things to begin, and then she/he can direct mothers, fathers, attendants, groom, and bride to enter at the proper time.) In this way the dinner that should be helping cement the relationships between families can be free of the inevitable tensions that arise when already nervous people are ordered to march up and down the aisle.

Community Recognition. Like every life-cycle event, a wedding is celebrated on three levels: personal, familial, and communal. The impact of a marriage on the couple and their families is obvious; however, every marriage changes the whole Jewish community by creating a new family and also, in many cases, by offering the promise of new life.

The Jewish community publicly recognizes and congratulates its cour-

Memory of Joe and Others by Laurie Gross

TZITZIT--a sign of life, prayer, action
Knots, fringes, unraveling white threads
I remember as a young child playing with the
fringes on
My father's tallit.
Tzitzit--A tradition we pass on from one generation to the next
This is how we tie them
This is how we wear them....
This is how we remember with them.
The tallit wrapped around the body for burial
The tzitzit
At least one cut off an imperfect tallit buried.
What happened to these cut off tzitzit?
A question I found no answer to until
At Cousin Joe's funeral
The Rabbi gave to Joe's wife, son and daughter,
Each a tzitzit from his tallit,
"With this you will remember your husband and father
his commitment to learning and living a Jewish life."
What happens to these cut off tzitzit?
We hold on to them for memories
We hold on to them to feel connected
We hold on to them to emulate
We hold on to them to continue
We hold on to them for commitment.
Tzitzit-- A tradition we pass on from one generation to the next.

Source:

<http://www.ritualwell.org/Rituals/ritual.html?docid=993>

© 2005 ritualwell.org.

Suggested Activity 12: A Class Debate

1. Encyclopaedia Judaica: Tekhelet

Feliks, Jehuda. "Tekhelet." *Encyclopaedia Judaica: CD Rom Edition*. Judaica Multimedia, 1997.

2. Maimonides on Tekhelet: *Mishneh Torah: Hilchot Tzitzit 2:1, 2, 4, 9.*

Touger, Eliyahu. *Maimonides Mishneh Torah: The Laws Governing Tefillin, Mezuzah, and Torah Scrolls and The Laws of Tzitzit*. New York: Moznaim Publishing, 1990.

3. Top Ten Tekhelet FAQ's & Facts

P'til Tekhelet: The Association for the Promotion and Distribution of Tekhelet
<http://www.tekhelet.com>

Encyclopaedia Judaica: Tekhelet

TEKHELET ("blue"), *argaman* ("purple"), and *tola'at shani* ("crimson worm") are frequently mentioned together in the Bible as dyestuffs for threads and fabrics, including the curtains of the Tabernacle (Ex. 26: 1), the veil (Ex. 26:31), the veil for the tent (Ex. 26: 31) and the ephod (Ex. 28:6). A thread of *tekhelet* had to be included in the fringes (Num. 15: 38). Princes and nobles wore garments of *tekhelet* (Ezek. 23:6) and it was used for the expensive fabrics in the royal palace (Esth. 1:6). The Tyrians were expert dyers with these materials (II Chron. 2:6; cf. Ezek. 27:7). According to the talmudic *aggadah* the dwellers in Luz (a legendary locality) were experts in dyeing *tekhelet* (Sanh. 12a; Sot. 46b). *Tekhelet* was extracted from the *hillazon*—a snail found in the sea between the promontory of Tyre and Haifa (Shab. 26a; Sif. Deut. 354). Members of the tribe of Zebulun engaged in gathering it (Meg. 6a), and according to the Midrash it is this which is referred to in that tribe's blessing that their inheritance would include "the hidden treasures of the sands" (Deut. 33: 19). The *baraita* notes that the *tekhelet* multiplies like fish, i.e., by laying eggs, "and comes up once in 70 years, and with its blood *tekhelet* is dyed, and that is why it is expensive" (Men. 44a; cf. Sif., *ibid.*). The statement reflects the fact that the snail reaches the shore in shoals infrequently and the extraction of the dye is a very expensive process. For this reason "a garment made wholly of *tekhelet*" was considered expensive and rare (Men. 39a, etc.).

The color of *tekhelet* was between green and blue and was thus described: "*Tekhelet* resembles the sea, the sea resembles grass, and grass resembles the heavens" (TJ, Ber. 1:5, 3a). It is like the color of the leek. *Tekhelet* was usually dyed on wool (Yev. 4b). The color was fast and withstood oxidization (Men. 42b–43a). The best dye was obtained when extracted from live snails (Shab. 75a) and to make it fast various materials were added (Men. 42b). In the time of the Mishnah another dye, *kela ilan*, extracted from the Indian indigo plant, was introduced into Erez Israel. This dye is very similar in color to *tekhelet* but is much cheaper. Thenceforth indigo was frequently used to counterfeit, and was sold as, *tekhelet*. Ways of testing to distinguish them were indeed suggested, but the *baraita* concluded that "There is no way of testing the *tekhelet* of *zizit*, and it should be bought from an expert" (Men. 42b). It is worthy of note that dyed *zizit* were discovered in the Bar Kokhba Caves. The testing of them by modern methods proved almost with certainty that they were in fact dyed with indigo—the aforementioned *kela ilan*. For all these reasons—the high cost of *tekhelet*, the difficulty of gathering the snails and extracting the dye, and because of the fear of counterfeiting with *kela ilan*—some *tannaim* permitted *zizit* made without a thread of *tekhelet* (Men. 4:1; cf. Men. 38a). It is probable, however, that many continued to fulfill the biblical precept. In the time of the *amora* Abbaye, Jews still engaged in dyeing with the *tekhelet* and Samuel b. Judah, a Babylonian *amora* who had resided in Erez Israel, explained the dyeing process to him. In the time of the *savora* Abai the differences between *tekhelet* and *kela ilan* were tested (Men. 42b). The Midrash, however, notes that "nowadays we only possess white *zizit*, the *tekhelet* having been concealed" (Num. R. 17:5).

Gershon Hanokh Leiner, the hasidic rabbi of Radzin, proposed in his books *Sefunei Temunei Hol* (1887) and *Petil Tekhelet* (1888) that the precept of the *tekhelet* in *zizit* be reintroduced. He came to the conclusion that *tekhelet* had been extracted from the cuttlefish, *Sepia officinalis (vulgaris)*, which has a gland in its body that secretes a blue-black dye, and his suggestion was adopted by his followers. From the sources, however, it seems that the *tekhelet* dye was much lighter, nor do the descriptions of *tekhelet* in rabbinical literature fit this creature, which is common on the shores of Israel, its dye being neither expensive nor fast. It is also difficult to identify it with the *hillazon*. *Hillazon* in rabbinical literature is a land or sea snail (Sanh. 91a). Among the latter there are species in whose bodies is a gland containing a clear liquid, which when it comes into contact with the air becomes greenish: this is *tekhelet* which, after the addition of various chemicals, receives its purple color, the "royal purple" of literature. The Phoenicians in particular specialized in it, Phoenicia in Greek meaning the land of purple. Around Tyre and Ras-Shamra—the site of ancient Ugarit—large quantities of shells of the purple snail have been found. These belong to the species *Murex trunculus* and *Murex brandaris*, which are found along the length of the eastern shore of the Mediterranean and whose quantities change from time to time. A modern

investigator extracted 1.4 gram of the purple dye from 12,000 such snails, thus explaining the high cost of the *tekhelet* and purple dyes. Isaac Herzog, in a study of *tekhelet* (unpublished dissertation: "The Dyeing of Purple in Ancient Israel," 1919), reached the conclusion that it was extracted from the snails *Janthina pallida* and *Janthina bicolor* that are found a considerable distance from the shore and only reach it at long intervals. This in his opinion explains the statement that the *tekhelet* comes up once in 70 years (Men. 44a). The dye extracted from these snails varies between violet blue and the blue of the heavens. Most investigators incline to the view that *tekhelet* and *argaman* were extracted from the *Murex* snails.

[Jehuda Feliks]

Encyclopaedia Judaica: CDRom Edition. Judaica Multimedia, 1997.

CHAPTER TWO

1. The term *techelet* mentioned throughout the Torah refers to wool dyed light blue - i.e., the color of the sky which appears opposite the sun when there is a clear sky.

The term *techelet* when used regarding tzitzit refers to a specific dye that remains beautiful without changing. [If the *techelet*] is not dyed with this dye, it is unfit to be used as tzitzit even though it is sky blue in color. For example, using isatis, black dye, or other dark dyes, is unacceptable for tzitzit.

The wool of a ewe that a goat gave birth to is unacceptable for use as tzitzit.

2. How is the *techelet* of tzitzit dyed? Wool is taken and soaked in lime. Afterwards, it is taken and washed until it is clean and then boiled with bleach and the like, as is the dyers' practice, to prepare it to accept the dye.

Afterwards, the blood of a chilazon is brought. A chilazon is a fish whose color is like the color of the sea and whose blood is black like ink.¹ It is found in the Mediterranean Sea.² The blood is placed in a

Commentary, Halachah 1

The term *techelet* mentioned throughout the Torah - regarding the priestly garments as well as tzitzit. See Exodus 28:6.

refers to wool dyed light blue - The Rambam's expression literally means "mixed blue." The *Tiferet Yisrael* explains that this refers to blue mixed with white.

i.e., the color of the sky which appears opposite the sun when there is a clear sky. - *Menachot* 43b describes this as resembling the color of the sea or of a sapphire stone.

The term *techelet* when used regarding tzitzit - The *Merkevat HaMishneh* explains that with this statement, the Rambam is differentiating between the *techelet* used for tzitzit and that used for the priestly garments. Significantly, in *Hilchot Klei HaMikdash* 8:13, when the Rambam describes *techelet*, he does not mention that it was taken from the blood of a chilazon.

refers to a specific dye - as described in Halachah 2

that remains beautiful without changing. - See Halachah 5.

[If the *techelet*] is not dyed with this dye, it is unfit to be used as tzitzit even though it is sky blue in color. For example, using isatis, black dye, or other dark dyes, is unacceptable for tzitzit. - Since the chilazon was extremely difficult to obtain, even in Talmudic times there was a tendency to dye tzitzit with other substances.

The wool of a ewe that a goat gave birth to - i.e., an animal resembling a ewe that was conceived by mating a she-goat and a ram (*Bechorot* 17a). The *Kessef Mishneh* writes that this wool is also not considered wool regarding the prohibition against sha'atnez.

is
chap
that
not f
state
unfit
1. T.
it we
that
anim
In
teche
gener
Ap
to re
the fi
theor
in pra
2. Th

pot together with herbs - e.g., chamomile - as is the dyers' practice. It is boiled and then the wool is inserted. [It is left there] until it becomes sky-blue. This is the manner in which the *techelet* of tzitzit [is made].

3. One must dye tzitzit *techelet* with the intention that it be used for the mitzvah. If one did not have such an intention, it is unacceptable.

When one places some wool in the pot in which the dye was placed, to check whether the dye is good or not, the entire pot may no longer be used [for tzitzit].³ [If so,] how should one check [the dye]? He should take some dye from the pot in a small container and place the wool he uses to check in it. Afterwards, he should burn the wool used to check - for it was dyed for the purpose of checking⁴ - and pour out the dye used to check it, since using it for an experiment disqualified it. Afterwards, he should dye [the wool] *techelet* with the remainder of the dye which was not used.

4. *Techelet* should be acquired only from a recognized dealer, lest it have been dyed without the intention of being used for the mitzvah.

Even though it was purchased from a recognized dealer, if it was checked,⁵ and it was discovered that it was dyed with another dark dye which is not of a permanent nature, it is not acceptable.⁶

5. How can *techelet* be checked to see whether it has been dyed properly or not? One takes straw, the secretion of a snail, and urine that had been left standing for forty days and leaves the *techelet* in this mixture for an entire day. If the color of the *techelet* remained unchanged, without becoming weaker, it is acceptable.

If it became weaker, we place the *techelet* which changed color inside a dough of barley meal that was left to sour for fish brine. The dough is baked in an oven, and then the *techelet* is removed. If it became even weaker than it was previously, it is unacceptable. If this strengthened the color and it became darker than it was before being baked, it is acceptable.⁷

uses this term to refer to the Mediterranean. See the conclusion of his Commentary on the Mishnah.

3. *Menachot* 42b interprets the phrase, "totally *techelet*" (Exodus 28:31), to mean that the entire dye must be intended for a ritual purpose.

4. Thus, it is unfit to be used for tzitzit. This wool should be burned lest it be discovered by someone else and unknowingly used for tzitzit.

פרק ב

צא בקו.

ציצית.

פסולה.

יפה אם

שבדק

ענה שלא

הוא באחד

לאור?

ושורין

שרה.

נתנין את

הכלת מן

כשרה.

5. Since it is
Nevertheless.6. The Ram
used for tzi:
they had (K

7. These pre

- 9 The punishment given someone who does not wear [tzitzit of white strands] is more severe than that given one who does not wear *techelet*, because the white strands are easily accessible while *techelet* is not available in every time and in every era, because of the [unique] dye mentioned above.¹⁴

CHAPTER THREE

1. A garment to which the Torah obligates a person to attach tzitzit [must meet the following requirements]:

- a) it must have four - or more than four - corners;
- b) it must be large enough to cover both the head and the majority of the body of a child who is able to walk on his own in the marketplace without having someone else accompany him and watch him;
- c) it must be made of either wool or linen alone.

2. In contrast, a garment made of other fabrics - for example, clothes of silk, cotton, camels' wool, hares' wool, goats' wool, and the like - are required to have tzitzit only because of Rabbinic decree, in order to show regard for the mitzvah of tzitzit.

14. Even in Talmudic times, *techelet* was very expensive and difficult to obtain. As mentioned in the commentary on Halachah 1, according to most authorities, *techelet* is not available in the present era, nor has it been available for at least 1000 years.

Commentary, Halachah 1

A garment to which the Torah obligates a person to attach tzitzit - With this expression, the Rambam could be alluding to the concept that a person is not obligated to wear tzitzit. Should a person desire to wear a garment of the type that requires tzitzit, then he has the opportunity to fulfill the mitzvah. See Halachot 10-11.

[must meet the following requirements]: a) it must have four - Deuteronomy 22:12 states: "Make braids on the four corners of your garments." As explained in Halachah 3, this excludes a garment with fewer than four corners.

or more than four - corners; - See Halachah 3.

b) it must be large enough to cover both the head and the majority of the body of a child - *Menachot* 41a adds that the garment must be large enough for an adult to use it occasionally.

This requirement is particularly significant regarding a *tallit katan*. Note the *Mishnah Berurah* 16:4, which requires that a *tallit katan* be at least 0.75 of a cubit long and 0.75 of a cubit wide on each side, without including the area of the hole where one's head is inserted. Preferably, the *tallit katan* should be a cubit by a cubit on each side.

who is able to walk on his own in the marketplace without having someone else

P'til Tekhelet

The Association for the Promotion
and Distribution of Tekhelet
Jerusalem, Israel

Top Ten Tekhelet FAQ's & Facts

What is Tekhelet?

Tekhelet is one of the colors mentioned in the Torah, traditionally associated with a shade of blue. It is mentioned frequently alongside gold, silver and silk as a precious commodity. There is a Biblical commandment to tie a thread of Tekhelet around the tzitzit (fringes) of cornered garments. In addition, Tekhelet is required in the garments of the High Priest, as well as for the coverings of the holy vessels.

What does Tekhelet come from?

The Talmud describes Tekhelet as coming from a sea-creature called a chilazon. In a homiletic passage, the chilazon is characterized as "similar to the sea, being similar to [but not] a fish, and coming up from the sea once in seventy years [rarely]." Chilazon in modern Hebrew means "snail". Rabbinic, historical, archaeological and chemical evidence point to *Murex trunculus* snails as the source of Tekhelet.

How is Tekhelet produced?

Murex snails possess a gland which contains the source of Tekhelet. Dibromindigo, which originates from glandular secretions of a fresh snail, bonds chemically to wool when put into solution in a reduced state (vat dyeing). In the presence of sunlight, the dibromindigo debrominates to indigo, leaving color-fast blue wool.

Where do the snails live?

Murex trunculus snails live along the coast of the Mediterranean Sea. In ancient Israel, the tribe of Zebulun, located on the North-East coast, was attributed with having the chilazon. Archaeological digs have since uncovered mounds of broken *Murex* shells and remains of the dyeing industry on the North-Eastern coast of Israel. Today, since *Murex trunculus* snails are a protected species in Israel, snails for Tekhelet are obtained and processed outside of Israel (Greece, Spain) where they are caught and sold for food.

Who does the dyeing?

The dye extraction process is performed by workers under P'til Tekhelet's

supervision. The actual dyeing of wool with the Tekhelet is undertaken by P'til Tekhelet, (in Jerusalem and its environs) under the direction of its founder Rav Eliyahu Tavger, and in consultation with various *Poskim*. The wool is dyed expressly with the intent of the mitzvah, as dictated by halacha.

How many snails does it take to complete a set of tzitzit?

One to make the dye and 29 to tie the tzitzit (just kidding). We estimate that it takes approximately 30 snails to produce a set of Tekhelet strings. However, this number may very well fluctuate based on season, port of origin, extraction technique, etc. Scientific investigation of these influences will hopefully produce more accurate information in the future.

How should I tie Tekhelet on my tzitzit?

There are different opinions regarding how Tekhelet should be tied. Bear in mind that the technique chosen does not qualify/disqualify the mitzvah, except for certain minimal requirements. Today, Tekhelet is being tied following the opinions of various legal authorities including the Vilna Gaon, the Rambam, the Sefer HaChinuch, and Chabad.

Why should I wear Tekhelet?

Wearing Tekhelet on tzitzit is a mitzvah prescribed by the Torah. It is a commandment which is intended for all generations, independent of location and unrelated to the existence of the Temple. It is only during the last century that we have had the means and privilege of embarking upon the restoration of Tekhelet, which has been denied to us for many centuries. Dare we let this opportunity pass us by?

How do I know this Tekhelet is really it?

Archaeological discovery of mounds of Murex snails at coastal dyeing sites, as well as literary evidence from the ancient world of dyeing and chemical analysis of the Murex dye, are all strong evidence in support of this conclusion. More importantly, the growing number of Rabbinic personalities and halachic communities wearing Tekhelet today, lends further credence to its authenticity. The results of the "real" test, however, will only be validated by its acceptance in the years, if not generations to come.

Suggested Activity 14: Tallit Styles

1. Hiddur Mitzvah: M'chilta Shirata, 3

Lauterbach, Jacob Z. *Mekilta de-Rabbi Ishmael*. Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1949.

Hiddur Mitzvah: M'chilta Shirata, 3

מכילתא פרשת השירה פרשה ג'
ואנוהו. רבי ישמעאל אומר וכי אפשר לבשר ודם להננות לקונו אלא
אנוהו לו במצות אעשה לפניו לולב נאה סוכה נאה ציצית נאה
תפלה נאה.

And I Will Glorify Him. R. Ishmael says: And is it possible for a man of flesh and blood to add glory to his Creator? It simply means: I shall be beautiful before Him in observing the commandments. I shall prepare before Him a beautiful lulav, a beautiful sukkah, beautiful fringes and beautiful phylacteries.

Lauterbach, Jacob Z. *Mekilta de-Rabbi Ishmael*. Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1949.

Suggested Activity 15: Wrapping Ourselves

Prayers for Donning a Tallit from:

1. Gates of Prayer for Shabbat and Weekdays
2. Siddur Sim Shalom for Shabbat and Festivals
3. Kol Haneshamah, Shabbat Vehagim
4. Artscroll Sabbath and Festival Siddur

C
E
N
T
R
A
L
C
O
N
F
E
R
E
N
C
E
O
F
R
A
B
B
I
S

Gates of Prayer

for Shabbat and Weekdays

שערי תפלה

לשבת ויום חול

A Gender Sensitive Prayerbook

Chaim Stern, Editor



CENTRAL CONFERENCE OF AMERICAN RABBIS
5755 NEW YORK 1994

FOR THOSE WHO WEAR A TALLIT

בְּרַכֵּי נַפְשִׁי אֶת־יְהוָה! יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵי, גְדֻלַּת מְאֹד!
חֹד וְהִדְר לְבִשְׁתָּ, עֲטָה־אֹר כְּשֶׁלֶמָה, נוֹטָה שָׁמַיִם כִּי־יַעַה.

Praise the Eternal One, O my soul!
O God, You are very great!
Arrayed in glory and majesty, You wrap Yourself in light as with a garment, and stretch out the heavens like a curtain.

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יי, אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם,
אֲשֶׁר קִדְּשָׁנוּ בְּמִצְוֹתָיו וְצִוָּנוּ לְהִתְעַטֵּף בְּצִיצִית.

We praise You, Eternal God, Sovereign of the universe:
You hallow us with Your Mitzvot, and teach us to wrap ourselves
in the fringed Tallit.



סדור

שלים

שלום

לשבת ויום טוב

Siddur Sim Shalom

FOR SHABBAT AND FESTIVALS



THE RABBINICAL ASSEMBLY
THE UNITED SYNAGOGUE OF CONSERVATIVE JUDAISM
New York City

Meditation before putting on the tallit

PSALM 104:1-2

Let all my being praise Adonai. Adonai my God, You are great indeed, clothed in splendor and majesty, wrapped in light as in a garment, unfolding the heavens like a curtain.

I wrap myself in a fringed tallit to fulfill the mitzvah of my Creator, as written in the Torah: "They shall put tzitzit on the corners of their garments in every generation" (Numbers 15:38).

We put on the tallit, which reminds us of all 613 mitzvot.

Praised are You Adonai our God, who rules the universe, instilling in us the holiness of mitzvot by commanding us to wrap ourselves in tzitzit.

PSALM 36:8-11

How precious is Your constant love, O God. Mortals take shelter under Your wings. They feast on the abundance of Your house; You give them drink from Your stream of delights. With You is the fountain of life; in Your light we are bathed in light. Maintain Your constant love for those who acknowledge You, and Your beneficence for those who are honorable.

Before creation shaped the world,

God, eternal, reigned alone;
but only with creation done
could God as Sovereign be known.
When all is ended, God alone
will reign in awesome majesty.
God was, God is, always will be
glorious in eternity.

God is unique and without peer,
with none at all to be compared.
Without beginning, endlessly,
God's vast dominion is not shared.
But still — my God, my only hope,
my one true refuge in distress,
my shelter sure, my cup of life,
with goodness real and limitless.
I place my spirit in God's care;
my body too can feel God near.
When I sleep as when I wake,
God is with me; I have no fear.

Meditation before putting on the tallit

החלים קיד: א-ב

פְּרָכִי נַפְשִׁי אֶת־יְהוָה. יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵי גְדִלְתִּי מְאֹד, הוֹד וְהָדָר
לְבָשָׁתִּי. עֲטָה אֹר כְּשֵׁלֶמָה, נוֹטָה שְׁמַיִם כְּרִיזָה.

הִנְנִי מַתְעַטֵּף / מַתְעַטֵּפֶת בְּצִיצִית כְּדֵי לְקַיֵּם מִצְוַת בּוֹרְאִי,
כְּפָתוּב בַּתּוֹרָה: וַעֲשׂוּ לָהֶם צִיצֵת עַל כַּנְּפֵי כְּגִידֵיהֶם
לְדֹרֹתָם.

The fringes of the tallit, as explained in Numbers 15:39-40, serve to remind us of the Torah's mitzvot,

and the ideal of holiness to which we are summoned.

Tefillin are not worn on Shabbat and Festivals, because these days are themselves reminders of these very truths.

כְּרוֹךְ אֶתְּהָ יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הַעוֹלָם,
אֲשֶׁר קִדְּשָׁנוּ בַּמִּצְוֹתָיו וְאָנּוּנוּ לְהַתְעַטֵּף בְּצִיצִית.

החלים ל"ו: ח-י"א

מִה יָגֵר חֲסוּדָה אֱלֹהִים, וּבְנֵי אָדָם בְּצַל כַּנְּפֵיךָ יַחֲסִינוּ.
יְרוּזוּ מִדְּשָׁן בֵּיתְךָ, וְנַחַל עַדְרֵיךָ תִשְׁקֵם.
כִּי עֲמִיק מְקוֹר חַיִּים, בְּאוֹרְךָ נִרְאָה אֹר.
מִשֶׁךְ חֲסוּדָה לִידְעִיךָ, וְאֶדְלֹקְךָ לִישְׁרֵי לֵב.

בְּטָרָם כִּלְיָנוּ נִבְרָא.

אֲזֵי מֶלֶךְ שָׁמוּ נִקְרָא.
לְבָדוּ יִמְלֹךְ נוֹרָא.

יְהוָה יְהִיָּה בְּתַפְאָרְתֵּךָ.

לְהַמְשִׁילַ לֹ לְהַחֲבִירְךָ.

וְלוֹ הָעוּ וְהַמְשִׁרְךָ.

רְצוּר חֲבָלֵי בְּעֵת צָרָה.

מִנְתַּת בּוֹטֵי בְיוֹם אֶקְרָא.

בְּעֵת אִישָׁן וְאֶעֱרָה.

יְהוָה לִי וְלֹא אֵיבָא.

אֲרוּז עוֹלָם אֲשֶׁר מֶלֶךְ

לְעֵת נַעֲשֶׂה בְּחַפְצוֹ כֹּל

וְאֶחָדִי כִּכְלוֹת הַכֹּל

וְהוּא הִיךָ וְהוּא הוֹדָה,

וְהוּא אֶחָד וְאֵין שְׁנֵי

כֹּלֵי רְאִישֵׁי כֹּלֵי תְכֵלֵת,

וְהוּא אֵלֵי וְחֵי גּוֹאֲלֵי,

וְהוּא נֶפֶשׁ וּמְנוּס לִי

כְּדוֹ אֶפְקִיד רִוְחִי

וְעַם רִוְחִי גּוֹיֹתֵי

כל הנשמה

Kol Haneshamah

שבת והגים

Shabbat Vehagim

The Reconstructionist Press
Wyncote, Pennsylvania
1994

עֲטִיפוֹת טַלִּית

It is customary to wrap oneself in the tallit before reciting the blessing that follows. After the blessing is recited, the tallit is placed across the shoulders. In some congregations the blessing is said in unison.

עֲטֵה
 פָּרְכֵי נַפְשִׁי אֶת יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵי גְדֻלָּתְךָ מְאֹד, הוֹד וְהַדָּר לְבִשְׁתִּי. עֲטֵה
 אֹד פְּשָׁלְמָה נוֹטָה שְׁמַיִם בִּירֵעֵה:
 בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם
 אֲשֶׁר קִדְּשָׁנוּ בְּמִצְוֹתָיו
 וַיְצַוֵּנוּ לְהַתְּעַפֹּף בְּצִיצֵיתָ:

Baruh atah adonay eloheynu meleḥ ha'olam
 asher kideshanu bemitzvotav
 vetzivanu lehitatef batzitzit.

Many contemporary Jews are reciting *berahot*/blessings in ways that reflect their theological outlooks and ethical concerns. At any place where a blessing occurs in the liturgy, the following elements can be combined to create alternative formulas for *berahot*. This can be done by selecting one phrase from each group to form the introductory clause.

I	Baruh atah adonay	בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְהוָה	Blessed are you Adonay
	Berubah at yah	בְּרוּכָה אַתְּ יָה	Blessed are you Yah
	Nevarch et	נִבְרַח אֶת	Let us bless
II	eloheynu	אֱלֹהֵינוּ	our God
	hasheh'inah	הַשְׁבִּינָה	Sheh'inah
	eyn habayim	עַיִן הַבַּיִתִּים	Source of Life
III	meleḥ ha'olam	מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם	Sovereign of all worlds
	hey ha'olamim	הֵי הָעוֹלָמִים	Life of all the worlds
	ruah ha'olam	רוּחַ הָעוֹלָם	Spirit of the world

ATIFAT TALLIT / DONNING THE TALLIT

It is customary to wrap oneself in the tallit before reciting the blessing that follows. After the blessing is recited, the tallit is placed across the shoulders. In some congregations the blessing is said in unison.

Bless, O my soul, THE ONE!
 ABUNDANT ONE, my God, how great you grow!
 In majesty and beauty you are dressed,
 wrapping yourself in light as in a garment,
 stretching out the heavens like a shawl!

(Psalm 104:1-2)

Blessed are You, VEILED ONE, our God, the sovereign of all worlds, who has made us holy with your mitzvot, and commanded us to wrap ourselves amid the fringed tallit.

COMMENTARY. According to rabbinic tradition, Psalm 104:1-2 describes how God, robed in splendor, wrapped in light, began to create the world. The radiance of God's light-robe (one source says that God donned a white tallit) illumined the world before the creation of sun, moon, and stars. This meditation invites the worshipper to consider the act of donning the tallit to be the first step in the daily renewal of the world. God's wrapping in light becomes Israel's enlightened wrapping at the outset of a new day. It encourages Israel to celebrate world renewing creativity as an unending sign of the divine presence within humankind. S.S.

DERASH. The tallit is a very personal ritual object. Usually I wrap it around myself when joining in a prayer community. For the tallit both creates a private space for me and links me with Jewish tradition. It emphasizes my connection to my people while also offering me spiritual privacy. I am alone and in community at the same time. L.B.

THE RENOV EDITION

The ArtScroll Sabbath and Festival

SIODOR

*A new translation
and anthologized commentary
by*

Rabbi Nosson Scherman

Co-edited by
Rabbi Meir Zlotowitz

Designed by
Rabbi Sheah Brander

תוסח אשכנז שלש רגלים

שבת / שלש רגלים

NUSACH ASHKENAZ — תוסח אשכנז

Published by

Mesorah Publications, Ltd.

UPON ARISING

A Jew should wake up with gratitude to God for having restored his faculties, and with a lionlike resolve to serve his Creator. He should immediately declare:

מוֹדָה אָנִי *I gratefully thank You,* O living and eternal King, for You have returned my soul within me with compassion — abundant is Your faithfulness!*

Wash the hands according to the ritual procedure: Pick up the vessel of water with the right hand, pass it to the left, and pour over the right. Then with the right hand pour over the left. Follow this procedure until water has been poured over each hand three times. Then, recite:

הָאֲשִׁית *The beginning of wisdom is the fear of HASHEM — good understanding to all their practitioners; His praise endures forever. Blessed is the Name of His glorious kingdom for all eternity.*

DONNING THE TZITZIS

Hold the tallis kattan in readiness to put on, inspect the tzitzis, and recite the blessing. Then don the tallis kattan and kiss the tzitzis.

One who wears a tallis for Shacharis does not recite this blessing.

בְּרוּךְ *Blessed are You, HASHEM, our God, King of the universe, Who has sanctified us with His commandments, and has commanded us regarding the commandment of tzitzis.*

יְהִי רָצוֹן *May it be Your will, HASHEM, my God and the God of my forefathers, that the commandment of tzitzis be as worthy before You as if I had fulfilled it in all its details, implications, and intentions, as well as the six hundred thirteen commandments that are dependent upon it. Amen, Selah!*

DONNING THE TALLIS

Before donning the tallis, inspect the tzitzis while reciting these verses:

בְּרָכִי נַפְשִׁי *Bless HASHEM, O my soul;* HASHEM, my God, You are very great; You have donned majesty and splendor; cloaked in light as with a garment, stretching out the heavens like a curtain.*¹

(1) Psalms 104:1-2.

been married. Although, strictly speaking, one should recite the appropriate blessings over each garment upon donning it, the custom is that one who wears a tallis at Shacharis does not recite the blessing *ציצת ציצת*, regarding the commandment of tzitzis, when donning the tallis kattan. Instead, before donning the large tallis he has in mind that the blessing *ציצת ציצת*, to wrap ourselves in tzitzis, should apply to both garments.

Before donning his tallis or tallis kattan, one must untangle the fringes and examine them carefully to be sure that none of the strings have torn. It is especially important to check the places

where the strings are looped through the holes in the corners of the garment, for if one of the strings is torn there, the tzitzis are invalid and the garment may not be worn.

צִיצֵי תְּלִית

בְּרָכִי נַפְשִׁי — Bless . . . O my soul. These two verses describe God figuratively as donning garments of majesty and light. Because the tallis symbolizes the splendor of God's commandments, we liken our wearing of it to wrapping ourselves in God's glory and brilliance. Similarly, the Kabbalistic references in the following *לְשֵׁם יְהוָה* prayer associate the tallis with protection, elevation, and illumination.

השכמת הבוקר

A Jew should wake up with gratitude to God for having restored his faculties, and with a lionlike resolve to serve his Creator. He should immediately declare:

מוֹדָה אָנִי *I gratefully thank You,* O living and eternal King, for You have returned my soul within me with compassion — abundant is Your faithfulness!*

Wash the hands according to the ritual procedure: Pick up the vessel of water with the right hand, pass it to the left, and pour over the right. Then with the right hand pour over the left. Follow this procedure until water has been poured over each hand three times. Then, recite:

הָאֲשִׁית *The beginning of wisdom is the fear of HASHEM — good understanding to all their practitioners; His praise endures forever. Blessed is the Name of His glorious kingdom for all eternity.*

לבישת ציצת

Hold the tallis kattan in readiness to put on, inspect the tzitzis, and recite the blessing. Then don the tallis kattan and kiss the tzitzis.

One who wears a tallis for Shacharis does not recite this blessing.

בְּרוּךְ *Blessed are You, HASHEM, our God, King of the universe, Who has sanctified us with His commandments, and has commanded us regarding the commandment of tzitzis.*

יְהִי רָצוֹן *May it be Your will, HASHEM, my God and the God of my forefathers, that the commandment of tzitzis be as worthy before You as if I had fulfilled it in all its details, implications, and intentions, as well as the six hundred thirteen commandments that are dependent upon it. Amen, Selah!*

עטיפת תלית

Before donning the tallis, inspect the tzitzis while reciting these verses:

בְּרָכִי נַפְשִׁי *Bless HASHEM, O my soul;* HASHEM, my God, You are very great; You have donned majesty and splendor; cloaked in light as with a garment, stretching out the heavens like a curtain.*¹

השכמת הבוקר

Such a time-related commandment and, as such, is not required of women. It may be fulfilled in two ways: by means of the tallis kattan (lit. small garment), popularly known simply as "the tzitzis," which is worn all day, usually under the shirt; and by means of the familiar large tallis, commonly known simply as "the tallis," which is worn during Shacharis. Among Sephardic and German Jews, the tallis is worn even by children, but in most Ashkenazic congregations it is worn during prayer only by one who is or has

restored his eyes and thanks God for restoring his faculties to him in the morning. Then, he acknowledges that God did so in the expectation that he will serve Him, and that He is abundantly faithful to reward those who do.

לְבִישַׁת צִיצֵי

Since tzitzis need not be worn at night, the commandment of tzitzis [Numbers 15:38] is classi-

Many recite the following declaration of intent before donning the tallis:
לְשֵׁם יְיָ For the sake of the unification of the Holy One, Blessed is He, and His Presence, in fear and love to unify the Name • — *yud-kei with vav-kei*
 — in perfect unity, in the name of all Israel.

הָרֵינִי I am ready* to wrap my body in tzitzis, so may my soul, my two hundred forty-eight organs and my three hundred sixty-five sinews* be wrapped in the illumination of tzitzis which has the numerical value of six hundred thirteen. Just as I cover myself with a tallis in This World, so may I merit the rabbinical garb and a beautiful cloak in the World to Come in the Garden of Eden. Through the commandment of tzitzis may my life-force, spirit, soul, and prayer be rescued from the external forces. May the tallis spread its wings over them and rescue them like an eagle rousing his nest, fluttering over his eagles.¹ May the commandment of tzitzis be worthy before the Holy One, Blessed is He, as if I had fulfilled it in all its details, implications, and intentions, as well as the six hundred thirteen commandments that are dependent upon it. Amen, Selah!

Unfold the tallis, hold it in readiness to wrap around yourself, and recite the following blessing:
בְּרוּךְ Blessed are You, HASHEM, our God, King of the universe, Who has sanctified us with His commandments and has commanded us to wrap ourselves in tzitzis.

Wrap the tallis around your head and body, then recite:
מַה נִּקָּר How precious is Your kindness, O God! The sons of man take refuge in the shadow of Your wings. May they be sated from the abundance of Your house; and may You give them to drink from the stream of Your delights. For with You is the source of life — by Your light we shall see light. Extend Your kindness to those who know You, and Your charity to the upright of heart.²

Ⓢ Tefillin on Chol HaMoed

There are three different customs (all halachically valid) regarding the wearing of tefillin on Chol HaMoed:

- Tefillin are worn but the blessings usually recited upon donning them are omitted (Taz to O.C. 31:2).
 - Tefillin are worn and the blessings recited, but silently (Rama).
 - Tefillin should not be worn (Orach Chaim 31:2 and Vilna Gaon).
- Mishnah Berurah advises that before putting on the tefillin one should stipulate mentally the following: "if I am obligated to wear tefillin today, then I am donning them in fulfillment of my obligation; but if I am not obligated to wear tefillin today, then I do not intend to fulfill any mitzvah by donning them"; and that the blessing not be recited. It is not proper for a congregation to follow contradictory customs. Thus, if one whose custom is not to wear tefillin during Chol HaMoed prays with a tefillin-wearing minyan, he should don tefillin without a blessing. Conversely, if one whose custom is to wear tefillin prays with a non-tefillin-wearing minyan, he should not wear his tefillin while praying but may don them at home before going to the synagogue (M.B.). Those who wear tefillin customarily remove them before Hallel. (However, since the Torah reading of the first day Chol HaMoed Pesach mentions the mitzvah of tefillin, on that day many people do not remove their tefillin until after the Torah reading.) [The Order of Putting on Tefillin appears as an appendix on page 927.]

Many recite the following declaration of intent before donning the tallis:

לְשֵׁם יְיָ קְדוֹשׁא בְּרוּךְ הוּא וּשְׁכִינְתּוֹהּ, בְּרַחֲמֵי וּדְחִימֵי לִיחֻד שְׁמֵי יִיָּה בְּיָרֵה בְּיָרֵה בְּיַחְוּדָא שְׁלִים, בְּשֵׁם כֹּף יִשְׂרָאֵל.

הָרֵינִי מִתְעַטֵּף גּוֹפִי בַּצִּיצִית, פֶּן תִּתְעַטֵּף נִשְׁמַתִּי וְרַמ"ח אֲבָרֵי וּשְׁס"ה גִּידֵי* בְּאוֹר הַצִּיצִית הַעוֹלָה תְּרִי"ג. וּבְשֵׁם שְׁאֲנֵי מִתְכַּפֶּה בְּטַלִּית בְּעוֹלָם הַהוּא, כִּן אֹזְבֵּה לְחֻלְקָא דְרַבְבָּן וְלַטַּלִּית נְאֻז לְעוֹלָם הַבָּא בְּפִי עֵדוֹ. וְעַל יְדֵי מִצְוַת צִיצִית נִפְשִׁי וְרוּחִי וְנִשְׁמַתִּי וְתַפְלָתִי מִן הַחַיּוֹנוֹת. וְהַטַּלִּית יַפְרוֹשׁ כְּנַפְיָי עֲלֵיהֶם וְנִצְלָם בְּנֶשֶׁךְ יַעֲרֵר קָנִי, עַל גּוֹלְזֵי וְרַחֲמֵי. וְהוּא הַשׁוֹבֵה מִצְוַת צִיצִית לְפָנַי הַקְדוֹשׁ בְּרוּךְ הוּא פֶּאֱלוֹ קִימְתֵיהּ בְּכֹל פְּרָטֵיהּ וְדִקְדוּמֵיהּ וּכְבוֹנוֹתֵיהּ וְתוֹרֵי"ג מִצְוַת הַתְּלִיּוֹת בְּהֵ. אָמֵן סְלָה.

Unfold the tallis, hold it in readiness to wrap around yourself, and recite the following blessing:

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, אֲשֶׁר קִדְשָׁנוּ בְּמִצְוֹתָיו, וְרַחֲמֵי לְחֻלְקֵנוּ בַּצִּיצִית.

Wrap the tallis around your head and body, then recite:

מַה נִּקָּר חֲסִידֶיךָ אֱלֹהִים, וּבְנֵי אָדָם בְּכַף כְּנַפְיָי יִחְסְיוּ. יִרְדָּן מִדְּשֵׁן בֵּיתְךָ, וְנִחַל עֲבָדֶיךָ תִּשְׁקֵם. כִּי עַמְּךָ מְקוֹר חַיִּים, בְּאוֹרְךָ נִרְאָה אוֹר. מִשֶּׁן חֲסִידֶיךָ לִידְעֵיךָ, וְצִדְקָתְךָ לִישְׁרֵי לֵב.²

(1) Deuteronomy 32:11. (2) Psalms 36:8-11.

Ⓢ **הָרֵינִי** ... For the sake of the unification... I am ready. This preliminary formulation serves two purposes. It is a statement of intent that the act about to be performed is to fulfill the Torah's commandment. The second purpose, indicated by the mystical references, is a prayer that the Kabbalistic spiritual qualities of the commandment be realized. Some authorities omit the sentence beginning וְרַחֲמֵי and start the supplication from הָרֵינִי. Others omit the entire prayer, but all agree that one should have intent to fulfill the mitzvah.

Ⓢ **לְשֵׁם יְיָ** ... To unify the Name... The first half of the Divine Name, formed of the letters yud and hei, symbolizes the Attribute of Judgment, while the second half, formed of the letters vav and hei, symbolizes the Attribute of Mercy. The blend of both attributes leads to His desired goal for

Creation. Since these letters form the sacred Four-Letter Name that is not to be uttered as it is spelled, and since many commentators maintain that this prohibition extends even to uttering the four letters of the Name, the commonly used pronunciation of these letters in the tallis prayer is yud-kei b'vav-kei.

Ⓢ **הָרֵינִי אֲבָרֵי וְשְׁסִי"ה גִּידֵי** — My two hundred forty-eight organs and my three hundred sixty-five sinews. The Sages' computation of the important sinews, two hundred forty-eight, is equal to the number of positive commandments, while the three hundred sixty-five sinews equal the number of negative commandments. This symbolizes the principle that man was created to perform God's will. The total number of sinews and organs in man, and the total of Divine commandments, are each six hundred thirteen, a number symbol-

Suggested Activity 16: Why or Why Not? A Panel Discussion

1. On Wearing Tallit and Tefillin by Dvora Weisberg

Daughters of the King: Women and the Synagogue. Ed. Susan Grossman and Rivka Haut. Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1992, 282-283.

*A Survey of
History, Halakhah, and
Contemporary Realities*

EDITED BY

Susan Grossman

Rivka Haut

DAUGHTERS
OF THE
KING

WOMEN
AND THE
SYNAGOGUE



THE JEWISH PUBLICATION SOCIETY
Philadelphia · Jerusalem

5752/1992

DM
726
D37
1992

that the text was clear and that the *otiyot* (letters) were large enough and easy to read. It was explained to me that the *kiaf*, which is made of the skin of a young calf, was strong and durable enough to be scraped with a knife so that the accumulation of dust could be removed from it, and yet was firm enough so that the letters that are inked into the scroll would be unaffected. I finally chose an old Torah that had been saved from the Holocaust. The *etzei hatim*, or poles around which the Torah scroll is rolled, were dried out and cracked and had to be replaced. Finally, I was to have the wonderful privilege of choosing a beautiful mantle (covering) upon which would be handsewn the names of my late husband, Dr. Aaron A. Alter, in whose memory I was dedicating this Torah, and my two daughters, Beth and Shira, as well as my own name.

On a Sunday in June 1985, accompanied by my two daughters, my mother, and two aunts, all of us dressed in white, I carried my Torah into the 18th Avenue Synagogue in Flatbush for a *Siyum ha-Sefer*, a dedication ceremony. As we entered the synagogue, women of all ages danced and sang before us, as they joyously embraced their new Torah. The Torah had finally come home to the other half of the Jewish people.

Dvora E. Weisberg

ON WEARING TALLIT AND TEFILLIN

When I was seventeen, I asked my grandfather where I could buy *tefillin*. He told me that "girls don't wear *tefillin*." When I persisted, saying that I already was wearing *tefillin*, he told me that I wouldn't be able to afford them. After I said I was prepared to spend my entire summer salary, my grandfather, convinced I was serious, bought me the *tefillin*. The next morning he was in *minyari*, bragging to the other men about his granddaughter, who was "so religious, she even puts on *tefillin*."

My decision to wear *tallit* and *tefillin* was not particularly well thought out. The camp where I worked listed them as optional equipment for women, and I was intrigued. Given my personality, I probably became more intrigued as various relatives protested. If I knew little about the halakhic issues surrounding women's observance of time-bound positive *mitzvot* in general, and of *tallit* and *tefillin* in particular, I learned quickly. I

was constantly called upon to defend my decision halakhically. I also had to deal with people's claims that I was offending them by my actions, even if those actions were halakhically permissible. During my first month in college, a man offered to buy my *tefillin* to stop me from wearing them. I found most frustrating the fact that many people ascribed motives to my wearing *tallit* and *tefillin* without asking me what my intentions actually were.

When I daven in *tallit* and *tefillin*, I am not trying to make a feminist gesture or prove that I can "pray like a man." I began to observe these *mitzvot* out of a desire to serve God by fulfilling God's commandments. It never occurred to me that the need to be reminded of God's presence in regular, concrete ways was limited to men. I felt, and still feel, that every *mitzvah* I perform strengthens the bond between me and my Creator. The recitation of "And I shall betroth you to me forever . . ." as I bind *tefillin* on my arm, the awareness of being enveloped in a *tallit*, evoke very powerful feelings in me. I can no more consider discarding my *tefillin* than I could consider eating pork; I regard all the *mitzvot* I observe as obligatory.

I realize that wearing *tallit* and *tefillin* is a highly visible action and one that arouses strong emotions in other people. I know that what I intend to be my personal commitment becomes a public statement every time I enter a synagogue. While part of me responds to the opportunity to represent a change in women's patterns of observance, there is also a part that sometimes longs to be an unremarkable member of the congregation.

My grandfather died two years ago. I have put his *tefillin* away, to be given someday to my first child, his great grandchild. I like to think my grandfather would be no less pleased if the child is a daughter rather than a son. I want to believe that his acceptance of my observance was not only a grandfather's pride in his granddaughter but also a reflection of his ability to accept the idea that women can be as committed to *mitzvot* they have accepted out of religious conviction as they are to those they have observed for centuries. This is all I would ask or expect from him . . . or from anyone else.

The dynamic process of women's growing involvement in communal worship, includes the development of new rituals that reflect their special con-

Unit 3: Magen David

Resources

1. Encyclopaedia Judaica: Magen David

Scholem, Gershom. "Magen David" *Encyclopaedia Judaica: CD Rom Edition*.
Judaica Multimedia, 1997.

Encyclopaedia Judaica: Magen David

Also: Hexagram; Seal of Solomon; Shield of David; Star of David

MAGEN DAVID ("shield of David"), the hexagram or six-pointed star formed by two equilateral triangles which have the same center and are placed in opposite directions.

From as early as the Bronze Age it was used—possibly as an ornament and possibly as a magical sign—in many civilizations and in regions as far apart as Mesopotamia and Britain. Iron Age examples are known from India and from the Iberian peninsula prior to the Roman conquest. Occasionally it appears on Jewish artefacts, such as lamps and seals, but without having any special and recognizable significance. The oldest undisputed example is on a seal from the seventh century B.C.E. found in Sidon and belonging to one Joshua b. Asayahu. In the Second Temple period, the hexagram was often used by Jews and non-Jews alike alongside the pentagram (the five-pointed star), and in the synagogue of Capernaum (second or third century C.E.) it is found side by side with the pentagram and the swastika on a frieze. There is no reason to assume that it was used for any purposes other than decorative. Theories interpreting it as a planetary sign of Saturn and connecting it with the holy stone in the pre-Davidic sanctuary in Jerusalem (Hildegard Lewy, in *Archiv Orientln*, vol. 18, 1950, 330–65) are purely speculative. Neither in the magical papyri nor in the oldest sources of Jewish magic does the hexagram appear, but it began to figure as a magical sign from the early Middle Ages. Among Jewish emblems from Hellenistic times (discussed in E. Goodenough, *Jewish Symbols in the Greco-Roman Period*), both hexagram and pentagram are missing.

The ornamental use of the hexagram continued in the Middle Ages, especially in Muslim and Christian countries. The kings of Navarre used it on their seals (10th and 11th centuries) and (like the pentagram) it was frequently employed on notarial signs in Spain, France, Denmark, and Germany, by Christian and Jewish notaries alike. Sometimes drawn with slightly curved lines, it appears in early Byzantine and many medieval European churches, as, for example, on a stone from an early church in Tiberias (preserved in the Municipal Museum) and on the entrance to the Cathedrals of Burgos, Valencia, and Lerida. Examples are also found on objects used in the church, sometimes in a slanted position; as on the marble bishop's throne (c. 1266) in the Cathedral of Anagni. Probably in imitation of church usage—and certainly not as a specifically Jewish symbol—the hexagram is found on some synagogues from the later Middle Ages, for example, in Hamelin (Germany, c. 1280) and Budweis (Bohemia, probably 14th century). In Arab sources the hexagram, along with other geometrical ornaments, was widely used under the designation "seal of Solomon," a term which was also taken over by many Jewish groups. This name connects the hexagram with early Christian, possibly Judeo-Christian magic, such as the Greek magical work *The Testament of Solomon*. It is not clear in which period the hexagram was engraved on the seal or ring of Solomon, mentioned in the *Talmud* (Git. 68a–b) as a sign of his dominion over the demons, instead of the name of God, which originally appeared. However, this happened in Christian circles where Byzantine amulets of the sixth century already use the "seal of Solomon" as the name of the hexagram. In many medieval Hebrew manuscripts elaborate designs of the hexagram are to be found, without its being given any name. The origin of this use can be clearly traced to Bible manuscripts from Muslim countries (a specimen is shown in Gunzburg and Stassoff, *L'ornement hIbrasque* (1905), pl. 8, 15). From the 13th century onward it is found in Hebrew Bible manuscripts from Germany and Spain. Sometimes parts of the masorah are written in the form of a hexagram; sometimes it is simply used, in a more or less elaborate form, as an ornament. Richly adorned specimens from manuscripts in Oxford and Paris have been reproduced by C. Roth, *Sefarad*, 12, 1952, p. 356, pl. II, and in the catalog of the exhibition "Synagoga," Recklinghausen, 1960, pl. B. 4.

In Arabic magic the "seal of Solomon" was widely used, but at first its use in Jewish circles was restricted to relatively rare cases. Even then, the hexagram and pentagram were easily interchangeable and the name was applied to both figures. As a talisman, it was common in many of the magical versions of the *mezuzah* which were widespread between the tenth and 14th centuries. Frequently, the magical additions to the traditional text of the *mezuzah* contained samples of the hexagram, sometimes as many as 12. In magical Hebrew manuscripts of the later

Middle Ages, the hexagram was used for certain amulets, among which one for putting out fires attained great popularity (see Heinrich Loewe, *Juedischer Feuersegen*, 1930).

The notion of a "shield of David" with magical powers was originally unconnected with the sign. It is difficult to say whether the notion arose in Islam, where the Koran sees David as the first to make protective arms, or from inner traditions of Jewish magic. From earlier times there is only one instance connecting the hexagram with the name David on a sixth-century tombstone from Taranto, southern Italy. There seems to have been some special reason for putting the hexagram before the name of the deceased. The oldest text mentioning a shield of David is contained in an explanation of a magical "alphabet of the angel Metatron" which stems from the geonic period and was current among the Hasidei Ashkenaz of the 12th century. But here it was the holy Name of 72 names which was said to have been engraved on this protective shield, together with the name MKBY, which the tradition of the magicians connected with Judah Maccabee. In cognate sources this tradition was much embellished. The name of the angel Taftafiyah, one of the names of Metatron, was added to the 72 holy names, and indeed an amulet in the form of a hexagram with this one name became one of the most widespread protective charms in many medieval and later manuscripts. (From c. 1500 onward the name *Shaddaj* was often substituted for the purely magical one.) This must have provided the transition to the use of the term "*magen David*" for the sign. What caused the substitution of the figure instead of the "great name of 72 names" is not clear, but in the 16th century instructions can still be found stating that the shield of David should not be drawn in simple lines but must be composed of certain holy names and their combinations, after the pattern of those biblical manuscripts where the lines were composed of the text of the masorah. The oldest known witness to the usage of the term is the kabbalistic *Sefer ha-Gevul*, written by a grandson of *Nahmanides* in the early 14th century. The hexagram occurs there twice, both times called "*magen David*" and containing the same magical name as in the aforementioned amulet, demonstrating its direct connection with the magical tradition. According to other traditions, mentioned in Isaac Arama's *Akedat Yizhak*, the emblem of David's shield was not the image known by this name today, but Psalm 67 in the shape of the *menorah*. This became a widespread custom and the "*menorah* Psalm" was considered a talisman of great power. A booklet from the 16th century says: "King David used to bear this psalm inscribed, pictured, and engraved on his shield, in the shape of the *menorah*, when he went forth to battle, and he would meditate on its mystery and conquer."

Between 1300 and 1700 the two terms, shield of David and seal of Solomon, are used indiscriminately, predominantly in magical texts, but slowly the former gained ascendancy. It was also used, from 1492, as a printers' sign, especially in books printed in Prague in the first half of the 16th century and in the books printed by the Foa family in Italy and Holland, who incorporated it in their coat of arms. Several Italian Jewish families followed their example between 1660 and 1770. All these usages had as yet no general Jewish connotation. The official use of the shield of David can be traced to Prague, from where it spread in the 17th and 18th century through Moravia and Austria and later to southern Germany and Holland. In 1354, Charles IV granted the Prague community the privilege of bearing its own flag—later called in documents "King David's flag"—on which the hexagram was depicted. It therefore became an official emblem, probably chosen because of its significance as a symbol of the days of old when King David, as it were, wore it on his shield. This explains its wide use in Prague, in synagogues, on the official seal of the community, on printed books, and on other objects. Here it was always called *magen David*. Its use on the tombstone (1613) of David Gans, the astronomer and historian, was still exceptional, obviously in reference to the title of his last work *Magen David*. Except one tombstone in Bordeaux (c. 1726), no other example of its being used on tombstones is known before the end of the 18th century. A curious parallel to the development in Prague is the one case of a representation of the Synagogue as an allegorical figure, holding a flag bearing the *magen David* in a 14th-century Catalan manuscript of the *Breviar d'amor* by Matfre d'Ermengaud (Ms. of Yates Thompson 31 in the British Museum).

The symbol early moved to other communities. Its use in Budweis has been mentioned above, and the Vienna community used it on its seal in 1655. In the following year it is found on a stone marking the boundary between the Jewish and the Christian quarters of Vienna (according to P.

Diamant) or between the Jewish quarter and the Carmelite monastery (according to Max Grunwald). Apparently they were both officially recognized symbols. When the Viennese Jews were expelled in 1670 they took the symbol to many of their new habitats, especially in Moravia, but also to the Ashkenazi community of Amsterdam, where it was used from 1671, first on a medallion permitting entrance to the graveyard. Later it became part of the community's seal. Curiously enough, its migration eastward was much slower. It never occurs on official seals, but here and there during the 17th and 18th centuries it appears as an ornament on objects for use in synagogues and on wood carvings over the Torah shrine (first in Volpa, near Grodno, 1643).

The use of the hexagram as an alchemical symbol denoting the harmony between the antagonistic elements of water and fire became current in the later 17th century, but this had no influence in Jewish circles. Many alchemists, too, began calling it the shield of David (traceable since 1724). But another symbolism sprang up in kabbalistic circles, where the "shield of David" became the "shield of the son of David," the Messiah. Whether this usage was current in Orthodox circles too is not certain, though not impossible. The two kabbalists who testify to it, Isaiah the son of Joel Ba'al Shem (Jacob Emden, *Torat ha-Kena'ot*, p. 128) and Abraham Hayyim Kohen from Nikolsburg, combine the two interpretations. But there is no doubt that this messianic interpretation of the sign was current among the followers of Shabbetai Zevi. The famous amulets given by Jonathan Eybeschuetz in Metz and Hamburg, which have no convincing interpretation other than a Shabbatean one, have throughout a shield of David designated as "seal of MBD" (Messiah b. David), "seal of the God of Israel," etc. The shield of David was transformed into a secret symbol of the Shabbatean vision of redemption, although this interpretation remained an esoteric one, not to be published.

The prime motive behind the wide diffusion of the sign in the 19th century was the desire to imitate Christianity. The Jews looked for a striking and simple sign which would "symbolize" Judaism in the same way as the cross symbolizes Christianity. This led to the ascendancy of the *magen David* in official use, on ritual objects and in many other ways. From central and Western Europe it made its way to Eastern Europe and to oriental Jewry. Almost every synagogue bore it; innumerable communities, and private and charitable organizations stamped it on their seals and letterheads. Whereas during the 18th century its use on ritual objects was still very restricted—a good specimen is a plate for *mazzot* (1770), reproduced on the title page of *Monumenta Judaica*, catalog of a Jewish exposition in Cologne, 1963—it now became most popular. By 1799 it had already appeared as a specific Jewish sign in a satirical anti-Semitic engraving (A. Rubens, *Jewish Iconography*, no. 1611); in 1822 it was used on the Rothschild family coat of arms when they were raised to the nobility by the Austrian emperor; and from 1840 Heinrich Heine signed his correspondence from Paris in the *Augsburger Allgemeine Zeitung* with a *magen David* instead of his name, a remarkable indication of his Jewish identification in spite of his conversion. From such general use it was taken over by the Zionist movement. The very first issue of *Die Welt*, Herzl's Zionist journal, bore it as its emblem. The *magen David* became the symbol of new hopes and a new future for the Jewish people, and Franz Rosenzweig also interpreted it in *Der Stern der Erloesung* (1921) as summing up his philosophical ideas about the meaning of Judaism and the relationships between God, men, and the world. When the Nazis used it as a badge of shame which was to accompany millions on their way to death it took on a new dimension of depth, uniting suffering and hope. While the State of Israel, in its search for Jewish authenticity, chose as its emblem the menorah, a much older Jewish symbol, the *magen David* was maintained on the national (formerly Zionist) flag, and is widely used in Jewish life.

[Gershom Scholem]

Encyclopaedia Judaica: CDRom Edition. Judaica Multimedia, 1997.

Suggested Activity 1: Six-Pointed Star Museum

1. Star Museum Key

2. Star Museum Images 1-10

Image Sources:

Oegema, Gerbern S. *The History of the Shield of David: The Birth of a Symbol*.
Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 1996.

Plaut, W. Gunther. *The Magen David: How the Six-Pointed Star Became an
Emblem for the Jewish People*. Washington, D.C.: B'nai B'rith Books, 1991.

Star Museum Key

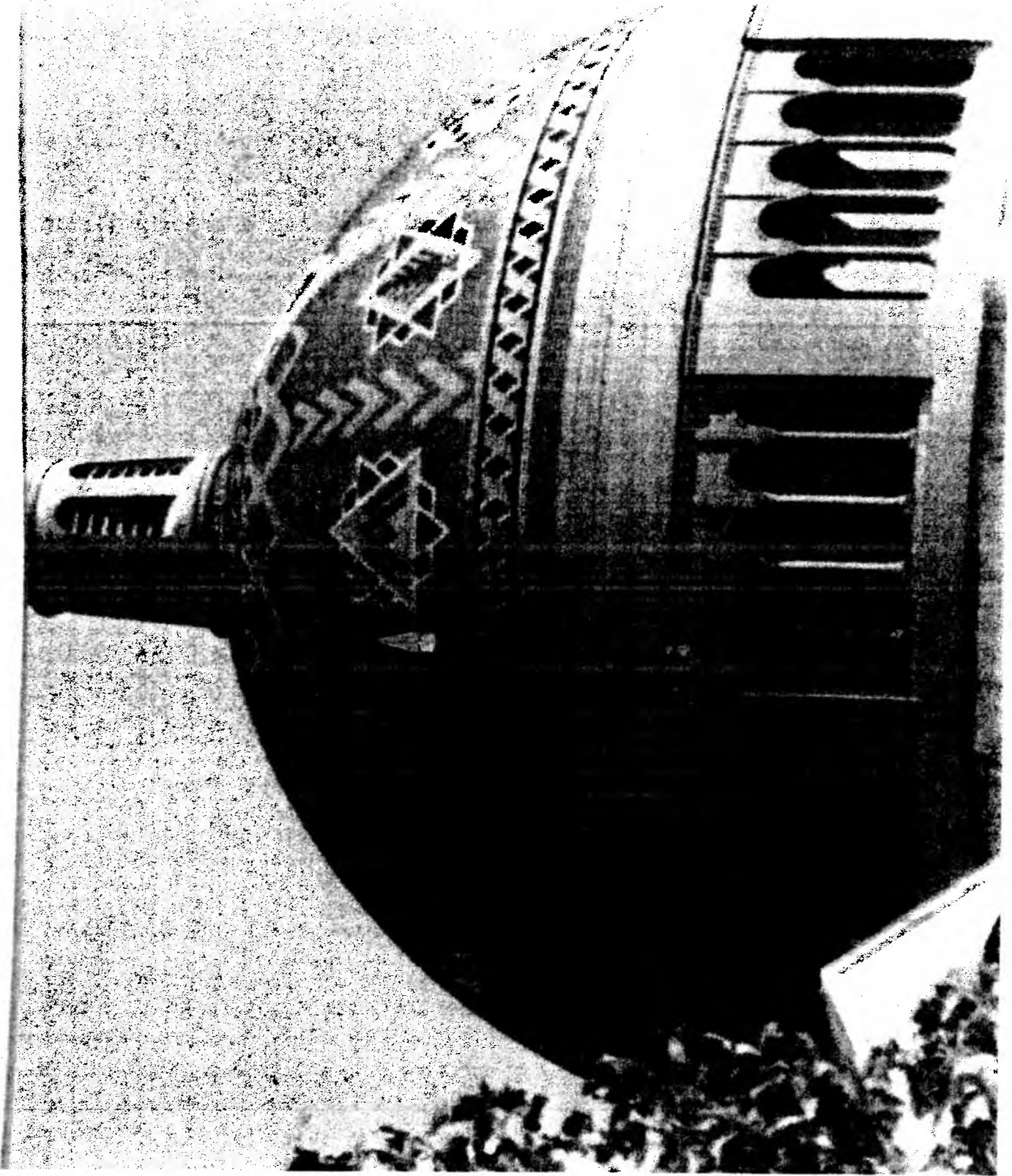
1. Shrine of the Immaculate Conception, at the Catholic University of American in Washington D.C. Built 1920-26.
2. Silver Roman Plate discovered in England. Made between the 1st and 4th centuries.
3. The area above the Eagle on the Great Seal of the United States as it is found on a one-dollar bill.
4. Marble Episcopal Throne of the Cathedral of Anagni, Italy. Carved in the 12th or 13th century.
5. Medieval Polish flag as depicted by a 14th century Franciscan friar on a map of Europe.
6. American Sheriff's Badge
7. 13th Century Page on How to Produce an Amulet.
8. 19th Century illustration of the Banner of the Jewish Community in Prague.
9. Material for Yellow Badges produced by a Berlin Factory in 1941.
10. Photo of the flower *Lilium Candidum*.

Sources for pictures:

Oegema, Gerbern S. *The History of the Shield of David: The Birth of a Symbol*. Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 1996.

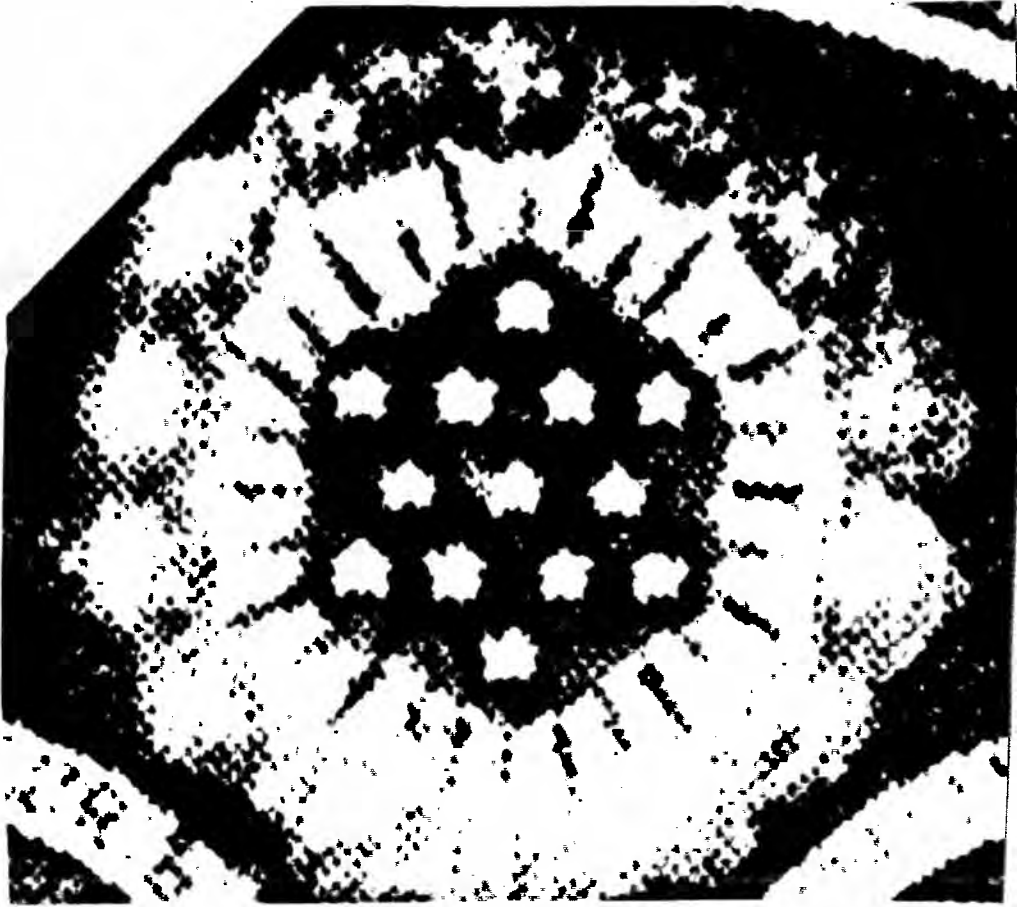
Plaut, W. Gunther. *The Magen David: How the Six-Pointed Star Became an Emblem for the Jewish People*. Washington, D.C.: B'nai B'rith Books, 1991.

1



2

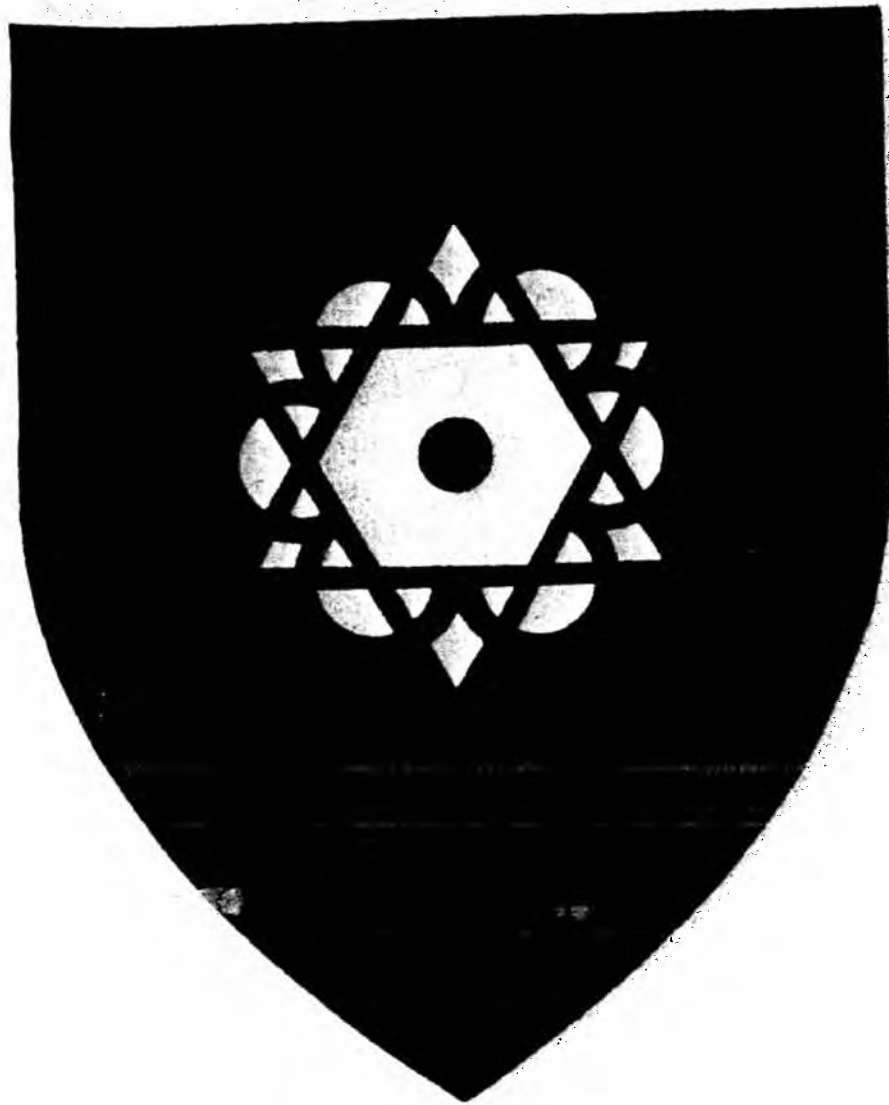




3



4



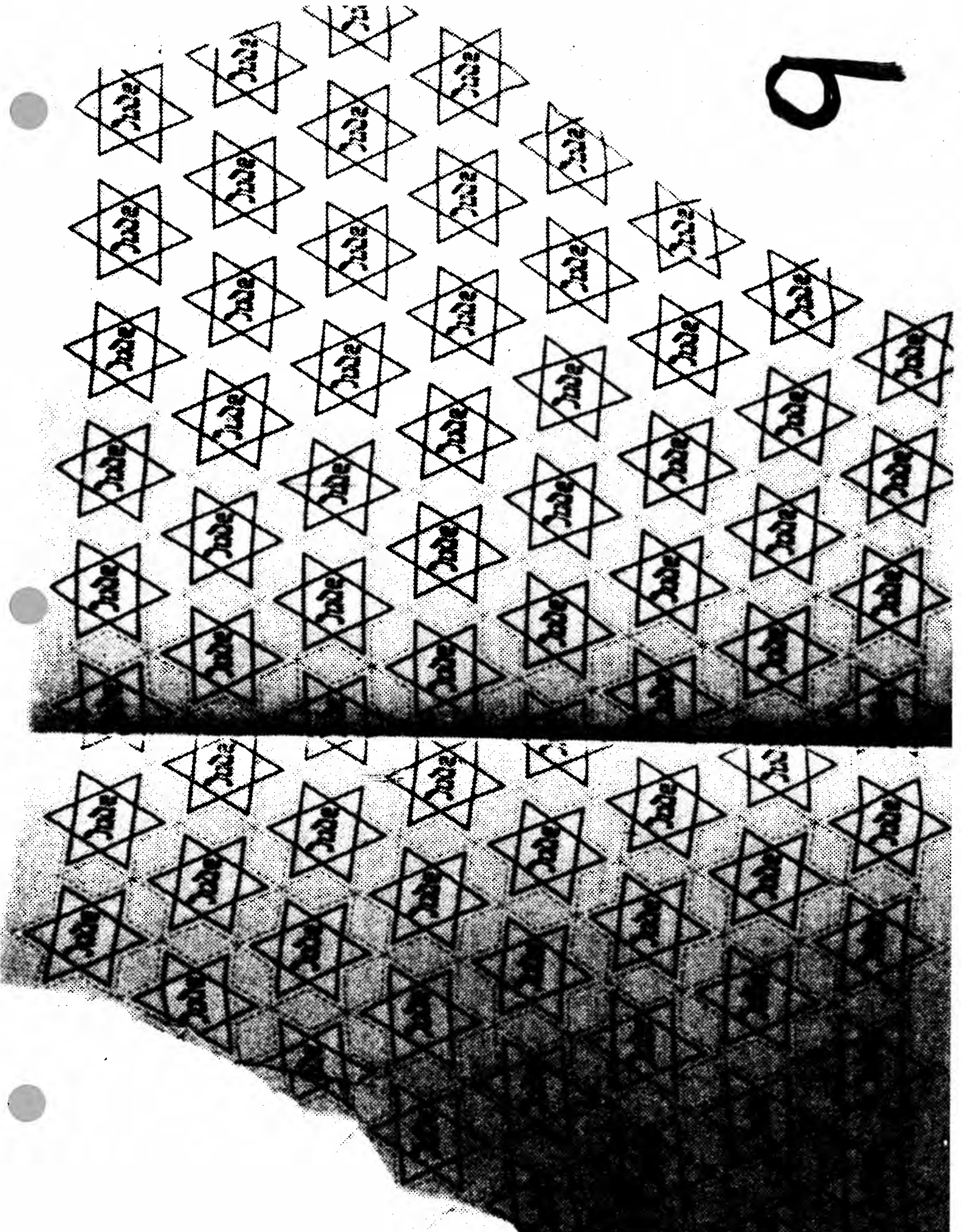
5



6



9





Suggested Activity 2: Gunther Plaut's Surprising Discovery

1. Gunther Plaut's Search

Plaut, W. Gunther. *The Magen David: How the Six-Pointed Star Became an Emblem for the Jewish People*. Washington, D.C.: B'nai B'rith Books, 1991, 3.

Gunther Plaut's Search

It was 1945. Allied troops were nearing the Rhine, preparing for the final assault on Nazi Germany. The 104th Infantry Division of the American forces had entered a little city and found it in shambles. What the air attacks had missed ground artillery had finished. Only a few buildings remained standing, their roofless walls gaping blindly into the winter sky.

A church was among them, and I stopped to look at its skeleton. Its Gothic windows had been splintered; the innocent glass shattered like that of hundreds of synagogues throughout the land when, just over six years before, they had been victimized in the orgy of *Kristallnacht* (Crystal Night).

Then came the surprise. One window had remained intact. Its sole design was what the Jews call the Magen David (Shield or Star of David), the same hexagram which formed a prominent part of my chaplain's insignia. By common acceptance it was the recognized symbol of Judaism, and Jews were forced to wear it as a badge throughout the Nazi realm. That a window so decorated should be the lone "survivor" of the destruction seemed reassuring to a soldier returning to a land where his people had been defamed, devastated and destroyed.

Yet at the same time the sight was startling: what was a Magen David doing on a church, and a German church at that? Most certainly it was not an acknowledgment of the Jewish origins of Christianity. What then? At the time I did not know the answer; for me, the sign was thoroughly Jewish and in my experience always had been. The Magen David in that German church aroused my interest: If it was found in unfamiliar surroundings here, were there other places as well? If so, When and how did we Jews adopt it as a national insigne? I promised myself that I would attempt to explore these questions once the war was over.

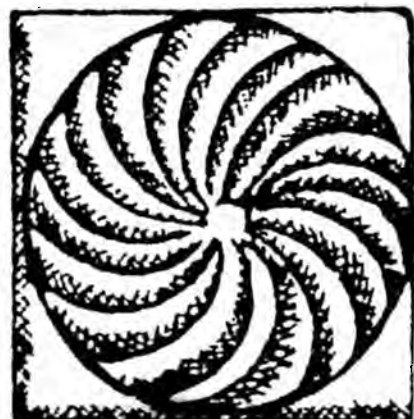
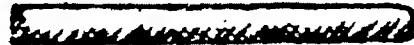
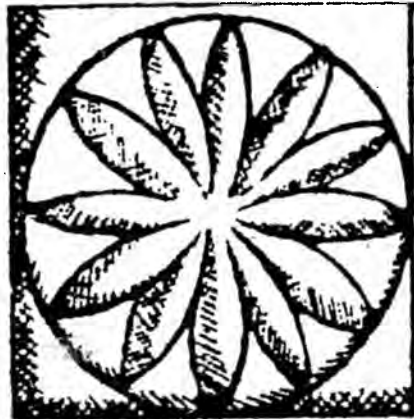
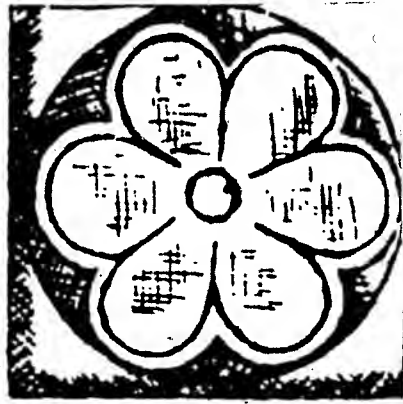
Plaut, W. Gunther. *The Magen David: How the Six-Pointed Star Became an Emblem for the Jewish People*. Washington, D.C.: B'nai B'rith Books, 1991, 3.

Suggested Activity 4: Compass Rosettes

1. Rosette Examples

Plaut, W. Gunther. *The Magen David: How the Six-Pointed Star Became an Emblem for the Jewish People*. Washington, D.C.: B'nai B'rith Books, 1991.

2. Rosette Design Instructions



Rosette Design

Classic Rosette:

1. With a compass, make a circle on the paper.
2. Keeping the compass at the same setting, place the point of the compass on the circumference of the circle and make an arc inside the circle, starting and ending with the pencil on the circle.
3. Place the point of the compass on one of the places where the arc met the circle and repeat step 2.
4. Repeat step 3 until you have completed six arcs and have created a six pointed rosette.

Six-Pointed Star:

1. With a compass, make a circle on the paper.
2. Keeping the compass at the same setting, place the point of the compass on the circumference of the circle and make a small mark with the pencil on the circle on both sides of the compass point.
3. Place the point of the compass on one of the marks you have just made and repeat step 2.
4. Repeat step 3 until you have made six evenly spaced small marks along the circumference of the circle.
5. With a straight edge, connect the marks to make a six-pointed star.

Suggested Activity 5: The Word *Magen* in the Bible and in Prayer

1. II Samuel 22:2-3, 31
2. Psalm 18:3
3. Genesis 15:1
4. Avot v'Imahot
5. Traditional Blessing after the Haftarah Reading

II Samuel 22:2-3, 31

ספר שמואל ב: כב-ג

ב וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוָה סִלְעִי וּמִצְדֹּתַי וּמִפִּלְטֵי-לִי: ג אֱלֹהֵי צוּרֵי אַחְסֵה-בִּי
מִגִּזְזֵי וְקִרְוֹן יִשְׁעֵי מִשְׁגְּבֵי וּמְנוּסֵי מִשְׁעֵי מַחְמָס תִּשְׁעֵנִי:

ספר שמואל ב: כב-לא

לא הָאֵל תָּמִים דְרָכָיו אִמְרַת יְהוָה צְרוּפָה מָגֵן הוּא לְכָל הַחֹסִים בּוֹ:

² He said: O LORD, my crag, my fastness, my deliverer! ³ O God, the rock wherein I take shelter: My shield, my mighty champion, my fortress and refuge!

³¹ The way of God is perfect, The word of the LORD is pure. He is a shield to all who take refuge in Him.

Psalm 18:3

ספר תהילים: יח:ג
ג יְהוָה סֹלֵךְ וּמְצוּדָתִי וּמִפֶּלְטֵי אֱלֹהֵי צוּרֵי אַחְסָה־בּוֹ מִגְּנֵי וְקִרְוֹ אֲשַׁעִי
מִשָּׁגְבִי:

³ O LORD, my crag, my fortress, my rescuer, my God, my rock in whom I seek refuge, my shield, my mighty champion, my haven.

Genesis 15:1

ספר בראשית: טו:א
א אַתָּר | הַדְּבָרִים הָאֵלֶּה הָיָה דְבַר־יְהוָה אֶל־אַבְרָם בְּמַחְזָה לֵאמֹר
אֶל־תִּירָא אַבְרָם אֲנִכִּי מִגֵּן לְךָ שְׂכָרְךָ הַרְבֵּה מְאֹד:

¹ Some time later, the word of the LORD came to Abram in a vision. He said, "Fear not, Abram, I am a shield to you; Your reward shall be very great."

Avot v'Imahot

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ וְאֱלֹהֵי אֲבוֹתֵינוּ, וְאֲמוֹתֵנוּ, אֱלֹהֵי אַבְרָהָם,
 אֱלֹהֵי יִצְחָק, וְאֱלֹהֵי יַעֲקֹב, אֱלֹהֵי שָׂרָה, אֱלֹהֵי רִבְקָה, אֱלֹהֵי לֵאָה,
 וְאֱלֹהֵי רָחֵל. הָאֵל הַגָּדוֹל הַגִּבּוֹר וְהַנּוֹרָא, אֵל עֲלִיוֹן, גּוֹמֵל חֲסָדִים
 טוֹבִים, וְקוֹנֵה הַכֹּל, וְזוֹכֵר חֲסָדֵי אֲבוֹת וְאֲמָהוֹת, וּמְבִיא גְאוּלָּה
 לְבָנֵי בְנֵיהֶם לְמַעַן שְׁמוֹ בְּאַהֲבָה:
 מְלֶכֶד עוֹזֵר וּמוֹשִׁיעַ וּמָגֵן: בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ, מָגֵן אַבְרָהָם וְעֹזֶרֶת שָׂרָה:

Praised be our God, the God of our fathers and our mothers: God of Abraham,
 God of Isaac, and God of Jacob; God of Sarah, God of Rebekah, God of Leah
 and God of Rachel; great, mighty, and awesome God, God supreme. Ruler of all
 the living, Your ways are ways of love. You remember the faithfulness of our
 ancestors, and in love bring redemption to their children's children for the sake of
 your name. You are our Sovereign and our Help, our Redeemer and **Shield**. We
 praise You, Adonai, **Shield** of Abraham, Protector of Sarah.

Traditional Blessing after the Haftarah Reading

ברכות אחרי ההפטרה
 בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, צוּר כָּל הָעוֹלָמִים, צַדִּיק בְּכָל
 הַדּוֹרוֹת, הָאֵל הַנֶּאֱמָן הַאֲמוּר וְעֹשֶׂה, הַמְדַבֵּר וּמְקַיֵּם, שְׁכַל דְּבָרָיו
 אֲמֵת וְצַדִּיק. נֶאֱמָן אַתָּה הוּא יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ, וְנֶאֱמָנִים דְּבָרֶיךָ, וְדַבַּר אֶחָד
 מִדְּבָרֶיךָ אַחֲזוֹר לֹא יָשׁוּב רִיקָם, כִּי אֵל מֶלֶךְ נֶאֱמָן וְרַחֲמָן אַתָּה. בְּרוּךְ
 אַתָּה יְיָ, הָאֵל הַנֶּאֱמָן בְּכָל דְּבָרָיו.
 רַחֵם עַל צִיּוֹן כִּי הִיא בֵּית חַיֵּינוּ, וְלַעֲלוּבַת נַפְשׁ תּוֹשִׁיעַ בְּמַהֲרָה
 בְּיַמֵּינוּ. בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ, מְשַׁמֵּחַ צִיּוֹן בְּבִנְיָהּ.
 שְׁמַחְנוּ יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ בְּאֵלֶיהוּ הַנְּבִיא עֲבָדֶיךָ, וּבְמַלְכוּת בֵּית דָּוִד מְשִׁיחֶךָ,
 בְּמַהֲרָה זָבֵא וְיִגַּל לְבַנּוּ, עַל כְּסֹאוֹ לֹא יֵשֵׁב זָר וְלֹא יִנְחֲלוּ עוֹד אַחֲרָיִם
 אֶת כְּבוֹדוֹ, כִּי בְשֵׁם קִדְשֶׁךָ נִשְׁבַּעְתָּ לוֹ, שֶׁלֹּא יִכָּבֵה נֵרוֹ לְעוֹלָם וָעֶד.
 בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ, מֶגֶן דָּוִד.
 עַל הַתּוֹרָה, וְעַל הָעֲבוֹדָה, וְעַל הַנְּבִיאִים, וְעַל יוֹם הַשַּׁבָּת הַזֶּה, שְׁנַתְּתָה
 לָנוּ יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ, לְקִדְשָׁה וְלִמְנוּחָה, לְכָבוֹד וְלִתְפֹּאֶרֶת. עַל הַכֹּל יְיָ
 אֱלֹהֵינוּ, אֲנַחְנוּ מוֹדִים לָךְ, וּמְבָרְכִים אוֹתְךָ, וְיִתְבָּרֵךְ שְׁמֶךָ בְּפִי כָּל חַי
 תְּמִיד לְעוֹלָם וָעֶד. בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ, מְקַדֵּשׁ הַשַּׁבָּת.

Blessed are You Adonai our God, Ruler of the universe, Rock of all creation, righteous One of all generations, the faithful God whose word is deed, whose every command is just and true.

You are the faithful One, Adonai our God, and faithful is Your word. Not one word of Yours goes forth without accomplishing its task, O faithful and compassionate God and Ruler. Blessed are You Adonai, the faithful God.

Show compassion for Zion, the locus of our life, and save Your people Israel speedily in our day. Blessed are You, Adonai, the builder of Jerusalem.

Gladden us, Adonai our God, through Elijah Your prophet, and through the kingdom of the House of David Your anointed. May Elijah come quickly and gladden our hearts. A stranger shall not sit on David's throne, nor shall others usurp his glory, because You have sworn by Your Holy Name that his light shall never be extinguished. Blessed are You, Adonai, the **Shield** of David.

For te Torah, for the privilege of worship, for the prophets, and for this Sabbath that You, Adonai our God, have given us for holiness and rest, for honor and glory, we thank and bless You. May Your name be blessed for ever by every living being. Blessed are You Adonai, who sanctifies the Sabbath.

Suggested Activity 6: Is the Magen David a Symbol?

1. Is the Magen David a Symbol?

Scholem, Gershom. *The Messianic Idea in Judaism*. London: George Allen & Unwin Ltd, 1971, 259.

Is the Magen David a Symbol? Gershom Scholem

None of the marks of a true symbol...apply to it. It express no "idea," awakens no primeval associations which have become entwined with the roots of our experiences, and it does not spontaneously comprise any spiritual reality. It calls to mind nothing of biblical or rabbinical Judaism; it arouses no hopes...

Scholem, Gershom. *The Messianic Idea in Judaism*. London: George Allen & Unwin Ltd, 1971, 259.

Suggested Activity 7: Magical Powers Jigsaw

1. David's Shield

Plaut – page 39.

Scholem – page 265.

2. Women's Childbirth Amulet

Plaut – page 41.

3. Sabbatean Symbol

Plaut – pages 43-44.

Scholem – page 272.

4. Warding off Demons

Scholem – pages 266-267.

Plaut, W. Gunther. *The Magen David: How the Six-Pointed Star Became an Emblem for the Jewish People*. Washington, D.C.: B'nai B'rith Books, 1991.

Scholem, Gershom. "Magen David" *Encyclopaedia Judaica: CD Rom Edition*. Judaica Multimedia, 1997.

My *magen*, my mighty
champion, my fortress and
refuge! My savior, You who
rescue me from violence!¹³

Note that the text speaks of God as David's *magen*: David's protection is *God*, and not a shield of copper or bronze. Neither text nor ancient tradition asserts that the shield displayed a hexagram, and it is further noteworthy that none of the medieval commentators on the biblical verse, either in the *Book of Samuel* or *Psalms*, connects David's shield with the hexagram. Nor do the standard commentaries on the Talmud make this connection when the expression *Magen David* is discussed.¹⁴

How then did it come about? We cannot be sure, for there are divergent traditions on the matter.

In about 1300 a Spanish kabbalist, whose name was coincidentally also David (ben Yehuda) and who claimed to be a grandson of the great Nachmanides, wrote a commentary on the "Idra Rabba"

(Greater Assembly) which is part of the centerpiece of Jewish mysticism, the *Zohar*. In his work, called *Sefer ha-Ge'ul* (Book of the Redemption), the author reproduces the hexagram twice and each time with a divine appellation:

- ☆ Magen David Arikh Anpin
- ☆ Magen David Ze'ir Anpin

Arikh Anpin (literally, the long face) refers to God as long-suffering, while *Ze'ir Anpin* describes God as short-fused, that is, impatient. Both qualities in balance are characteristic of the divine nature, for God's justice is impatient, while the quality of mercy implies forbearance. The hexagram shows both aspects in perfect harmony and is therefore a telling symbol of God's protective presence.¹⁵

This imagery was further strengthened by adding the name of a potent angel, called Taftafiyah. He was, so to speak, the one who mediated the magic qualities of


David's shield, and with the angel's name added the Magen David began to appear more and more frequently on amulets, along with a single triangle or an occasional pentagram. This was one tradition.¹⁶

But another did not know of the hexagram. Instead it related that *Psalms* 67 was inscribed on the shield and written in such a form that its words formed the likeness of the biblical candelabrum.

One purveyor of this idea was the Spanish rabbi Isaac Arama who supported his claim by eight verses from the psalm. These are recited during the period between Pesach and Shavuot when the protection of God against danger was deemed to be especially required.

The "Menorah Psalm" became a popular image; it was displayed in synagogues, on the title pages of books, and on charms. A sixteenth-century booklet says: "This psalm together with the menorah alludes to great things... and when King David went out to war he used to carry on his shield this psalm in the

name of David. The basis for this is the inscription on a tombstone in Taranto in Southern Italy which certainly originated no later than the sixth century. There, according to the inscription, lies the grave of the wife of one "Leon son of David," and a hexagram is chiseled in front of the name David. It would be difficult to assume that this is a mere coincidence. On the other hand, the sign does not recur on any other Jewish tombstone of the Middle Ages, not even in connection with the name David. A double pentagram occurs at the end of the first line on the monument of a Spanish Jewess of Tortosa, which belongs to approximately the same period, but its significance in the context remains unclear.

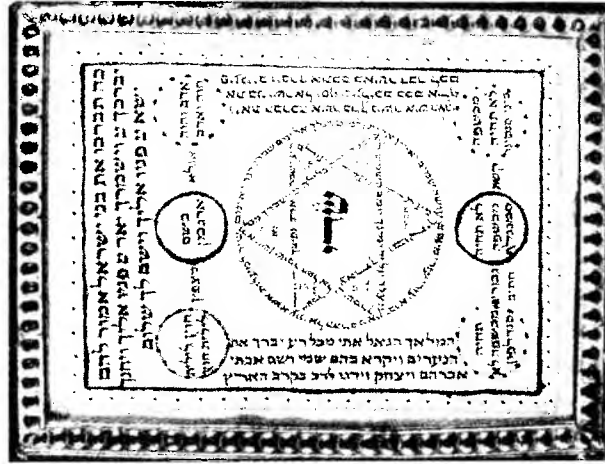
What the nature of the connection between the hexagram and the name of King David may have been can be easily explained. We possess a number of medieval Jewish magical texts which speak of a shield of David which provided him with magic protection. The oldest of these texts probably originates in the Orient or in Southern Italy. It contains an explanation of a secret alphabet in the so-called "star-script" often used for amulets. This particular alphabet is supposed to be that of Metatron, the highest of all the angelic princes. It has been preserved in a number of Hebrew manuscripts. One of these letters, which looks like this  (similar to a Latin V which has three small circles at its three corners), is said to have been constructed in the manner of a shield "for King David had a shield on which the Great Name of God containing seventy-two letters—a combination of holy names which according to an ancient Jewish legend made possible Israel's redemption from Egypt—was engraved and which helped him to win all of his wars." Furthermore, it says here that a verse from the Bible was also engraved on it, in which the first letters of each word made up the name Maccabee. This shield was then passed on until it reached Judah the Maccabee, hero of the Maccabean wars. Of a similar nature are other magic texts in circulation among German Jews in the thirteenth century. For example, there is an explanation of the seventy secret names of Metatron, which however varies in that under the Great Name of God another name is inscribed: Taftafiyah, one of these secret names of Metatron. "And when you go out to war and your enemies attack you, pronounce this name and you will remain unharmed." At what point this name, whether as Maccabee or as Taftafiyah, was conjoined with the figure of the hexagram, thus explaining its designation as Shield

used in the Near East and therefore not easily isolated as specifically Jewish. Still, to this day, a pair of lions upholding the tablets of the Ten Commandments grace many if not most synagogue arks. The lion's protective function thus persists into our time, though this function is no longer recognized and the depiction of these lions is nowadays seen as purely "traditional."¹⁹

Let us return to the Menorah Psalm. The popularity of this image stimulated another tradition, one that believed in the hexagram as David's protective shield. It fastened itself to *Psalm 121* which also has eight verses, suffused with promises of protection. Singled out specifically was the verse:

The Lord will guard you
from all harm;
God will guard your life.

The words were often written on amulets in the form of a hexagram and became a popular protection for women in childbirth.



A Magen David fashioned from the words of Psalm 121 served as an amulet for women in childbirth in 18th-century Germany. Feuchtwanger Collection, Israel Museum, Jerusalem. Photo by R. Milton, Jerusalem, pictured in *Encyclopaedia Judaica*, vol. 6, col. 691. (Courtesy of the Library of Congress)



Lions of Judah and the saying in Hebrew which translates "Remember Before Whom You Stand" on a mantle over the ark at Beth Tikva Synagogue in Rockville, Maryland. (Photo by B. Fishman)

the sophisticated as well as their counterparts.

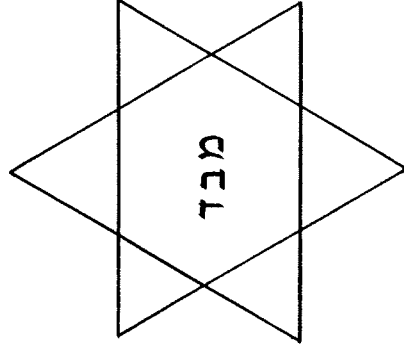
Moritz Gudemann was right: the Magen David had dubious beginnings as a popular symbol,²⁵ but a people rarely charts its practices by such considerations. Thus also, the breaking of the glass at the end of Jewish wedding ceremonies has murky origins. Some scholars see it as the descendant of an ancient defloration symbolism, and others recount the belief that the glass breaking would scare away jealous demons hovering around the wedding canopy. No one thinks of these antecedents today when the custom is generally interpreted as recalling the destruction so often visited on the Jewish people, or as calling the couple's attention to the suffering of others and their own responsibilities toward them; or simply to remind bride and groom that life is not all joy.

Gershom Scholem made an additional observation. He stressed the influence of the Sabbateans on the development of the Magen David.

Sabbateans were the spiritual heirs of a seventeenth-century messianic movement led by Sabbetai Zevi. While the movement failed when the hero became a convert to Islam, it did not entirely disappear. A hundred years later it spawned another surge of messianic expectation when Jacob Frank stirred up many Jews in Turkey, Poland and Bohemia.

In western Europe, Sabbateans usually hid their sympathies for these sectarian beliefs in order to escape the censure of their coreligionists. Among those believed to be secret practitioners, none was more famous than Jonathan Eybeschutz, a rabbi in Metz and then Altona. His amulets were widely used and featured the hexagram, in the center of which often appeared a messianic allusion common to Sabbateans – מביד.

These letters stand for *M*(ashiah) *b*(en) *D*(avid), Messiah descendant of David. It was Scholem's thesis that the introduction of messianic elements into heretofore purely



Sabbatean Amulet

magical use greatly enhanced the popularity of the sign. He was probably right, but the influence of the Sabbateans must not be overestimated. Not all of them used the sign; the Frankists,²⁶ for instance, did not, though they proclaimed themselves the true heirs of Sabbetai Zevi.

But even without the likes of Eybeschütz, the name of David conjured up redemptive associations. After all, three times a day the Jew would pray:

Speedily cause the descendant of David to flourish,
and his horn be exalted by
Your salvation,
for we await Your salvation
every day.

Which is to say that, once the name of David became more widely associated with the hexagram, it received a strong thrust forward. Mystery, magic, and salvation sent it on its way.

It was perhaps inevitable that attempts would be made to prove

King David's actual connection with the sign. Thus it was claimed that Δ , an old writing for γ (D), alluded to the king, and, when doubled and interlaced as a hexagram, became his signature. Others said that God had protected David from six sides, as is related in tradition – hence the origin of the symbol. Of such explanations there was, and is, no dearth.²⁷

thereby indicating that they belonged to the sphere of "kingdom."

This symbolism now recurs in a most peculiar connection. The career of the Shield of David as magic not only reaches its height, but it moves beyond the realm of magic to become a symbol of the vision of the Messianic redemption, which the followers of the Kabbalistic Messiah Sabbatai Zevi believed they had already begun to detect. This new shift is most evident in the famous amulets from Metz and Hamburg written by Rabbi Jonathan Eibeschütz. After 1750 they caused a real scandal within Central European Jewry. It seemed simply incredible that one of the greatest talmudic scholars of the age should have given these cryptographically sealed amulets to pregnant women and thereby declared himself an adherent of the mystical heresy of the followers of Sabbatai Zevi. (This debate still divides and excites a lot of people today!) Insofar as they became known and were published by his critics, all of these amulets contain the Shield of David; in fact it is the only emblem that appears. In its center there are various inscriptions such as simply the word "Seal," or "Seal of MBD," "Seal of the God of Israel," and the like. In his defense, Rabbi Jonathan tried to hide behind a purely magical interpretation of the amulets; he denied both their Messianic symbolism and that his cryptograms could be deciphered as Sabbatian confessions. He retreated to the claim that all of the words are only magical names derived from old sacred texts without meaning or import. They may not be deciphered and interpreted as complete sentences in order to obtain some conceivable connection of meaning. His critics, however, saw the matter very differently. They ascribed Rabbi Jonathan's predilection for the Shield of David on his amulets to his regarding it a Messianic symbol of the arrival of redemption embodied in Sabbatai Zevi. They compared the variant forms of the inscriptions on the amulets and explained signs like MBD as an abbreviation of Messiah ben David and the like. It can hardly be denied that the interpretations of the amulets in this sense are downright convincing, just as it is not surprising that Rabbi Jonathan, like most Sabbatians, did not want to reveal his secret and therefore denied the reproaches. So we have two alternatives: If Rabbi Jonathan was not a secret Sabbatian, then his amulets have no symbolic significance whatever and represent only a pitiful hocus-pocus. But if he was a Sabbatian, then we would have to admit that the Shield of David was a very significant symbol for his secret vision of redemption, even if, for the time being, it remained a very private

of David, we cannot determine on the basis of the sparse material which has so far become known. That tombstone in Taranto could be the earliest evidence of such an association. It remains strange that, as we shall see, nearly 700 years passed before the designation as Shield of David could be unequivocally attested for the hexagram from Hebrew literature.

But whatever the name may have been under which the pentagram or the hexagram was known, it had one and only one purpose in its career as magic: to serve as protection against demons. In this connection it also appears in the magic versions of the *mezuzah* which circulated widely from earliest medieval times down into the fourteenth century. The *mezuzah* is a capsule which contains a certain passage from the Torah written on a strip of parchment. Following a rabbinic prescription which goes back long before the Christian era, it has been attached to the doorposts of every Jewish household. Although, to begin with, scarcely intended for magic protection, at the hands of adepts in magic the *mezuzah* could easily be made to take over this function as well. Rabbi Eliezer of Metz (twelfth century) reports that it is a "common practice to add seals and the names of angels at the end of the Bible verses contained in the *mezuzah* for the sake of the increased security of the home. This is neither commanded nor prohibited; it simply serves as additional protection." But there were also other authorities who unhesitatingly decided that the *mezuzah* must be written with these additions in magic style. Maimonides vigorously attacks the extremists who inscribe the names and seals not only at the edges of the actual text of the *mezuzah* but even interpose them in the text and between the lines. According to him, they have lost their prospect for salvation "because they have perverted the great commandment regarding the proclamation of God's unity, the honor and love of Him [of which the text in the *mezuzah* speaks] to the end of making it an amulet for selfish purposes." However, the seals in these magic versions of the *mezuzah*, a number of which have been preserved, are mostly nothing more than drawings of a hexagram; sometimes, as in the case of a *mezuzah*, from the Elkan Adler collection, there are up to twelve such hexagrams.

Thus, this emblem began its career in larger Jewish circles not as a symbol of monotheism but as a magic talisman against evil spirits. Among the masses, that remained its principal significance down to the first half of the nineteenth century. The above-mentioned magic version of the *mezuzah* no doubt originated in

Babylonia or Palestine of the early Middle Ages, although we cannot determine in which of the two lands. No document of this period which describes the preparation of the magic *mezuzah* uses a particular name for the seal, neither Seal of Solomon nor Shield of David. Although all reference works insist that the Karaite scholar Judah Hadasi (mid-twelfth century) first called the hexagram Shield of David, this particular designation is in fact an addition of the printer who published Hadasi's work in Southern Russia in 1836.

In the course of time the magic *mezuzah* fell into desuetude. But the two forms of the Seal of Solomon, the pentagram and the hexagram, were preserved in the occult literature of all three monotheistic religions. A glance at manuals of sorcery from the Renaissance, such as the *Clavicula Salomonis* or *Dr. Faustus' Hell-Charms* and similar products of the Faustus literature, shows that they were used in many connections. Until the seventeenth century the hexagram does not appear very frequently, by either of its two names, on Jewish amulets or in the descriptions of such amulets in occult manuscripts. A manuscript of such instructions, which was put together in Italy about 1550, contains on the title page a figure which displays two intertwined hearts and several Shields of David. Only a little later (already in a manuscript of 1586) the tradition of Isaac Luria's students in Safed knows of a "general talisman" which it describes as a hexagram and designates as the Seal of Solomon. Yet a Judeo-German manuscript written about 1600 (now in Jerusalem) calls the pentagram the "Shield of David with five points"—which shows the continuing instability of the terminology. Beginning in the sixteenth century, many such amulets displaying a hexagram achieved considerable popularity. This was especially true of a talisman to ward off fires, which appears again and again in all kinds of places, in literature as well as on old houses and the like; its occurrences have often been described.

IV

Aside from its uses for magic, the hexagram was also employed since early Arabic times purely for decoration. This was quite in keeping with the tradition of ornamentation so beloved by the Arabs. The *Masorah* (the traditions concerning the text of the Bible) in oriental Bible manuscripts is sometimes presented in such figures. In addition to the figure of the Menorah, which

Suggested Activity 8: A Timeline of Symbolic Evolution

1. Symbolic Timeline
2. Timeline Resources

Bar Kochba Coin

Plaut - pages 26-27.

Seal of Solomon

Plaut – pages 37-38.

Medieval European Flags

Plaut – pages 19-20.

Prague Community Flag

Plaut – pages 51-53.

Jewish Printer Logos

Plaut - pages 66-67.

City Border Marker

Plaut - page 62.

First Zionist Congress

Oegema - pages 115-117.

French Protest Over Military Burial

Plaut - pages 34-35.


Yellow Badges

Plaut – pages 99-101.

Oegema, Gerbern S. *The History of the Shield of David: The Birth of a Symbol*.
Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 1996.

Plaut, W. Gunther. *The Magen David: How the Six-Pointed Star Became an
Emblem for the Jewish People*. Washington, D.C.: B'nai B'rith Books, 1991.

Symbolic Timeline



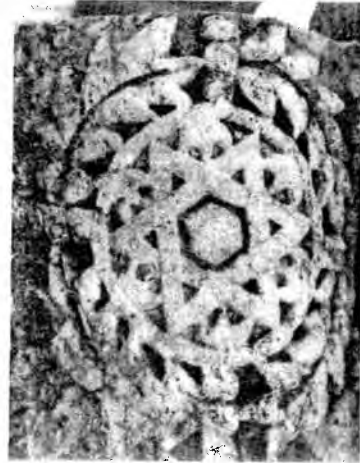
135	Bar Kochba Coin
13 th c.	Seal of Solomon
14 th c.	Medieval European Flags
	Prague Community Flag
16 th c.	Jewish Printer Logos
1656	City Border Marker
1897	First Zionist Congress
1917	French Protest Over Military Burial
1939	Yellow Badges



“(The seal of Joshua, son of Asaiah”
From Torrey, *Journal of the American Oriental Society* (1903), p. 204. (Photo courtesy of the Library of Congress)



A shard of pottery, broken but with enough remaining intact to show that the design was a Magen David. Macalister, *The Excavation of Gezer* (London, 1912), vol. III, Plate CLIX, no. 12. (Photo courtesy of the Library of Congress)



Hexagram carved on a stone frieze of the synagogue at Capernaum, dating from the second century C.E. Photo by Werner Braun, Jerusalem, as pictured in *Encyclopaedia Judaica*, vol. 11, col. 689. (Photo courtesy of the Library of Congress)

One oft-cited example of early Jewish usage is a frieze in Kfar Nachum (Capernaum) which was probably fashioned a century or two before the common era. But since the sign appears together with other designs it is clear that its employment here had no special significance.⁶

A claim for a distinctively Jewish connotation can possibly be made for a coin struck by Simon Bar Kochba, in the year 135 C.E., during the Jewish war against the Romans. Such a coin became the object of much public discussion when it was discovered in a most unlikely place: in a pig pen in Clay City, Powell County, Kentucky. (Some people speculated at once that, if the coin was genuine, here was proof positive that the ancient Judeans had travelled to America, a claim which we shall not examine here.) How the coin got to Kentucky is less important for our inquiry than the knowledge that the picture of such a coin had already been published some forty years

before, and that it was not unique.⁷ The coin is dated "Year 2 of the Freedom of Israel" and shows on one side a Temple-like structure with a figure resembling a hexagram crowning it. The figure quite clearly functions here primarily as a star and as a sign for Bar Kochba, the leader of the war of liberation. For his name was taken to mean "Son of a Star" and to evoke the biblical prophecy that "a star will arise from Jacob."⁸

Indeed, had the revolt succeeded, such a star might even have taken its place among the important Jewish images. But with the defeat and devastation that befell the people this did not happen. Still, one cannot rule out that a star-shaped symbol – possibly seen as a hexagram – was here given a redemptive, quasi-messianic significance which may have left its traces in the subconscious of the Children of Israel.

But we should not exaggerate the importance of the Bar Kochba coin. The Goodenough studies make it clear that at that time the hexa-

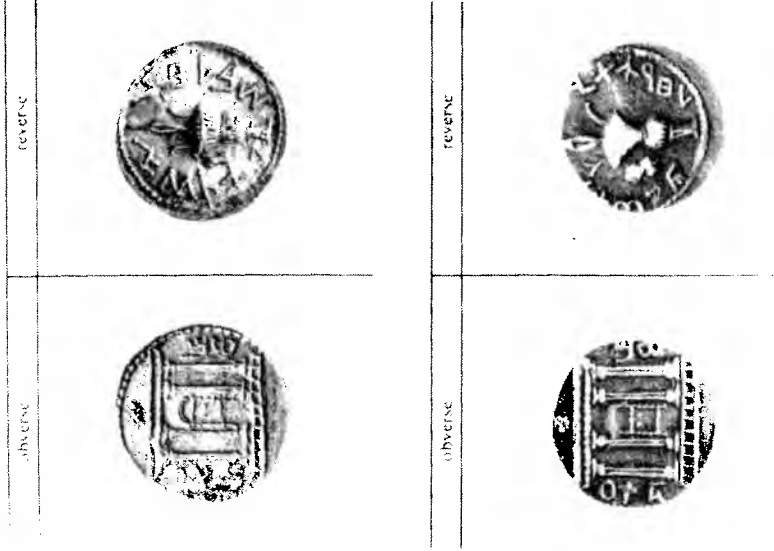
gram was just one of many designs in use in the Jewish realm and, counting the occurrences recorded by the author, not a very prominent one.

A noteworthy depiction of the hexagram in a Jewish context was discovered on a tombstone in south-eastern Italy, in Taranto (then called Tarentum).⁹ The stone dates from the sixth century or even earlier and reads as follows:

פֶּה יָרַח אֵשֶׁת
 לֵאֲוֹן בֶּן
 דָּוִד מִן
 מִלּוֹ

Here rests the wife of
 Leon, son of David,
 from Milo.

One might suppose that here indeed is an instance not only of the hexagram in a Jewish setting, but also of linking the sign with the name of David, an early attestation of the hexagram as a Jewish symbol with the name we know today. Yet this occurrence is so isolated that we cannot securely draw such a conclusion. A more conservative judgment is indicated: the sign was personal and probably used as a



Coins from the Bar Kochba revolt, 132-35 C.E. On each, the obverse view shows the Temple at Jerusalem with a rosette (hexagram) above the lintel. Pictured in *Encyclopaedia Judaica*, vol. 5, col. 709-10. (Photo courtesy of the Library of Congress)

5

Solomon and David

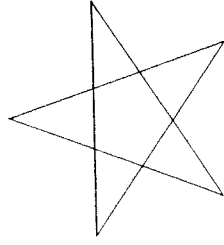
Our discussion in previous chapters has demonstrated both the sign's universal occurrence in earlier days and its predominant use as a protective device among Jews and Gentiles alike. Despite this, the hexagram managed in time to overcome this handicap and win the hearts of the Jewish people. When and how did this happen?

In the days when Talmud and Midrash were compiled, King Solomon's reputation as one who mastered the secret arts was very high. It was founded on the biblical tradition that the king was the wisest of all human beings, and that people came from afar to marvel at

his wisdom. Quite naturally, legends grew up around him that ascribed to him extraordinary feats, one of which was his command of spirits and demons.

He mastered these, the tales went, with the help of a ring upon which the *pentagram* was incised, which enabled him to vanquish all demons and even obtain access to the Shamir, a worm with which stones could be cut with ease and which he used in the construction of the Temple.¹

Christian and Muslim traditions also incorporated some of these legends, and in time the pentagram was known as the Seal of Solo-



Pentagram

mon.² The Greeks too contributed to the reputation of the pentagram in that the Pythagoreans considered the sign to be a symbol of health.

In western Europe the pentagram's power was derived from a different source. There, pre-Christian Druids believed the sign possessed magical powers and it became known as "Druids' foot," which in Germany was later corrupted into *Drudenfuss* or *Trutenfuss*.³

But alongside this tradition went another: that Solomon's Seal had in fact not been a pentagram but a *hexagram*, and the latter, too, was often called by the wise king's

name. These conflicting traditions resulted in considerable confusion, so that, in studying the literature, one must make sure what the expression "Seal of Solomon" meant to the author: did he mean the pentagram or the hexagram? Thus, the thirteenth century Spanish scholar Abraham Abulafia used it for the latter⁴ and an amulet from Ostia (the old port of Rome) for the former.⁵

Even many centuries later such usage persisted. A British traveler reported that Jewish women in North Africa "did make this mark on their chrysome cloths" and had it on their trunks in nails, and on their cupboards and tables;⁶ and an Arabic author of the eighteenth century called the hexagram both Shield of David and Seal of Solomon.⁷ In 1872 the German rabbi Leopold Stein, author of a widely read moral and ritual guide, referred to the pentagram as Magen David,⁸ while fifty years later an Italian writer termed the hexagram "Il Nodo di Salomone."⁹

As late as 1939 one could encounter the Solomonic ascription in Britain, where the Zionist flag was described as featuring the Seal of Solomon;¹⁰ and in Paris, during the German occupation, a newspaper so described the hexagram worn by Jews on their yellow armbands.¹¹

Yet somehow, the name of Solomon invested the insigne, whether pentagram or hexagram, with only limited appeal. To be sure, the king's feats - 3000 proverbs, 1005 songs and many wives! - were fondly told and his magical powers willingly believed. Jews were not immune to superstition, and therefore a device which he used must have some power, even if only in reproduction. But Solomon had no call on the Jewish heart.

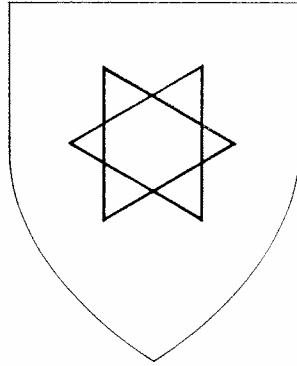
It was different with King David, and only when his name was regularly associated with the hexagram did it enter onto a path which eventually led to its acceptance as *the* Jewish symbol. For David's name evoked a different level of sentiment

in the Jew. David was the beloved of God whose Psalms spoke to every soul. David made Jerusalem the center of Jewish life and hope, and the Messiah would spring forth from his line. To this day popular folk songs carry his name as the symbol of redemption. "David, David, King of Israel, lives forever," one goes, and another sings of Elijah who will "soon come with the Messiah, descendant of David."

David was also a warrior and fought with forces terrestrial and extraterrestrial. He was said to have overcome the forces of the netherworld and battled with Margalittu, the ocean god of Babylonian mythology (possibly an agadic reminder of the giant Goliath of biblical fame.) There existed also a legend that David's engineering of canals caused the earth's waters to break forth and that he stemmed them with the name of God written on a shard.¹² This name was inscribed on his shield, for did he himself not sing:

During the fourteenth century, an unidentified Franciscan friar created a map which among other things purported to show a number of flags in their full colors.³ There, the flag of Lithuania (called "Litefania" by the author) is depicted as white with a blue hexagram (blue and white!), and that of neighboring Poland as green, red and white, embellished with the same symbol. If in fact such were the national colors, they could hardly be traced to Jews, whose numbers in these countries were still small at that time.

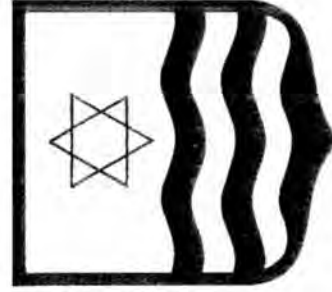
The Lithuanian and Polish banners were not the only ones shown by our friar to have had a six-cornered design. He depicts two flags for Satalia in the province of Naturi, which corresponds to Anatolia in Asia Minor. (This Satalia is the same as today's Adala in western Turkey (east of Izmir), an identification which we can make from another map that appeared in 1375.⁴) One flag contains a black hexagram superimposed on a white



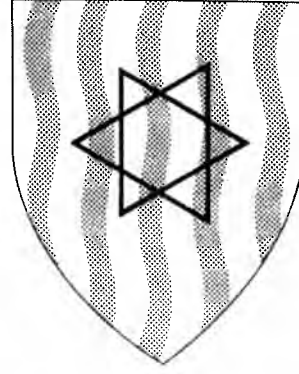
Litefania



Poland

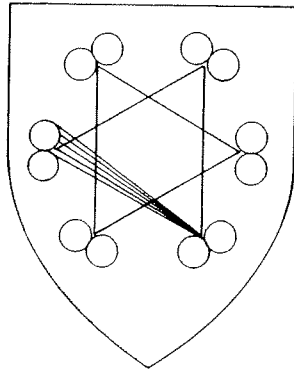


Satalia



Satalia

Medieval national flags as depicted on plates 3, 9, 13 in Markham, *Libro del Conoscimiento* (London, 1912).



Brischan

Based on Markham, *Libro del Conoscimento* (London, 1912).

background with wavy grey stripes, and another red-bordered banner has the emblem located above the stripes.

Our friar-cartographer also reports that a banner flown over a city called Brischan, in northern Africa,⁵ showed a black hexagram with two small circles embellishing each of the six points, on a plain white background.

How reliable are these reports? Some may be accurate, and some purely imaginary. Certainly in Schedel's famous world history (published in 1493, among the earliest printed books) all illustrations are fanciful, to the extent that even ancient Babylon in the sixth century B.C.E. is naively shown with churches topped by crosses! And one should note that the German cosmographer and Hebrew scholar Sebastian Münster, who published his *Cosmographia Universalis* in 1544, assigns quite different insignia to Lithuania. But then again these may have been changed during the two hundred years since the

Franciscan friar produced his world map.

An even earlier depiction of contemporary flags comes to us from the year 1360, fifteen years before the friar's creation. It too shows hexagrams for various locales in North Africa and Asia Minor – for such places as Tarsus, Aldano and Manustra (in Armenia).⁶ Un fortunately none corresponds to the friar's map, which leads one to believe that the imagination of the draftsmen supplanted what accurate reportage could not supply.

But one conclusion may be drawn even from these dubious sources: quite obviously, those who created the images did not think of the hexagram as a Jewish symbol. (Whether that held true also for another famous map of the fourteenth century, one that was drawn by a Jewish cartographer called Cresquez, is another question to which we shall turn in the next chapter.)

In sum, the hexagram as a geometric design, as a perfect shape, as

7

The Prague Connection

Few Jewish communities could match the capital city of Bohemia in its amplitude of highs and lows, achievements and miseries.

Prague lay at the crossroads of East and West. From the middle of the fourteenth century on it was, and remained for some three hundred years, the capital of the Holy Roman Empire. Here, Christians fought over the religious teachings of Jan Huss who was burned at the stake for his heresies.¹ Here, in the seventeenth century, the Swedish penetration into central Europe came to a halt, which hastened the end of the Thirty Years' War and divided the continent into Protes-

tant and Roman Catholic regencies.

Jews had lived in the city for a long time, but had done so in a state of constant insecurity. Shortly after they had settled in appreciable numbers they were ravaged by the "pious heroes" of the 1096 crusade who found it easier to kill unarmed Jews than armed Saracens. Not long after the community had somewhat recovered, the whole Jewish quarter burned to the ground and its hapless inhabitants moved across the river. For a while they flourished, only to be humiliated and expelled, readmitted and expelled again with terrible regularity.

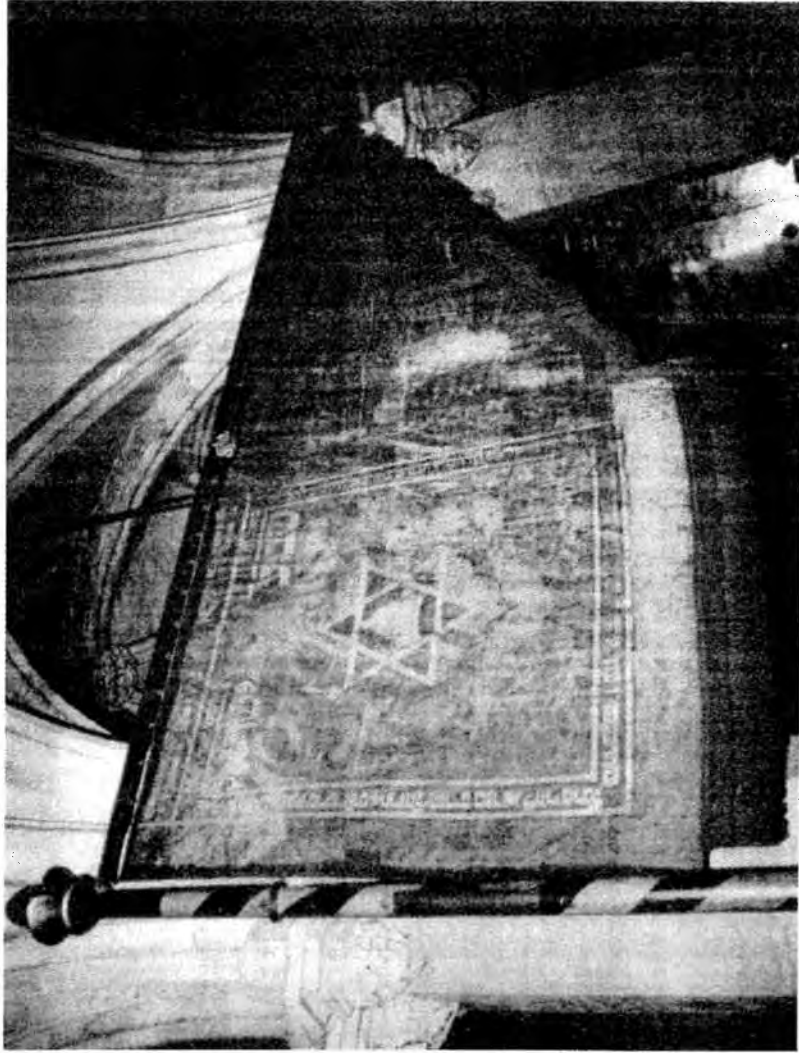
Yet the Jews returned, for more



A porcelain Passover plate, ca. 1900, from *The Precious Legacy: Judaic Treasures from the Czechoslovak State Collections*, Photo by Quicksilver Photographers, Washington, D.C. (Courtesy of SITES)

often than not other habitats were equally unattractive or other rulers closed their borders to the "Christ-deniers." And when they returned to Prague they experienced, in the interstices between persecutions, periods of well-being and great spiritual creativity.

The year 1338 had seen a particularly vicious persecution, but Jewish fortunes turned decidedly for the better when Charles IV became King of Bohemia in 1346 and nine years later, acceded to the throne of the Holy Roman Empire and made Prague its capital. The emperor was most comfortable with well-defined legal procedures and



The flag of the Jewish community which hangs in the Altneschul, featuring a Magen David with a "Swedish hat" in its center. From *The Precious Legacy: Judaic Treasures from the Czechoslovak State Collections*. (Photo by permission of SITES)

promulgated a constitution for the empire (the so-called Golden Bull). He also found it prudent to issue writs of protection for the Jews in his realm. This protection came at a time when Jews were excluded from England and largely from France as well. Charles assured the Jews of his benevolence and, as a token of his regard, he gave them leave to display a distinctive flag of their own. Red colored, with a yellow Magen David, it was subsequently on view in the city's premier synagogue. When after some years it fell into disrepair it was replaced with a replica and this banner of 1716 is still to be seen in the Altneschul.²

Here then was a Jewish community which, in the middle of the fourteenth century, identified itself officially with an emblem showing a Magen David surrounded by Hebrew script.³ Probably the sign's presumed protective power made it especially attractive.

Gershom Scholem raised the question whether the Prague banner

was created by the Jews themselves and at their initiative or was issued to them by royal fiat. He favors the former as more likely because of the Hebrew inscriptions.⁴ But the latter possibility has credence also, because other marks of Jewish identity, like hats, were usually prescribed by Gentile authorities. (Another theory holds that the flag was an import from southern Russia where the Khazars, a people converted to Judaism, were said to have used it.⁵ This is an intriguing suggestion but, alas, brought forward with insufficient supportive data.)

The identification of the Prague community with the Magen David, once begun, became firmly established. Two hundred years later another emperor, Rudolf II, presented the city's Jewry with a flag fashioned with a hexagram and Hebrew script. The recipient was Mordecai ben Samuel Meisel, who at the time was Prague's most prominent Jewish layman and the emperor's financial adviser. He was

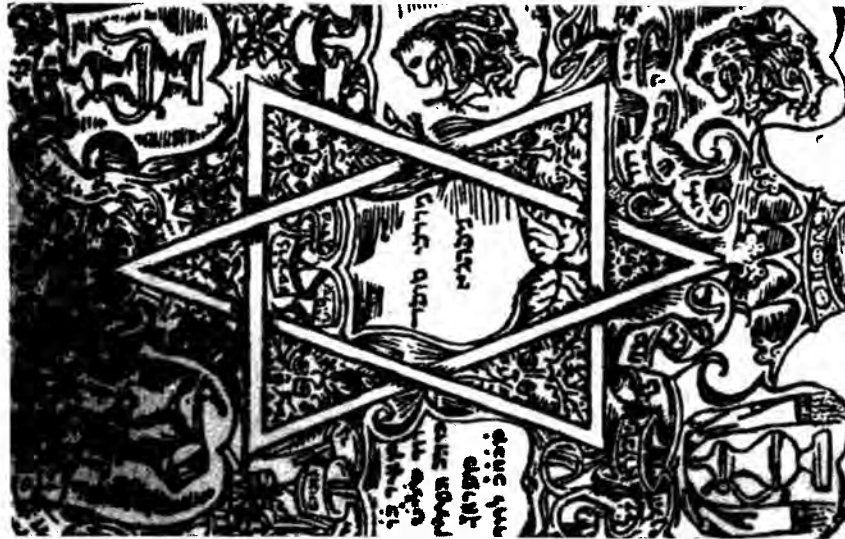
a man of great wealth and during the Turkish war was of considerable service to the crown. When in 1597 he completed the building of his own synagogue (to this day known as Meisel's shul) the emperor gave him a flag as a gift. In this instance it may be assumed that the recipient had a hand in creating or ordering the design.⁶

Both synagogue and flag survived, though Meisel's fortune did not. After Meisel's death the authorities summarily seized it for their own benefit. If they could no longer have Meisel's advice, at least they could have his money.

In addition to the Magen David and the Hebrew text, the Meisel and Altneschul flags have one other feature in common. In the center of both hexagrams is the picture of a hat. How this image came to be incorporated into these flags has given rise to much speculation. A modern publication which tells the history of the Prague ghetto relates the following:⁷

We have to transport ourselves back into the year 1648, when the Thirty Years' War came to an end. At that time the Swedish general Koenigsmark invaded Bohemia, advanced on Prague and laid siege to it... Colloredo, the defender of Prague, sent a messenger who had to pass the enemy lines in order to obtain relief.... He was a Jew, accomplished his task, and the emperor's army arrived in Prague in time to prevent the Swedish intent to encircle the city completely.

In addition, the Jews distinguished themselves in the city's defense. While the Gentile population sustained the loss of 113 men, no fewer than 22 Jews sacrificed their lives, a disproportionately high number. When the news reached Prague that a peace treaty had been signed at Münster and Osnabrück,⁸ Emperor Ferdinand rewarded the Jews of Prague with



Magen David used as a printer's mark in *Seder Tefillot*, the first Hebrew book published in central Europe (Prague, 1512). From A. Yaari, *Hebrew Printers' Marks from the Beginning of Hebrew Printing to the End of the 19th Century* (Jerusalem, 1943), as pictured in *Encyclopaedia Judaica* vol. 6, col. 691. (Photo courtesy of the Library of Congress)

grapes (recalling the natural wealth of the land of Israel), or lions (often shown as guarding the holy ark or the tablets of the commandments). These lions could be seen by everyone in the synagogues, but other symbols were confined to manuscripts. The wider Jewish public, even though schooled in reading, came only occasionally into contact with such depictions.¹

Abstract symbols, such as pentagram and hexagram, fared no better. Christians had their flags and heraldry emblazoned with a cross; Muslims had their banners showing stars and crescents; Jews, having no state of their own, displayed as identifying marks only those forced upon them by their masters. But once the printing process made its way in the second half of the fifteenth century and Hebrew books were published, illustrative symbolism had a chance to become popular.

The printing of the first Hebrew book in Prague is of particular interest. The dedication page

describes the community as "an adornment to all the cities of the earth." Six associates participated in the issuance of the prayer book which was called *Seder Tefillot* and appeared on the eve of Hanukah in 1512. The printer's mark featured a hexagram with a shield in the center.

It may be assumed that the official status the Magen David had already acquired was a major reason for its printed usage. At any rate, books published in Prague made their way to many communities.

But one cannot be sure about the importance of this influence, for some books printed earlier in Lisbon and Constantinople also showed the Magen David. Still, the Prague connection provides a more likely explanation for the dissemination of the symbol, and suggests the reason why one of the most prominent Jewish printing houses in Europe came to use it as its regular emblem. The establishment was owned by the Foà family which

originated in Italy and branched out to Holland. Its career spans more than 250 years, and its influence in popularizing the Magen David is beyond question. The Foà name made the sign familiar to many Jewish readers.

Tobias Foà published in the middle of the sixteenth century in Venice and Sabionetta, and fashioned the Magen David into an important part of his logo. Lions were shown supporting the emblem, and in one instance it is depicted as part of a palm tree, together with a quotation from the 92nd Psalm, "The righteous shall flourish like the palm." Printed around the Magen David are four biblical quotations each containing the word *magen*.

When the family built a synagogue they pictured the symbol there as well. Isaac Foà used it in the latter half of the eighteenth century, and Gad ben Samuel Foà in the early nineteenth, while Nathaniel Foà had already transported the symbol to Amsterdam.

About that time Israel Jaffe, who

צדיק כתר יפוח



פואה

טוביה

ואלו שאוהבם יפואה, ואזו במשאי
 סתרי ומגיני אתה לרברך יחלתי
 ואתה י' מנן בעדי כבודי ומרים ראשי
 סטרי ופואה וזוהו סטרי ופואה



יצו

Marks used by Tobias Foà in Sabionetta, 1551-1559, as pictured in A. Yaari, *Hebrew Printers' Marks from the Beginning of Hebrew Printing to the End of the 19th Century* (Jerusalem, 1943), p. 13. (Photo courtesy of the Library of Congress)



A boundary marker from Vienna, 1656. From Staedtisches Museum, Vienna; pictured in *Encyclopaedia Judaica*, vol. 6, col. 692. (Photo courtesy of the Library of Congress)

because of the Prague precedent. When the time came to adopt a seal for the community, Mohr may have looked to the heraldic symbol of his son's family, fortified as it was by the Prague precedent.

In 1656 a boundary between city and ghetto was fixed and a marker was fashioned which separated the two communities. The Christians were identified by the cross and the Jews by the hexagram. This was the first time that the hexagram functioned as a counterpart to the Christian cross and thus assumed a clearly religio-cultural aspect.

Thirteen years later, in 1669, a new expulsion of Vienna's Jewry began. All Jews who could be classified as poor were driven out and in the following year a like fate befell the rest, their money proving to be an impermanent defense against bigotry and a stimulus for their oppressors' greed. The refugees fled to the countryside and to more hospitable communities in Moravia as well as southern and central Germany.

The flight had one consequence which concerns us here: it spread Viennese Jewish customs abroad. Among them was the use of the Magen David, for the symbol went with them.

It is interesting to note that it appeared in Kromeriz (Kromeriz) in Moravia where Joseph Mohr had fled and here too it became the community seal. Other refugees took the symbol to such places as Nickolsburg, Eibeschütz, Eisenstadt and Przedborz (Poland). Thus, the Viennese Jewish dispersion of 1669-1670 had the effect of introducing the Magen David to many new places.

We cannot, however, trace the path of its migration to other centers of Jewish life. We do know that in the latter part of the seventeenth century the symbol also appeared in Amsterdam, now one of the great centers of European Jewry. The official seal of its Ashkenazic community featured the six-pointed star – *with the "Swedish hat" at its center!* –

12. The Shield of David as the Symbol of Zionism

The Zionist dream of the return to the promised land is as old as the Babylonian exile, its realization was strived for by Zerubbabel and Joshua, the Maccabees, Bar Kokhba and many other messianically inspired leaders of Israel up to Shabbetai Zevi. However, Zionism⁴¹² as a political movement came into being in the Eighties and Nineties of the 19th century and was partly a reaction to the growing anti-Semitism.

Ever since then, the Shield of David has been the symbol of Zionism, for which reason it was also called "Star of Zion" ("Zionstern"). It was placed on the flags of the Zionist youth movements, in the textbooks of the choral societies and on the shirts of the sports clubs. Even during the Nazi regime, when the Star was turned into a stigma, the Zionists and in an increasing number also those Jews, who saw themselves foremost as members of the German nation and had little to do with the Zionist ideals, confessed themselves to this symbol.

By 1897, the year that the first Zionist congress took place in Basel, the Zionists had made the Shield of David into a worldwide sign of hope: a blue Star on a white background, on the upper and lower side surrounded by blue stripes, in the same way as the present flag of the state of Israel.

However, when one looks for a formulation or even a small note in the protocols of this Basel congress, one will not find any statement that the Shield of David has officially been accepted as the Zionist symbol. Also in the protocols of the following congresses and in the letters and documents of the founding years of the Zionist movement the Magen David or even the choice of an emblem as such plays an insignificant role.

Other topics were of greater importance: the cultivation of Eretz Yisrael, the establishment of the Jewish National Fund, the reaction to the growing anti-Semitism, in short, the solving the more important economic and political problems of those days and the realization of the Zionist ideals.⁴¹³

Exactly 36 years later, in September 1933, the meeting of the eighteenth Zionist congress in Prague, the city where the Shield of David as early as 1354/7 had been chosen as a Jewish symbol, "officially" declared the Shield of David as the national symbol. This almost forgotten episode took place at the very end of the congress, when all important items had already been discussed. A man called Gerach Wahrhaftig, a member of the Mizrahi party, stood up and asked for an official proclamation. Mr. Motzkin, the chair of the congress, then said:

⁴¹² The expression "Zionism" dates from the year 1893 and was defined by Nathan Birnbaum; see Heil, H. J., *Die neuen Propheten*, Fürth-Erlangen 1969, 270.

⁴¹³ See Bodenheimer, H. H. (Ed.), *Im Anfang der zionistischen Bewegung. Eine Dokumentation auf der Grundlage des Briefwechsels zwischen Theodor Herzl und Max Bodenheimer von 1896 bis 1905*, Frankfurt a/M 1965; Reinharz, J. (Ed.), *Dokumente zur Geschichte des deutschen Zionismus 1882-1933*, Tübingen 1981, and see further Heil, *Propheten*.

"Da es bisher so Usus war, ist es klar, daß die Fahne der Zionistischen Organisation und des jüdischen Volkes die blauweiße Fahne ist. Der Kongreß erklärt, daß die Hymne Hatikwa die nationale Hymne des jüdischen Volkes ist."⁴¹⁴

But we may assume that it was self-evident, even without its official proclamation, for the first Zionists to use the Shield of David as their emblem, as since the 1880's and 1890's it has been the overall accepted symbol of Jewry. It was left to the artists and scholars to expound the form and origin of the hexagram. Even before the first Zionist congress, several pre-Zionist movements ("Howewe Zion" 1881, "Kadimah" 1882, as well as Theodor Herzl and his book "Der Judenstaat" of 1895 and the first Zionist newspaper "Die Welt" of Juni 4th 1897) had used the Shield of David as their emblem. Several artists, inspired by the Zionist ideals, had made suggestions for a design of the Star of David.

In 1864 Ludwig August Frankl, in a poem published in his "Ahnenbilder", had suggested the colours blue and white for a Jewish flag, as they corresponded with the colours of the Tallit, the prayer shawl.⁴¹⁵ From 1873 to 1875 the "American Jewish Publication Society" had used the Magen David as their emblem.⁴¹⁶ In the Eighties of the last century the "Howewe Zion" had used the Shield of David both with and without the word "Zion" in its centre. In 1885 the third anniversary of the Jewish settlement "Rishon le-Zion" was celebrated with a Shield of David.⁴¹⁷ In 1892 the "B'nai Zion Educational Society" in Boston had chosen the Star of David as their emblem.⁴¹⁸ In 1895 the Magen David appeared on the title page of Nathan Birnbaum's monthly magazine "Zion".⁴¹⁹

In a letter of December 16th of the pogrom year 1881, Mordechai ben Hillel Hakohen wrote to S.D. Levontin about a festival of the "Ahvath Zion":

"Die Musik war von Halévy, Meyerbeer und Mendelssohn, und selbst die Musikanten waren Juden. Besonders erfreut wurde unser Herz, als hebräische Lieder angestimmt wurden. Stell Dir vor: zweihundert junge Menschen stehen auf, und plötzlich singt ein Tenor: Zion, Zion, du Stadt Gottes, wie groß ist Dein Unglück! und dann ein Gedicht von Letteris ... Man sammelte auch für die Unglücklichen in Brody und für eine hebräische Bibliothek. Die Mitglieder des Komitees trugen einen Davidstern, in welchem das Wort Zion gestickt war ..."⁴²⁰

At the second Zionist congress the Shield of David appeared on a flag, but its form was still an open question. In the following years several alternative suggestions

⁴¹⁴ See for the whole text of the protocol Oegema, G. S., "Als Zionsstern weltweit zum Symbol der Heimkehr geworden", in: *Der Davidstern*, 94-99, esp. 99.

⁴¹⁵ See the *Encyclopedia of Zionism and Israel*, New York 1971, Vol. I, 328. On the Magen David in Zionism see esp. Plaut, *Magen David*, 87-96.

⁴¹⁶ *Jewish Encyclopedia*, Vol. I, 520.

⁴¹⁷ *Encyclopedia of Zionism*, Vol. I, 328.

⁴¹⁸ *Encyclopedia of Zionism*, Vol. I, 328.

⁴¹⁹ *Jewish Encyclopedia*, Vol. VII, 251.

⁴²⁰ Koblér, F., *Jüdische Geschichte in Briefen aus Ost und West. Das Zeitalter der Emanzipation*, Vienna 1938, 453-454.

were made. In his book "Der Judenstaat" Theodor Herzl, for instance, argued for a flag with seven stars:

"Wir haben keine Fahne. Wir brauchen eine. Wenn man viele Menschen führen will, muß ein Symbol über ihre Häupter erheben. Ich denke mir eine weiße Fahne mit sieben goldenen Sternen. Das weiße Feld bedeutet das neue, reine Leben; die Sterne sind die sieben goldenen Stunden unseres Arbeitstages. Denn im Zeichen der Arbeit gehen die Juden in das neue Land."⁴²¹

In the correspondence between the two main Zionist leaders, Theodor Herzl and Max Bodenheimer, we find the design of the Star of David as the emblem of the "Jewish Colonial Trust" from the year 1898: a hexagram with the lion of David in the middle and around it either seven stars, representing perfection (or the seven days of the week), or twelve stars for the twelve tribes of Israel.⁴²²

On the admission tickets of the I. to VII. Zionists congresses we find the Magen David used five times, every time designed in another way: as a simple hexagram (I. and VI. congress), as a Star of David with seven stars and a lion (II. congress), together with the eight-armed Hanukkah-candle (III. congress), together with the Temple mountain as well as with the Temple wall and the inscription "Zion" (V. and VII. congress).⁴²³ Other examples are found on the magazines "Der Jüdische Arbeiter", published in Vienna and Krakow in 1904 and "The Jewish Chronicle", the War Number of 1915.⁴²⁴

However, it is not easy to answer the question who designed the Zionist flag for the first time, if at all there was a first one. Gunther Plaut mentions four possible candidates:⁴²⁵ the "Howewe Zion", Jakob Baruch Askowith, Isidor Bonn and David Wolffsohn and then argues in favour of Wolffsohn.⁴²⁶

Of interest for the development of the Zionist flag is also the following account of what had happened in the year 1935 to Martin Fried-Landes, who in 1980 wrote to the Berlin Museum:

"Sehr geehrte Damen, (...) 1935 sind in Deutschland die "Rassengesetze" herausgekommen, in denen es Juden verboten wurde die Deutsche Fahne mit dem Hakenkreuz zu zeigen, aber, (was in meiner Meinung spöttisch gemeint war) es ihnen erlaubt wurde, die "Jüdische" Fahne zu adoptieren. Eine Kundin, Frau Gimler, hat diese Fahne für mich genäht und das Ironische dabei war, dass ihr Schwager, ein SS-Mann dabei stand und ihr zeigte wie sie den David Stern einzunähen hatte. An den folgenden 2 Jüdischen Neujahrstagen Sept. oder Oktober 1935 hat diese Fahne aus meiner Wohnung (Berlin N. 54 Linienstr. 196) 2 Treppen rechts aus dem Fenster gehangen. Das Haus im Osten Berlins steht noch und hat die Bombardierung überstanden. Ein Photograph hat eine Zeit lang auf der Straße gewartet bis diese

⁴²¹ Herzl, Th., *Der Judenstaat. Versuch einer modernen Lösung der Judenfrage*, 1896, reprint Berlin 1918, 76-77.

⁴²² See Bodenheimer, *Anfang*, 77.

⁴²³ Bodenheimer, *Anfang*, 444 ff.

⁴²⁴ Bar-Navia, חולדה, 196, 211; see also p. 198 for the emblem of the 3rd Zionist congress.

⁴²⁵ Plaut, *Magen David*, 87 ff.

⁴²⁶ Plaut, *Magen David*, 94.



Tombstone from 17th-century Poland with a design resembling the Magen David, from Loukomski, *Jewish Art in European Synagogues* (London, 1947), p. 180. (Photo courtesy of the Library of Congress)

usage. None other than the widely read poet and journalist Judah Leib Gordon strongly protested when in 1879 the new synagogue in St. Petersburg (now Leningrad) was to be decorated with the Magen David. He called it a heathenish symbol and traced its use to

“Magen Druid” – derived from the Druids who were members of a religious order among the Celts, before the advent of Christianity.⁴

The century’s greatest authority in the field tended to agree with the negative judgment on the Magen David. Leopold Löw was a Hungarian rabbi who wrote the classic work on Jewish graphic creations. He called the Magen David

un-Jewish and derived from German mythology, and added: “In many places one can see the Magen David even now [emphasis added] with women who have given birth, and the sign is also displayed on communal seals and synagogal ornaments.”⁵ And a German preacher of the time asked plaintively: “Why do people put a

Magen David on synagogues?”⁶

Even in 1904, when the *Jewish Encyclopedia* – the first great compendium of Jewish knowledge – was compiled, the article on the Magen David was quite brief.⁷

While it described the by-then frequent use of the symbol, it was in no way identified as “the” Jewish sign. Quite clearly, it had not as yet achieved its representative character.

Two more examples will suffice to show that as late as the time of the First World War (1914-18) the Magen David had not yet been accepted by all Jews as their symbol.

During the war, Americans as well as Germans buried their Jewish dead under the sign of the Magen David. The French War Department also considered the matter and in two orders in 1917 directed that “a form of the special emblem called Magen David” be used for this purpose.⁸ However, the French Jewish ecclesiastical authority (the *Consistoire*) objected

and proposed instead an emblem representing the tablets of the Ten Commandments. The *Consistoire* said it was astonished that the Ministry should make such a choice, for not only was the Magen David unknown to its Algerian constituency but it also created confusion with the Masonic insigne.

That happened nearly twenty years after the Zionist movement had displayed the Magen David on its flag. The fascinating aspect of this controversy is that the (non-Jewish) Ministry considered the sign a Jewish emblem, but the (Jewish) *Consistoire* did not. Its members most certainly were aware of the Zionist movement and its flag. Was this a gesture of anti-Zionism? Possibly; but it is noteworthy that apparently the Jews in French North Africa did not relate to the Magen David at all, and certainly not for any ideological reasons.⁹

The sharpest judgment on the Magen David as a Jewish symbol was delivered by the Viennese



Torah scroll niches in a faience-tiled wall in a synagogue in Isfahan, Iran, c. 1550. The Jewish Museum, New York. Photo by H. R. Lippmann, New York, pictured in *Encyclopaedia Judaica*, vol. 15, plate 2, following p. 620. (Courtesy of the Library of Congress)

people, religion and culture. There were others, of course, who had tried to evade their Jewishness, but the Nazis had forced it on them again. These persons, Weltsch wrote, now had to admit membership in the Jewish people, "not because of an inner conviction, not because of loyalty to their people, nor because of their pride in a magnificent history and in the noblest human achievements," but because their enemies affixed to their property or their persons an identifying sign — either a Magen David or the word *Jude* or both.⁴

The yellow badge of which Weltsch spoke was then still a metaphor, before the isolation of the Jews turned to systematic slaughter. The Nazis had smeared a Magen David on Jewish business establishments, but the actual badge — affixed first to arms and afterwards to breasts and backs — was yet to come. When it did, introduced by special edicts, it was imposed by the Germans wherever they encountered Jewish populations. Its effect

JUDISCHE RUNDSCHAU

Der 1. April 1933 wird ein wichtiger Tag in der Geschichte der Juden, ja in der Geschichte der gesamten Welt. In diesem Tage wird der erste Tag sein, an dem die Juden sich als Juden fühlen werden. Bis dahin waren sie nur Fremde, die man nicht anerkennen wollte. Heute werden sie als Juden anerkannt. Das ist ein großer Tag für die Juden und für die Welt. Wir wünschen allen Juden ein glückliches Leben und eine glückliche Zukunft. **REDAKTION: 4. IV. 1933**

Tragt ihn mit Stolz, den gelben Fleck!

Der 1. April 1933 wird ein wichtiger Tag in der Geschichte der Juden, ja in der Geschichte der gesamten Welt. In diesem Tage wird der erste Tag sein, an dem die Juden sich als Juden fühlen werden. Bis dahin waren sie nur Fremde, die man nicht anerkennen wollte. Heute werden sie als Juden anerkannt. Das ist ein großer Tag für die Juden und für die Welt. Wir wünschen allen Juden ein glückliches Leben und eine glückliche Zukunft. **REDAKTION: 4. IV. 1933**

שאוהו בנאון, את הטלאי הצהוב, מאמרו של רוברט ולטש בכיטאון הציוני

1933 באפריל 4, Jüdische Rundschau

Heading of the editorial "Wear the Yellow Badge with Pride" by Robert Weltsch in the *Jüdische Rundschau*, April 4, 1933, as pictured in Gutman, *Fighters Among the Ruins: The Story of Jewish Heroism During World War II* (1988), p. 47. (Photo courtesy of B'nai B'rith Books)



Jews wearing badges, from Schoenberner, *Der Gelbe Stern* (Hamburg, 1961), p. 117. (Photo courtesy of the Library of Congress)

was profound. The Star isolated the Jews and in time marked them for death. The Nazis' systematic attack on Jewish survival did in fact begin with the introduction of the badge.⁵

It was first tried out in Poland, shortly after the Germans had occupied the country. They had invaded it on September 1, 1939, and on October 24 the Jews of Wloclawek were instructed by Oberführer Cramer of the SA⁶ to wear a yellow triangle. Shortly thereafter, in Cracow, Governor Wächter decreed that all Jews, or children of a Jewish father or mother, had to be clearly designated as such:

As a distinguishing mark an armband is to be worn on the upper arm of their clothes as well as on the outer garments, which is to show the Zion's Star on a white background.⁷

In time, Governor General Hans Frank introduced a Jewish badge for all of Poland. The edict was published in the official gazette.⁸

Beginning with the 15th of September 1941, Jews who have reached the age of six are forbidden to appear in public without a Jewish Star. They are also forbidden to leave their community without written permission by the police, or to wear decorations, medals or other insignia.

This does not apply to the Jewish partner of a mixed marriage if there are children who are not considered as Jews or if their only son was killed in the war, or to the Jewish wife of a childless mixed marriage, as long as she remains married.

Usually the word Jew was inscribed in the center of the Star (which was shaped as a Magen David), in the language of the occupied land: *Jude, Juif, Jood*. The star, a high-ranking Nazi in France made clear, would be "one more step to the final solution of the Jewish problem in all the occu-



Der Distriktschef von Krakau

ANORDNUNG

Kennzeichnung der Juden im Distrikt Krakau

Ich ordne an, dass alle Juden im Alter von über 12 Jahren im Distrikt Krakau mit Wirkung vom 1. 12. 1939 ausserhalb ihrer eigenen Wohnung ein sichtbares Kennzeichen zu tragen haben. Dieser Anordnung unterliegen auch nur vorübergehend im Distriktsbereich anwesende Juden für die Dauer ihres Aufenthaltes.

Als Jude im Sinne dieser Anordnung gilt:

1. wer der mosaischen Glaubensgemeinschaft angehört oder angehört hat,
2. jeder, dessen Vater oder Mutter der mosaischen Glaubensgemeinschaft angehört oder angehört hat.

Als Kennzeichen ist am rechten Oberarm der Kleidung und der Überkleidung eine Armbinde zu tragen, die auf weissem Grunde an der Aussenseite einen blauen Zionstern zeigt. Der weisse Grund muss eine Breite von mindestens 10 cm. haben, der Zionstern muss so gross sein, dass dessen gegenüberliegende Spitzen mindestens 8 cm. entfernt sind. Der Balken muss 1 cm. breit sein.

Juden, die dieser Verpflichtung nicht nachkommen, haben strenge Bestrafung zu gewärtigen.

Für die Ausführung dieser Anordnung, insbesondere die Versorgung der Juden mit Kennzeichen, sind die Ältestenräte verantwortlich.

Krakau, den 18. 11. 1939.

H. Z. Wächter
Gouverneur

Governor Wachter's edict from Schoenberner, *Der Gelbe Stern* (Hamburg, 1961), p. 31. (Photo courtesy of the Library of Congress)

Suggested Activity 9: Micrography Magen David

1. Psalm 121

2. Sample Micrography Star 1: 13th c. France

Oegema, Gerbern S. *The History of the Shield of David: The Birth of a Symbol*.
Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 1996.

3. Sample Micrography Star 2: 18th c. Germany

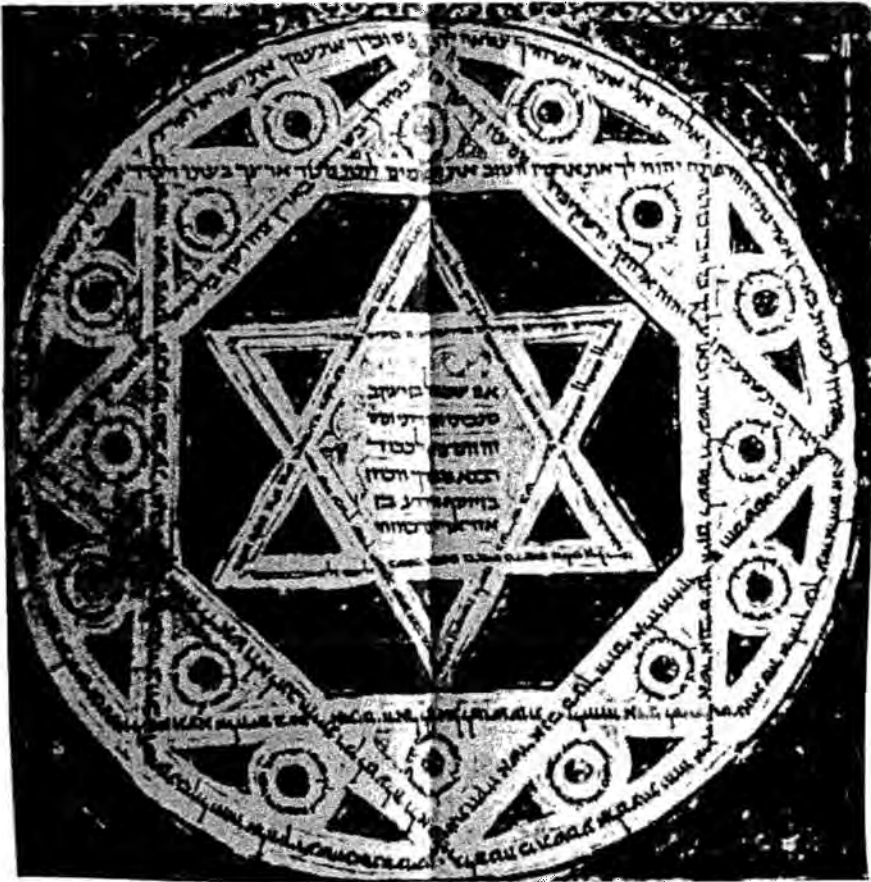
Plaut, W. Gunther. *The Magen David: How the Six-Pointed Star Became an
Emblem for the Jewish People*. Washington, D.C.: B'nai B'rith Books, 1991.

Psalm 121

ספר תהילים: קכא

א שִׁיר לַמַּעֲלוֹת אֲשֶׁר עֵינַי אֶל-הַהָרִים מֵאֵין יָבֹא עֲזָרִי: ב עֲזָרִי מֵעַם
 יְהוָה עֲשֵׂה עֲשִׂים וְאָרֶץ: ג אֶל-יָתֵן לַמּוֹט רַגְלֶךָ אֶל-יְנוּם שְׁמֶרְךָ:
 ד הִנֵּה לֹא יָנוּם וְלֹא יִישָׁן שׁוֹמֵר יִשְׂרָאֵל: ה יְהוָה שְׁמֶרְךָ יְהוָה צִלְּךָ
 עַל-יַד יְמִינֶךָ: ו יוֹמָם הַשֶּׁמֶשׁ לֹא-יִלְכָּךְה וְיָרַח בַּלַּיְלָה: ז יְהוָה יִשְׁמְרֶךָ
 מִכָּל-רָע יִשְׁמֹר אֶת-נַפְשֶׁךָ: ח יְהוָה יִשְׁמֶר-צֵאתְךָ וּבואֶךָ מֵעַתָּה
 וְעַד-עוֹלָם:

¹A song for ascents. I turn my eyes to the mountains; from where will my help come? ²My help comes from the LORD, maker of heaven and earth. ³He will not let your foot give way; your guardian will not slumber; ⁴See, the guardian of Israel neither slumbers nor sleeps! ⁵The LORD is your guardian, the LORD is your protection at your right hand. ⁶By day the sun will not strike you, nor the moon by night. ⁷The LORD will guard you from all harm; He will guard your life. ⁸The LORD will guard your going and coming now and forever.

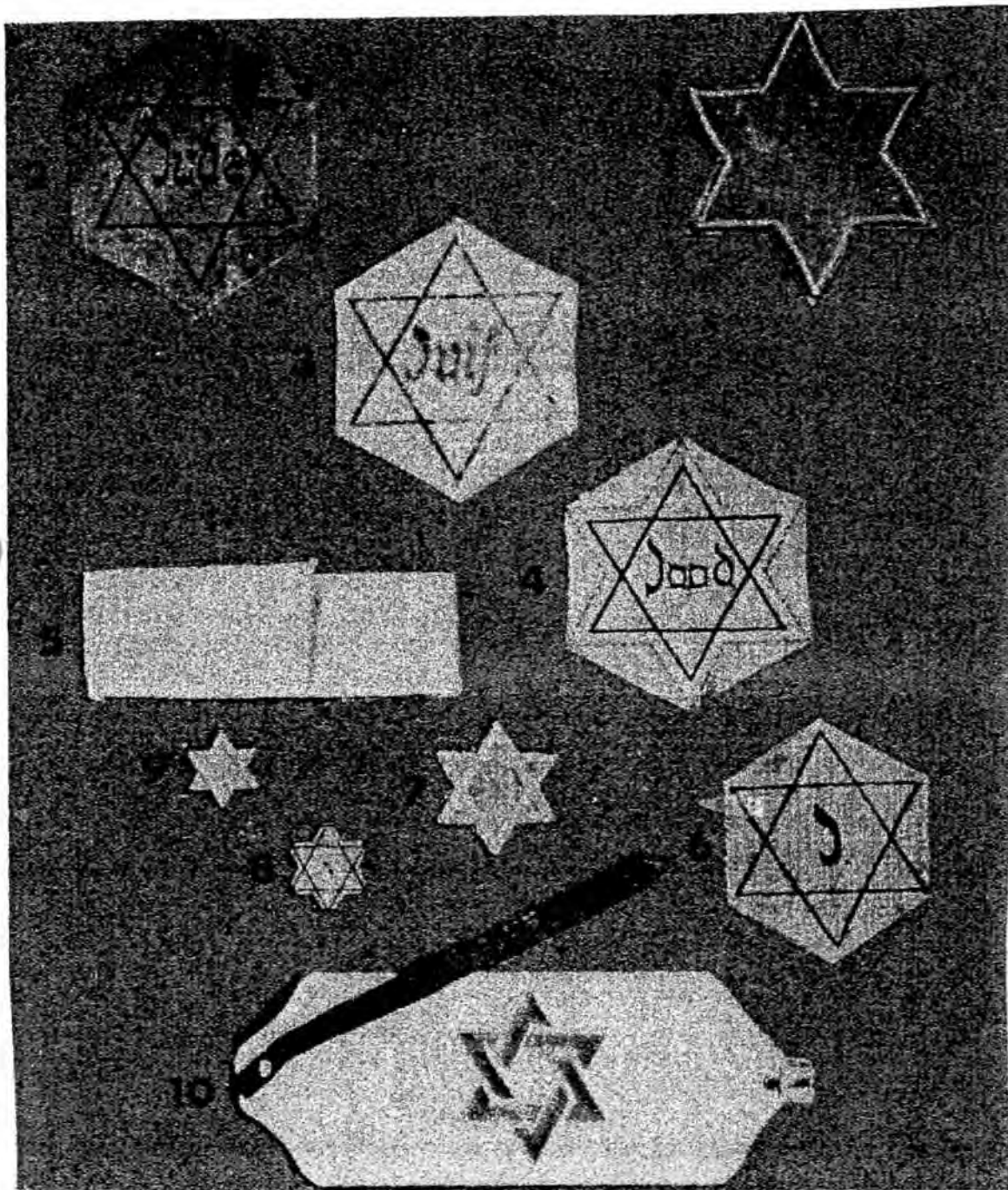




Suggested Activity 10: Nazi Era Badges of Persecution

1. Sample Poster

Plaut, W. Gunther. *The Magen David: How the Six-Pointed Star Became an Emblem for the Jewish People*. Washington, D.C.: B'nai B'rith Books, 1991.



Suggested Activity 12: Star of Redemption Text Study

1. Encyclopaedia Judaica: Franz Rosenzweig
Schwarzschild, S. and R. Hirsch. "Rosenzweig, Franz" *Encyclopaedia Judaica: CD Rom Edition*. Judaica Multimedia, 1997.
2. Star of Redemption Introduction
Trepp, Leo. *A History of the Jewish Experience*. Behrman House, 2000, 507-509.
3. Star of Redemption Chart
From earlier edition of Trepp's *A History of the Jewish Experience*.

Encyclopaedia Judaica: Rosenzweig, Franz

ROSENZWEIG, FRANZ (1886–1929), German Jewish theologian. Born in Kassel, Rosenzweig was the son of cultured parents whose adherence to Judaism was minimal and largely motivated by reactions to anti-Semitism. Rosenzweig entered university in 1905, studying a variety of disciplines, in a number of cities. Eventually he concentrated on philosophy, history, and classics. Friedrich Meinecke the historian had a great personal and intellectual influence on Rosenzweig. During this period, several of Rosenzweig's friends and relatives converted to Christianity, and he too contemplated conversion, arguing that he and his friends were Jews in name only—culturally, they were already Christians. However, he refrained from converting, because, like his parents, he regarded conversion as a socially cowardly act. In 1912, in Leipzig, he ran into a distant relative, Eugen Rosenstock-Huessy, who was on his way to becoming an unconventional but significant Protestant theologian. Out of his own highly literate and passionate faith, Rosenstock urged Rosenzweig to defend his nominal Jewishness or convert. After an intensive discussion on the night of July 7, 1913, Rosenzweig decided to convert, making only the reservation that he would become a Christian not as "a pagan" but "as a Jew," i.e., not by rejecting his Jewish origin but by recapitulating the consummation of Judaism in Christianity. He enacted this resolution by attending High Holiday services in a small Orthodox synagogue in Berlin, and he came out of this experience reversing his decision: he now declared that he knew himself to be a Jew; that the Jew does not need to seek God, for he is already with God; and that he intended henceforth to recover Judaism for himself and, possibly, for others like him. The circumstances under which this "return" to Judaism occurred continued to influence Rosenzweig's life and religious views to the end. He conducted an erudite and lengthy correspondence on Judaism and Christianity with Rosenstock while the two were soldiers during World War I, stationed far away from one another (see his collected letters, *Briefe*, ed. by E. Rosenzweig and E. Simon (1935), and E. Rosenstock-Huessy (ed.), *Judaism Despite Christianity*, 1969). Rosenstock's central notion, that revelation, the incursion of the divine into history, is the point around which men organize their world and experiences, not only became the chief thesis of Rosenzweig's first Jewish theological essay, *Atheistische Theologie* ("Atheistic Theology," in *Kleinere Schriften* (1937); see Goldy and Hoch, in: *Canadian Journal of Theology*, 14 (1968), 79ff.) but also the cornerstone of his later theological magnum opus. The Jewish liturgy, the calendar of the Jewish year, etc., became the building blocks of his theological edifice. To intensify his knowledge of Judaism, Rosenzweig went to Berlin where he fell under the spell of Hermann Cohen, then teaching at the liberal rabbinical seminary, having retired from the University of Marburg. Here he also made his first acquaintance with, among others, Martin Buber, who was to become his close friend and colleague. In 1917 his *Das aelteste Systemprogramm des deutschen Idealismus* was published. In this work, Rosenzweig identifies as Schelling's a manuscript written in Hegel's hand, which constituted Schelling's only attempt to formulate a unified system of idealism. Out of his prewar doctoral dissertation grew the important two-volume study *Hegel und der Staat*, published in 1920. By this time, however, his interest in general philosophy and German history had taken second place to his Jewish concerns. As a soldier during the war he experienced some of the "Jewish authenticity" of the Eastern European Jewish populace; he studied a great deal and wrote essays about the needed reforms in general as well as Jewish education. He then also contracted an illness which is believed to have been the cause of his eventual fatal disease. During these years a close personal and intellectual relationship developed between him and Cohen, although their philosophical positions were far apart—Cohen being a classical neo-Kantian rationalist, and Rosenzweig being oriented toward "life-philosophy" and existentialism. Rosenzweig also differed sharply with Cohen's somewhat hyperbolic German patriotism.

Der Stern der Erloesung

The most important product of the war years was his major work *Der Stern der Erloesung* ("The Star of Redemption," 1921, 1930², 1954³; English translation by W. W. Hallo, 1971), which in August of 1918 he began to write on postcards sent home from his military stations and completed in February 1919 after his return. In this difficult work he tries to formulate a "new

thinking" (see his essay "*Das neue Denken*," in *Kleinere Schriften*), to outline a history of culture, and propose a philosophical theology of Judaism and Christianity. The three parts of this work can be summarized:

BOOK 1

The experience of "the fear of death" is completely private and cannot be conceptualized; thus it destroys philosophy's pretension that it is able to unify the cosmos and all experience. Rosenzweig regards the world as manifold, as being constituted of three elements—man, the universe, and God—and he rejects philosophy's attempt to reduce these three elements to one basic element on the grounds that this does not conform to reality. While in the "pagan" world view these three elements are independent and unrelated, according to the biblical view they interact through the processes of creation, revelation, and redemption. Revelation—which becomes possible once philosophy has been assigned its limited place—is initiated by God as the process of relating, first God to man, and then man to God, and through his life to the world. "Truth," then, is not any set of abstract principles. Following Hegel's and Rosenstock's emphasis on "subjectivity," Rosenzweig maintains that truth is subjective, is arrived at by the individual on the basis of his own personal existence, and can be verified only in the life of the individual.

BOOK 2

Revelation so understood is clearly not an historical event but the continuous entry into relationship with man on the part of God. It takes a verbal form, and its content is not any kind of addition to the previously existing stuff of the universe but simply God's identification of Himself to man in love. This divine love evokes a response of love in man, which is expressed also in man's relationships with his neighbor. (The three "pagan" elements comprise one triangle, their revelatory relations another, and when superimposed one upon the other they form "the star of redemption.") Following a Kantian distinction, Rosenzweig distinguishes between "laws" (*Gesetz*), which are universal, and "commandments" (*Gebot*), which are personal. Though revelation does not comprise "laws," "commandments" are born out of the love relationship, which when carried out, change life. (In his later argument with Buber in "The Builders" (in *On Jewish Learning* (1955), 72–92), Rosenzweig broadens this conception by holding that the Jew must open himself up to the *halakhah* as an at least potential channel of the love commandments. What a man "cannot yet" accept, may, in the course of time and with real effort, become possible and, therefore, incumbent upon him.)

BOOK 3

Men's desire, in prayer, action, and hope, for the repetition and permanent reality of the revelatory experience in community is the search for the kingdom of God. The people of Israel entered into this kingdom of eternity from the outset. The Jew is naturally born a Jew, and the continuity of the Jewish people is biological—thus biology, in the spirit of Judah Halevi, is a theological value. The Jew lives eternity essentially through the religious calendar and liturgy. Israel is thus outside the stream of history, in which the nations of the world are still flowing toward "the end of days." It is the risky business of Christianity to carry its own members and the rest of mankind toward the consummation in which God will be "all in all." Christians are, therefore, always converts to Christianity, which is superimposed upon their pagan origin and base. The language of the world of redemption, attained or envisioned, is liturgical chorus. Judaism and Christianity are both partial truths in history, equally valid for their respective communities (i.e., "the doctrine of the two covenants"), and both will be superseded by the absolute truth in the "end of days." (It must be added, however, that the truth of Sinai still seems to hold primacy in Rosenzweig's view; see S. Schwarzschild, in: *Conservative Judaism*, 11 (1956–57), 41–58.)

After World War I

Settled again in civilian life, Rosenzweig determined to devote himself to the pedagogical task of turning himself and as many fellow-Jews as he could influence into real Jews. He moved to Frankfurt on the Main, where, with the help of an intellectually and Jewishly variegated group of men, including the orthodox rabbi N. Nobel, Martin Buber, Eduard Strauss, Richard Koch, Erich Fromm, Ernst Simon, G. Scholem, N. Glatzer, and others—men who were to become immensely

influential—he organized the Freies Juedisches Lehrhaus ("Free Jewish House of Learning"). This was conducted along the educational lines he had formulated in various essays: regardless of their respective levels of academic qualification, in Jewish studies teachers and students were tyros together, trying to move from the periphery of European culture where they found themselves toward the center of authentic Jewish sources. Thus an emphasis on the classic texts was combined with the empathy which existed among the self-consciously "homeless" Jewish intellectuals.

In 1921 progressive paralysis set in; he soon lost, almost completely, his mobility and his power of speech. After July 1922 he was confined to his home, but not only did he live for seven years, he even continued his intellectual and literary activities. His confinement contributed to his increasing observance of Jewish law. His colleagues and friends visited him at home and held services there. Rabbi Leo Baeck bestowed a rabbinical teacher's title on him. Rosenzweig's wife, with the help of a specially constructed machine, deciphered his thoughts and wishes. He concentrated on talmudic studies and listened to much recorded music, and he conducted an active and wide correspondence until his death.

The main literary products of Rosenzweig's years of confinement are translations from Hebrew into German. These are of value not only in literary terms but also for their philosophical and theological implications, which he often spelled out himself. Thus his German renderings of liturgical poems by Judah Halevi are accompanied not only by a lengthy introduction which deals with the philosophy and problems of translation but also by many, often extended, footnotes that discuss the religious and theological subject matter of individual poems (*Sechzig Hymnen und Gedichte des Jehuda Halevi*, 1924; *Zweiundneunzig Hymnen und Gedichte*, 1927; *Zionslieder mit der Verdeutschung von F. Rosenzweig und seinen Anmerkungen*, 1933). In 1924 he and Martin Buber began a new translation of the Bible. By the time of Rosenzweig's death they had reached the Book of Isaiah (*Die Schrift*, 10 vols., 1925). Buber completed the project in the 1950s in Israel. Essays which the two wrote in connection with this undertaking, dealing with the principles of their translation and specific problems encountered in it, were gathered and published in Berlin under the title *Die Schrift und ihre Verdeutschung* (1936). The chief principle underlying Rosenzweig's translating activity is the notion that all human languages, like all groupings of mankind, are diverse developments from one single source; it must be possible, therefore, by tracing languages sufficiently far back, to find a common etymological root which will supply the basis for the proper translation of any expression in one language into its counterpart in any other. The intentional result of this methodology is that the Bible translation reads like strongly Hebraized German, forcing the reader into shocked attention rather than pious passivity. The translators also tried to reproduce in German what they believed to be the originally intended and traditionally preserved oral quality of the biblical texts. In accordance with their theological doctrine that the God of the Bible enters into unpredictable relations with men and is encountered only in this fashion, they rendered His traditionally unpronounceable name in the pronominal form appropriate to the grammatical occurrence, "You," "He," etc. In general Rosenzweig's views of the Bible must be regarded as "post-critical." Fully conversant with so-called Bible criticism, he held that the important question to be asked about the Bible is not concerned with its origins but with its fate, not what the authors had in mind but what the reader gets out of it; in other words, the Bible read as history in the synagogue is carried forward by the contemporary reader's understanding. He symbolized this view by suggesting that the "R" (redactor) of the Bible critics ought to be read as "(Moses) *rabbenu*" ("(Moses) our teacher"). Whereas in the critical reading, divine anthropomorphisms are primitive remnants, in his they are quasi-Platonic paradigms of human features. Rosenzweig's view of the Jewish people as an entity outside history made his posture toward Zionism ambivalent. On the one hand, he favored the Zionist thrust toward self-authentication and self-extrication from European acculturation; on the other hand, the trend toward political Zionist activity and goals clashed with his belief that Jewish redemption could come about only with the eschatological dissolution of exile and alienation.

In Jewish religious circles Rosenzweig's thought has exerted a significant influence. One reason for this is that the men who were associated with him and who long survived him, carried his imprint through their own, often noteworthy, intellectual careers. Another is the fact that, in

different ways, the problems which Rosenzweig faced in his generation still persist in the later 20th century—e.g., the recovery of Jewish authenticity and literacy, and the relationship between Judaism and Christianity and between the secular environment and the Jewish religion.

[Steven S. Schwarzschild]

The publication of *Martin Buber's Briefwechsel aus sieben Jahrzehnte* (Heidelberg, 1975) by Grete Schaeder, consisting of correspondence between Rosenzweig and Martin Buber in 1922, reveal the intimate relationship which existed between these two scholars while Buber was writing his monumental *Ich und Du*, and the influence of Rosenzweig on Buber's dialogical thinking. Rivka Horwitz, in her study *Buber's Way to I and Thou* (1978), analyzes the new material uncovered in the archives and throws new light on the relationship between Buber and Rosenzweig.

Rosenzweig criticizes Buber's dialogical philosophy as it is also based on I—It, a notion which appears idealistic to Rosenzweig.

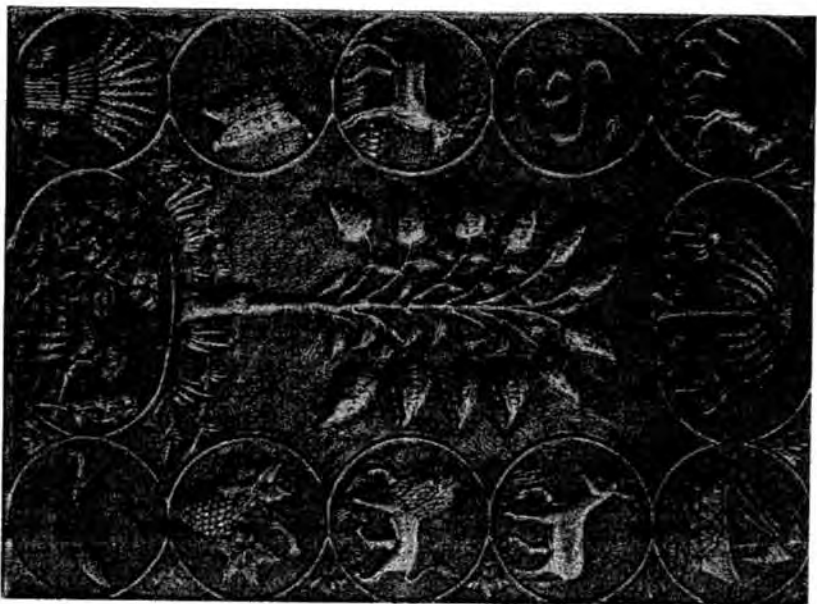
Rosenzweig thinks the counterpart to I—Thou should be He—It, for building it around the human I—the human mind—is an idealistic mistake that should be rejected. He prefers the divine He, whose world man is searching. The world is God's world; He is the Creator of the world. There is ample proof that Buber accepted Rosenzweig's criticism with regard to *Ich und Du*, although not immediately, as it would have demanded a drastic change in the book, but in his later writing—not only in the Bible translation where the Tetragrammaton is translated *Er, He*, but also in his own philosophy in the coming years. Buber then wrote about the Creator next to the Eternal Thou. It is now clear that by dialogue with Buber the philosophy of Rosenzweig played a more important role than previously thought in forming and molding the dialogical theory of our time.

[Richard Hirsch]

Encyclopaedia Judaica: CD Rom Edition. Judaica Multimedia, 1997.

155.2
T /
3000

A
HISTORY OF THE
JEWISH
EXPERIENCE




BOOK ONE

Torah and History

BOOK TWO

*Torah, Mitzvot, and
Jewish Thought*

LEO TREPP

 BEHRMAN HOUSE, INC.

Rosenzweig based his “new thinking” on two basic assumptions. The first is that all thinking must be based on common sense, on “knowing that a chair is a chair” and not something else. The second is that all thinking must be dialogical, thinking in speech with the other—*speech-thinking*. In it, thought unfolds in time, which will lead to wholly different results from the “old thinking.” And because speech-thinking requires another person as partner in dialogue, the “other” is equal and actually the teacher. Therefore, other people are essential for all life and creative thought.

Rosenzweig is aware, however, that common sense is prone to error and may differ between groups and with time. He therefore had to define truth in a way that accounts for these differences. Truth is something of absolutely vital importance to a person:

The new thinking sees in truth not the truth of the philosopher, but something that is so true for a person that this person eventually will stake even his or her life and the life of the generations for it.⁶

This means that human truth remains divided, is relative, and rests on time. The full truth is known only to God, and this means that all the different truths that people claim by staking their lives on them, are true as they find their focus in the hidden God.

While for Cohen, whose thoughts Rosenzweig develops, the *idea* of God guarantees the unity of nature and human ethics, for Rosenzweig, the living God, creator of nature, assures the unity of humanity because God alone is the truth and has the truth; for both thinkers, correlation is the core element, for the new thinking is nothing else but speaking to one another in time. Therefore, life is the test and reveals the truth. The person who “walks humbly with God” partakes of the truth, not as theological conclusions but as life.⁷ Life grants the truth, unfolding it to the person on the way. “To walk humbly with

6. Franz Rosenzweig, “Das neue Denken,” in *Kleinere Schriften* (Berlin: Schocken, 1937), p. 387.

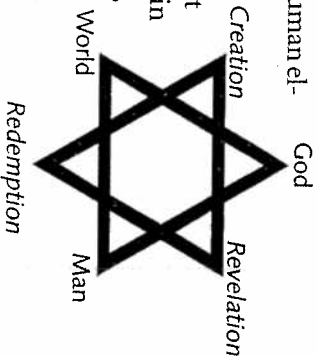
7. See Franz Rosenzweig, *Der Stern der Erlösung*, 2d ed. (Frankfurt: J. Kaufman, 1930), part 3, pp. 210–11.

your God” is the abiding duty of human beings, it rests on trust in God, and from this trust faith, hope, and love will grow.

The Star of Redemption

Through the ages, the *Magen David*, David’s Shield, the Star of David, has been a symbol of Judaism. Rosenzweig used it as symbol of his new theology, giving the star a modern meaning as *The Star of Redemption*.

True to his “new thinking,” he grounds his thought in common sense and dialogical interaction in time. Common sense and experience tell us that in the universe three fundamental elements exist and are separate from each other: *God, world, humanity*. In addition “experience, as it penetrates even to the ultimate, discovers in human beings only human elements, in the world only worldly elements and in God only divine elements.”⁸ If we wish to know more of these three elements, we must find out how they interact with each other in time: what they did to each other in the past, what they are doing to each other in the present, and what they will do to each other in the future.



There are three basic actions by which *God, world, and humans* constantly interact with each other in time: *creation, revelation, redemption*. God constantly makes the world through creation. God at all times chooses humans through revelation. God, with the help of humanity’s creative work in the world, brings about redemption. God has fashioned the world and in revelation chosen humans for a special task: every human being is God’s co-worker in the work of creation, and the world is their laboratory; in life, the human being, active in the world, finds God—and God finds world and humanity. This is redemption.

God, world, and humanity form the upper triangle of the star; creation, revelation, and redemption are represented by the lower triangle. The three elements are interwoven with the three actions, and the six-pointed star explains their constant

8. Rosenzweig, “Das neue Denken,” in *Kleinere Schriften*, pp. 387–89.

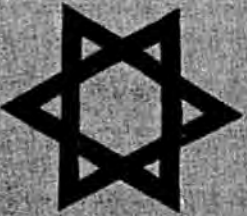


Terra cotta Magen David, c. third century C.E.



Under Hitler, mandatory yellow badges marked "Jew" were used for quick identification.

Through the ages, Magen David, David's Shield, has been a symbol of Judaism. It has acquired a new meaning in modern Judaism, both tragic and heroic. The Jews under Nazi domination had to wear it by order of their oppressors and exterminators. Intended to be the Jews' badge of shame, the Jews transformed it into a badge of honor and affirmation. It has acquired a new significance and flows proudly as the flag of Israel.



The Star of David shields a new country—a symbol of independence, strength, and reverence for the past.

interaction. Creation, revelation, and redemption are not one-time events but, rather, pose a daily challenge for all human beings on humanity's road through life and history. To the world, the completed star symbolizes a vision toward which humanity is moving, but that has not been fulfilled; the two triangles are not yet interwoven.

Judaism and Christianity

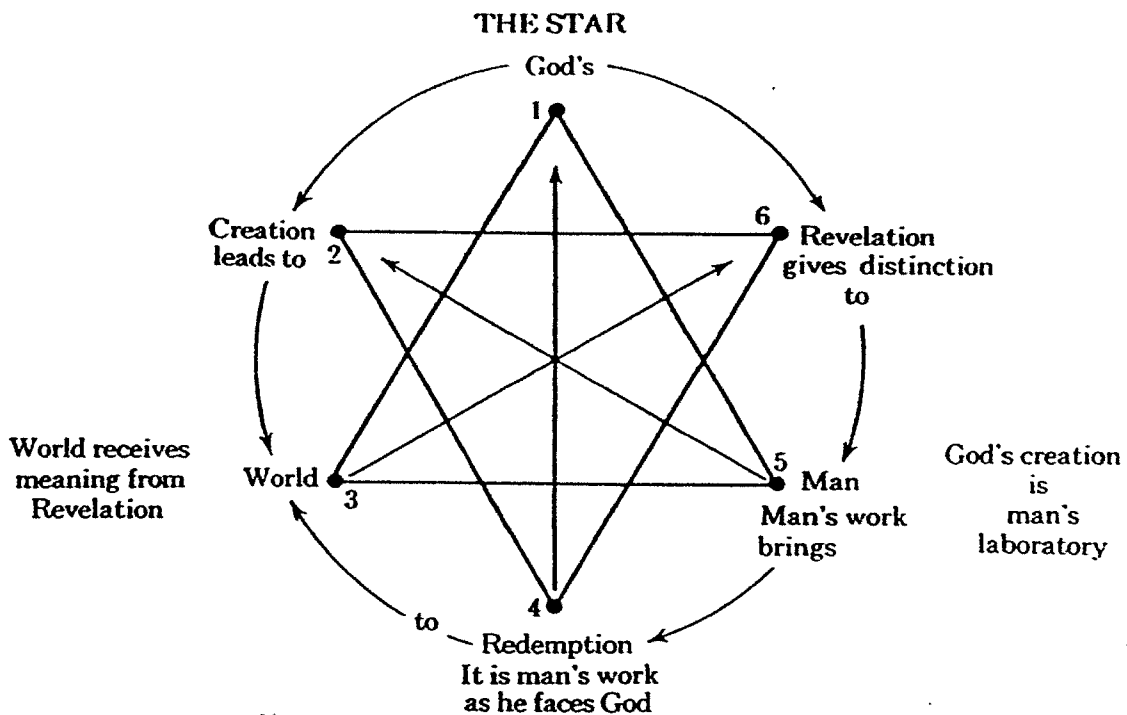
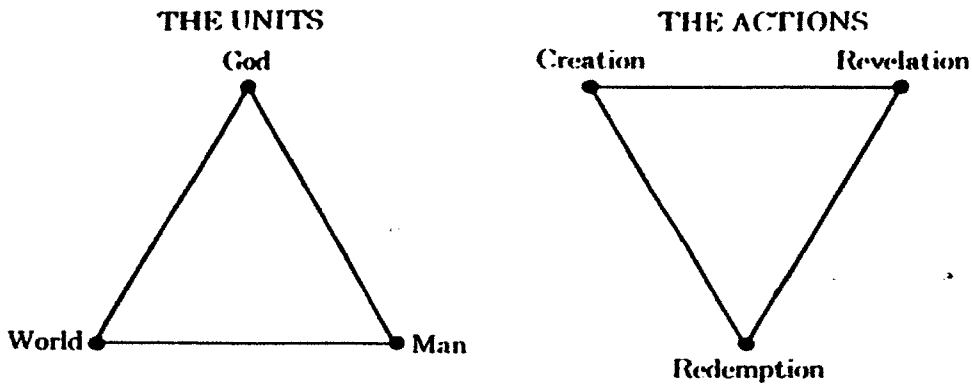
Rosenzweig accepts the Christian idea that no one comes to the Father except through the Son (John 14:6) but adds, "except for those already with the Father": Jews, whose Star of Redemption is complete. Rosenzweig concludes that Judaism and Christianity, each in its own way, are essential in God's scheme for the world. Their truth is true for each of them. Christianity is called to bring humanity to the Father through the Son. Judaism, living testimony that it is possible to come to the Father, offers the image of a society that dwells with God and spurs the rest of humanity on its road.

Rosenzweig is the first Jewish thinker who held that Judaism and Christianity are dependent upon each other and that both are necessary under God's plan. Hermann Cohen had explained how Christianity and Judaism needed each other. Rosenzweig elevates this mutual dependency to the level of God's design.

The Road to Mitzvot

The individual Jew must study Judaism and commit himself or herself to the mitzvot. But, admonishing those who, like him, seek the road to return, Rosenzweig advised Jews against a jump into the law as a result of crisis. Rather, the Jew coming

Rosenzweig's Star (Information for the Teacher)



The six corners:

- 1-2-3: God's (1) Creation (2) leads to World (3).
- 1-6-5: God's (1) Revelation (6) gives distinction to Man (5).
- 5-4-3: Man's (5) Work brings Redemption (4) to World (3).

The opposites:

- 1-4: God and Redemption face each other; God assures ultimate Redemption to World and Man.
- 2-5: Man and Creation face each other; God's Creation is man's workshop; he leads it to Redemption by bringing to life the message of Revelation.
- 3-6: The World receives meaning from Revelation, being led from Creation to Redemption.

(From Trepp, Leo, A History of the Jewish Experience, p. 354)

Suggested Activity 14: Flag Proclamation

1. Flag Proposals

Flags of the World Website

<http://www.crwflags.com/fotw/flags/il!1948.html>

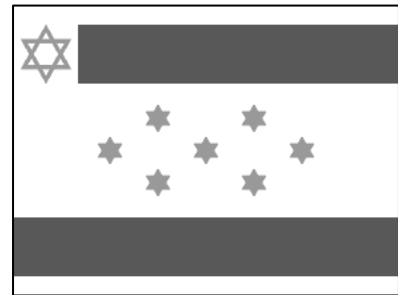
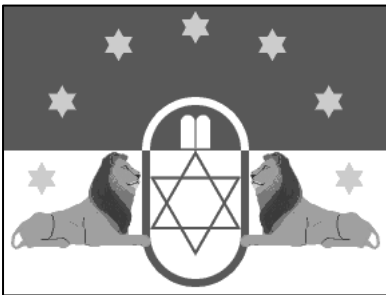
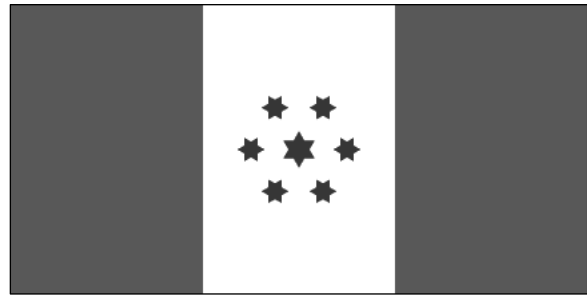
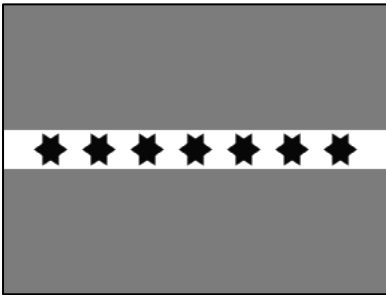
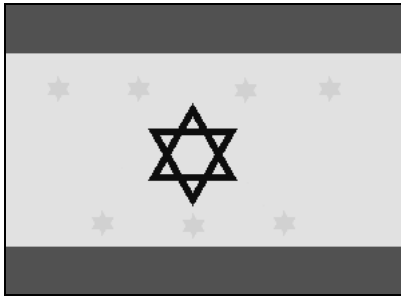
2. Proclamation Adopting the Zionist Flag as the State Flag of Israel, 1948

Israel Ministry of Foreign Affairs

<http://www.israel->

[mfa.gov.il/MFA/History/Modern%20History/Israel%20at%2050/The%20Flag%20and%20the%20Emblem](http://www.israel-mfa.gov.il/MFA/History/Modern%20History/Israel%20at%2050/The%20Flag%20and%20the%20Emblem)

Flag Proposals for the State of Israel Submitted in 1948



Source of Images:
Flags of the World Website
<http://www.crwflags.com/fotw/flags/il1948.html>

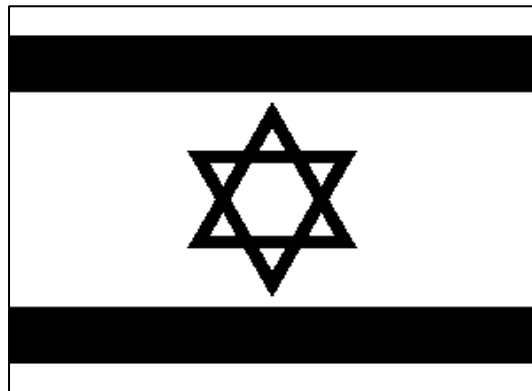
Proclamation Adopting the Zionist Flag as the State Flag of Israel, 1948

Provisional State Council
Proclamation of the Flag of the State of Israel

The Provisional Council of State hereby proclaims that the flag of the State of Israel shall be as illustrated and described below:

The flag is 220 cm. long and 160 cm. wide. The background is white and on it are two stripes of dark sky-blue, 25 cm. broad, over the whole length of the flag, at a distance of 15 cm. from the top and from the bottom of the flag. In the middle of the white background, between the two blue stripes and at equal distance from each stripe is a Star of David, composed of six sky-blue stripes, 5.5 cm. broad, which form two equilateral triangles, the bases of which are parallel to the two horizontal stripes.

25 Tishrei 5709 (28 October 1948)
Provisional Council of State
Joseph Sprinzak, Speaker



Source:
Israel Ministry of Foreign Affairs
<http://www.israel-mfa.gov.il/MFA/History/Modern%20History/Israel%20at%2050/The%20Flag%20and%20the%20Emblem>

Suggested Activity 15: From Destruction to Hope

1. The Magen David: Both Destruction and Hope

Oegema, Gerbern S. *The History of the Shield of David: The Birth of a Symbol*.

Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 1996, 132.

Scholem, Gershom. *The Messianic Idea in Judaism*. London: George Allen & Unwin Ltd, 1971, 281.

The Magen David: Both Destruction and Hope

Gerbern Oegema:

After the destruction of the Temple the seed of a lily was sown in the earth. During the dispersion of the Jewish people the seed absorbed the juice of many cultures without losing its essence. In medieval Europe it began to grow in the secrecy of books and synagogues. At the time the liberation and emancipation of the Jews began, the flower showed itself to the surrounding world. Then, with a brutality never seen before, it was trampled to death. But its leaves and petals were not broken or had gone up in the air. The lily was back in its own, fertile soil, the land of Israel. Only there it could blossom like a rose in the desert. Only there its symbol resembled the real lily.

Oegema, Gerbern S. *The History of the Shield of David: The Birth of a Symbol*. Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 1996, 132.

Gershom Scholem:

But far more than the Zionists have done to provide the Shield of David with the sanctity of a genuine symbol has been done by those who made it for millions into a mark of shame and degradation. The yellow Jewish star, as a sign of exclusion and ultimately of annihilation, has accompanied the Jews on their path humiliation and horror, of battle and heroic resistance. Under this sign they were murdered; under this sign they came to Israel. If there is a fertile soil of historical experience from which symbols draw their meaning, it would seem to be given here. Some have been of the opinion that the sign which marked the way to annihilation and to the gas chambers should be replaced by a sign of life. But it is possible to think quite the opposite: the sign which in our own days has been sanctified by suffering and dread has become worthy of illuminating the path to life and reconstruction. Before ascending, the path led down into the abyss; there the symbol received its ultimate humiliation and there it won its greatness.

Scholem, Gershom. *The Messianic Idea in Judaism*. London: George Allen & Unwin Ltd, 1971, 281.

Unit 4: Menorah

Resources

1. Encyclopaedia Judaica: Menorah

Strauss, Heinrich. "Menorah" *Encyclopaedia Judaica: CD Rom Edition*. Judaica Multimedia, 1997.

2. Anchor Bible Dictionary: Lampstand

Anchor Bible Dictionary. Ed. David Noel Freedman. New York: Doubleday, 1992.

Encyclopaedia Judaica: Menorah

MENORAH ("candelabrum"), the name given to the seven-branched candelabrum which, according to the Bible, was a prominent feature of the Tabernacle erected by the people of Israel in the wilderness, as well as in the Jerusalem Temple. In archaeological finds in Erez Israel and Syria dating from the Middle Bronze Period onward, lamps have been uncovered in the form of a deep bowl, with seven spouts on its rim for inserting wicks. At the high place (*bamah*) discovered at Nahariyyah, several bowls, similar to those of the Middle Bronze Period, have been found. Some lamp bowls have a clay, stone, or metal stand, thereby transforming them into *menorot*. At Taanach such a *menorah* has been unearthed, consisting of a small bowl with seven spouts, set on a stand whose circumference, narrowing in the middle to form a grip, broadens out at the bottom into a base for placing it on the ground.

The Tabernacle

Among the vessels of the Tabernacle mentioned in the Priestly Code, reference is made to a *menorah* of gold, whose form is given in two parallel passages (Ex. 25:31–40; 37:17–24). A pattern of this *menorah* was, it is related, shown by God to Moses at Mount Sinai (Ex. 25:40), as He also showed him the pattern of the Tabernacle and all its furniture (Ex. 25:9). Six branches, three on each side, curved upward from the *menorah's* central shaft, which stood on a base (Ex. 25:31; Num. 8:4) whose precise shape cannot be determined. The shaft and each of the branches were ornamented respectively with four and three carvings of cups made like almond-blossoms, each subdivided into a knob and a flower. Under every two branches that were of one piece a knob was carved on the central shaft, making a total of three knobs "for the six branches going out of the *menorah*" (Ex. 25:35). These three knobs were probably an integral part of the cups on the central shaft and not, as some (A. R. S. Kennedy, S. R. Driver, and others) hold, in addition to its four cups. The fourth cup was at the top of the central shaft, above the places where the branches joined it. The uppermost cups of the branches were similarly at their top, with all of them—as well as that of the central shaft—ending at the same height. The flowers on these uppermost cups served as receptacles for the seven lamps.

The entire *menorah* was carved from one ingot of gold, "beaten work" (Ex. 25:31), and its vessels, also of gold and including the lamps, were carved separately (Ex. 25:37–38). The *menorah* was placed in front of the veil (*parokhet*) "on the side of the Tabernacle toward the south... over against the table" (Ex. 26:35; 40:24). When the lamps burnt they gave "light over against it" (Ex. 25:37) "in front of the *menorah*" (Num. 8:2–3), that is, the spouts of the lamps and the wicks faced northward, so that their shadow was cast on to the wall. The measurements of the *menorah* are not given in the Bible but the Talmud stated that its height was 18 handbreadths, which are three short cubits (Men. 28b; Rashi to Ex. 25:35). The use to which the Tabernacle *menorah* was put is described in the Priestly Code. The lamps (*nerot*) are said to have burned from evening to morning (Lev. 24:3), were lit at dusk and trimmed in the morning by the high priest (Ex. 30:7–8), and hence are called *ner tamid* (a perpetual lamp; Ex. 27:20; Lev. 24:2), that is, they were lit according to a fixed routine and for the nighttime only. This is specifically mentioned in connection with the lamp in the sanctuary at Shiloh (I Sam. 3:3). However, in the Second Temple (see below) three of the lamps burnt throughout the day, the rest being lit in the evening (Jos., Ant., 3:199).

The First Temple

In the Temple built by Solomon there were ten *menorot* of gold, five along the northern and five along the southern wall of the *Heikhal* (the hall; I Kings 7:49; II Chron. 4:7). These were ornamented with carvings of flowers and furnished with appliances of gold for tending the lamps (I Kings 7:49–50), the number of which on each *menorah* is not stated. Some scholars hold that the passage listing the golden vessels made by Solomon for the house of the Lord (I Kings 7:48–50) is a later addition; but this view should be rejected. All the vessels of gold in Solomon's Temple, including the ten *menorot*, were cut in pieces at the end of Jehoiachin's reign by the Chaldeans who entered the *Heikhal* during their siege of Jerusalem (II Kings 24:13). Hence neither vessels of the *Heikhal* nor *menorot* are mentioned in the description of the Temple in Ezekiel's vision

(Ezek. 41:1–4), for this description is apparently based largely on the actual appearance of the Temple in Jerusalem after the exile of Jehoiachin.

The *menorot* in Solomon's Temple may have had branches, and these may have numbered seven on each *menorah*. For the *Heikhal*, which Solomon built and which measured 40 by 20 cubits (I Kings 6:2, 17), was too large for only ten lamps to give it adequate illumination. Hence it is probable that each of the ten *menorot* had not one but several lamps, arranged on a central shaft and on branches, and that they numbered seven. Further support for the similarity between the *menorot* of Solomon and the one in the Tabernacle is to be found in the fact that the former, too, were ornamented with carvings of flowers (7:49), resembling the latter which had "cups made like almond-blossoms" and flowers. Moreover, the *menorot* in Solomon's Temple were made of pure gold (*ibid.*, *loc. cit.* *zahav sagur*, apparently the equivalent expression for *zahav tahor* used in the Priestly Code; see Ex. 25:31, 39; et al.; see Metals). The vessels of the *menorah* in the Tabernacle consisted of lamps, tongs, snuff-dishes, and oil vessels (Ex. 25:37–39; Num. 4:9); the first three are among those mentioned in connection with the *menorot* in Solomon's Temple (1 Kings 7:49–50).

In addition to the vessels in the *Heikhal*, there were others in Solomon's Temple treasuries whose collection was started already in the days of David (II Sam. 8:10–11), and which were left as objects consecrated to God but not used in worship. The passage in the Book of Chronicles enumerating the gifts prepared for the Temple by David before his death refers to the *menorot* of gold and silver in the Temple treasuries (I Chron. 28:15; and *cf.* 28:12). When the First Temple was destroyed the Chaldeans removed from it all these vessels, among which *menorot* are again included (Jer. 52:19), but they were not those of the *Heikhal*. No actual specimen of the *menorah* in the Tabernacle nor of one with a different number of branches has up to the present been uncovered in archaeological finds. Only reproductions of the *menorah* of the Second Temple are extant (see below).

Although according to the critical views the Priestly Code's account of the subject is legendary tradition, the artistic and architectonic elements of its description are undoubtedly based on an actual art style and derived from reality. Many scholars of the Wellhausen school held that the Tabernacle *menorah* was a literary projection of the one in the Second Temple. Their theory proceeds from that school's basic view that the Priestly Code was compiled at the beginning of Second Temple times, and hence its need to explain the entire Tabernacle as an imaginary reflection of the Second Temple. If, however, it is maintained that the Priestly Code was committed to writing earlier and is the production of the Jerusalem pre-Exilic priesthood, it must necessarily be held that the *menorah* described in it reflects a historic situation preceding the Second Temple. That the *menorot* in Solomon's Temple provided the pattern for the *menorah* in the Tabernacle is, indeed, not impossible.

The Second Temple

According to rabbinic legend, when the Temple was about to be destroyed the *menorah* was hidden away and it was later brought back by the exiles (see L. Ginzberg, *Legends of the Jews*, 4 (1913), 321; 6 (1928), 410–1). In reality, however, the *menorah* of the Tabernacle, as a hallowed emblem mentioned in the Pentateuch, had an influence on the interior of the Second Temple, in which from the outset one *menorah* as in the Tabernacle, and not ten, as in the Temple of Solomon, was placed. The *menorah* in the Temple of necessity had to conform to that in the Pentateuch, which became its archetype. The force that the *menorah* of the Tabernacle had in Second Temple times as a hallowed and binding emblem can be seen from the claim, incorporated by the Chronicler in Abijah's speech, that the people of Judah, keeping the commandments of the Lord, every night lit the lamps of the *menorah* of gold (II Chron. 13:11). Elsewhere, however, the Chronicler repeats the evidence of the Book of Kings by stating specifically that in the First Temple there were ten *menorot* and not one (see above). This contradiction between the enduring and binding validity of the *menorah* mentioned in the Pentateuch and the ten *menorot* in Solomon's Temple was met by the Sages with the above-mentioned statement that the *menorah* made by Moses was used during the entire existence of

the First Temple, where all the *menorot* were placed on the south side, five on its right side and five on its left, and that of Moses in the middle (Men. 98b).

The golden *menorah* which stood in the Second Temple in the early stage of its history (it is referred to by Ben Sira—26:17) was removed in 169 B.C.E. by Antiochus Epiphanes IV (I Macc. 1:21). Judah Maccabee made new Temple vessels, including the *menorah*, after the cleansing of the Temple (I Macc. 4:49–50; II Macc. 10:3). According to the Talmud the first one was made of iron overlaid with tin (or with wood): "When they grew richer they made it of silver; when they grew still richer, they made it of gold" (RH 24b, Av. Zar. 43b); according to Josephus (Ant., 12:238), however, it was made of gold from the outset. It was seen by Pompey and his men when they entered the Temple (*ibid.*, 14:7) and remained in Herod's Temple until its destruction (Jos. Wars, 5:216–7). After the destruction of the Temple it was borne by the Romans in Titus' triumphal procession (*ibid.*, 7:148–9) and depicted with the other vessels on the wall of the triumphal arch called after him (see below). Elsewhere, however (*ibid.*, 6:387–8), Josephus relates that during the siege of Jerusalem by Titus one of the priests went out and handed over to him two lamps of gold similar to the lamp in the Temple. On the erroneous assumption that the reference is to the *menorah*, some maintain that there were in the Second Temple several copies of the *menorah* of the *Heikhal*, one of which was carried in the triumphal procession (see below). In the Second Temple three of the lamps of the *menorah* burnt throughout the day, the rest being lit in the evening (Jos., Ant., 3:199). The Talmud states that the priest who entered used to clean and trim the lamps except its two eastern ones which he found burning, and that its western lamp burnt continuously, and from it the priest relit the *menorah* at dusk (Tam. 3, 9; 6, 1; Sifra, Emor, 13, 7; Sif. Num. 59; Yoma 33a; et al.). If the western lamp was extinguished it was interpreted as boding ill for the future (Yoma 39b). Josephus (Apion, 1:22) similarly reports in the name of Hecataeus that on the Temple *menorah* there was a light which was never extinguished by night or by day. According to some, the western lamp mentioned by the sages refers to the second of the two easterly lamps, according to others, to the middle lamp, designated as "western" because its spout faced westward, that is, toward the inner sanctum, the Holy of Holies (see Rashi to Shab. 22b, and to Men. 98b; Maim. Yad, Beit ha-Behirah, 3, 8). According to the latter interpretation the tradition of the sages accords with Josephus' statement (Ant., 3:199) that three lamps burnt throughout the day, that is, the two eastern and the western lamps.

[Menahem Haran]

Menorah on the Arch of Titus

The most important testimony for the form of the Temple *menorah* is the candelabrum on the Arch of Titus in Rome, which ought to be considered in conjunction with Josephus' description. Only three sides of each octagon of the arch are visible. They show reliefs within a threefold frame: in the middle shield of the upper cone two eagles face each other and hold a garland in their beaks; the other shields have different types of sea-monsters. The upper part of the *menorah* is, by and large, in accordance with biblical tradition and archaeological evidence. The hanging leaf-ornament of the middle shaft shows the oriental (Persian) origin (cf. the pillars of Persepolis). The problem of the Arch of Titus *menorah* is, however, its pedestal, which consists of two octagonal casings, a smaller above the larger, giving a cone-shaped form. Though its proportions are rather large, it does not necessarily cast doubt on the fidelity of the sculptor, since this was a peculiarity of Roman—and later Christian—artists. What does make this representation of the pedestal suspect is that according to all Jewish sources (cf. Men. 28b) and archaeological finds the Menorah stood on three legs, usually lion's paws. These paws are particularly distinct in the Nirim Mosaic (see below). The Bible speaks of the *yerekh* of the candelabrum (Ex. 25:31), which Rashi explains as a plate with three legs (see S. Shefer (ed.), *Enziklopedyah le-Inyenei ha-Mishkan...*, 1 (1965), 126ff.), and so it appears in the wall painting of Dura-Europos and perhaps on the coin of Mattathias Antigonus, the only ancient coin depicting a *menorah*. The few extant specimens of this coin are, however, badly preserved, one only showing, besides the plate, a rudimentary foot.

This divergence between the Arch of Titus and the sources has given rise to a lively controversy beginning with Relandus' *De Spoliis...* (1716) which maintained, on the basis of the biblical

prohibition of depicting animals, that the pedestal of the *menorah* on the Arch of Titus could not be an authentic reproduction. In point of fact, as E. Cohn-Wiener pointed out, there is a difference in style between the lower and upper parts of the *menorah*. The upper part, dating from the time of the later Hasmonean kings (see above), shows characteristics of late Hellenistic style, whereas the pedestal is typical of a later Roman style. Important too, is the evidence of Josephus, who must have seen the *menorah* often, both in Jerusalem and in Rome, and who has proved reliable in matters such as these, e.g., the Masada excavations. Whether his description supports or contradicts the authenticity of the Arch of Titus *menorah* depends on the interpretation of the relevant words used by him. According to W. Eltester (in bibl. cf. Michel-Bauernfeind's edition of Josephus, Wars, 2, 2, 1969), the words translated from Greek, "the central shaft arose firmly from the pedestal," seems to confirm the Arch of Titus representation which indeed gives this impression of weight and firmness. Another interpretation would be that the central shaft "stretched" out of its pedestal, that it was of one piece with it. This would not only be in accordance with the biblical injunction of Numbers 8:4 (cf. Ex. 25:31, 36; 37:17, 22), but also with Josephus' statement preceding the above quotation that the *menorah* was different from those in general use. These were put together from separate parts (cf. Pliny, Nat. Hist. 34, 6, 11).

Various suggestions have been made to solve the difficulty. Chief Rabbi Isaac Herzog, after summing up all other proposals, suggested that the original pedestal had been broken in the transport from Jerusalem to Rome and was replaced by the work of a Roman artist. Another hypothesis is that of W. Wirgin (IEJ 11, 1961, no. 3) who suggests that in order to carry the *menorah* in the triumphal procession without mishap, a Roman artist built a box-shaped covering from relief plates—well known from Roman censers—around the base to give it greater stability. A third suggestion is that the *menorah* on the Arch of Titus had as its model another *menorah*, perhaps one given as a gift to Rome by Herod. In fact Josephus (Wars, 6:388) relates that after the capture of Jerusalem, a priest handed to Titus "two lampstands similar to those deposited in the Temple." The *Talmud* (Hag. 26b, 27a) also mentions duplicates and triplicates of all Temple vessels in case the original ones were defiled. The Jerusalem Talmud (Hag. 3:8; 79d) and the *Tosefta* (Hag. 3:35) report the cleansing of the *menorah* on the Sabbath which provoked the derision of the Sadducees. This would not have been done had there been a duplicate but in any case it does not solve the problem of the Arch of Titus, since the duplicate would have been an exact replica of the original.

Reproductions of the Temple Menorah

Though the *menorah* of the Arch of Titus was widely known—the medieval pilgrims' guide *Mirabilis Urbis Romae* mentions the *arcus septem lucernarum*—it was not copied in late antiquity or the Middle Ages. While church candelabra and manuscript illustrations have animal feet, only one example of the Arch of Titus type is known: the Gothic candelabrum in Sta. Maria i Vulturella near Rome (see bibl. P. Bloch).

Several sketches of the *menorah* have been preserved from the time of the Second Temple in Jason's Tomb, Jerusalem (see Rahmani, in: *Atiqot*, 1964, Plate XII no. 1 and 2), and in the two pieces of plaster excavated in the Jewish Quarter of the Old City of Jerusalem in 1969, an artisan's sketch; three feet or triangle-basis are visible, but with knobs on them, a feature not corroborated by any other ancient literary or archaeological source (reproduced in *Jerusalem Post*, Weekend Magazine, 5/XII/1969; see Avigad, in *Qadmoniot*, 3, 1970, 28–29).

The Later History of the Menorah

Vespasian deposited the *menorah* together with the other booty in the special Peace Temple which he erected after the Jewish War (Jos. Wars 7:148–50; ARN1 41, 133). The subsequent fate of the candelabrum is uncertain. Procopius of Caesarea, the sixth-century Byzantine historian, in his introduction to the history of the Gothic War, reports that the "treasures of the Jews" were carried in Belisarius' triumphal procession in Constantinople (Byzantium) after his victory over the Vandals, who had taken them to Carthage after their sack of Rome in 455. Procopius goes on to relate that a Jew had warned a high official at Justinian's court not to keep the sacred vessels in Byzantium, as they had manifestly brought ill luck to Rome and Carthage, whereupon the Emperor had sent them hurriedly to Jerusalem, where they were deposited in one

of the churches. As the result of the Persian and Arab invasions of the seventh century, their fate once more became unknown. This story has little credibility; no other source, such as the reports of the pilgrims, can be adduced in its support, nor is the *menorah* mentioned explicitly in this story.

On the other hand, medieval sources speak of the presence of the candelabrum in Constantinople. The seventh-century apocalypse *Milhemet Melekh ha-Mashi'ah* ("War of the King Messiah") mentions Temple vessels deposited in the palace library of Emperor Julian. The learned emperor Constantine Porphyrogenitus (905–59) reports that a Heptalychnos, i.e., a seven-branched candelabrum, was lit for solemn processions. The imperial palace is said to have included a "Dome of the Seven-branch Candelabrum" It is not clear whether all these reports refer to the original *menorah* or a later copy. If the one or the other was really in Constantinople during the Middle Ages, it must have shared the fate of other ancient masterpieces when the town was sacked in 1204 in the course of the Fourth Crusade. It may appear odd that no reference to it is found in later medieval chronicles.

[Heinrich Strauss]

In Kabbalah

From the early days of Kabbalah, the *menorah* appears as a symbol of the structure of the *Sefirot*. As far as is known, it was Asher b. David, in his *Perush Shem ha-Meforash* (published in *Ha-Segullah* (1932) pamphlet 2ff.), who first explained the *menorah* in kabbalistic symbolic terms as reflecting the world of the *Sefirot*. He was followed by Bahya b. Asher and especially by Menahem Recanati and others. There is little difference between the interpretations of Recanati and Asher b. David. The basic idea is that the *menorah*, despite the fact that it is composed of branches, bowls, etc., is not a combination of parts but is one solid whole made from "one bar." Similarly, the world of the *Sefirot*, despite its multiplicity, is a unity. The seven branches symbolize the seven lower *Sefirot*. Asher b. David and, following him, Recanati, placed special emphasis on the middle branch, which is equal to the *Sefirah Tiferet* ("glory"), which is called the "middle line." This *Sefirah* is directed toward the "attraction of the body" of man, in contrast to the other lower *Sefirot* which are directed toward the arms and legs. The middle branch, which stands on the *menorah* itself, toward which all the other branches face, therefore naturally stands for the "middle line." This *Sefirah* is imbued with abundance flowing from above which is transferred from it to the others. The oil which is put in the branches and is the force for the light of the *menorah* signifies the dynamic stream influenced by the *Ein-Sof*. This stream is the inner soul of all the *Sefirot* which operate within every *Sefirah*. For the same reason—these kabbalists maintain—the Torah calls the seven lower *Sefirot* "lights" and days of the week according to Genesis. The oil as a symbol of the streaming of abundance from above is a commonplace idea in kabbalistic literature. There were kabbalists who explained that the oil and the light indicate the three higher *Sefirot*.

According to the view of several kabbalists that Divine Providence is exercised through the *Sefirot*. Recanati interprets the saying of Zechariah (4:10): "These seven are the eyes of God," to mean that God governs by means of the seven *Sefirot* symbolized by the seven branches of the *menorah*.

The Zohar itself gives no details of the symbolic significance of the parts of the *menorah*. In the *Tikkunei Zohar* the symbolism differs from that of the kabbalists mentioned above. In one place the *menorah* symbolizes an angelic power outside that of the *Sefirot*. The wick stands for the last *Sefirah*, *Malkhut*, equated with the *Shekhinah*; the oil is the *Sefirah Yesod* ("foundation"); and the light is the *Sefirah Tiferet* (*Tikkunei Zohar*, Introd., 146, ed. R. Margulies).

In a 14th-century kabbalistic manuscript Psalm 67 is interpreted as signifying the *menorah* and the counting of the *Omer* (Vatican Ms. no. 214). A reproduction of the text of the psalm in the form of a *menorah* has since become widespread among oriental Jews and appears both in prayer books and in the form of amulets on walls in homes and, especially, synagogues.

[Efraim Gottlieb]

THE MENORAH IN ART

After the destruction of the Temple the *menorah* became "the most important Jewish pictorial motif, and from an implement it became an emblem." Out of 1,207 reproductions in the third volume of Goodenough's standard work, *Jewish Symbolism in the Greco-Roman World* (see bibliography), no less than 182 are representations of the *menorah*. This number has considerably increased through later findings. Here only a short review of the various kinds of archaeological remnants together with the most important examples can be given (the numbers refer to Goodenough).

Synagogues

ACTUAL MENORAH. Upper part of brass *menorah* from En-Gedi (Barag-Porat, in *Qadmoniot* 3, 1970, 97–100, back-cover; see below).

STONE FRAGMENTS AND CAPITALS

Stone screen from Ashkelon (575, 576), from El Hamma (629), stones from Eshtemoa and Naveh (615, 618); Capitals in Capernaum (478), Beit Jibrin (542), and Caesarea (997, 998); on a column in Gaza mosque Djami-el-Kebir (584); and on stones in Pergamon (877), Priene (878), and Ostia.

MOSAIC FLOORS

In Beth Alpha (639); Hammath-Tiberias (in both these and many others are two *menorot* right and left of the Ark); and Maon (Nirim, see above; the Nirim *menorah* is reproduced on the Israel 50 lira banknote).

PAINTINGS

The only preserved example is in Dura-Europos, and it is a conical base with three feet near Ark (602). It appears twice in narrative paintings: Aaron in the Temple (Goodenough vol. 11, color-plate X), and Moses giving water to the tribes (color-plate XII).

On Tombs

SCULPTURES.

In Bet She'arim, a *menorah* on the head of a warrior (56).

ON DOORS OF TOMBS

Ibelin: YMHEY 17 (1953), nos. 3 and 4; Kefar Yassif (44); Kefar Tamra, near Shefar Am (Haifa Municipal Museum), which shows the *menorah* on the top of a date tree.

FRESCO AND SARCOPHAGUS IN THE TORLONIA CATACOMB, ROME (817, 818)

In the catacombs the *menorah* is often the only indication of Jewishness.

SARCOPHAGI IN VIGNA RANDANINI CATACOMB, ROME (789)

(Now in the Museo di Terme.) The *menorah* is in a medallion, borne by two winged Victorias; on gentile sarcophagi such medallions show the head of the buried person or a Medusa. Here the *menorah* is the distinctive emblem of Judaism on an artifact common to other religions as well.

LEAD SARCOPHAGI IN THE ISRAEL MUSEUM, JERUSALEM

The same type as made for pagans, Christians, and Jews. On the Jewish sarcophagi (from Bet She'arim) *menorot*—in contradistinction to the ornaments—are pressed on the three sarcophagi (see bibl. Katz reproductions nos. 104, 120).

TOMBSTONES

Frequently in catacombs (e.g. Randanini and Monteverde in Rome:33 example in Goodenough).

OSSUARIES

Ossuaries (rare): *menorah* (220, not certain): Hanukkah lamp (198).

Varia

GLASS-BOTTLES

Glass-Bottles: 391, 411, 424, 428, 961.

GOLD-GLASSES

From catacombs (963–974), with peculiar techniques: between two layers of glass is the golden design (mostly ritual objects, Ark, lions).

LAMPS

Bronze. K. Katz, *From the Beginning*, pl. 109, p. 126: Reifenberg Collection, now on loan to Israel Museum; ceramic lamps: with various numbers of holders for oil lamps, but very frequently with a *menorah* design (more than 40 reproductions in Goodenough).

AMULETS, SEALS, RINGS, CORNELIANS

On these small artifacts too, the *menorah* is the most frequent symbol indicating the Jewishness of the owner (1012–1027). A good example is a glass amulet (third-sixth centuries) showing a *menorah* among other ritualia (Hechal Shlomo Museum).

The Middle Ages

Representations of the *menorah* are found frequently in medieval manuscripts, Jewish and Christian, of both Spanish and Franco-German origin, depicted alongside other Temple vessels. Earlier even, and of particular importance in this context, is the one in the *Codex Amiatinus* (Italy, c. 500, see bibl. H. Strauss and P. Bloch), which no doubt still reflects an older, classical-oriental tradition (cf. Strauss, in *Erez Yisrael*, 6, 1960, 126/7; Roth, *Warburg-Courtauld* 16, 1953, 37–38). B. Narkiss, *Hebrew Illuminated Manuscripts* (1969), reproduces (and describes in detail) five medieval manuscripts with *menorah* representations: Plate 1: Bible (Leningrad), probably from Egypt (Introduction, 23); Plate 6: Cervera Bible (Portugal, *ibid.*, and note 53); Plate 16: Farhi Bible (Spain-Provence, Introduction, 23); Plate 23: British Museum (11639, Franco-German, *ibid.*, 28, note 95); and Plate 24: Pentateuch (French, *ibid.*, 26; note 96). In the British Museum plate, Aaron is twice depicted lighting the *menorah* (*ibid.*, 114a and 122b), the differences in style suggesting two artists. The frequency of this representation may be connected with the fact that it is based on Numbers 8:2–3 and with its ample treatment by the Midrash. All five examples reflect faithfully and impressively their local background: the first three, the influence of the iconoclastic Islamic art, including the playful one of the *Reconquista* in no. 2: the burning lights turned toward the center and the variant of the oil flowing in the same direction; while the last two show the influence of the late Gothic French environment with their wealth of figures and drolleries. Numerous seven-branched candelabra may also be found in medieval French, German, and Italian churches.

A hitherto unpublished *menorah* with its appurtenances (Ex. 25, 38) painted in gold and color, is contained in a Spanish 14th-century Bible-manuscript on parchment, which was shown in an exhibition of the Jewish National and University Library (Jerusalem April–May 1970, Catalogue No. 6). This *menorah* has three feet with rather rare knobs (as in the recently excavated piece of plaster from the Old City of Jerusalem, see above), and snuffdishes like goblets with coats of arms: the tongs hang from the outer branches of the candelabrum and are shown in perspective before and behind the branches. It is apparently the work of an artist of the late Middle Ages, already accustomed to perspective. It frequently appears as an emblem also on book plates showing Hanukkah lamps, printers' marks, and community seals.

Modern Times

In modern times the *menorah* has continued to be used as a religious symbol, particularly in synagogue art: wall-paintings, stained glass windows, mosaics, and—in spite of the talmudic prohibition (see below)—as a seven-branched metal candelabrum. In imitation of the ancient mosaics, some synagogues place a *menorah* to the right and the left of the Ark. The *menorah* representations in modern American synagogues reveal the problem of expressing ancient symbols in terms of modern art. In many cases little is left of the original tree-and-branches motive, but in some this has been preserved, in spite of modern simplicity. Independently of the

synagogue, Benno Elkan created several tree-shaped bronze *menorot*, of which one stands in Westminster Abbey, London, and another in the vicinity of the Knesset building in Jerusalem. Marc Chagall incorporated a lighted *menorah* and olive leaves (Deut. 33:24) in his Tribe of Asher window (Hadassah Synagogue, Jerusalem). The Warsaw Ghetto memorial (1963) embodies two outsize *menorot* flanked by lions. The U.S. Jewish artist Ben Shahn, who is responsible for the mosaic in the Ohev Shalom synagogue in Nashville, Tenn. (Kampf, *ibid.*, 134–6), has produced as its sketch a *menorah* (with shofar) in tempera (Ben Shahn, 1966, no. 116) and another one as the colored frontispiece of a Passover Haggadah illustrated by him (1965). Jankel Adler has a *menorah*—together with several ritualia—in his "Jewish Still-Life" painted in the 1930s. In literature Stefan Zweig devoted his short story *Der begrabene Leuchter* ("The Buried Candelabrum; 1937) to the saga of the *menorah*. The Arch of Titus *menorah* was adopted as the official symbol of the State of Israel, expressing the idea of Judaea Resurrecta, 2,000 years after the last Hasmonean prince had used the same symbol on his coins.

According to the Talmud it was forbidden to make an exact copy of the seven-branched candelabrum (RH 24b; Av. Zar. 43b; Men. 28b), and this prohibition is largely observed to the present day. On the other hand, the discovery of the upper part of a small bronze *menorah* during the excavations of a synagogue of the Byzantine period at En-Gedi (see above) shows that this prohibition was not always observed. It is possible that the bar of brass connecting the seven branches on their upper end which is also found in mosaic, stone-and-oil-lamp-representations of the same time (Bet Alfa, Ashkelon, oil lamp from Syria: Good-enough 3, p. 941) may have invalidated the above prohibition. J. Gutmann suggests that since the prohibition is found in a baraita in the Babylonian Talmud only, it was not accepted in Palestine. Gregorovius reports (*History of the City of Rome...* 2, 2, 3) that in the time of King Theodoric (c. 500) the Jews of Rome used to assemble in their synagogue on Sabbaths and festivals to the light of a gilded seven-branched candelabrum. The Hanukkah lamp, having eight branches, did not violate the talmudic law.

Heinrich Strauss

Encyclopaedia Judaica: CDRom Edition. Judaica Multimedia, 1997.

THE ANCHOR BIBLE DICTIONARY

VOLUME 4

K-N

David Noel Freedman
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

ASSOCIATE EDITORS
Gary A. Herion • David F. Graf
John David Pleins

MANAGING EDITOR
Astrid B. Beck



DOUBLEDAY

NEW YORK • LONDON • TORONTO • SYDNEY • AUCKLAND

- Barthélemy, J.-D. 1963. *Les dévanciers d'Aquila*. VTSup 10. Leiden.
- Bergler, S. 1977. Threni V—Nur ein alphabetisierendes Lied?—Versuch einer Deutung. VT 27: 304–20.
- Brunet, G. 1968. *Les lamentations contre Jérémie: Réinterprétation des quatre premières lamentations*. Bibliothèque de L'École des Hautes Études, Section des Sciences Religieuses 75. Paris.
- Budde, K. 1882. Das hebräische Klagelied. ZAW 2: 1–52.
- Cohen, M. 1981. *Sumerian Hymnology: The Ershemma*. HUCASup 2. Cincinnati.
- . 1988. *The Canonical Lamentations of Mesopotamia*. 2 vols. Potomac, MD.
- Cooper, J. 1983. *The Curse of Agade*. Baltimore.
- Cross, F. M. 1964. The History of the Biblical Text in the Light of Discoveries in the Judaean Desert. HTR 57.
- . 1983. Studies in the Structure of Hebrew Verse: The Prosody of Lamentations 1:1–22. WLSGF, pp. 129–53.
- Dahood, M. 1978. New Readings in Lamentations. Bib 59: 174–97.
- Demsky, A. 1977. A Proto-Canaanite Abecedary Dating from the Period of the Judges and its Implications for the History of the Alphabet. TA 4:14–27.
- Freedman, D. N. 1972. Acrostics and Metrics in Hebrew Poetry. HTR 65: 367–92. Repr. pp. 40–76 in *Pottery, Poetry, and Prophecy*. Winona Lake, IN, 1980.
- Gottlieb, H. 1978. *A Study on the Text of Lamentations*. Acta Jutlandica 48, Theology Series 12. Aarhus.
- Gottwald, N. 1962. *Studies in the Book of Lamentations*. Rev. ed. SBT 14. London.
- Green, M. 1975. *Eridu in Sumerian Literature*. Ph.D. diss. Chicago.
- . 1978. The Eridu Lament. JCS 30: 127–69.
- . 1984. The Uruk Lament. JAOS 104: 253–79.
- Gunkel, H. 1929. Klagelieder Jeremiae. RGG² 3: 1049–52.
- Gwaltney, W. 1983. The Biblical Book of Lamentations in the Context of Near Eastern Literature. Pp. 191–211 in *Scripture in Context II*, ed. W. Hallo, J. Moyer, and L. Perdue. Winona Lake, IN.
- Hillers, D. 1974. Observations on Syntax and Meter in Lamentations. Pp. 265–70 in *A Light unto My Path*, ed. H. Bream, R. Heim, and C. Moore. Philadelphia.
- Jahnow, H. 1923. *Das hebräische Leichenlied im Rahmen der Völkergedichtung*. BZAW 36. Giessen.
- Kochavi, M. 1977. An Ostrakon of the Period of the Judges from 'Isbet Sartah. TA 4: 1–13.
- Kramer, S. N. 1969. Lamentation over the Destruction of Nippur. *Eretz-Israel* 9. Jerusalem.
- Kutschler, R. 1975. *On Angry Sea (a-ab-ba hu-luh-ha): The History of a Sumerian Congregational Lament*. New Haven.
- Lanahan, W. 1974. The Speaking Voice in the Book of Lamentations. JBL 93: 41–49.
- McDaniel, T. 1968a. The Alleged Sumerian Influence upon Lamentations. VT 18: 198–209.
- . 1968b. Philological Studies in Lamentations. Bib 49: 27–53; 199–220.
- Meshel, Z. 1978. *Kuntillet 'Ajrud—A Religious Centre from the Time of the Judaean Monarchy on the Border of Sinai*. Israel Museum Catalogue 175. Jerusalem.
- Naveh, J. 1978. Some Considerations on the Ostrakon from 'Isbet Sartah. IEJ 28: 31–35.
- Rudolph, W. 1938. Der Text der Klagelieder. ZAW 52: 101–22.
- Shea, W. 1979. The *qinah* Structure of the Book of Lamentations. Bib 60: 103–7.
- Tigay, J. 1976. Review of *Lamentations AB*, by Hillers. JNES 35: 140–43.
- Westermann, C. 1954. Struktur und Geschichte der Klage im Alten Testament. ZAW 66: 44–80.
- Ziegler, J. 1976. *Ieremias, Baruch, Threni, Epistula Ieremiae* (Göttingen Septuagint). 2d ed. Göttingen.

DELBERT R. HILLERS

LAMPSTAND [Heb *mēnôrâ*]. (In some English versions of the Bible the Hebrew *mēnôrâ* is translated by the anachronistic word "candlestick.") Since lamps were the normal source of light other than daylight in the biblical world, one would expect stands to hold them to have been items of everyday usage. The furniture of a room described in 2 Kgs 4:10 includes a lampstand; and many examples of ceramic stands, at least some of which might be construed as lampstands, have been found in archaeological excavations. However, lampstands have rarely been found, archaeologically, in domestic contexts (Smith 1964: 9–11). Aside from the 2 Kings passage, all the biblical mentions of lampstands refer to golden objects used in sacred contexts.

Lampstands as receptacles for light-giving vessels were part of the sacred furniture in the central Israelite shrines or sanctuaries described in the Bible. The light given off by the lamps served to illuminate the interior of the sanctuary, and it also functioned as part of a set of ritual objects or acts, appealing to all the senses, that were part of the established priestly ritual (Haran 1978: 208–21). However, the lights or lamps were not the same as the stands on which they were placed. The nature of those stands varied during the long history of ancient Israel's cultic institutions.

A. Tabernacle Lampstand

The earliest of Israel's lampstand traditions belongs to pre-temple times, that is, to the tent or tabernacle associated with the premonarchic period. Of the forty-one occurrences of "lampstand" in the Hebrew Bible, more of them (26) deal with the tabernacle menorah or lampstand than with those of the subsequent Israelite shrines (either the Jerusalem temple built by Solomon and continuing, though with alterations over the centuries, until the destruction of Jerusalem; or the restored temple built in the early postexilic period and remodeled or rebuilt several times thereafter until the Roman destruction of Jerusalem in 70 C.E.).

The lampstand of the tabernacle (*miškān*) is mentioned in various places in the priestly writings of the Pentateuch, but the chief descriptive passages are found in the tabernacle texts of Exodus (Exod 25:31–40 and 37:17–24). Although the priestly texts in their final form are probably exilic or postexilic in date, biblical scholarship has established the greater antiquity of much of the priestly material, including traditions dealing with the tabernacle. Thorough study of the lampstand texts, from the perspectives of philosophy, archaeology, and art history, has established a basic reality for that biblical artifact that can be located in the Mosaic era, the end of the LB Age (see Meyers 1976: 182–84 and *passim*).

The Hebrew word for lampstand is ambiguous in what it represents in the priestly texts. Sometimes (e.g., Exod 26:35; 40:4; Num 8:2–3), it indicates a branched object,

that is, a central shaft with three branches coming forth from each side. This arrangement produces seven receptacles for lamps: one on each of the six branches, and one on the central shaft. At other points the biblical references to the tabernacle lampstand (as in Exod 25:31–35; 37:17–21), refer only to the central shaft, which constitutes the actual stand for the lamps, with the branches thus being part of the symbolic shape of the appurtenance but not part of its functional aspect.

The latter instances make it clear that the seven lamps associated with the lampstand are not themselves to be construed as being physically part of the lampstand. They are discrete objects, and in at least two instances (Exod 27:20; Lev 24:2–3, and perhaps also Exod 25:37) a tradition of a single lamp rather than seven lamps can be discerned. In the case of both the seven lamps and the single one, these actual light sources were to be placed on the central shaft or stand and *not* on the end of the branches (see Lev 24:4). The idea of a seven-branched lampstand is the result of early post-biblical Jewish interpretations (in graphic and textual sources) of the Exodus texts, but it is not intrinsic to the biblical description itself.

The existence of apparently contradictory information about the number of lamps can be related to the conflation of two sanctuary traditions, the tent of meeting and the tabernacle. The single-lamp passages contain references to the tent of meeting, whereas the seven lamp texts are in the context of tabernacle data.

The biblical descriptions of the lampstand contain many technical terms that are very specific in their meaning and that help reconstruct the form of the object, the workmanship used in fashioning it, as well as its symbolic value. Perhaps the key to understanding its fundamental form and identity is the pair of words, *yarēk wēqāneh*, that designate the central shaft, or lampstand proper. This pair, mistakenly translated “base and shaft” by the RSV, is actually a hendiadys denoting a cylindrical form that flares outward at its lower end, thereby forming a stable base. This feature makes it possible for the lampstand to be freestanding. There is no description of a tripod or of a stepped base, one or the other of which appear in nearly all post-biblical descriptions or depictions of the lampstand.

Its basic cylindrical form, flaring at the bottom and possibly also at the top, places the lampstand typologically within the category of stands recovered in ceramic form in archaeological excavations in Palestine and appearing, in metal and stone form, in artistic renderings all over the ANE. Such stands were used to hold a variety of vessels, such as bowls, jars, incense dishes, offering platters, and, of course, lamps.

The other technical terms used to describe the whole lampstand are noteworthy for being part of the vocabulary of plant forms in ancient Israel. Moreover, the botanical aspects of the terminology relate to features of graphic renderings of plant forms especially as they appear in Egyptian art. The very term *qāneh*, representing “branch” and also appearing in the pair of words for the central shaft described above, is a generic word for “reed.” It specifies the *arundo donax*, or Persian reed, a gigantic grass commonly found along the edges of bodies of water or water courses, the latter exemplified by the Nile. In nearly

all other, nonpriestly biblical texts mentioning this reed, it has an Egyptian context and even symbolized Egypt (as in Isa 36:6 = 2 Kgs 18:21).

Another pair, *kaptōr wēperah*, is best translated as a hendiadys: “floral capital” rather than RSV “capital and flower.” It, too, is botanical in its vocabulary and Egyptian in its artistic orientation. These floral capitals, along with the somewhat enigmatic rounded bowls (*gēbi ʿm*) with almond-shaped inlay, were repeated three times on each branch and four times on the central shaft. This repetition functions as an artistic motif conveying permanence or continuity.

The presence of botanical terms, and the basic central shaft-plus-six-branches form, give the impression of a tree-shaped object. As such—and apart from its functional role as a holder of lamp(s)—the lampstand constitutes a conventional form appearing in depictions widespread in NE iconography (see Perrot 1937; Vincent 1924). This convention is derived from a stylized tree of life design and symbolizes such themes as the fertility of nature and the sustenance of life. The specific form of the branched lampstand of Exodus is closest to examples that are found at the end of the LB Age, or the age of Moses. See also TREE OF KNOWLEDGE AND TREE OF LIFE.

Since most ANE examples of the tree of life motif apparently represent the fertility-granting and life-giving powers of various deities, the presence of such a form in the aiconographic Israelite cult can perhaps be construed as the use of a powerful religious symbol to represent the presence of the unseen God of Israel. As a demythologized tree symbol, it served along with other aspects of the tabernacle, as God’s residence, to assure God’s availability to the Israelites or their priestly representatives.

The technology involved in shaping this complex appurtenance is not perfectly understood. The material, “pure gold,” puts the lampstand in the category of furnishings for the interior of the tabernacle. It also points to a kind of metallurgy associated with Egyptian workmanship (Meyers 1976: 41–43). The fact that the lampstand was to be made all of one piece indicates the usage of sheet gold, or gold foil, which probably would have been shaped by a rubbing process (*maqšā*) over a wooden form.

B. Lampstands of Solomon’s Temple

The image of a single, branched lampstand, vivid from the tabernacle texts and from postbiblical Jewish art, should not obscure the fact that the temple built by Solomon in Jerusalem contained ten lampstands (1 Kgs 7:49 = 2 Chr 4:7). Furthermore, there is no indication that those objects were branched. The only detail of their shape is the mention of their “flowers.” The Solomonic lampstands were probably the cylindrical stands with flaring bottoms and tops that are represented in the central shaft of the tabernacle stand. The lamps that rested on these stands in the Jerusalem temple were likely to have been the seven-spouted bowl lamps typically found in cultic contexts in archaeological strata of the Iron II period, the time of the Solomonic temple. Not only does the temple lampstand differ in number and decoration from the one described in Exodus; it also involved a different technological tradition. The “pure gold” for the Solomonic stands is indicated by a term different from that used for the tabernacle

lampstand. The term in Kings is related to the Tyrian workmanship of the Jerusalem temple.

Without the branches, and with ten stands being used, it is doubtful that the symbolic value of these lampstands was the same as for the single tabernacle one. Rather, the light-giving property of the lamps they held apparently was their most significant attribute. Arboreal symbolism in the Jerusalem temple was present in other forms: in the trees carved on the cedar panels (1 Kgs 6:15, 18, 29) and cypress door (1 Kgs 6:34-35), and perhaps also in a sacred grove in the temple precincts (cf. Ps 52:8).

The lampstands commissioned by Solomon are not mentioned again in the Hebrew Bible. A possible exception is Jer 52:17. However, since that passage lists "lampstands" in an inventory of minor cultic appurtenances or utensils, it is doubtful that the main sanctuary lampstands are meant. Thus it is difficult to know whether or not the original ten lampstands of gold survived until the Babylonian conquest of 587 B.C.E. They may have been replaced during one of the periodic refurbishings of the temple (Meyers 1981), or they may have been relinquished in an earlier Judean encounter with a foreign power.

C. Postexilic Lampstands

The temple was restored early in the postexilic period, in the late 6th century, under the guidance of the prophets Haggai and Zechariah and under the leadership of the governor Zerubbabel and the chief priest Joshua. But the Bible gives no indication that the reestablished temple contained one or more lampstands. Most of our information about the cultic furniture of the rebuilt temple comes from extrabiblical sources, such as Philo, Josephus, the Talmud, and graphic renderings (Meyers 1979). Such sources from late in the postexilic period, or even after the destruction of the rebuilt temple in 70 C.E., are more likely to reflect the last known temple lampstand, since the restored temple was itself rebuilt at least several times (cf. 1 Macc 1:21; 4:49), most grandly in its last existing form as the Herodian temple. Those sources preserve a single lampstand tradition.

The nature and number of lampstands at the beginning of the postbiblical period may, however, be informed by one prophetic passage, Zech 4:1-6 and 11-14, which predates the completion of the temple restoration project. Zechariah's vision includes a golden lampstand. The description of the stand, which has its own complex and to some extent fanciful terminology, clearly depicts a single lampstand and not ten of them. In that sense, it relies upon the pentateuchal traditions. Such a reliance is typical of many of the characteristics of the semi-autonomous community established in Judah in the late 6th century. Zechariah apparently envisioned the rebuilt temple with a lampstand just like the one presented in the tabernacle texts. But such an appurtenance would have been fabricated according to Persian period or late Iron Age styles and technologies rather than according to archaic LB or early Iron Age ones (see Meyers and Meyers, *Haggai, Zechariah 1-8 AB*, 227-40).

Zechariah's lampstand has its idiosyncratic qualities. On a symbolic level, it seems to combine the importance of the life form of the tabernacle tradition with the light-giving aspects of the temple stands. The former is repre-

sented in Zechariah's vision by the presence of two olive trees flanking the golden lampstand. And the latter is expressed in the prophet's explanation of the symbolic value of the seven seven-spouted lamps resting on the stand (for which no branches are mentioned): "These seven are the eyes of Yahweh which range through all the earth" (Zech 4:10b).

Whether or not Zechariah's vision was ever translated into reality cannot be established except in the fact that the single lampstand tradition resumes by the time of the Roman conquest of Jerusalem in 70 C.E. However, the idea of visionary and symbolic temple furnishings gets played out once more, and extravagantly, in Revelation (1:12, 13, 20; 2:1; 11:4). There, the golden lampstands are seven in number (except in 11:4). The sacred number seven is combined with the sacred furniture of the temple in the apocalyptic imagery of this NT book.

Bibliography

- Haran, M. 1978. *Temples and Temple Service in Ancient Israel*. Oxford.
- Meyers, C. 1976. *The Tabernacle Menorah*. Missoula, MT.
- . 1979. Was There a Seven-Branched Menorah in Solomon's Temple? *BAR* 5: 46-57.
- . 1981. The Elusive Temple. *BA* 45: 33-42.
- Perrot, N. 1937. Les representations de l'arbre sacré sur les monuments de Mesopotamie et de l'Élam. *Babyloniaca* 17: 5-144.
- Smith, R. H. 1964. The Household Lamps of Palestine in Old Testament Times. *BA* 27: 1-31.
- Vincent, L. H. 1924. La peinture céramique Palestinienne. *Syria* 5: 81-107.

CAROL MEYERS

LANCE. See WEAPONS AND IMPLEMENTS OF WARFARE.

LAND. The frequent occurrence of various terms designating land, and the central role land plays in certain narratives, testify to the importance of this concept in the Bible. But while the concept is ubiquitous, the different units of the OT provide various ideological perspectives and theological nuances. Similarly, while the use of this term in the NT displays an awareness of the centrality of this concept, its meaning is further transformed through the motivations of its individual authors.

- A. Old Testament
 1. Terminology
 2. Israel's Land
 3. Theology: The Land Theme in the OT
- B. New Testament
 1. Terminology
 2. Theology

A. Old Testament

1. Terminology. In the vast majority of instances (RSV ca. 1620 times) "land" translates Hebrew *'eres*, a word that can also be rendered by "earth" (RSV ca. 660 times), "ground" (RSV 107 times), "country" (RSV 83 times) and by several less frequent terms (see EARTH for cognates and for a discussion of original meaning). In addition,

Suggested Activity 1: Constructing the Tabernacle Menorah

1. Exodus 25:31-40

2. Drawings of Tabernacle Menorah

Levine, Moshe. *The Tabernacle: Its Structure and Utensils*. London: Soncino, 1968.

Scherman, Nosson. *The Torah: Haftaros and Five Megillos with a Commentary Anthologized from the Rabbinic Writings*. Brooklyn: Mesorah, 1993.

Exodus 25:31-40

ספר שמות: כה:לא-מ

לא ועשית מנרת זהב טהור מקשה תיעשה המנורה ירכה וקנה
 גביעיה כפתריה ופרחיה ממנה יהיו: לב וששה קנים יצאים מצדיה
 שלשה | קני מנרה מצדה האחד וששה קני מנרה מצדה השני:
 לג שלשה גבעים משקדים בקנה האחד כפתר ופרח וששה גבעים
 משקדים בקנה האחד כפתר ופרח כן לששת הקנים היצאים
 מן המנרה: לד ובמנרה ארבעה גבעים משקדים כפתריה ופרחיה:
 לה וכפתר תחת שני הקנים ממנה וכפתר תחת שני הקנים ממנה
 וכפתר תחת שני הקנים ממנה לששת הקנים היצאים מן המנרה:
 לו כפתריהם וקנתם ממנה יהיו כלה מקשה אחת זהב טהור:
 לז ועשית את נרותיה שבעה והעלה את נרותיה והאיר על עבר פניה:
 לח ומלקחיה ומחתתיה זהב טהור: לט כפר זהב טהור יעשה אתה
 את כל הכלים האלה: מ וראה ועשה בתבניתם אשר אתה מראה
 בהר:

³¹ You shall make a lampstand of pure gold; the lampstand shall be made of hammered work; its base and its shaft, its cups, calyxes, and petals shall be of one piece. ³² Six branches shall issue from its sides; three branches from one side of the lampstand and three branches from the other side of the lampstand. ³³ On one branch there shall be three cups shaped like almond-blossoms, each with calyx and petals, and on the next branch there shall be three cups shaped like almond-blossoms, each with calyx and petals; so for all six branches issuing from the lampstand. ³⁴ And on the lampstand itself there shall be four cups shaped like almond-blossoms, each with calyx and petals: ³⁵ a calyx, of one piece with it, under a pair of branches; and a calyx, of one piece with it, under the second pair of branches, and a calyx, of one piece with it, under the last pair of branches; so for all six branches issuing from the lampstand. ³⁶ Their calyxes and their stems shall be of one piece with it, the whole of it a single hammered piece of pure gold. ³⁷ Make its seven lamps -- the lamps shall be so mounted as to give the light on its front side -- ³⁸ and its tongs and fire pans of pure gold. ³⁹ It shall be made, with all these furnishings, out of a talent of pure gold. ⁴⁰ Note well, and follow the patterns for them that are being shown you on the mountain.

THE TABERNACLE

ITS STRUCTURE AND UTENSILS

BY MOSHE LEVINE

Introduction: Professor Yehuda Elitzur

Editing: Joseph Shaked, M.A.

Book design: Zvi Narkiss

Photography: Israel Zafrir

English version: Dr. Esther J. Ehrman

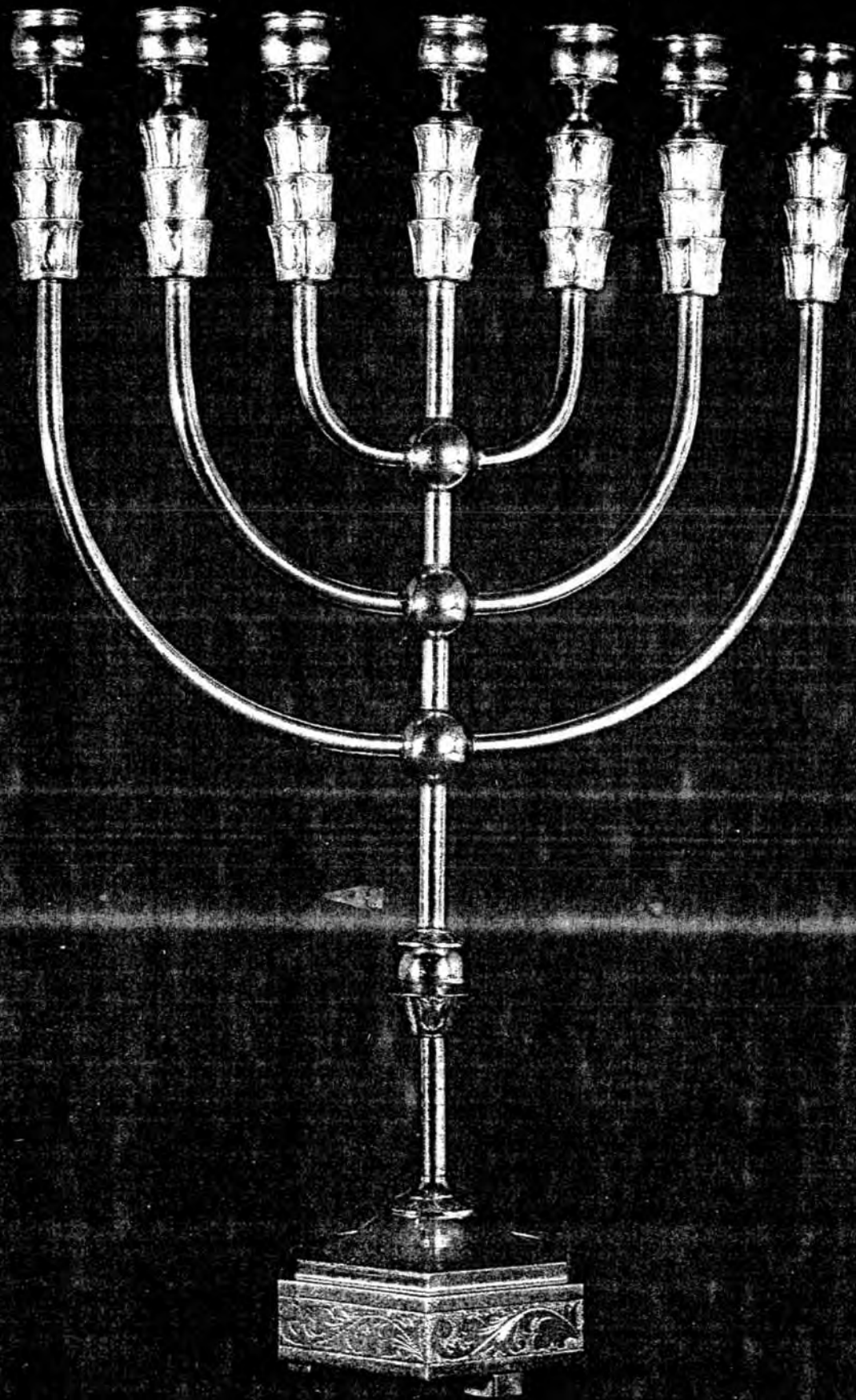
in association with Rabbi Dr. S. M. Lehrman

Rabbi Dr. A. Ehrman and M. Kohn



Books of Enduring Worth

Published for The Soncino Press Limited
London Jerusalem New York
by "Melechet Hamishkan" Tel Aviv Israel



**The
STONE
EDITION**

THE

THE TORAH: HAFTAROS AND FIVE MEGILLOS
WITH A COMMENTARY ANTHOLOGIZED
FROM THE RABBINIC WRITINGS.

by
Rabbi Nosson Scherman

Contributing Editors:
Rabbi Hersh Goldwurm ל"צ
Rabbi Avie Gold
Rabbi Meir Zlotowitz
Designed by
Rabbi Sheah Brander

them with gold, and the Table shall be carried through them. ²⁹ You shall make its dishes, its spoons, its shelving-tubes, and its pillars, with which it shall be covered; of pure gold shall you make them. ³⁰ On the Table shall you place show-bread before Me, always.

The Menorah ³¹ You shall make a Menorah of pure gold, hammered out shall the Menorah be made, its base, its shaft, its cups, its knobs, and its blossoms shall be [hammered] from it. ³² Six branches shall emerge from its sides, three branches of the Menorah from its one side and three branches of the Menorah from its second side; ³³ three cups engraved like almonds on the one branch, a knob and a flower; and three cups engraved like almonds on the next branch, a knob and a flower — so for the six branches that emerge from the Menorah. ³⁴ And on the Menorah shall be four cups, engraved like almonds, its knobs and its flowers. ³⁵ A knob shall be under two of the branches from it, a knob under two of the branches from it, and a knob under two of the branches from it — for the six branches emerging from the Menorah.

simple sense, the ornate, gold Menorah served to demonstrate the majesty of the Tabernacle. It was placed in the outer chamber so that it would be visible — and inspirational — to everyone, and it was *outside* of the Holy of Holies to show that the Ark and all that it represented did not require light; the Torah is its own light (R' Bachya).

The Menorah, whose flames were fed by the purest oil of the olive, symbolized the illumination of the intellect. It was placed near the southern wall of the Tabernacle, opposite the Table on the north. The Ark, hidden behind the *Paroches* (26:33-35), was equidistant from both. Thus, the Ark, containing the word of God, cast its spiritual emanations, as it were, upon the Menorah and the Table, which represented intellectual achievement and material prosperity. This symbolized the conviction that both our spiritual and temporal lives must be guided by, and work to serve, the dictates of the Torah. Jewish life cannot be compartmentalized in the realms of sacred and temporal, or, in the modern vernacular, Church and State; the Torah regulates all aspects of life, and demands purity in all of them. Indeed, the requirement that the entire, very intricate Menorah had to be hammered out of one ingot of gold (vs. 31, 35) symbolized the indivisibility of the Torah; a Jewish life must be constructed entirely from one set of values. It may not be a hodge-podge of separate bits and pieces, grafted together to suit anyone's convenience. All areas of life must derive from the same set of values.

As *Sforno* comments, the law that the flames on the six side branches of the Menorah had to point toward its central stem (v. 37) teaches that all intellectual achievements must be directed toward the central authority of the Torah.

The Menorah also represents another dimension of the Torah: the Oral Law that is the God-given companion of the Written Torah. By using the principles and methodology taught to Moses at Sinai, man exercises his own creative, inquisitive abilities to derive new knowledge and apply eternal wisdom to new situations. Just as the

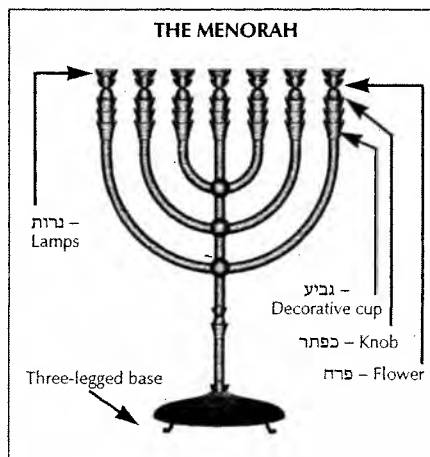
Menorah's illumination was created by man-made wicks, oil, and flame, so the Oral Torah is man's contribution to the Torah itself (R' Gedaliah Schorr).

31. מְקֻשָּׁה תִּקְשָׁה — *Hammered out shall . . . be made.* Although the Menorah consisted of many shapes and forms, all of them had to be hammered from the same ingot; nothing could be made separately and then attached. *Midrash Tanchuma* teaches that so difficult was this feat that Moses could not visualize how the Menorah should appear, so God showed him a Menorah of fire. Even then, Moses despaired of actually being able to make it properly, whereupon God instructed him to throw the ingot into a fire — and the completed Menorah emerged (*Rashi*). That this miracle occurred is suggested by the term *shall be made*, rather than *you shall make*, indicating that the Menorah came into being without human intervention.

Gur Aryeh explains that once God showed Moses how the Menorah was to be made, he actually began to make it — otherwise, what was the purpose of the commandment and the demonstration? — but then God assisted him, so that when the ingot was cast into the fire as part of the normal process of crafting it, the work was completed miraculously. This is how God typically performs miracles: First Man must do what he can, and then God comes to his aid. Similarly, at the time of the Splitting of the Sea, God commanded Moses to split the waters by raising his staff (14:16), and it was only after Moses had done so that God performed the awesome miracle. In Egypt and throughout the years in the Wilderness, Moses performed acts that resulted in miracles; clearly, only God makes miracles, but He wants man to initiate them.

33. מְשֻׁקְרִים — *Engraved like almonds.* The surface of the cup was grooved like an almond (*Rashbam*).

34. וּבִמְנֵרָה — *And on the Menorah.* In this context, the Torah refers to the central shaft of the Menorah, from which the arms branched out (*Rashi*).



Suggested Activity 2: Lampstand or Lamp? Defining Menorah

1. Definition of *Ner, Menorah*

Brown, F., S. Driver, and C. Briggs. *The Brown-Driver-Briggs Hebrew and English Lexicon*. Peabody: Hendrickson, 2001.

a sickle thou shalt not wield over the standing grain of thy neighbour; abs. מניפו Is 10¹⁵ against him that wieldeth it (i.e. a saw), and בְּהִנִּיף שֵׁבֶט וְאַתְּ-מְרִימוֹ v¹⁵ (rd. אֶתְּ) like a rod's wielding him that lifteth it.

2. Shake or wave the hand; a. wave hand אֶל-הַמִּקּוֹם 2 K 5¹¹, in healing ceremony (i.e. prob. toward sanctuary Kmp^{Kau}; > toward the spot [where leprosy appears], so most). b. c. -ל, shake or brandish against, Is 11¹⁵ 19¹⁶ Zc 2¹³ (all of 'י), Jb 31²¹ [cf. Eccles 12¹⁵ (without ל)] in mockery]. c. wave hand, as a signal, Is 13². 3. swing to and fro בְּנִפְתַּת, in a sieve, Is 30²⁸ (fig., of nations).

4. Oft. term. techn. in P (H), of rite in which originally the priest lifted his share of offering and waved it, i.e. moved it toward altar and back, in token of its presentation to God and its return by him to priest: in H, 'י הִנִּיף אֶת-הַעֹמֶר לְפָנָי Lv 23¹¹ a cf. v¹¹ b. 12, also v²⁰ (on text v. Di Dr-Wh^{Hpt}); in P, וְהִנִּפְתָּ אֹתוֹ, וְהִנִּיף אֶת-הַנּוֹפֵחַ לְפָנָי Ex 29²⁶, so Lv 7³⁰ 8²⁹ 9²¹ 10¹⁵ (obj. om.), Nu 6²⁰; thus also Levites are set apart for service of the priests Nu 8¹¹ (Di del. v.), v^{13.21}, cf. v¹⁵ ('י לְפָנָי om.); but same phr. of entire lamb, with oil, Lv 14^{12.24}, and of offerings wh. were burnt, entirely Ex 29²⁴ (cf. v²⁵), Lv 8²⁷ (cf. v²⁸), or in part Nu 5²⁵ ('י הִנִּיף הַמִּנְחָה לְפָנָי 'י), —in these the orig. signif. seems lost; so, clearly, of contributions for tabernacle, = offer, 'י הִנִּיף הַנּוֹפֵחַ וְהָבָה לִי Ex 35²².—Cf. הִנּוּפָה infr.

5. Shed abroad (si vera l.) בָּשָׂם נְדִיבוֹת תִּנְיִף v⁶⁸ 68¹⁰ bounteous rain thou didst shed abroad [cf. Eccles 43^{17c}], but vb. not wholly suitable; Lag Gr prop. הִשְׂיִף, yet this also questionable. Hoph. Pf. 3 ms. הִנּוּפָה, be waved, Ex 29²⁷ (P), pass. of Hiph. 4.

† I. [נִפְתָּת] n.f. sieve or other winnowing implement, Di Du Schwinge, Che^{Hpt} fan (as swung);—only cstr. לְהִנּוּפֵה גוֹיִם בְּנִפְתַּת שְׂוִיא Is 30²⁸ to swing nations in a sieve of worthlessness.

הִנּוּפָה n.f. a swinging, waving, wave-offering, offering;—abs. 'ת Is 30³² +; cstr. הַנּוֹפֵחַ Is 19¹⁶ Ex 35²²; pl. cstr. הַנּוֹפֵחַ Nu 18¹¹;—
1. a swinging, brandishing, 'י נִרְ' ת Is 19¹⁶ the brandishing of 'י's hand (in hostility); מְלַחֲמֹת ת' 30³² battles of brandishing (brandished weapons).
2. a. waving, wave-offering, term. techn. in P (H), orig. of priest's share of sacrifice (cf. נוף Hiph. 4), לְבַל-הִנּוּפֵחַ בְּנִי יֵשׁ לְךָ נְתִימִים Nu 18¹¹;

oft. as 2nd acc. after הִנִּיף Ex 29²⁶ + 5 t.; even of Levites Nu 8^{11.13.15.20} (on all v. נוף Hiph. 4); הַת' Ex 29²⁷ the wave-breast, so Lv 7³⁴ 10^{14.15} Nu 6²⁰ (all הַתְרוּמָה + שֹׁק הַתְרוּמָה); 18¹⁸ (+ הַיָּמִין); הַת' Lv 23¹⁵; לָחֶם הַת' v¹⁷; 'ת' alone v²⁰ (all H); less accurately Ex 29²⁴ Lv 8²⁷ 14^{12.21.24} (v. נוף^{1c}). b. offering, of gold and brass for tabern., Ex 35²² 38^{24.29}.—On 'ת' v. Di^{Lv 7.30} Benz Arch. 459 f. and esp. Now^{Arch. II. 239 f.}; also הַתְרוּמָה.

II. נוף (√ of foll.; cf. Ar. نوب, I, iv. overtop (Frey), مَنِيْفٌ camel-hump (ib.); مَنِيْفٌ high, lofty (of mt. and building, Lane³⁰³⁹).

† נוף n.[m.] elevation, height (NH נוף is tree-top, bough, so נופא נ'—; ψ 48³ beautiful in elevation (of Mount Zion).

II. [נִפְתָּה] n.f. height;—only cstr. in combin. נְבוֹת דָּוִר Jos 12²³ = נ' דָּוִר I K 4¹¹, pl. cstr. דָּוִר Jos 11²; cf. II. דָּוִר, and Di^{Jos 11.2}; v. also [נִפְתָּה].

† [נִפְתָּה] n.f. id.;—only הַנּוֹפֵחַ Jos 17¹¹ (but rd. perh. הַנּוֹפֵחַ, fr. foregoing, v. Di; ⊕ Μαφερα, A Nαφερα, ⊕L Νοφεθ, cf. 12²³ [supr. sub II. נִפְתָּה], ⊕L Nαφαθδωρ).—נפת honey, v. נפת.

נוצה v. I. נצה.

[נוק] vb. whence (si vera l.) might come, Hiph. suckle, nurse;—Impf. 3 fs. sf. וְהִנִּיףָהּ Ex 2⁹, but v. ינק and Ges^{70a}; rd. prob. וְהִנִּיףָהּ (Sam. והניקהו).

נר (√ of foll.; cf. NH נור, flame, fire, & id.; Ar. نور, نَار give light, shine, I. (Kam Frey), iv. Lane²⁶⁶⁴, نور, نَار fire, نور, نور light; Syr. نَار fire; also in n. pr. Palm. Pun. v. Lzb³²² Cook⁸¹; Min. מנורה torches (?) Hom^{Sudar. Chrest. 128}; As. tindru, furnace, oven (DI^{HWP 711}) belongs here acc. to Jäger^{BAS II. 294}).

I. נר n.m. Ex 25³⁷ lamp;—נ' abs. Ex 27²⁰ +, cstr. I S 3³ +; sf. נִרִי ψ 18²⁹, + נִרִי || 2 S 22²⁹, etc.; pl. נִרוֹת abs. Lv 24⁴ +; cstr. Ex 39³⁷; sf. נִרְתִּיהָ Ex 25^{37.37} +, נִרְתִּיהָ I Ch 28¹⁵ 2 Ch 4²⁰;—lamp in shrine at Shiloh I S 3³; esp. of lamps in temple I K 7⁴⁹ + 7 t. Ch, and in tabern. Ex 25^{37.37} + 15 t. P; cf. in Zech.'s vision Zc 4^{2.2}; as token of merrymaking Je 25¹⁰; used in search Zp 1¹², cf. (fig.) נִשְׂמַת אָדָם נִרְ Pr 20²⁷; used in household work Pr 31¹⁸; fig. of prosperity נִרְ אֶל 2 S 21¹⁷ (embodied in David); also Jb 18⁹ 21¹⁷ 29³ ψ 18²⁹ = 2 S 22²⁹, ψ 132¹⁷ Pr 13⁹ 20²⁰ 24²⁰; of God's word as a guide ψ 119¹⁰⁵, cf. Pr 6²³.

† II. נַר n.pr.m. Ⓞ Nḥp: 1. father of Abner 1 S 14^{50,61} 26^{5,14} 2 S 2^{9,12} 3^{23,25,28,37} 1 K 2^{5,32} 1 Ch 26²⁸. 2. father of Kish 1 Ch 8³³ 9^{36,39}.

† I. נֵר n.[m.] lamp;—alw. fig. לְמַעַן הַיְיֹתֵנִי לְנֵר 1 K 11³⁶, i.e. that his family may remain on the throne; cf. 15⁴ 2 K 8⁹ = 2 Ch 21⁷; = happiness, delight (cstr.) נֵר רִשְׁעִים Pr 21⁴ (so Vrss Thes Buhl Now Wild, > Ew Del SS Frankenb=II. נֵר sub I. [נֵר] infr.).

† נְרִיָּה n.pr.m. father of Baruch: נְרִיָּה Je 36^{14,32} 43⁶ 45¹, = father of Seraiah 51⁵⁹; נְרִיָּה 32^{12,16} 36^{4,8} 43²; Ⓞ Nḥpov; cf. Gray Prop N. 294.

מְנוֹרָה n.f. lampstand (Eccles 31^{31,32,32} 32^{12,16} 36^{4,8} 43²);—abs. מְנוֹרָה 2 K 4¹⁰ + 9 t., מְנוֹרָה Ex 25^{32,32} + 19 t.; cstr. מְנוֹרֹת Zc 4² 2 Ch 13¹¹, מְנוֹרָת Ex 25³¹ + 2 t.; pl. מְנוֹרוֹת abs. 1 K 7⁴⁹ + 2 t.; cstr. 1 Ch 28^{15,15} 2 Ch 4⁷;—lampstand: 1. in private house 2 K 4¹⁰. 2. ten lampstands in temple, pl. 1 K 7⁴⁹ = 2 Ch 4⁷, Je 52¹⁹ (so also Ⓞ; om. || 2 K 25^{14,15}, del. here Now Arch. II. 40 < retain Gf Gie), cf. 2 Ch 4²⁰, also 1 Ch 28^{15,15,15,15,15,15}, but 2 Ch 13¹¹ has מ' in sg. (as 3); cf. sg. in Zech.'s vision Zc 4². 3. seven-branched lampstand in tabern. Ex 25^{31,31,32,32} + 15 t. Ex, Lv 24⁴ (with lamps upon it), Nu 3³¹ 4⁹ 8^{2,3,4,4} (all P).—מְנוֹרָה v. II. נֵר.

† [נָשִׁי] vb. be sick, si vera l. (= I. אָנֹשׁ acc. to Thes who comp. Syr. نَسِي);—Qal Impf. 1 S 1¹ וְאֲנִישָׁה ψ 69²¹, but rd. נָשִׁי [מִכַּת נִפְשִׁי]; וְאֲנִישָׁה (חֲרָפָה שְׂבָרָה לְבָיִי) (Bi Che^{crit. n.}, cf. Ⓞ, v. I. אָנֹשׁ; or (< קָוָה) וְאֲנִישׁ הוּא קָוָה (with different word-division), Weir^{Acad. 1870, 257} (who cp. Je 17⁹ 8¹⁵).

† I. [נָזַף] vb. spurt, spatter; Hiph. sprinkle (NH Hiph. sprinkle; Aram. נָזַף, Lv 4⁶ and oft., for הִזָּה; Syr. نَزَف is erupit, stillavit Is 63³, also prominuit, etc. PS²²⁹¹);—Qal Impf. 3 ms. יָזַף Lv 6^{20,20}, יָזַף Is 63³ (but rd. יָזַף Che Di Du Ges^{558, p. n., 107 b n. al.}); 2 K 9²³;—spurt, spatter, alw. of blood:—יָזַף מִדָּמָה אֶל־ 2 K 9²³ and some of her blood spurted against the wall; so נִזְפָּהָם Is 63³ (c. על־ rei, in metaph.); יָזַף מִדָּמָה Lv 6²⁰, cf. v²⁰ (both c. על־ rei). Hiph. Pf. 3 ms. יָזַף consec. Lv 4⁶ + 12 t.; 2 ms. יָזַף Ex 29²¹; Impf. יָזַף Lv 16¹⁴ (Is 52¹⁵, v. infr.); יָזַף Lv 8^{11,30}, Imv. הִזָּה Nu 8⁷; Pt. cstr. יָזַף Nu 19²¹;—cause to spurt, sprinkle upon, in ceremonials of P: c. acc. + על־ pers. Nu 8⁷ (water), + על־ rei, לְפָנַי rei Lv 16¹⁵; obj. oft. מִן

partit., or implied in context; sq. על־ Lv 5⁹ 14⁷ 16^{14,19} (all of blood); 8¹¹ (oil); Nu 19^{18,19} (water), Ex 29²¹ Lv 8³⁰ (both blood and oil); sq. אֶל־ Lv 14⁵¹ (blood and water), אֶל־נֹכַח פָּנָי Nu 19⁴ (blood); sq. לְפָנַי Lv 4^{6,17} 16¹⁴ (blood), 14^{16,27} (oil); once without prep. מְזַה Nu 19²¹ the sprinkler of the water.—Is 52¹⁵ v. II. נוֹה.

† יָזַף n.pr.m. (may 'i sprinkle, rd. prob. יָזַף, Ⓞ Αζεία, Α Αδεία, Ⓞ L Ιαζίας);—one of those who took strange wives Ezr 10²⁵.

II. [נָזַף] vb. (dub.) spring, leap (cf. Ar. نَزَف leap, leap up, upon, Thes Frey^{Prov. Ar. 1, 171, 257; 22, 138; 26, 11});—hence, acc. to many, Hiph. Impf. 3 ms. יָזַף Is 52¹⁵ so shall he cause to leap (i.e. in joyful surprise, or = startle) many nations; but perh. crpt.; Che^{Comm.} יָזַף in like sense; < יָזַף (for יָזַף) many shall tremble (v. רָגַז), GFM^{JBL 1890, 216 ff.} cf. Che^{Hpt.}.

זֵר v. נָזַר

† [נָזַף] vb. flow, trickle, drop, distil (poet.) (נָזַף of flowing water; Syr. نَزَف descendit, defluet PS²³³¹; Ar. نَزَف descend (milk into udder, but also in gen.));—Qal Pf. נָזַף Ju 5⁵; Impf. נָזַף Nu 24⁷, etc.; Pt. נָזַף Ex 15⁸ +, etc.;—1. flow, subj. water, Nu 24⁷ (JE); ψ 147¹⁸; cf. Je 18¹⁴; subj. clouds, Jb 36²⁸ sq. rain as acc. mat. Ges¹¹⁷² (|| רַעַף and, v²⁷, זָקַק, cf. Je 9¹⁷ (of eyelids); so fig. Is 45⁸ sq. צָדַק (|| רַעַף); of mts. (i.e. their torrents) Ju 5⁵ acc. to Ew GFM al., but v. I. זָלַל; esp. pt. as subst., = streams, floods, Ex 15⁸ (|| מֵי־תְהוֹם of Red Sea); ψ 78⁴⁴ (|| יָזַף); for drinking ψ 78¹⁶ (|| מֵי־בְנֵה־רוֹת) (|| יָזַף), Pr 5¹⁵ out of well (|| מֵי־); for irrigation Is 44⁸ (|| מֵי־); fig. of Shulammitte נִזְפָּהָם Ct 4¹⁵ (|| מֵי־). 2. distil, of spices נִזְפָּהָם Ct 4¹⁶; fig. of words, like dew Dt 32² (|| עֵרַף). Hiph. Pf. הִזָּף Is 48²¹ cause to flow, water from rock (|| זָבַח).—Vid. also I. זָלַל.

נֹזֵם (√ of foll.; meaning unknown).

† נֹזֵם n.m.^{7b, 42, 11} ring, always of gold when material mentioned;—' abs. Gn 24³⁰ +; cstr. v²² +; sf. נֹזְמָה Ho 2¹⁵; pl. נֹזְמִים Gn 35⁴; cstr. נֹזְמִי Ex 32² +;—1. nose-ring (Syr. نَوْضَا) woman's ornament, נֹזְמָה גִּ' Gn 24⁴⁷ cf. v^{22,30} (J) also Ho 2¹⁵; Ez 16¹² fig. of 's adorning Jerus. (|| עֲגִילִים על־אֶזְנוֹתָהּ); cf. בָּאֵף חֲוִיר Pr 11²².

Suggested Activity 3: Tracking the Menorah

(Biblical Citations are not provided for this activity. Give students the list of texts and hand out Bibles.)

1. Tabernacle Menorah

Exodus 25:31-40
26:31-35
Numbers 3:27-32
4:9-10

2. First Temple

I Chronicles 28:11-19
I Kings 7:48
Jeremiah 52:17-19
II Kings 24:11-13

3. Second Temple

Ginzberg, Louis. *Legend of the Jews Vol. 1*. Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 2003, 644-645.

I Maccabees 1:21
I Maccabees 4:49-50

4. Arch of Titus

Copy excerpt from Encyclopaedia Judaica article.

the earth as the place where the Shekinah be- took itself to commune with Moses.³³⁴ The heads of the Cherubim were slightly turned back, like that of a scholar bidding his master farewell; but as a token of God's delight in His people Israel, the faces of the Cherubim, by a miracle, "looked one to another" whenever Israel were devoted to their Lord, yea, even clasped one another like a loving couple. During the festivals of the pil- grimage the priests used to raise the curtain from the Holy of Holies to show the pilgrims how much their God loved them as they could see in the embrace of the two Cherubim.³³⁵

A two-fold miracle came to pass when the Cherubim were brought into the Temple by So- lomon: the two staves that were attached to the Ark extended until they touched the curtain, so that two protuberances like a woman's breasts became visible at the back of it, and the wings of the Cherubim furthermore extended until they reached the ceiling of the Holy of Holies.³³⁶

329. ShR 50.1-2; Tan. Wa-Yakhel 5; Tan. B. II, 124. Compare also with p. 642, where a different opinion is given, according to which the Sanctuary was first erected and subsequently the ark was fashioned. See also text on pp. 644-645 and 654-655. God commanded Moses to make the entire nation participate in the work of the ark, in order that all might have a share in the To- rah kept in the ark; ShR 34.2. Comp. Tan. Wa-Yakhel 7, which reads: Bezalel fashioned the ark with his own hands, whereas the rest of the work was done by others under his direction.

330. Tan. Wa-Yakhel 7; BaR 4.13 and 5.1; Ye- lammedenuin Yalkut I, 729; Tehillim 22, 185-186; Baba Batra 14b; Shir 1.2 and 3.5; DR 7.9; Yoma 21a, which states: The ark did not diminish the empty space of the Holy of Holies; see parallel passages cited on margin as well as Yerushalmi Baba Batra 6. 15c, and compare foot- note 65 on p. 966. Just as the ark, the receptacle of the To- rah, was within and without of fine gold, even so must a scholar, the possessor of the Torah, take care that his inside is like his outside, that is, he must be sincere. See Yoma 72b, as well as Philo, *De Ebriet.* 21; *Quaestiones*, Exod. 2, 54. In 2'Clemens, 12, a saying attributed to Jesus, reads: The kingdom of God will not arrive before the inside of

man will be like his outside. It is quite obvious that in this saying the rabbinic phrase תוכו כבירו (comp. Yoma 72b; Tan., *loc. cit.*; *Leket Midrashim*, 6b and 7b) is made use of.—The identification of the ark with the promised angel (see Exod. 23.20) is first found in Lekah, Exod., *loc. cit.* This identification is very likely based on old sources. Comp. the reference in note 435. Of all the furniture and vessels of the Sanctuary the ark is the only one whose mea- sure is given in fractions (see Exod. 25.10); this indicates that, like the ark, the human receptacle of the Torah ought to be humble of spirit and contrite (=broken) of heart; *Kad ha-Kemah, Gaawah* (end). See also the explanation of the four staves of the ark as given in Lekah, Exod. 25.12.

331. Shekalim 6. 49b Sotah, Tosefta 7.18 and Yerushalmi 8, 22b-22c; Baba Batra 14a-14b; Meleket ha- Mishkan 6; Sifre N., 82; Sifre Z., 191. A different view is given in Yerushalmi Sotah, *loc. cit.*, according to which there was only one ark which served as a receptacle for the two sets of the two tables, for the scroll of the Torah, and for the presents offered by the Philistines (see 1 Sam. 6.8).

332. Meleket ha-Mishkan 7; Shekalim, Mishnah 6.1-2; Tosefta 2.18; Talmud 7, 49b; Tosefta Sotah 13.1; Yoma 53b-54a; EZ 25, 129. Comp. Friedmann's remarks on Meleket ha-Mishkan, *loc. cit.*; text on pp. 573 and 645.

333. Tadshe 2; Sukkah 5b; ShR 41.6; DR 3.16. The symbolic representation of the ark, as given by Philo, *Moses*, 2(3).8, and *Quaestiones*, Exod. 2, 62, offers many points of resemblance to that of the Midrashim. With refer- ence to the Cherubim, Josephus, *Antiqui.*, 6.5 writes: Cherubim are flying creatures, whose form is not like any creature, but which Moses saw near the throne of God.

334. Sukkah 5a; Mekilta Bahodesh 4, 65; comp. al- so Yerushalmi Shabbat 1,2d.

335. Baba Batra 99a; a somewhat different version is given in Yoma 54a-54b. Comp. also Onkelos and Targum Yerushalmi on Exod. 25.20. The raising of the curtain dur- ing the festivals is also mentioned by Josephus, *Antiqui.*, III, 6. 4.

336. Meleket ha-Mishkan 7; Yoma, Tosefta 2(3).7 and Babli 64a; compare with p. 646.

THE TABLE AND THE CANDLESTICK

While the number of Cherubim was the same in the Temple as in the Tabernacle, Solomon had, on the other hand, ten tables set up in the Temple in place of the one fashioned by Moses. This was because the one table suf-

ficed to bring sustenance to Israel so long as they were maintained by manna in the desert; but as the demand for food was greater after they settled in the promised land, Solomon had ten tables set up. But in the Temple also did the table of Moses retain its ancient significance, for only upon it was the shewbread placed, and it stood in the centre, whereas the tables fashioned by Solomon stood five to the south and five to the north. For from the south come "the dews of blessing and the rains of plenty," while all evil comes from the north; hence Solomon said: "The tables on the south side shall cause the rains of plenty and the dews of blessing to come upon the earth, while the tables on the north side shall keep off all evil from Israel."³³⁷

Moses had great difficulty with the construction of the candlestick, for although God had given him instructions about it, he completely forgot these when he descended from heaven. He thereupon betook himself to God once more to be shown, but in vain, for hardly had he reached earth, when he again forgot. When he betook himself to God the third time, God took a candlestick of fire and plainly showed him every single detail of it, that he might now be able to reconstruct the candlestick for the Tabernacle. When he found it still hard to form a clear conception of the nature of the candlestick, God quieted him with these words: "Go to Bezalel, he will do it aright." And indeed, Bezalel had no difficulty in doing so, and instantly executed Moses' commission. Moses cried in amazement: "God showed me repeatedly how to make the candlestick, yet I could not properly seize the idea; but thou, without having had it shown thee by God, couldst fashion it out of thy own fund of knowledge. Truly dost thou deserve thy name Bezalel, 'in the shadow of God,' far thou dost act as if thou hadst been 'in the shadow of God' while He was showing me the candlestick."³³⁸

This candlestick was later set up in the Temple of Solomon, and although he set up ten other candlesticks, still this one was the first to be lighted. Solomon chose the number ten because it corresponds to the number of Words revealed on Sinai; and each of these candlesticks had seven lamps, seventy in all, to correspond to the seventy nations. For while these lamps burned the power of these nations was held in check, but on the day on which these lamps are extinguished the power of the nations is increased.³³⁹ The candlestick stood toward the south, and the table to the north of the sanctuary, the table to indicate the delights of which the pious would partake in Paradise, which lies to the north; the light of the candlestick to symbolize the light of the Shekinah, for in the future world there will be but one delight, to gaze at the light of the Shekinah.³⁴⁰ On account of its sacredness the candlestick was one of the five sacred objects that God concealed at the destruction of the Temple by Nebuchadnezzar, and that He will restore when in His loving-kindness He will erect His house and Temple. These sacred objects are: the Ark, the candlestick, the fire of the altar, the Holy Spirit of prophecy, and the Cherubim.³⁴¹

337. Meleket ha-Mishkan 8; Menahot Tosefta 11.9, and Babli 98b-99a; Shekalim 6, 50a-50b. On the qualities of the south and the north, see text on pp. 6-7, and the notes appertaining to them. Philo, *Moses*, 2(3).10, writes: The table on which bread and salt are laid (salt is in agreement with Septuagint Lev. 24.7; whereas the Rabbis, Menahot 11, 5-8, and Josephus, *Antiqui.*, II, 6.6, know nothing of salt) was placed on the northern side, since of all the winds, the north wind is the most beneficial for the production of nourishment. See also Yelammedenu 53=BHM VI, 88.

338. BaR 15.9; Tan. B. I, 49-50; Tan. Beha'aloteka 6. The pattern, fashioned of fire, for the ark, the table, and the candlestick came down from heaven to Moses, that he might be able to make these vessels of the sanctuary. According to another view, it was Gabriel who taught Moses

Suggested Activity 4: Locating the Divine in the Tree of Light

1. Genesis 12:6-7
2. Joshua 24:25-28
3. Judges 4:4-5
4. 2 Samuel 5:22-25
5. Job 14:7-9
6. Exodus 15:16-18
7. Images of Seven-Branched Trees:
Carving from Stone Bowl. Susa, Elam 2300 BCE
Coin of Bar Kochba 135 CE
Yarden, L. *The Tree of Light: A Study of the Menorah*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1971.
Mesopotamian Vase. Before 3000 BCE
Meyers, Carol L. *The Tabernacle Menorah: A Synthetic Study of a Symbol from the Biblical Cult*. Missoula: Scholars Press, 1976
8. Jeremiah 1:11
9. Numbers 17
10. The Menorah and the Tree: Carol Meyers
Meyers, Carol L. *The Tabernacle Menorah: A Synthetic Study of a Symbol from the Biblical Cult*. Missoula: Scholars Press, 1976

Genesis 12:6-7

ספר בראשית: יב-ז

וַיַּעֲבֹר אַבְרָם בְּאֶרֶץ עַד מְקוֹם שְׁכֵם עַד אֵלּוֹן מוֹרֶה וְהַכְּנַעֲנִי אָז
 בְּאֶרֶץ: ז וַיֵּרָא יְהוָה אֶל-אַבְרָם וַיֹּאמֶר לְזַרְעֲךָ אֶתֵּן אֶת-הָאֶרֶץ הַזֹּאת
 וַיִּבֶן שָׁם מִזְבֵּחַ לַיהוָה הַנִּרְאָה אֵלָיו:

⁶ Abram passed through the land as far as the site of Shechem, at the terebinth of Moreh. The Canaanites were then in the land. ⁷ The LORD appeared to Abram and said, "I will assign this land to your heirs." And he built an altar there to the LORD who had appeared to him.

Joshua 24:25-28

ספר יהושע: כד:כה-כח

כה וַיִּכְרֹת יְהוֹשֻׁעַ בְּרִית לְעַם בְּיַמֵּי הַהוּא וַיִּשֶׂם לוֹ חֻק וּמִשְׁפָּט
 בְּשִׁכְמֹ: כו וַיִּכְתֹּב יְהוֹשֻׁעַ אֶת־הַדְּבָרִים הָאֵלֶּה בְּסֵפֶר תּוֹרַת אֱלֹהִים
 וַיִּקַּח אֶבֶן גְּדוֹלָה וַיְקִימֶהָ שָׁם תַּחַת הָאֵלֶּה אֲשֶׁר בְּמִקְדָּשׁ יְהוָה:
 כז וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוֹשֻׁעַ אֶל־כָּל־הָעָם הִנֵּה הָאֶבֶן הַזֹּאת תִּהְיֶה־בָּנוּ לְעֵדוּת
 כִּי־הִיא שֹׁמֵעָה אֶת כָּל־אֲמֹרֵי יְהוָה אֲשֶׁר דִּבֶּר עִמָּנוּ וְהִיְתָה בָכֶם
 לְעֵדוּת פֶּן־תִּכְחַשׁוּן בְּאֱלֹהֵיכֶם: כח וַיִּשְׁלַח יְהוֹשֻׁעַ אֶת־הָעָם אִישׁ
 לְנַחֲלָתוֹ:

²⁵ On that day at Shechem, Joshua made a covenant for the people and he made a fixed rule for them. ²⁶ Joshua recorded all this in a book of divine instruction. He took a great stone and set it up at the foot of the oak in the sacred precinct of the LORD; ²⁷ and Joshua said to all the people, "See, this very stone shall be a witness against us, for it heard all the words that the LORD spoke to us; it shall be a witness against you, lest you break faith with your God." ²⁸ Joshua then dismissed the people to their allotted portions.

Judges 4:4-5

ספר שופטים: ד:ד-ה

ד וּדְבוֹרָה אִשָּׁה נְבִיאָה אִשְׁתְּ לַפִּי־דָוִד הָיָא שֹׁפֵטָה אֶת־יִשְׂרָאֵל בְּעֵת
הַהִיא: ה וְהָיָא יוֹשֶׁבֶת תַּחַת־תְּנִמֹּר דְּבוֹרָה בֵּין הַרְמָה וּבֵין בֵּית־אֵל
בְּהַר אֶפְרַיִם וַיַּעֲלוּ אֵלֶיהָ בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל לְמִשְׁפָּט:

⁴ Deborah, wife of Lappidoth, was a prophetess; she led Israel at that time. ⁵ She used to sit under the Palm of Deborah, between Ramah and Bethel in the hill country of Ephraim, and the Israelites would come to her for decisions.

II Samuel 5:22-25

ספר שמואל ב: ה:כב-כה

כב וַיִּסְפוּ עוֹד פְּלִשְׁתִּים לַעֲלוֹת וַיִּנְטְשׁוּ בְעֵמֶק רְפָאִים: כג וַיִּשְׁאַל דָּוִד
 בַּיהוָה וַיֹּאמֶר לֹא תַעֲלֶה הַסֵּב אֶל־אַחֲרֵיהֶם וּבֹאתָ לָהֶם מִמּוֹל
 בְּכַאֲסִים: כד וַיְהִי בִשְׁמֹעַי [בְּשִׁמְעַי] אֶת־קוֹל צְעָדָהּ בְּרֵאשֵׁי הַבְּכָאִים
 אֲזַ תַּחֲרֹץ כִּי אֲזַ יֵצֵא יְהוָה לִפְנֵיךָ לְהַכּוֹת בְּמַחְנֶה פְּלִשְׁתִּים: כה וַיַּעַשׂ
 דָּוִד כַּאֲשֶׁר צִוָּהוּ יְהוָה וַיִּדֹּף אֶת־פְּלִשְׁתִּים מִגִּבְעַ עַד־בְּאֵהָ גֶזֶר:

²² Once again the Philistines marched up and spread out over the Valley of Rephaim. ²³ David inquired of the LORD, and He answered, "Do not go up, but circle around behind them and confront them at the baca trees." ²⁴ And when you hear the sound of marching in the tops of the baca trees, then go into action, for the LORD will be going in front of you to attack the Philistine forces." ²⁵ David did as the LORD had commanded him; and he routed the Philistines from Geba all the way to Gezer.

Job 14:7-9

ספר איוב: כד:ז-ט

ז עָרֹם יָלִינוּ מִבְּלֵי לְבוּשׁ וְאֵין כְּסוּת בְּקֶרֶה: ח מִזֶּרֶם הָרִים יִרְטְבוּ
וּמִבְּלֵי מַחֲסֵה חִבְקוֹ צֹר: ט יִגְזְלוּ מִשָּׂדֵד יִתּוֹם וְעַל־עֵנִי יִחְבְּלוּ:

⁷ There is hope for a tree; If it is cut down it will renew itself; Its shoots will not cease. ⁸ If its roots are old in the earth, And its stump dies in the ground, ⁹ At the scent of water it will bud And produce branches like a sapling.

Exodus 15:16-18

ספר שמות: טו:טז-יח

טו תפל עליהם אימתה ופחד בגדל זרועך ידמו כאבן עד יעבר
 עמך יהוה עד יעבר עם זו קניית: יז תבאמו ותטעמו בהר נחלתך
 מכון לשבתך פעלת יהוה מקדש אדני פננו ידך: יח יהוה | ימלא
 לעלם ועד:

¹⁶ Terror and dread descend upon them; Through the might of Your arm they are still as stone -- Till Your people cross over, O LORD, Till Your people cross whom You have ransomed. ¹⁷ You will bring them and plant them in Your own mountain, The place You made to dwell in, O LORD, The sanctuary, O LORD, which Your hands established. ¹⁸ The LORD will reign for ever and ever!



6 (pp. 38f.)



24 (p. 18)

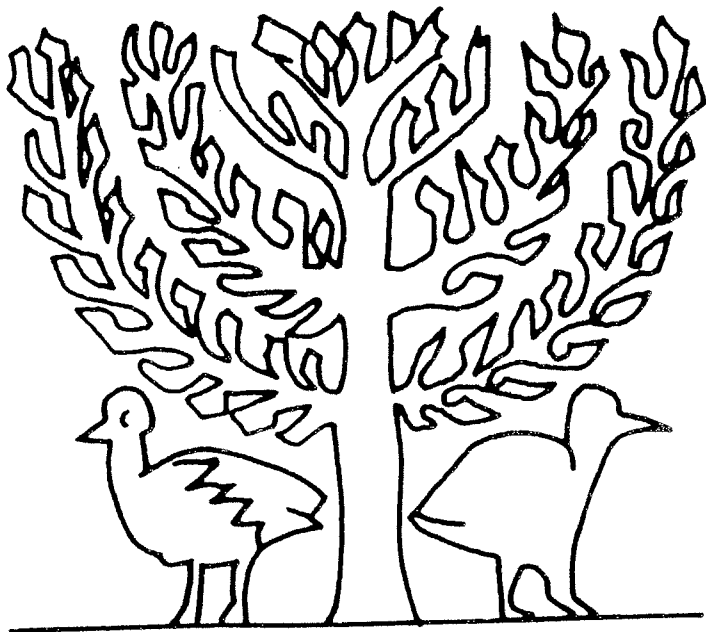


Fig. 43

Jeremiah 1:11

ספר ירמיהו: איא
יא ויהי דבר יהוה אלי לאמור מה-אתה ראה ירמיהו ואמר מקל
שקד אני ראה:

¹¹ The word of the LORD came to me: What do you see, Jeremiah? I replied: I see a branch of an almond tree.

Numbers 17

ספר במדבר: יז

א וַיְדַבֵּר יְהוָה אֶל־מֹשֶׁה לֵאמֹר: ב אֲמַר אֶל־אַלְעָזָר בֶּן־אַהֲרֹן הַכֹּהֵן
וַיָּרֶם אֶת־הַמַּחֲתֹת מִבֵּין הַשָּׂרֵפָה וְאֶת־הָאֵשׁ זָרַה־הַלֵּאָה כִּי קִדְּשׁוּ:
ג אֵת מַחֲתֹת הַחֹטָאִים הָאֵלֶּה בְּנִפְשֹׁתֵם וַעֲשׂוּ אֹתָם רִקְעֵי פָחִים
צִפּוּי לַמִּזְבֵּחַ כִּי־הִקְרִיבֶם לִפְנֵי־יְהוָה וַיִּקְדָּשׁוּ וַיְהִיו לְאוֹת לִבְנֵי
יִשְׂרָאֵל: ד וַיִּקַּח אֶלְעָזָר הַכֹּהֵן אֶת מַחֲתֹת הַנְּחֹשֶׁת אֲשֶׁר הִקְרִיבו
הַשָּׂרֵפִים וַיִּרְקְעוּם צִפּוּי לַמִּזְבֵּחַ: ה זָכְרוּן לִבְנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל לְמַעַן אֲשֶׁר
לֹא־יִקְרַב אִישׁ זָר אֲשֶׁר לֹא מִזֶּרַע אַהֲרֹן הוּא לְהִקְטִיר קִטְרֹת לִפְנֵי
יְהוָה וְלֹא־יִהְיֶה כְּקִרְחַ וְכַעֲדָתוֹ כֹּאֲשֶׁר דִּבֶּר יְהוָה בְּיַד־מֹשֶׁה לֵּוִי:
ו וַיִּלְנוּ כָּל־עַדַּת בְּנֵי־יִשְׂרָאֵל מִמַּחֲרַת עַל־מֹשֶׁה וְעַל־אַהֲרֹן לֵאמֹר
אֲתֶם הַמֵּתִים אֶת־עַם יְהוָה: ז וַיְהִי בַּהֲקֵהֶל הָעֵדָה עַל־מֹשֶׁה
וְעַל־אַהֲרֹן וַיִּפְּנוּ אֶל־אַהֵל מוֹעֵד וְהִנֵּה כִסְהוּ הָעֵנָן וַיֵּרָא כְבוֹד יְהוָה:
ח וַיָּבֹא מֹשֶׁה וְאַהֲרֹן אֶל־פְּנֵי אֹהֶל מוֹעֵד: ט וַיְדַבֵּר יְהוָה אֶל־מֹשֶׁה
לֵאמֹר: י הֲרָמוּ מִתּוֹךְ הָעֵדָה הַזֹּאת וְאָכְלָה אֹתָם כְּרָגַע וַיִּפְּלוּ
עַל־פְּנֵיהֶם: יא וַיֹּאמֶר מֹשֶׁה אֶל־אַהֲרֹן קַח אֶת־הַמַּחֲתֶּה וְתֵן־עָלֶיהָ
אֵשׁ מֵעַל הַמִּזְבֵּחַ וְשִׂים קִטְרֹת וְהוֹלֵךְ מִהֵרָה אֶל־הָעֵדָה וְכַפֵּר עֲלֵיהֶם
כִּי־יֵצֵא הַקֶּצֶף מִלִּפְנֵי יְהוָה הַחַל הַנֶּגֶף: יב וַיִּקַּח אַהֲרֹן כֹּאֲשֶׁר | דִּבֶּר
מֹשֶׁה וַיֵּרָץ אֶל־תְּנוּךְ הַקֹּהֶל וְהִנֵּה הַחַל הַנֶּגֶף בָּעַם וַיִּתֵּן אֶת־הַקִּטְרֹת
וַיִּכַּפֵּר עַל־הָעַם: יג וַיַּעֲמֵד בֵּין־הַמֵּתִים וּבֵין הַחַיִּים וַתַּעֲצֵר הַמַּגֵּפָה:
יד וַיְהִיו הַמֵּתִים בַּמַּגֵּפָה אַרְבָּעָה עָשָׂר אֶלֶף וּשְׁבַע מֵאוֹת מִלִּבְד
הַמֵּתִים עַל־דַּבַּר־קִרְחַ: טו וַיֵּשֶׁב אַהֲרֹן אֶל־מֹשֶׁה אֶל־פֶּתַח אֹהֶל מוֹעֵד
וְהַמַּגֵּפָה נִעְצְרָה: טז וַיְדַבֵּר יְהוָה אֶל־מֹשֶׁה לֵאמֹר: יז דִּבֶּר | אֶל־בְּנֵי
יִשְׂרָאֵל וְקַח מֵאֹתָם מִטָּה מִטָּה לְבַיִת אָב מֵאֵת כָּל־נְשֵׂי־אֵהֶם לְבַיִת
אֲבֹתָם שְׁנַיִם עָשָׂר מִטּוֹת אִישׁ אֶת־שְׁמוֹ תִּכְתֹּב עַל־מִטָּהוּ: יח וְאֵת
שֵׁם אַהֲרֹן תִּכְתֹּב עַל־מִטָּה לֵוִי כִּי מִטָּה אֶחָד לְרֹאשׁ בַּיִת אֲבוֹתָם:
יט וְהִנַּחְתֶּם בְּאֹהֶל מוֹעֵד לִפְנֵי הָעֵדוּת אֲשֶׁר אֲנִיעַד לָכֶם שָׁמָּה:
כ וְהָיָה הָאִישׁ אֲשֶׁר אֲבָחַר־בּוֹ מִטָּהוּ יִפְרָח וְהִשְׁכַּחְתִּי מֵעַלִי אֶת־תְּלִנּוֹת
בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל אֲשֶׁר הֵם מְלִינִם עֲלֵיכֶם: כא וַיְדַבֵּר מֹשֶׁה אֶל־בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל
וַיִּתְּנוּ אֲלָיו | כָּל־נְשֵׂי־אֵיהֶם מִטָּה לְנְשֵׂי־אֶחָד מִטָּה לְנְשֵׂי־אֶחָד לְבַיִת
אֲבֹתָם שְׁנַיִם עָשָׂר מִטּוֹת וּמִטָּה אַהֲרֹן בְּתוֹךְ מִטּוֹתָם: כב וַיִּנַּח מֹשֶׁה
אֶת־הַמִּטּוֹת לִפְנֵי יְהוָה בְּאֹהֶל הָעֵדוּת: כג וַיְהִי מִמַּחֲרַת וַיָּבֹא מֹשֶׁה
אֶל־אֹהֶל הָעֵדוּת וְהִנֵּה פָּרַח מִטָּה־אַהֲרֹן לְבַיִת לֵוִי וַיֵּצֵא פָּרַח וַיֵּצֵא
צִיץ וַיִּגְמַל שְׂקָדִים: כד וַיֵּצֵא מֹשֶׁה אֶת־כָּל־הַמִּטּוֹת מִלִּפְנֵי יְהוָה
אֶל־כָּל־בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל וַיִּרְאוּ וַיִּקְחוּ אִישׁ מִטָּהוּ:

כה וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוָה אֶל־מֹשֶׁה הִשָּׁב אֶת־מִטָּה אֶהְרֹן לִפְנֵי הָעֵדוּת
 לְמִשְׁמֶרֶת לְאוֹת לְבְנֵי־מִרְי וּתְכַל תְּלוֹנְתָם מֵעָלֵי וְלֹא יָמָתוּ: כּו וַיַּעַשׂ
 מֹשֶׁה כַּאֲשֶׁר צִוָּה יְהוָה אֹתוֹ כֵּן עָשָׂה: כז וַיֹּאמְרוּ בְנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל
 אֶל־מֹשֶׁה לֵאמֹר הֵן גִּנַּעְנוּ אֲבֹדְנוּ כָּלְנוּ אֲבֹדְנוּ: כח כָּל הַקָּרֵב | הַקָּרֵב
 אֶל־מִשְׁכַּן יְהוָה יָמוּת הָאֵם תִּמְנוּ לְגֹועַ:

¹ The LORD spoke to Moses, saying: ² Order Eleazar son of Aaron the priest to remove the fire pans -- for they have become sacred -- from among the charred remains; and scatter the coals abroad. ³ Remove the fire pans of those who have sinned at the cost of their lives, and let them be made into hammered sheets as plating for the altar -- for once they have been used for offering to the LORD, they have become sacred -- and let them serve as a warning to the people of Israel. ⁴ Eleazar the priest took the copper fire pans which had been used for offering by those who died in the fire; and they were hammered into plating for the altar, ⁵ as the LORD had ordered him through Moses. It was to be a reminder to the Israelites, so that no outsider -- one not of Aaron's offspring -- should presume to offer incense before the LORD and suffer the fate of Korah and his band. ⁶ Next day the whole Israelite community railed against Moses and Aaron, saying, "You two have brought death upon the LORD's people!" ⁷ But as the community gathered against them, Moses and Aaron turned toward the Tent of Meeting; the cloud had covered it and the Presence of the LORD appeared. ⁸ When Moses and Aaron reached the Tent of Meeting, ⁹ the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, ¹⁰ "Remove yourselves from this community, that I may annihilate them in an instant." They fell on their faces. ¹¹ Then Moses said to Aaron, "Take the fire pan, and put on it fire from the altar. Add incense and take it quickly to the community and make expiation for them. For wrath has gone forth from the LORD: the plague has begun!" ¹² Aaron took it, as Moses had ordered, and ran to the midst of the congregation, where the plague had begun among the people. He put on the incense and made expiation for the people; ¹³ he stood between the dead and the living until the plague was checked. ¹⁴ Those who died of the plague came to fourteen thousand and seven hundred, aside from those who died on account of Korah. ¹⁵ Aaron then returned to Moses at the entrance of the Tent of Meeting, since the plague was checked. ¹⁶ The LORD spoke to Moses, saying: ¹⁷ Speak to the Israelite people and take from them -- from the chieftains of their ancestral houses -- one staff for each chieftain of an ancestral house: twelve staffs in all. Inscribe each man's name on his staff, ¹⁸ there being one staff for each head of an ancestral house; also inscribe Aaron's name on the staff of Levi. ¹⁹ Deposit them in the Tent of Meeting before the Pact, where I meet with you. ²⁰ The staff of the man whom I choose shall sprout, and I will rid Myself of the incessant mutterings of the Israelites against you. ²¹ Moses spoke thus to the Israelites. Their chieftains gave him a staff for each chieftain of an ancestral house, twelve staffs in all; among these staffs was that of Aaron. ²² Moses deposited the staffs before the LORD, in the Tent of the Pact. ²³ The next day

Moses entered the Tent of the Pact, and there the staff of Aaron of the house of Levi had sprouted: it had brought forth sprouts, produced blossoms, and borne almonds.²⁴ Moses then brought out all the staffs from before the LORD to all the Israelites; each identified and recovered his staff.²⁵ The LORD said to Moses, "Put Aaron's staff back before the Pact, to be kept as a lesson to rebels, so that their mutterings against Me may cease, lest they die."²⁶ This Moses did; just as the LORD had commanded him, so he did.²⁷ But the Israelites said to Moses, "Lo, we perish! We are lost, all of us lost!"²⁸ Everyone who so much as ventures near the LORD's Tabernacle must die. Alas, we are doomed to perish!"

The Menorah and the Tree: Carol Meyers

“The notion of God’s omnipotence and omnipresence was not emotionally convincing, and in cult and prayer the proximity of God was sought. And insofar as minds are metaphoric by nature, God’s nearness could be expressed symbolically to provide the necessary emotional reassurance. Hence the life theme of the tree motif of the menorah, in entering the cosmic sphere, can be seen as performing the function within the tabernacle shrine of establishing the center of the center, bringing the organizing principle of God’s presence in the cosmos into visible focus in the midst of the people.

Meyers, Carol L. *The Tabernacle Menorah: A Synthetic Study of a Symbol from the Biblical Cult*. Missoula: Scholars Press, 1976, 175.

Suggested Activity 5: Menorah Midrashim

1. Midrash Rabbah Numbers 14:9
2. Midrash Rabah Exodus 36:3
3. Midrash Rabbah Numbers 15:6
4. Midrash Rabbah Exodus 36:1

* All translations of Midrash found in the resources are from:
Midrash Rabbah. Ed. H. Freedman and Maurice Simon. London: Soncino Press, 1939.

Midrash Rabbah Numbers 14:9

מדרש רבה במדבר פרשה יד סימן ט

פר אחד בן בקר וגו' שלשה מיני עולה אלו למה כנגד ג' כתרים שנתן הקב"ה לישראל על זאת כתר תורה וכתר כהונה וכתר מלכות כתר תורה זה הארון שכתוב ועשית עליו זר זהב סביב כתר כהונה זה מזבח הזהב שכתוב בו ועשית לו זר זהב סביב כתר מלכות זה השלחן שכתוב ויעש לו זר זהב סביב, שעיר עזים וגו' כנגד שם טוב הוא המעשה כמה דתנינן לא המדרש הוא עיקר אלא המעשה לפי שהמעשה הוא מכפר על האדם כהוא דתנינן תשובה ומעשים טובים כתריס בפני הפורענות ואותו כתר הוא כנגד המנורה לקיים מה שנאמר (משלי י) כי נר מצוה ותורה אור, למה נקראת התורה אור שהיא מאירה את האדם מה יעשה ולפי שהתורה מלמדת את האדם כיצד יעשה רצון המקום לפיכך שכר התלמוד גדול.

One young bullock, one ram, one he-lamb, etc. (Numbers 7:75). What was the purpose of these three kinds of burnt-offering? To symbolize the three crowns which the Holy One, blessed be He, gave to Israel as a reward for this, viz. he crown of the Torah, the crown of the priesthood, and the crown of royalty. 'The crown of Torah' was the ark, of which it is written, *And shalt make upon it a crown of gold round about* (Ex 25:11). 'The crown of the priesthood' was the golden altar, of which it is written, *And thou shalt make unto it a crown of gold round about* (Ex 30:3). 'The crown of royalty' was the table, of which it is written, *And made thereto a crown of gold round about* (Ex 37:11). *One male of the goats for a sin-offering* (Numbers 7:76) was in allusion to the crown of a good name. This represents good deeds; as we have learned: Not study, but its practical application, is the principal thing. For good deeds make atonement for a man, as we have learned: Repentance and good deeds are like a shield against punishment. And this crown is symbolized by the candlestick, thus bearing out the text which says, *For the commandment is a lamp, and the Torah is light* (Prov 6:23). Why was the Torah called a light? Because it enlightens man as to how he should act. And since the Torah teaches a man how he shall do the will of the Omnipresent, the reward of study is great.

Midrash Rabbah Exodus 36:3

מדרש רבה שמות פרשה לו סימן ג

ג ד"א זית רענן ראה היאך דברי תורה מאירין לאדם בשעה שעוסק בהן, וכל מי שאינו עוסק ואינו יודע הוא נכשל, משל למי שעומד באפילה בא להלך מצא אבן ונכשל בה, מצא ביב נופל בו הקיש פניו בקרקע, למה שלא היה בידו נר, כך הדיוט שאין בידו דברי...

ואיזו נרו של הקב"ה זו תורה שנאמר (שם משלי ו) כי נר מצוה ותורה אור, מהו כי נר מצוה אלא כל מי שעושה מצות הוא כאלו מדליק נר לפני הקב"ה ומחיה נפשו שנקראת נר שנאמר(שם משלי כ) נר ה' נשמת אדם, ומהו ותורה אור אלא הרבה פעמים שאדם מחבב בלבו לעשות מצוה ויצר הרע שבתוכו אומר מה לך לעשות מצוה ומחסר את נכסיד, עד שאתה נותן לאחרים תן לבניך, ויצר טוב אומר לו תן למצוה ראה מה כתיב כי נר מצוה מה הנר הזה כשהוא דולק אפילו אלף אלפים קרוינין וסבקיין מדליקין הימנו אור במקומו, כך כל מי שיתן למצוה אינו מחסר את נכסיו, לכך נאמר כי נר מצוה ותורה אור.

Another explanation of 'A leafy olive tree'. Just see how the words of the Torah give forth light to a man when he studies them; but he who does not occupy himself with the Torah and does not know it, stumbles. It can be compared to one who stands in a dark place; as soon as he starts walking, he stumbles against a stone; he then strikes a gutter, falls into it, and knocks his face on the ground – and all because he has no lamp in his hand. It is the same with the ordinary individual who has no Torah in him; he strikes against sin, stumbles, and dies...What is the lamp of God? The Torah, as it says, *For the commandment is a lamp, and the teaching is light* (Prov 6:23). Why is the commandment 'a lamp'? Because if one performs a commandment it is as if he kindled a light before God and as if he had kindled his own soul...

Midrash Rabbah Numbers 15:6

מדרש רבה במדבר פרשה טו סימן ו
 ומה כתיב למעלה מן הענין שנא' (במדבר ז) ויהי ביום כלות משה
 ויקריבו נשיאי ישראל ואחר כך דבר אל אהרן בהעלותך את הנרות
 זה שאמר הכתוב (תהלים לד) יראו את ה' קדושו כי אין מחסור
 ליראיו, את מוצא למעלה י"א שבטים הקריבו ושבט אפרים הקריב
 וכל הנשיאים הקריבו חוץ מנשיאו של לוי ומי היה נשיאו של לוי זה
 אהרן שנאמר (במדבר יז) ואת שם אהרן תכתב על מטה לוי ואהרן
 לא הקריב עם הנשיאים והיה אומר אוי לי שמא בשבילי אין
 הקב"ה מקבל שבטו של לוי אמר לו הקב"ה למשה לך אמור לו
 לאהרן אל תתירא לגדולה מזו אתה מתוקן לכך נאמר דבר אל
 אהרן ואמרת אליו בהעלותך את הנרות, הקרבנות כל זמן שבהמ"ק
 קיים הם נוהגים אבל הנרות לעולם אל מול פני המנורה יאירו וכל
 הברכות שנתתי לך לברך את בני אינן בטלין לעולם.

What is it that is written just before this passage? It says, *And it came to pass on the day that Moses had made an end of setting up the tabernacle...that the princes of Israel...offered* (Num 7:1), and after that: *Speak unto Aaron, and say unto him: When thou lightest the lamps.* This bears on what Scripture says: *O fear the Lord, ye His holy ones; for there is no want to them that fear Him* (Ps 24:10). You find that eleven tribes brought offerings, and the tribe of Ephraim brought an offering; in fact, all the princes brought offerings except the prince of Levi. Who was the prince of Levi? It was Aaron; for it says, *And thou shalt write Aaron's name upon the rod of Levi* (Num 27:18). Now Aaron did not bring an offering with the other princes, and so he thought: Woe is me! Perhaps it is on my account that the Holy One, blessed be He, does not accept the tribe of Levi? The Holy One, blessed be He, therefore said to Moses: Go and tell Aaron: Do not be afraid! You have in store for you an honor greater than this!" For this reason it says, *Speak unto Aaron, and say unto him: When thou lightest the lamps.* The offerings shall remain in force only as long as the Temple stands, but the lamps shall always *give light in front of the candlestick*, and all the blessings with which I have charged you to bless My children shall never be abolished.

Midrash Rabbah Exodus 36:1

מדרש רבה שמות פרשה לו סימן א

...לכך נאמר זית רענן יפה פרי תואר, כשם שהשמן מאיר כך ביהמ"ק מאיר לכל העולם שנאמר (ישעיה ס) והלכו גוים לאורך, לכן נקראו אבותינו זית רענן שהם מאירים לכל [באמונתם], לכך אמר הקב"ה למשה ויקחו אליך שמן זית זך.

...For this reason does it say, *A leafy tree, fair with goodly fruit*; for just as oil gives forth light, so did the Temple give light to the whole world, as it says, *And nations shall walk at thy light* (Isa 60:3). Our forefathers were accordingly called 'A leafy olive tree' because they gave light to all (with their faith). It was on this account that God said to Moses: *That they bring unto thee pure olive oil beaten for the light* (Num 27:20).

Suggested Activity 6: Adding a Branch: From Menorah to
Chanukiyah

1. I Maccabees 4:36-59
2. The Rabbis' Reason for Chanukah. Babylonian Talmud Shabbat 21b

* All translations from the Apocrypha found in the resources are from the NRSV: *The Holy Bible: New Revised Standard Version*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1989.

** All translations from the Babylonian Talmud found in the resources are from the Soncino translation. *The Babylonian Talmud*. London: Soncino Press, 1990.

I Maccabees 4:36-59

³⁶ Then Judas and his brothers said, "See, our enemies are crushed; let us go up to cleanse the sanctuary and dedicate it." ³⁷ So all the army assembled and went up to Mount Zion. ³⁸ There they saw the sanctuary desolate, the altar profaned, and the gates burned. In the courts they saw bushes sprung up as in a thicket, or as on one of the mountains. They saw also the chambers of the priests in ruins. ³⁹ Then they tore their clothes and mourned with great lamentation; they sprinkled themselves with ashes ⁴⁰ and fell face down on the ground. And when the signal was given with the trumpets, they cried out to Heaven. ⁴¹ Then Judas detailed men to fight against those in the citadel until he had cleansed the sanctuary. ⁴² He chose blameless priests devoted to the law, ⁴³ and they cleansed the sanctuary and removed the defiled stones to an unclean place. ⁴⁴ They deliberated what to do about the altar of burnt offering, which had been profaned. ⁴⁵ And they thought it best to tear it down, so that it would not be a lasting shame to them that the Gentiles had defiled it. So they tore down the altar, ⁴⁶ and stored the stones in a convenient place on the temple hill until a prophet should come to tell what to do with them. ⁴⁷ Then they took unhewn stones, as the law directs, and built a new altar like the former one. ⁴⁸ They also rebuilt the sanctuary and the interior of the temple, and consecrated the courts. ⁴⁹ They made new holy vessels, and brought the lampstand, the altar of incense, and the table into the temple. ⁵⁰ Then they offered incense on the altar and lit the lamps on the lampstand, and these gave light in the temple. ⁵¹ They placed the bread on the table and hung up the curtains. Thus they finished all the work they had undertaken. ⁵² Early in the morning on the twenty-fifth day of the ninth month, which is the month of Chislev, in the one hundred forty-eighth year, ⁵³ they rose and offered sacrifice, as the law directs, on the new altar of burnt offering that they had built. ⁵⁴ At the very season and on the very day that the Gentiles had profaned it, it was dedicated with songs and harps and lutes and cymbals. ⁵⁵ All the people fell on their faces and worshiped and blessed Heaven, who had prospered them. ⁵⁶ So they celebrated the dedication of the altar for eight days, and joyfully offered burnt offerings; they offered a sacrifice of well-being and a thanksgiving offering. ⁵⁷ They decorated the front of the temple with golden crowns and small shields; they restored the gates and the chambers for the priests, and fitted them with doors. ⁵⁸ There was very great joy among the people, and the disgrace brought by the Gentiles was removed. ⁵⁹ Then Judas and his brothers and all the assembly of Israel determined that every year at that season the days of dedication of the altar should be observed with joy and gladness for eight days, beginning with the twenty-fifth day of the month of Chislev.

The Rabbis' Reason for Chanukah: Babylonian Talmud Shabbat 21b

שבת דף כא.ב

מאי חנוכה? דתנו רבנן: בכ"ה בכסליו יומי דחנוכה תמניא אינון,
 דלא למספד בהון ודלא להתענות בהון. שכשנכנסו יוונים להיכל
 טמאו כל השמנים שבהיכל, וכשגברה מלכות בית חשמונאי
 ונצחום, בדקו ולא מצאו אלא פך אחד של שמן שהיה מונח
 בחותמו של כהן גדול, ולא היה בו אלא להדליק יום אחד, נעשה בו
 נס והדליקו ממנו שמונה ימים. לשנה אחרת קבעום ועשאוּם ימים
 טובים בהלל והודאה.

What is [the reason of] *Hanukkah*? For our Rabbis taught: On the twenty-fifth of Kislev [commence] the days of *Hanukkah*, which are eight, on which a lamentation for the dead and fasting are forbidden. For when the Greeks entered the Temple, they defiled all the oils therein, and when the Hasmonean dynasty prevailed against and defeated them, they made search and found only one cruse of oil which lay with the seal of the High Priest, but which contained sufficient for one day's lighting only; yet a miracle was wrought therein and they lit [the lamp] therewith for eight days. The following year these [days] were appointed a Festival with [the recital of] Hallel and thanksgiving.

Suggested Activity 7: Prohibiting Recreation

1. Do Not Copy the Menorah: Babylonian Talmud, Rosh Hashanah 24a-b

Do Not Copy the Menorah: Babylonian Talmud, Rosh Hashanah 24
a-b

ראש השנה דף כד.א-ב

לא יעשה אדם בית תבנית היכל, אכסדרה תבנית אולם, חצר כנגד
עזרה, שלחן כנגד שלחן, מנורה כנגד מנורה. אבל עושה של חמשה
ושל ששה ושל שמונה. ושל שבעה - לא יעשה, אפילו של שאר מיני
מתכות.

A man may not make a house in the form of the Temple, or a porch in the form of the Temple hall, or a court corresponding to the Temple court, or a table corresponding to the table, or a candlestick corresponding to the candlestick, but he may make one with five, or six or eight lamps, but with seven he should not make, even of other metals.

Suggested Activity 8: Messianic Menorah

1. The Messianic Tree of Zechariah's Vision

Yarden, L. *The Tree of Light: A Study of the Menorah*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1971, 43

2. Arborescent Messiah

Meyers, Carol L. *The Tabernacle Menorah: A Synthetic Study of a Symbol from the Biblical Cult*. Missoula: Scholars Press, 1976, 151-153.

3. Refer back to Midrash Rabbah Numbers 15:6 in Activity 5

for us to see that here, awakened by our attitude, something lights up and approaches us from the course of being. In the sphere we are talking of we have to do justice, in complete candour, to the reality which discloses itself to us.²

In later interpretations, the lampstand's cosmic character appears to have come more to the fore through astral notions. This, at all events, seems to be suggested by Zechariah's fifth vision, where the seven menorah lamps are said to symbolize the seven 'eyes of the Lord, which range through the whole earth'³ – an allegory that is usually interpreted as referring to the sun and planets,⁴ on Mesopotamian and Egyptian monuments, it has been observed, likewise occurring as 'eyes'⁵ or oil lamps.⁶

Characteristically enough, there are also two imaginary olive trees in the vision of Zechariah, one on each side of the menorah,⁷ supplying it with oil (life power), presumably in its capacity as original Life image.⁸ This is said to be accomplished by means of two olive branches, evidently one from each tree, extending to two 'golden pipes' or receptacles from which the oil is 'poured out' to the lampstand,⁹ the latter described as 'all of gold, with a bowl [possibly 'crown' or branched upper part] on the top of it, and seven lamps on it, with seven lips on each of the lamps which are on the top of it'.¹⁰

To this cosmic and life imagery is added, finally, a third, more Messianic one, with the menorah symbolizing – as so often later – Israel's freedom (the Temple and Jerusalem),¹¹ and the two attendant trees 'the two anointed who stand by the Lord [or Temple of the Lord] of the whole earth'.¹² Thus a sort of double Messiah, a temporal and religious power – a Prince (Zerubbabel) and a High Priest (Joshua) – who will now, after the return from Babylon, rebuild the Jewish Commonwealth.¹³

That the symbolism of the menorah became influenced by cosmic notions is hardly surprising, considering the influence that astronomy always exerted on religious thinking. This not least in the Near East, where the great discoveries of the Mesopotamian astronomers 'won', as one scholar put it, 'such prestige for their beliefs that they spread . . . as far as India, China, and Indo-China, . . . Egypt, and over the whole of the Roman world'.¹⁴

It is evident that Israel, too, was bound to be influenced by these notions. 'It is difficult to fix the date at which the influence of the "Chaldaeans" began to be felt in Syria,' continues the same scholar, 'but it is certainly not later than . . . the eighth century B.C.; and without admitting, with the Pan-Babylonists, that

Elsewhere, especially in eschatological settings, the tree idea alone conveys the message of restoration: Amos 9:15 ("I will plant them upon their land, and they shall never again be plucked up out of the land which I have given them"), Jer 24:6 ("I will bring them back to this land...I will plant them, and not uproot them"),⁷³ Hos 14:6, 7, 8 (Israel "shall blossom as the lily, he shall strike root as the poplar, his shoots shall spread out; his beauty shall be like the olive...they shall blossom as the vine..."),⁷⁴ Isa 37:31 = 2 Kgs 19:30 ("the surviving remnant of the house of Judah shall again take root downward, and bear fruit upward"), Isa 65:22 ("Like the days of a tree shall the days of my people be"),⁷⁵ Isa 61:3 ("that they may be called oaks of righteousness, the planting of the Lord"), etc.

In the visions of Ezekiel the tree image as an expression of Israel's existence appears in its fullest form with an extravagant supply of cosmic trappings. We refer specifically to the conclusion in chapter 47 of Ezekiel's extensive temple vision. The temple itself is in the land of Israel "upon a very high mountain."⁷⁶ Life-giving streams issue forth from below the threshold of the temple.⁷⁷ And, in Edenic style, all sorts of trees for food grow there, bearing fruit all the time because they are not dependent upon rains but rather have their roots in the perpetual cosmic waters which flow from the sanctuary.⁷⁸ This vivid presentation of cosmic trees in a well-watered garden on the high mountain indicates the currency for Ezekiel and his audience of the paradigmatic image of the magical trees at the sacred center.

What is so fascinating about the appearance of this image at this point in Ezekiel is its immediate and abrupt juxtaposition with the description of the boundaries of the land which Israel shall inherit⁷⁹ and the apportionment of the tribal territories within that land. In other words, the twelve tribes are distributed geographically throughout the land⁸⁰ just as the trees on the mountain of God's inheritance flourish everywhere.⁸¹ Israel's restoration to the land thus is seen in the same cosmic terms as her original conquest-habitation of the land of Canaan, which is presented as a *hieros topos* beginning in the earliest poetic portions of the Bible.

C. Arborescent Messiah

The concept of the Messianic restorer of Israel follows naturally, i.e., in line with natural imagery, from the figure of Israel as a vine or tree upon God's holy mountain. The possibilities for this development are expressed in purely natural terms in Job:

For there is hope for a tree,
if it be cut down, that it will sprout again,
and that its shoots will not cease.
Though its root grow old in the earth,
and its stump die in the ground,
yet at the scent of water it will bud
and put forth branches like a young plant.
(Job 14:7-9)

The disaster or impending disaster of Israel, its destruction and exile, are seen in terms of the destruction of all the vegetation of the land. Formerly an Edenic garden, the land utterly will be laid waste.⁸² The strongest stem of the vine, which was the ruler of Israel, will be burnt completely.⁸³ It follows from this that if the restoration of Israel is to be effected, she will have to be replanted on the mountain of God. In the burnt-out, cut-down stump lies the possibility for regeneration:

'And though a tenth remain in it,
it will be burned again,
like a terebinth or an oak,
whose stump remains standing
when it is felled.
The holy seed is its stump.
(Isa 6:13)

If Israel is the destroyed tree, it nonetheless has not perished completely but contains within itself the potential for regeneration. As a corollary to the reestablishment of the people comes the theme of the restoration of the Davidic throne, also cut off but not dead. This theme likewise is expressed in arborescent terms: a shoot or new growth will sprout forth from the Davidic stump.⁸⁴ A parade example is found in Isa 11:1, in which a shoot (צֶמַח) comes forth from the "stump of Jesse" and a branch (גֶּזֶעַץ) goes out from its roots. Further, in v. 9 the scene of this new Davidic growth is God's holy mountain, הַר צְדָקָה.⁸⁵ And in the following prose verse, in

terms reminiscent of Exodus 17, the "root of Jesse" is called an "ensign to the peoples" as prelude to the "ensign for the nations" oracle which ensues.⁸⁶ Thus the cosmic paradigm is invoked.

This theme also appears in Isa 4:2 where, with no specific identification of a Davidic scion, "the branch (מִצְיָא) of the Lord"⁸⁷ is equated with the fruitfulness of the land, the glorious pride of the remnant of Israel. Jeremiah likewise uses מִצְיָא with reference to a righteous (פְּרָיִם) Davidic shoot.⁸⁸ In Zechariah the restoration of Zerubbabel to the Davidic throne is seen in terms of a shoot (מִצְיָא) growing up in Jerusalem and building the temple of the Lord.⁹⁰

The vision of Zechariah 4, already mentioned above in Chapter II because of the menorah contained therein also presents a Messianic theme expressed in terms of trees, rather than branches or shoots. In v. 3, it is noted that there are two olive trees flanking the menorah. The explanation of these trees comes in vv. 11-14 where the angel of the Lord reveals that the trees⁹¹ represent the "two anointed" of the Lord, presumably Joshua and Zerubbabel, who are to be co-rulers in the theocracy of Zechariah's prophecy.

In this particular vision, between the establishment of the objects of the prophetic vision in vv. 1-6 and the elaboration of their portent in vv. 11-14 comes an inserted element relating the building of the temple from which Joshua and Zerubbabel are to reign together. Even the "great mountain" upon which Zerubbabel is building God's house shall be flattened out to facilitate the completion of the building project. Thus the concept of the Messianic ruler(s), expressed in arborescent terms, is joined to the mountainous element of the cosmic picture.

As with the metaphorical presentation of Israel in its fullest cosmic setting, the arborescent expression of the Messianic hope also is found in its most vivid cosmic terms in the prophet Ezekiel. The whole of chapter 17 revolves around the comparison of Israel and its ruler to branches removed from their trees in the land of Israel and transplanted to Babylon. The redemption of Israel will come when God himself will effect

a new "conquest" of the land by taking Israel--a twig (מִצְיָא)-- and rerooting it in the land:

I myself will plant it upon a high and lofty mountain;
on the mountain height of Israel will I plant it,
that it may bring forth boughs and bear fruit,
and become a noble cedar.

(Ezek 17:22-23)

The elements of tree and mountain are explicit. Implicit because of the relationship of the language to that of Ezekiel 31 are the elements of flowing waters and Edenic garden. That passage, though referring to Pharach, develops the same imagery of the mighty cedar in greater detail. Birds nest in its branches and beasts seek refuge in its shade.⁹² The source of moisture for such a flourishing tree is the waters of the deep (דַּיָּה) and the rivers which flow from the place of its planting (מַיִם).⁹³ This exceptional tree is beyond the rivalry of the "trees of Eden," that were in "the garden of God."⁹⁴ Thus, though not all of these elements are present in chapter 17, there is enough similarity of terminology to indicate that both passages are drawn from a common source describing the Edenic paradigm.⁹⁵

Summary

The presentation of deity in arborescent terms is part of the cosmic typology of the sacred center. The *sneh* episode has YHWH appearing in the midst of a plant form and also in the midst of a non-consuming flame, which may serve to introduce solar imagery and prefigure the law-giving acts to follow. In any case, it is clear that flame/light and plant form are two important and integral elements of what transpired on the mountain of God in Exodus 3, just as they are commonly associated elements in Near Eastern glyptic portrayals of the arboreal motif.⁹⁶

The episode of Exodus 17 presents another variation where-- by a branch of a tree, "the rod of God," is used on a hill to attain the active presence of God. In the Blessing of Moses, the *sneh* motif is joined to the constellation of values surrounding the root יְשׁוּעָה, which denotes the permanent visitations of YHWH to his sacred mountain (Israel) or his sanctuary.

Suggested Activity 9: The Sefirot Menorah

1. The Ten Sefirot

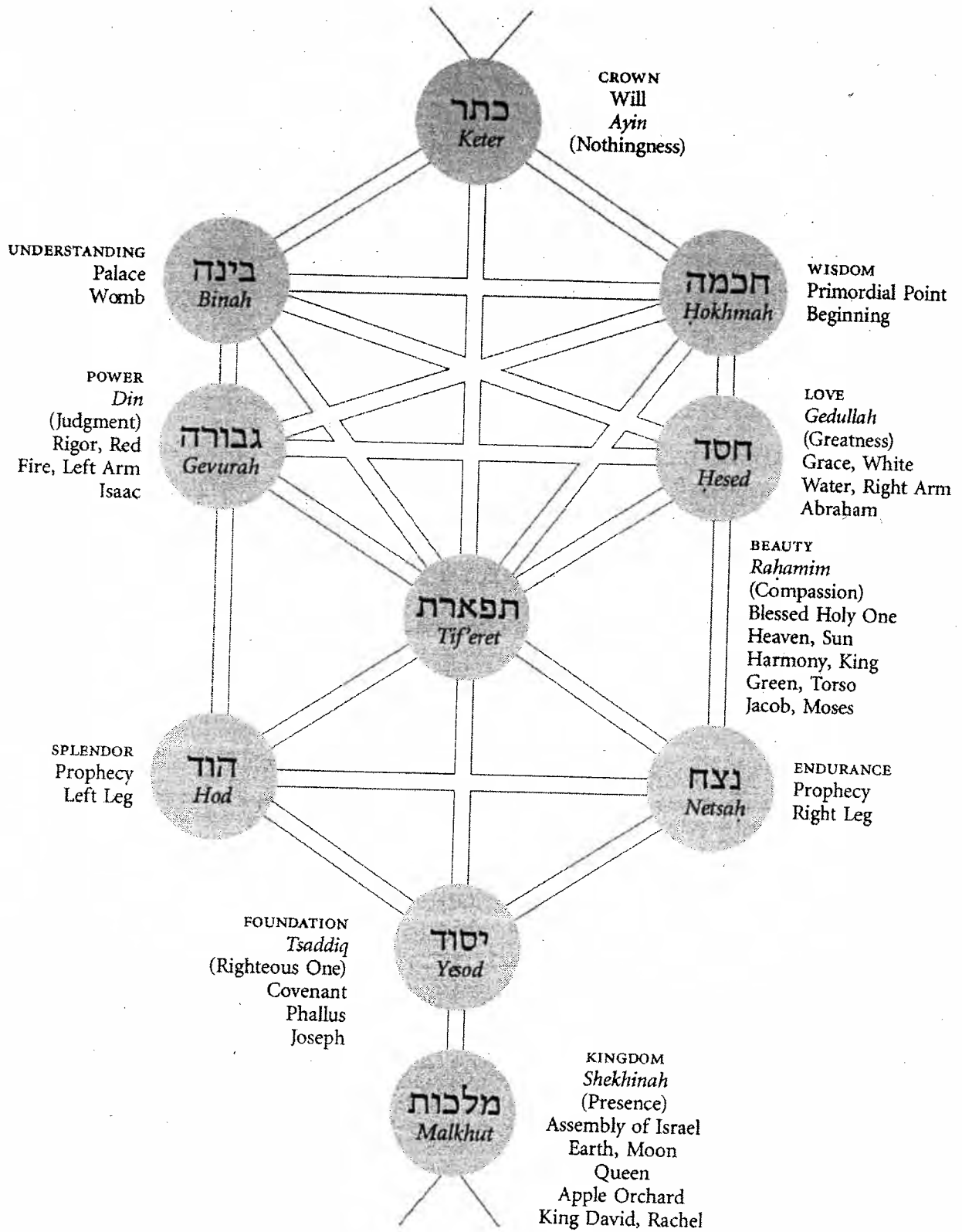
Green, Arthur. *A Guide to the Zohar*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2004.

2. Sefirot Menorah

A
GUIDE
TO THE
ZOHAR

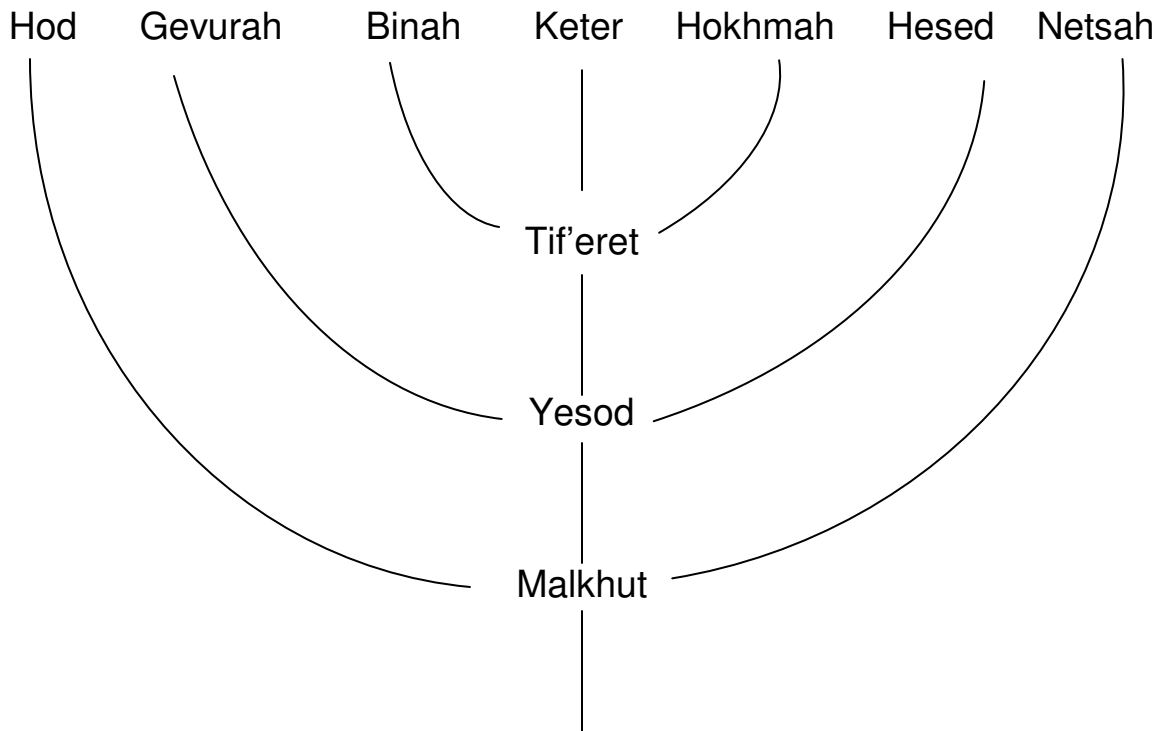
Arthur Green

STANFORD UNIVERSITY PRESS
STANFORD, CALIFORNIA 2004



The Ten Sefirot

The Sefirot Menorah



Suggested Activity 10: Chanukiyah Design

1. "Designing a Hanukkah Menorah." Noam Zion

Zion, Noam and Barbara Spectre. *A Different Light: The Big Book of Hanukkah*.
Jerusalem: Shalom Hartman Institute, 2000, 215-217.

2. Chanukiyot

Tin lamp, Germany, 19th c.

Brass lamp, Poland, 17th c.

"Hanukkah Lamps." *Encyclopaedia Judaica: CD Rom Edition*. Judaica
Multimedia, 1997.

Brass Menorah, London, 20th c.

Circular Stone Menorah, Persia, 19th c.

Hanging Menorah, Germany, 18th c.

Zion, Noam and Barbara Spectre. *A Different Light: The Big Book of Hanukkah*.
Jerusalem: Shalom Hartman Institute, 2000.

A DIFFERENT LIGHT

A PLURALIST ANTHOLOGY

THE BIG BOOK OF HANUKKAH

Pluralistic Perspectives on the Festival of Lights:

A broad-ranging anthology of short essays by thinkers, historians, and scientists on Hanukkah themes

Profiles in Modern Jewish Courage:

A collection of dramatic stories about contemporary Jewish heroes — great and small — and their inner search for courage

BY NOAM SACHS ZION
AND BARBARA SPECTRE



A companion to

A Different Light:

The Hanukkah Book of Celebration

DESIGNING A HANUKKAH MENORAH

HISTORICAL AND HALACHIC GUIDELINES FROM THE MENORAH TO THE HANUKKIYAH

by Noam Zion

For years I was confused by the term "MENORAH." The menorah in our home was the nine-branched Hanukkah candelabrum for wax candles. In the Bible menorah means either a plain lamp of any kind or the seven-branched oil candelabrum lit only by the priest and only in the portable Tabernacle or the Jerusalem Temple. Now I have begun to sort things out with the help of an article by Bracha Yaniv, "The Influence of Halacha and Custom on the Design of the Hanukkah Menorah,"⁸ which provided the research summarized in the following pages.

The Hanukkah menorah as a special candelabrum was developed only in the later Middle Ages. Until then the only Jewish menorah was the seven-branched Temple menorah, which went out of use in 70 CE when the Temple was destroyed. At home on Hanukkah and Shabbat Jews used the same kind of lamps as the general population in whatever land they resided. For example, in the Talmudic era in the area around the Mediterranean and until the 20th century in Persia and Afghanistan, each of the eight oil candles for Hanukkah was a separate oil dish. On Hanukkah eight dishes were lined up. Sometimes a stone circular star was used with separate compartments. When using simple pottery dishes, it was forbidden to light a used candle. New disposable pottery dishes were purchased or made specifically for Hanukkah. As the Talmud stipulated, "If no new one is available, then the old one must be cleaned very, very well with a flame."⁹

In medieval Europe the general and the Jewish population used a circular, metal, star-shaped lamp (with multiple wicks) that hung from the ceiling. Later when in the 16th century the general population switched over to tallow and wax candles and their appropriate candelabra, the star-shaped hanging oil lamp was associated specifically with the Jews who continued to prefer oil over wax candles for Shabbat and Hanukkah. The star lamp was then known as the "Judenstern" — the Jewish star — and it was manufactured with eight separate compartments in a circle.

In the Middle Ages a uniquely Jewish Hanukkah menorah began to be developed in

conformance with Jewish law and local materials. Here are the key halachot and their influence on the design of the Hanukkah menorah.

A Lamp for the Doorway or the Windowsill

The Rabbis of the Mishna established:

"It is a mitzvah to place the Hanukkah candle outside of the doorway of one's home. If one lives upstairs, then one places it in the window opening nearest the public domain. In time of danger one places it on one's table (inside) and that is adequate."¹⁰

Rava added: "The Hanukkah candle should be placed within a handsbreadth of the doorway, to the left [as one enters], so that the Hanukkah candle is to the left and the mezuzah to the right."¹¹

Therefore, outdoor menorahs need to be protected from the wind (today with glass walls). In 13th century Germany the menorah was hung from the outside door, so it required a hook and a backing to protect the wooden door from the flames. In Morocco the menorah's backing was inscribed with the verse appropriate for the doorway: "*Blessed are you as you come in! Blessed are you as you go out.*"¹¹ Menorahs placed inside the window need legs to raise the level of the candle so it can be seen from the outside.

8. *Minhagei Yisrael: Hanukkah*, p. 121-161, edited by Daniel Sperber

9. *Babylonian Talmud, Soferim* 20a

10. *Babylonian Talmud, Shabbat* 21b-22a

11. *Deuteronomy* 28:6

The Double Function of the *Shamash*: the Ninth Candle

The Hanukkah candles are purely symbolic and therefore their light, unlike Shabbat candles, may *not* be used for any practical purposes. After the candles are lit, many families sing "*Hanerot Hallalu*" — "These candles are holy and so we are not permitted to use their light."¹² Therefore beginning in the 16th century the menorah was often inscribed with this song.

Ravah¹³ rules: "One needs another candle whose light is to be used."¹⁴ In the pre-modern period when oil lamps or wax candles lit the home, it was also a problem to distinguish between the lamps for lighting and the lamp for Hanukkah. In the modern era when the electric lights are extinguished for the lighting of the menorah, one may end up using the light of the Hanukkah candles to see or to read. Hence an added lamp or candle — the *shamash* — separated off from the other lights became standard.

Some Babylonian Rabbis also forbade the use of one Hanukkah candle to light the others. Rav said: "One may not light one Hanukkah candle from the other," though Shmuel says: "One may light one from the other."¹⁵ In the 17th century we can see a woodcut of a man lighting an oil menorah (see page 191) using two wax candles — one to give light and one to light the oil — which is in accordance with Rav's ruling.

The Afghani menorah: Nine little brass saucers in a row.

(20th Century)



Later a special place for the oil *shamash* was added to the menorah to give light, while a wax candle was used to light the other candles. The custom of Habad, Lubavitch Hasidim, is to use a wax candle for the *shamash* and oil candles for the 8 nights, in order to distinguish the two types of candles and to reflect the fact that oil is the recommended fuel only for the Hanukkah lights themselves.

Fuels: Olive Oil? Wax? Electricity?

The Rabbis of the Mishna argued about the type of fuel appropriate for Hanukkah candles:

Rabbi Tarfon said: "Only olive oil may be lit (for Hanukkah)." But Rabbi Yehoshua ben Levi (whose view became dominant) ruled: "All the oils are good for Hanukkah candles, though olive oil is the most commendable."¹⁶

In the Mediterranean in the days of the Bible and the Talmud, **vegetable oils** were used exclusively for indoor lighting in a candelabrum called simply a menorah. In the 16th century **wax**, whether from animal tallow or beeswax or vegetable fats, became readily available in high quality and inexpensive candles. However, menorahs designed for wax candles specifically for Hanukkah were not invented until the 19th century. Generally wax candles were white until 20th century American Jews began preferring multi-colored candles.

In the 20th century there was a debate over electric menorahs and many rabbis disqualified electric Hanukkah menorahs. However, a contemporary Israeli rabbi for religious soldiers, Rabbi Rabinowitz, holds that in situations of possible danger, flashlights are acceptable as Hanukkah candles, though a blessing should not be said over them.

Round Menorahs and Line Menorahs

Although each home needs only one candle for Hanukkah, the Rabbis encouraged "*hidur mitzvah*" — going beyond the minimum to beautify the mitzvah — by lighting an extra candle for each night per home (8 for the 8th night) and/or by a separate candelabrum for each person in the home. Often Jews used one oil container with multiple wicks. Rav

12. *Babylonian Talmud, Soferim 20:6; Shabbat 23a*

13. the 3rd century Talmudic scholar

14. *Babylonian Talmud, Shabbat 21b*

15. *Babylonian Talmud Shabbat 22a*

16. *T.B. Shabbat 23a*

Hana ruled: "One (oil) lamp with two wicks counts for two people."

Rava refined that ruling: "If one fills a bowl with oil and surrounds it with many separate wicks (in a circular fashion), then if a cover is put over the bowl with separate openings for each wick, then it counts for many people lighting their own candle. If there is no such cover, it will appear like a "bonfire" (*medurah*) and it will not count as a candle for anyone."¹⁷

In the Middle Ages there were many circular menorahs with separate multiple wicks as in the hanging star-shaped European "Jewish star" lamp. However, in the later Middle Ages menorahs were usually designed with rows of candles. **Still, as long as it does not appear like a bonfire, a round menorah is perfectly halachically kosher.**

Three-Tiered Menorahs and Portable Menorahs

In Afro-Asian and Sephardic homes only one Hanukkah menorah is lit and that by the head of the household for the whole family. In Ashkenazi homes one often tries to provide a separate menorah for every family member. Therefore in the German Rhine Valley special two and three-tiered menorahs with eight rows each of candles could be used by two or three family members simultaneously.

What about the guest who is not a family member? The Babylonian rabbi, Rav Sheshet,¹⁸ ruled: "The boarder is obligated to light his/her own Hanukkah lamp."¹⁹ In the 19th century, yeshivot in Eretz Yisrael sent out official fundraisers to wander the world collecting contributions, some carrying their own portable menorah.

Free-Standing Giant Synagogue Menorahs

Though the halacha requires that each home light its own menorah, it became a medieval custom to light a synagogue menorah as well. As the notion of the synagogue as

a "micro-Temple"/*mikdash m'at* became popular, it was natural that the Hanukkah menorah that recalls the Temple's seven-branched menorah be celebrated in the micro-Temple itself. Rabbi Yaacov Ben Asher²⁰ rules: "In the synagogue the Hanukkah menorah should be placed on the southern wall so as to recall the Temple menorah that stood in the southern part of the Temple."²¹

Therefore 18th century European Hanukkah menorahs were designed as free-standing oil candelabra, decorated with organic motifs like those described as part of the Tabernacle's menorah in *Exodus* 25 and with reliefs of Aaron the priest lighting the Temple candles. Later smaller home menorahs were also designed to stand up high on a table.

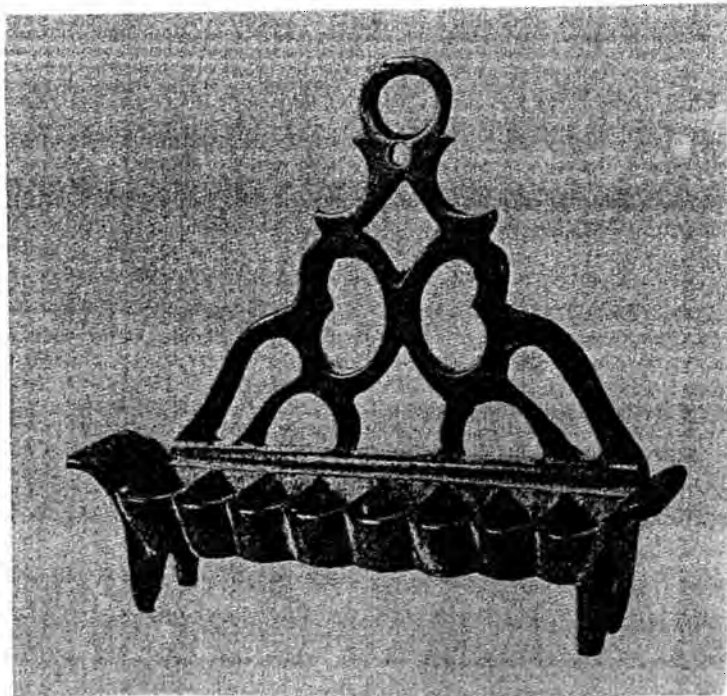
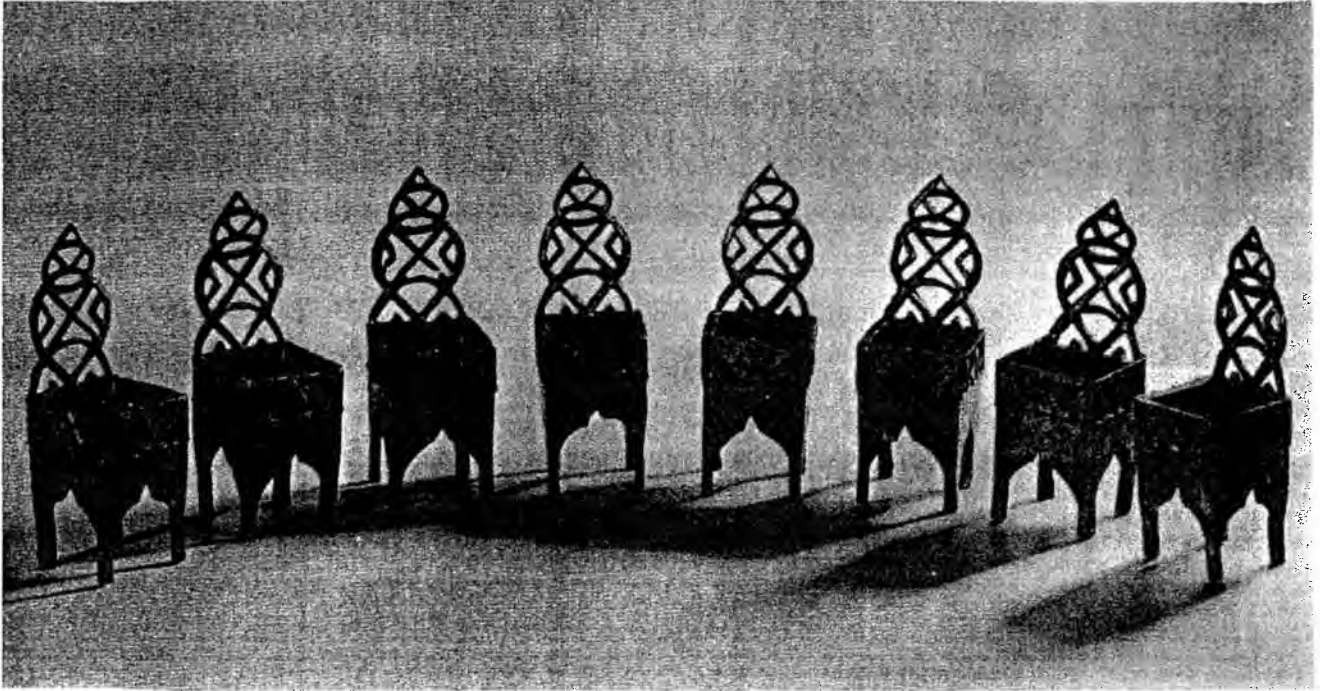
In summary, the confusion between the Temple menorah and the Hanukkah menorah may be resolving itself. Initially there was no Hanukkah menorah at all but just a series of pottery dishes with a wick. Then in the late Middle Ages as special Hanukkah menorahs were first designed, especially for the synagogue, they came to resemble the seven-branched original menorah. However, in the 19th-20th century many menorahs are designed specifically for wax candles — clearly different from the Temple's oil lamp.

In Israel a new name has been invented for the Hanukkah menorah — "hanukki-yah."²² This word was invented in 1897 by Hemda Ben Yehuda in an article she wrote in her husband's Hebrew newspaper. Her husband's name was Eliezer Ben Yehuda, the reviver of modern Hebrew, however Eliezer Ben Yehuda may not have liked his wife's invention since he never included it in his own classic Hebrew dictionary. However, today's Israeli children clearly distinguish a "hanukkiyah" used for Hanukkah's candle lighting and the Temple's seven-branched "menorah," now the official symbol of the State of Israel.

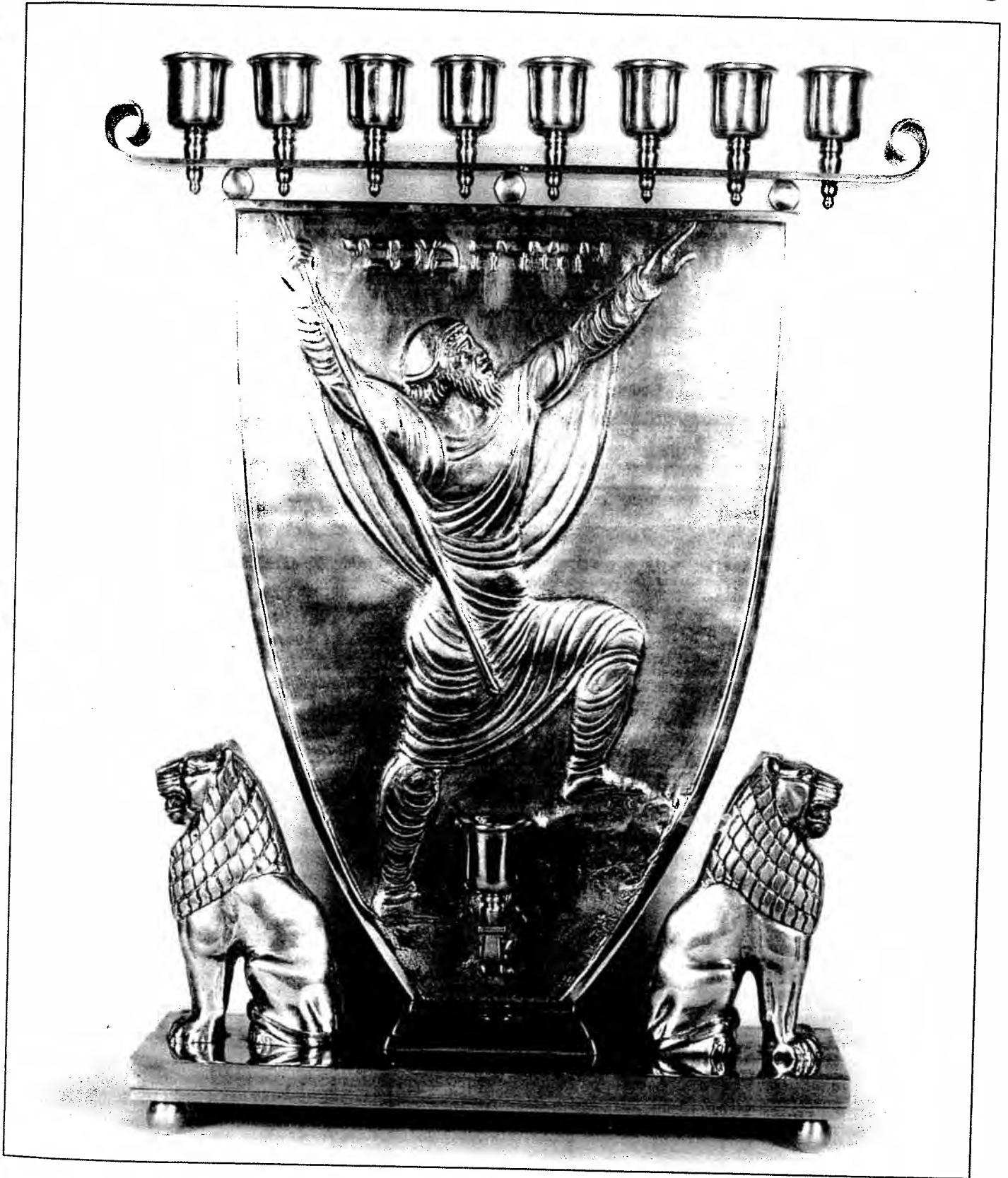


The "Jewish Star"
German hanging lamp

17. *Babylonian Talmud Shabbat* 23b 18. 3rd century CE
19. *Babylonian Talmud Shabbat* 23a 20. 14th century
21. *Tur Orach Hayim* 671
22. Reuven Sivan, "First Words," *Etmol*, 1977



Hero Menorahs



The Judah Menorah

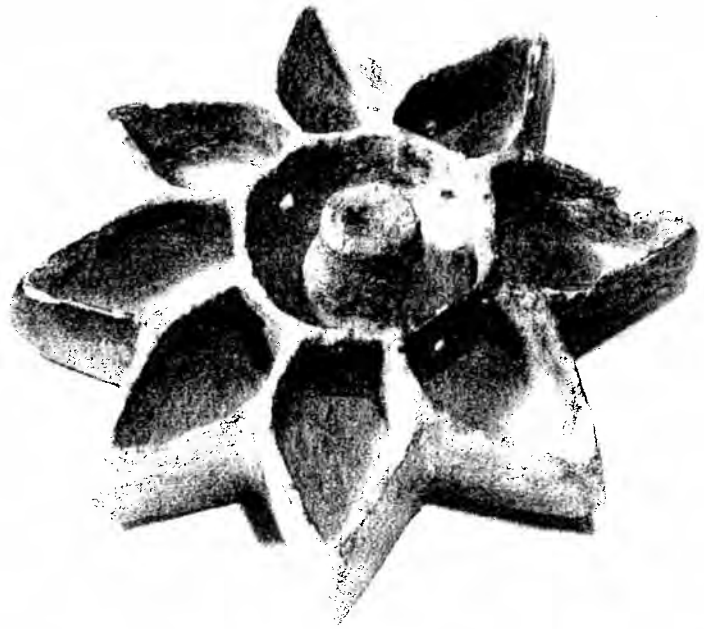
This brass menorah shows Judah going into battle, flanked by the Lions of Judah, which symbolize the tribe of Judah, even though Judah the Maccabee as a priest was from the tribe of Levi.

(Artist Fred J. Kormis, London, 1950. The Jewish Museum/Art Resource, New York)



The German Jewish Menorah

*For use on Shabbat and Hanukkah
(Germany, 18th century)*



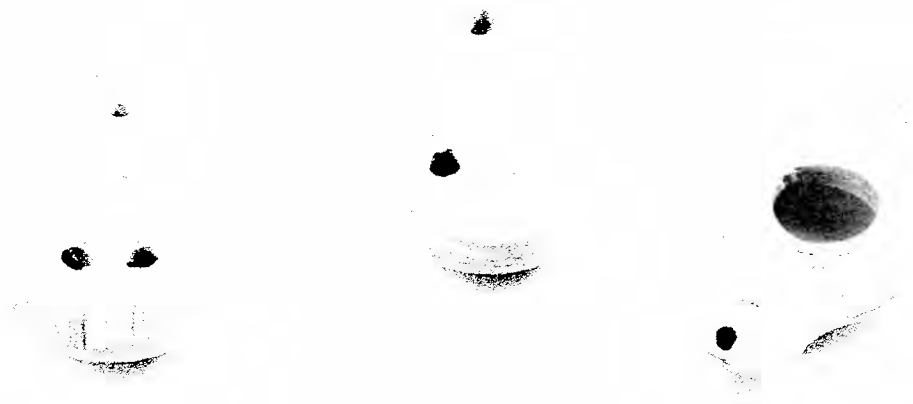
The Persian Rose Menorah

*This circular menorah, made of stone, was used for
Hanukkah and for everyday use in 19th century Persia.*

**Traditional Menorahs
at Home**

Ancient Oil Menorahs/Lamps

*(from the Schlesinger Collection of the Archeology Institute
and the Hebrew University, displayed in and photographed
by the Israel Museum)*



Suggested Activity 11: Mixing Menorahs: The Torah and Haftarah Portions for Chanukah

1. Excerpt of Torah portion for Chanukah
2. Haftarah portion for Shabbat Chanukah

Excerpt of Torah portion for Chanukah
Numbers 8:1-4

ספר במדבר: ח:א-ד

א וַיְדַבֵּר יְהוָה אֶל־מֹשֶׁה לֵאמֹר: ב דַּבֵּר אֶל־אַהֲרֹן וְאָמַרְתָּ אֵלָיו
בְּהִעָלְתְּךָ אֶת־הַנֵּרוֹת אֶל־מוֹל פְּנֵי הַמְּנוֹחָה וְאִירוּ שִׁבְעַת הַנֵּרוֹת: ג וַיַּעַשׂ
כֵּן אַהֲרֹן אֶל־מוֹל פְּנֵי הַמְּנוֹחָה הֵעֲלָה נֵרֹתֶיהָ כַּאֲשֶׁר צִוָּה יְהוָה
אֶת־מֹשֶׁה: ד וְזֶה מַעֲשֵׂה הַמְּנֹחָה מִקִּשָׁה זָהָב עַד־יִרְכָּה עַד־פְּרֻחָהּ
מִקִּשָׁה הוּא כַּמְרָאָה אֲשֶׁר הִרְאָה יְהוָה אֶת־מֹשֶׁה כֵּן עָשָׂה
אֶת־הַמְּנֹחָה:

¹ The LORD spoke to Moses, saying: ² Speak to Aaron and say to him, "When you mount the lamps, let the seven lamps give light at the front of the lampstand." ³ Aaron did so; he mounted the lamps at the front of the lampstand, as the LORD had commanded Moses. -- ⁴ Now this is how the lampstand was made: it was hammered work of gold, hammered from base to petal. According to the pattern that the LORD had shown Moses, so was the lampstand made.

Haftarah portion for Shabbat Chanukah
Zechariah 4:1-7

ספר זכריה: ד:א-ז

א וַיָּשָׁב הַמַּלְאָךְ הַדֹּבֵר בִּי וַיַּעֲרֵנִי כְּאִישׁ אֲשֶׁר יַעֲוֹר מִשְׁנָתוֹ: ב וַיֹּאמֶר
 אֵלַי מָה אַתָּה רֹאֶה וַיֹּאמֶר [וַיֹּאמֶר] רְאִיתִי | וְהִנֵּה מְנוֹרַת זָהָב כְּלֵה
 וּגְלָהּ עַל-רֹאשָׁהּ וְשִׁבְעָה נִרְתִּיָּהּ עָלֶיהָ שִׁבְעָה וְשִׁבְעָה מוֹצְקוֹת לְנֵרוֹת
 אֲשֶׁר עַל-רֹאשָׁהּ: ג וּשְׁנַיִם זֵיתִים עָלֶיהָ אֶחָד מִיְמִין הַגְּלָהּ וְאֶחָד
 עַל-שְׂמאלָהּ: ד וַאֲעֹן וַאֲמַר אֶל הַמַּלְאָךְ הַדֹּבֵר בִּי לֵאמֹר מָה אֵלֶּה
 אֲדֹנָי: ה וַיַּעַן הַמַּלְאָךְ הַדֹּבֵר בִּי וַיֹּאמֶר אֵלַי הֲלוֹא יִדְעַתְּ מָה הֵמָּה
 אֵלֶּה וַאֲמַר לֹא אֲדֹנָי: ו וַיַּעַן וַיֹּאמֶר אֵלַי לֵאמֹר זֶה דְּבַר-יְהוָה
 אֶל-זַרְבָּבֶל לֵאמֹר לֹא בְחַיִל וְלֹא בְכֹחַ כִּי אִם-בְּרוּחִי אֶמַר יְהוָה
 צְבָאוֹת: ז מִי-אַתָּה הָרֹהֵגְדוֹל לִפְנֵי זַרְבָּבֶל לְמִישֵׁר וְהוֹצִיא אֶת-הָאֲבָן
 הַרְאֵה תְּשׂאוֹת חֵן חֵן לָהּ:

¹ The angel who talked with me came back and woke me as a man is wakened from sleep. ² He said to me, "What do you see?" And I answered, "I see a lampstand all of gold, with a bowl above it. The lamps on it are seven in number, and the lamps above it have seven pipes; ³ and by it are two olive trees, one on the right of the bowl and one on its left." ⁴ I, in turn, asked the angel who talked with me, "What do those things mean, my lord?" ⁵ "Do you not know what those things mean?" asked the angel who talked with me; and I said, "No, my lord." ⁶ Then he explained to me as follows: "This is the word of the LORD to Zerubbabel: Not by might, nor by power, but by My spirit -- said the LORD of Hosts. ⁷ Whoever you are, O great mountain in the path of Zerubbabel, turn into level ground! For he shall produce that excellent stone; it shall be greeted with shouts of 'Beautiful! Beautiful!'"

Suggested Activity 12: Light of a Nation

1. "In Search of an Appropriate National Symbol."

Zion, Noam and Barbara Spectre. *A Different Light: The Big Book of Hanukkah*.
Jerusalem: Shalom Hartman Institute, 2000, 218-226.

East and West.
 A Zionist publication, bringing together for the first time, two Jewish
 symbols, the seven-branched menorah and the six-pointed Star.
 (E.M. Lillien, the artist of the Jewish national renaissance, 1904)



4.

IN SEARCH OF AN APPROPRIATE NATIONAL SYMBOL

THE MENORAH OF JUDAH THE MACCABEE OR THE STAR OF DAVID?

by Noam Zion

THE INVENTION OF THE "JEWISH" STAR: FROM ALCHEMY TO ZIONISM

In the 19th century, for the first time in Jewish history, the six pointed star was universally called the "Shield of David" and identified by Jew and anti-Semite alike as the Jewish symbol. Previously known as "Solomon's seal" or David's shield, the hexagram was used extensively in Moslem, Jewish and Christian magical literature. Although the decorative symbol of the hexagram appears in Jewish contexts as early as the sixth century BCE, it appears next to a swastika and neither decoration seems to have a particular Jewish meaning. By the same token the hexagram appears on many medieval churches without any religious significance. In alchemy, for example, it denoted the harmony between antagonistic elements of water and fire. In the mystical messianic movement of Shabbtai Zvi (1665) the Shield of David is called "the Seal of the Messiah son of David." However, originally the meaning of the term "*Magen David*" referred to God who is David's shield, just as

in the prayer book God is called "*Magen Avot*" (Shield of the Ancestors). The *Magen David* first became a public symbol for the Jewish people in Prague where the Jewish community earned the privilege of flying its own banner called "King David's flag" (1354).

However, it is only in the 19th century, when Jews of Western Europe were struggling to fend off assimilation into Christianity, that the *Magen David* was adopted as an answer to the Christian symbol of the cross. It then appeared on the coat of arms of the newly ennobled Rothschild family (1822) and Lord Moses Montefiore.²³ Gershom Scholem²⁴ notes that

23. E.J. Vol. 11:695-696

24. "The Star of David: History of a Symbol" in *The Messianic Idea in Judaism*, p. 256 ff. 1971, Schocken and Luah Haaretz (Tel Aviv, 1948), 148-63.

The Menorah Atop Israel's First Art School

When the first modern Zionist school of art was created in Jerusalem in the early 20th century by Boris Shatz, it was topped by a menorah which became a symbol of Jewish artistic creation. That school was named Bezalel after Bezalel ben Or (Uri), the inspired artisan of the Tabernacle in the desert in the days of Moses, who forged the very first menorah and whose father's name means "Light/Or."

the construction of synagogues played a special role in the dissemination of the *Magen David* as the Jewish symbol. Alfred Grotte, in his day one of the most famous synagogue builders, wrote in 1922:

"When in the nineteenth century the construction of architecturally significant synagogues was begun, the mostly non-Jewish architects strove to build these houses of worship according to the model of church construction. They believed they had to look around for a symbol which corresponded to the symbol of the churches, and they hit upon the hexa-

The Shield of Judah the Maccabee and the Menorah Psalm 67

In 12th century Germany the tradition of Jewish magic spoke of a protective shield (*Magen*) belonging to Judah the Maccabee. The shield derived its power from the inclusion of God's 72 names and a hexagram with the angelic name Metatron. In 14th century Spain the *Magen David* was "written" not as a star but as a seven-branched menorah using the words of Psalm 67. Sometimes David's magical shield is inscribed with the same verse associated with the acronym of Judah the MaCaBY's name — *Mi Chamoch Ba-eyleem YHWH = Who is like You among the gods?*²⁵ The scholar Gershom Scholem notes that about 1580 a booklet appeared in Prague entitled *The Golden Menorah*. It concludes with this illuminating comment: "This psalm [67] together with the menorah alludes to great things . . . When King David went out to war, he used to carry on his shield" this psalm in the form of a menorah engraved on a golden tablet and he used to meditate on its secret. Thus he was victorious."²⁶

gram. In view of the total helplessness (of even learned Jewish theologians) regarding the material of Jewish symbolism, the *Magen David* was exalted as the visible insignia of Judaism. As its geometrical shape lent itself easily to all structural and ornamental purposes, it has now been for more than three generations an established fact, already hallowed by tradition, that the *Magen David* for the Jews is the same kind of holy symbol that the Cross and the Crescent are for the other monotheistic faiths."

Concurrent with the rise of modern European anti-semitism, Jews and non-Jews alike began to see themselves in national or ethnic terms. Since distinctive ethnic dress and religious observance were in decline, members of the various groups sought secular national symbols. These symbols took on increasing importance especially in the new age of mass literacy, newspapers, and political propaganda.

Theodor Herzl wrote admiringly of the power of symbols to transform disparate Catholic and Protestant German-speaking principalities into Otto Bismarck's creation of a powerful united modernized German empire. He saw such tactics as being highly applicable to the even more ambitious Zionist endeavor:

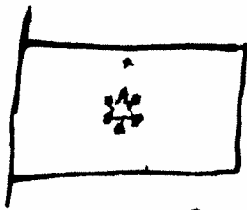
"The exodus to the Promised Land presents itself practically as an enormous job of transportation unparalleled in the modern world.

"Beforehand, prodigious propaganda is necessary: the popularization of the idea through newspapers, books, pamphlets, travel lectures, pictures, songs. Everything directed from one center with purposive and far-sighted vision.

"Finally, I would have had to tell you what flag to unfurl and how. And then you would have asked in mockery, 'A flag, what is that? A stick with a cloth rag?' No, a flag is more than that. With a flag you can lead men where you will — even to

25. *Exodus* 15 26. See *Encyclopaedia Judaica*, Vol. II, p. 695

*Hier mein Entwurf
unserer Fahne*



*weisses Feld
sieben goldene Sterne*

Theodor Herzl's sketch of the Jewish national flag. Herzl imagined a white field with seven golden stars, six of the stars form the Star of David, and the seventh floats above it. (ca. 1896)

the Promised Land.

"Men live and die for a flag; it is indeed the only thing for which they are willing to die in masses, provided one educates them to it.

"Believe me, the policy of an entire people — especially one that is scattered all over the world — can only be made out

of imponderables that float high in the thin air. Do you know out of what the German Empire sprang? Out of reveries, songs, fantasies, and black-red-and-gold ribbons — and in short order. Bismarck merely had to shake the tree, which the visionaries had planted.

"What, you do not understand an imponderable? What then is religion? Consider, if you will, what the Jews have withstood throughout two thousand years for the sake of a vision. Visions alone grip

the souls of men. And whoever does not know how to deal in visions may be an excellent, worthy, practical-minded person, and even a benefactor in a big way; but he will never be a leader of men and no trace of him will remain."

— *Theodor Herzl's Diaries (1895-1896)*

The early Zionist movement adopted the blue and white flag whose colors and stripes suggested the traditional "tallit" (which in the Biblical and Rabbinic age still was dyed with a special blue dye derived from a now nearly extinct sea creature) and placed a Star of David in the middle of the stripes. However, this new symbol — even if it was misleadingly called the "Star or the Shield (Magen) of David" — in fact, lacked historical or spiritual depth. The great 20th century Zionist and historian of mysticism, Gershom Scholem, speaks of "the magnificent career of emptiness associated with the 19th century *Shield of David*. It expresses no idea, arouses no spiritual reality."

Perhaps secular Zionists, intent on rejecting the old religious baggage that prevented the growth of an activist modern nationalist movement, were drawn to this history-less symbol whose content they could shape. Nevertheless, secular and religious Zionists also wanted to root their new form of national existence in a romantic restoration of the ancient mythic essence of their people. Early on, the Temple's menorah was the unofficial companion of the Star of David in Zionist literature. In 1904 E. M. Lillien, the Jugendstil European artist joined the Zionist movement in response to Martin Buber's call



Hasmonean Gelt — left, King Mattathias Antigonus' coins, 40 BCE; and right, Israeli ten "cent" coin



The Maccabees, the Menorah, and Hasmonean "Gelt"

Over 100 years after the Maccabean revolt the last of Hasmonean kings, Mattathias Antigonus (40-37 BCE), minted a coin in his name with a seven branched menorah imprinted on the silver coin. Both his name (named after the original rebel, Judah's father, Mattathias) and his coin reflect the compromise (or perhaps symbiosis) reached between the Hellenistic culture and the Jewish culture of the Hasmoneans. On one side it says in Hebrew: "Matityahu the High Priest and Friend of the Jews" and on the other in Greek, "King Antigonus."²⁷

27. Daniel Sperber. *Münzhagi Yisrael: Hanukkah*, p. 171-173

Judaea Capta — "Judaea is captured," the motto written on coins produced by the victorious Romans after the defeat of Judea.

68CE (Israel National Medallion)



for a restored and renewed national art. He created a collage of stars of David integrated with seven-branched Temple menorahs — Lillien juxtaposed the new star and the old menorah in the same way he often juxtaposed the secular youthful farming pioneer (*halutz*) in Eretz Yisrael and the old religious Jews imprisoned in Europe praying and yearning for redemption. **The future and the past**

welded through a cultural transformation of old religious symbols with new activist nationalist symbols.

The Arch of Titus and the National Emblem

On July 15, 1948, soon after the establishment of the State



**Titus' Captured Menorah:
A Pagan Base to a Temple Menorah?**

The Temple candelabrum reproduced on the Arch of Titus (81 CE) in Rome presents the historic menorah originally made by Judah the Maccabee in 164 BCE. However its base differs from the Rabbinic descriptions of a three-legged base and the other artistic representations of the menorah. In fact, the decorations on the Roman portrayal of the base include pagan symbols like two eagles holding a wreath of leaves and two sea dragons which are expressly forbidden in Rabbinic law. It seems that the original three-legged stand broke or was removed to make it easier to transport the massive gold menorah. The design of the replacement of the base is based on the podium of the god Zeus-Didyma in the Temple in Asia Minor dedicated to the violent Roman warrior god — Jupiter. Or perhaps the pagan style base was ordered by King Herod (37 CE) who rebuilt and remodeled the Temple in contemporary style. When the State of Israel chose as its symbol the menorah with the pagan base rather than the three-legged menorah, Chief Rabbi Herzog (father of Chaim Herzog, who later became President of the State of Israel) protested. However, it is the Roman portrayal of our menorah which has left its mark in the national memory, however it acquired its pagan base.

*The Arch of Titus.
Titus's soldiers bring the Temple's menorah
as a trophy to Rome.*



of Israel (but while Jerusalem was still under siege by the Arabs) the temporary Israeli National Assembly began a competition to choose a national emblem to accompany their blue and white flag which had long been the flag of the modern Jewish nationalist movement. A national emblem was essential to complete their application for membership in the United Nations. The committee for proposing a national emblem specified that it include a seven-branched menorah and the seven stars which Theodor Herzl had envisioned for the original Zionist flag. While the menorah represented the most ancient symbol of the Jewish commonwealth, the seven stars represented Herzl's vision of the Jewish state as a progressive European state limiting the working day to seven hours per day.

The Blue Stripes on the Jewish Flag and the Tallit²⁸

The blue color of the Israeli flag — originally the flag of the Jewish people chosen by the Zionist movement in the early 20th century — originates from the *techelet*/blue color of the *tzitzit*/fringes mandated by the Torah on the corners of whatever four-cornered garment is worn.²⁹ But where do the stripes come from?

As we know from Roman and Greek dress, many distinguished persons in the Greco-Roman world dyed their four-cornered sheet-like togas with a colored stripe. For example, Roman senators, as well as Jews, wore a distinctive “royal blue” stripe. Later Christian clergy adopted and continued to wear a colored stripe.

Much later in the Middle Ages when togas were out of fashion, Jews wore special four-cornered garments over or under their clothes so as to continue to observe the mitzvah of *tzitzit* (though the special blue dye for *techelet* was no longer available). Ashkenazim added a blue or black stripe to their “*tallit*” (Hebrew for a toga one throws on) and the European Zionists used that stripe as a part of their national flag. More recently the source for this rare blue dye has been rediscovered and reintroduced by some Jews on their *tzitzit*.

28. Daniel Sperber, *Minhagei Yisrael: Hanukkah* p. 207-208.

29. *Numbers* 16:38

David Remez, from the Ministry of Education, argued that the design of the menorah be based on the relief on the Arch of Titus in Rome. Similarly, he urged that the first coins of the State of Israel bear the inscription “*Judea Restituta*” just as the Roman coins of 70 CE bore the motto “*Judea Capta*” (Judea is captured).

The arch was constructed (after 81 CE) by the Emperor Titus to celebrate his victory as a general over Judea (70 CE) in a hard-fought battle ending with the burning of the Temple and the capture of its gold ritual utensils including the seven branched menorah. Though the secular Zionists did not want a purely religious symbol for their new state, the Temple’s menorah was considered appropriate because the Temple did not stand merely for a house of worship. It represented the place of the decisive battle of the previous War of Independence, fought from 66 to 70 CE against the Roman Empire.

The Prophet Zecharia’s Golden Menorah

The menorah was not merely another ritual object in the service of God. As early as the Second Temple period in the prophecy of Zecharia, the menorah became a symbol of the Divinely aided restoration of the Jews to their land after the Babylonian Exile. One of the last of the biblical prophets, Zecharia received his revelation during the struggle of the newly returned community of Persian and Babylonian Jews to Jerusalem to rebuild the Temple under the auspices of the liberal Persian Emperor Cyrus (from 539 BCE). Cyrus and the Persians displaced the descendants of Nebuchadnezzar, the Babylonian who captured and burned the Temple in 586 BCE. Exactly 70 years later, as predicted by Jeremiah, the Temple was rebuilt, though political independence was not restored. Nonetheless, the high priest did become the civil and political as well as religious governor of the Persian province of Judea.

Zecharia had a vision of a golden menorah surrounded by two olive branches, representing the two messianic leaders of his time, Zerubbavel and the High Priest Joshua:

The angel who talked with me came back and woke me as a man is wakened from sleep. He said to me, “What do you see?” and I answered, “I see a menorah all of gold, with a bowl above it. The lamps on

Ner Tamid —

The Intermittent Eternal Light

While modern synagogue architecture includes an Eternal Light that burns continuously night and day, the original “eternal light” burned from evening until morning only. The High Priest prepared and lit the oil candles nightly³⁰ in the golden menorah in the Tabernacle and later in the Temple.

30. *Leviticus* 24:3; *Exodus* 27:20

The Blue Star and the Yellow Star

Both Zionist and anti-semitic national political movements have used the *Magen David* to represent the Jewish people in the press and the propaganda. The *Magen David*, the hexagram, not the menorah, was chosen for this purpose. Gershom Scholem sums up his essay on the Jewish star by attributing the high status of the *Magen David* in our modern consciousness to the Nazis. "Far more than the Zionists have done to provide the Shield of David with the sanctity of a genuine symbol has been done by those who made it for millions into a mark of shame and degradation. The yellow Jewish star, as a sign of exclusion and ultimately of annihilation, has accompanied the Jews on their path of humiliation and horror, of battle and heroic resistance. Under this sign they were murdered; under this sign they came to Israel. If there is a fertile soil of historical experience from which symbols draw their meaning, it would seem to be given here. Some have been of the opinion that the sign, which marked the way to annihilation and to the gas chambers, should be replaced by a sign of life. But it is possible to think quite the opposite: the sign which in our own days has been sanctified by suffering and dread has become worthy of illuminating the path to life and reconstruction. Before ascending, the path led down into the abyss; there the symbol received its ultimate humiliation and there it won its greatness."

Not a Star, but a Shield: The Origin of the "Magen David"

BY THEODORE GASTER³¹

The Shield of David (Hebrew, Magen David) — that is, the hexagram formed by two inverted triangles — is today the universally recognized symbol of Judaism. It is frequently emblazoned on the walls and windows of synagogues, on ritual implements and vessels. It is the central element of the Israeli flag. It surmounts the graves of fallen Jewish soldiers and is the official badge of the Jewish military chaplain. In the Holy Land, the Red Shield of David is the equivalent of the Red Cross elsewhere. This widespread use of the symbol is, however, of comparatively recent date. Back of it lies a long and complicated history, woven of many strands.

Not until the twelfth century do we hear of the hexagram as the Shield of David. Nobody knows for certain how and why this peculiar name came to be adopted. The most probable conjecture would seem to be that it was originally designed as a complement to the familiar Seal of Solomon, which was a popular designation of the pentagram. In a legend recorded in

it are seven in number, and the lamps above it have seven pipes. Next to it there are two olive trees, one on the right of the bowl and one on its left." I, in turn, asked the angel who talked with me, "What do these things mean, my lord?"

"This is the word of the Lord to Zerubbabel: **Not by might, nor by power, but by My spirit**, says the Lord of Hosts. Whoever you are, O great mountain in the path of Zerubbabel, turn into level ground! For he shall produce that excellent stone; it shall be greeted with shouts of 'Beautiful! Beautiful!'"

And the word of the Lord came to me: "Zerubbabel's hands have founded this House and Zerubbabel's hands shall complete it. Then you shall know that it was the Lord of Hosts who sent me to you. Does anyone scorn a day of small beginnings? When they see the stone of distinction in the hand of Zerubbabel, they shall rejoice . . ."

[What are those seven stars in the vision?]

the Koran, it is said that the seal in question came down from heaven engraved with the all-powerful name of God. It was partly of brass, partly of iron. With the brass part, Solomon sealed his orders to the good spirits; with the iron, to the bad. This seal is mentioned frequently in ancient magical texts as an instrument of power efficacious in controlling or banning the princes of darkness.

Possibly we can go a step further, for the fact is that it was common practice in antiquity to name particularly powerful charms after Biblical or other heroes. A famous Hebrew book of spells, for instance, was entitled *The Key of Solomon*, and another went under the name of *The Sword of Moses*.

On this analogy, the "Shield of David" would have seemed a peculiarly appropriate name for a magical sign.

31. Theodore Gaster, *Customs and Folkways of Jewish Life*, p. 221-222; William Sloan Publishers © 1955 by Theodore Gaster, cc. 55-7551.

Is It Forbidden To Produce a Seven-Branched Menorah?

“A person may not make a house after the design of the Temple, or a porch after the design of the Temple-porch, a courtyard after the design of the Temple-court, a table after the design of the table [in the Temple], or a candelabrum after the design of its candelabrum. He may, however, make one with five, six, or eight [branches], but with seven one may not make it even though it be of other metals. R. Jose b. Judah says: Also of wood one may not make it, because thus did the Hasmoneans make it. [The Rabbis] said to him: It consisted of metal staves overlaid with tin. [The Talmud resolved the dispute by explaining:] When [the Hasmoneans] grew rich they made one of silver, and when they grew still richer they made one of gold!”³²

32. *Babylonian Talmud Avodah Zara 43a*

“Those seven are the eyes of the Lord ranging over the whole earth.”³³

Judah the Maccabee’s Menorah

What Zecharia had in mind was the menorah first fashioned by Bezalel for the mishkan (Tabernacle) in the desert. It was placed in Solomon’s Temple (1000 BCE) and despoiled by the Babylonians (586 BCE) and returned in 539 BCE by Cyrus of Persia.³⁴ Perhaps the repatriated utensils included the seven-branched menorah.

However the founders of Israel in 1948 had a different vision of the menorah. It was the menorah represented on the Arch of Titus after the destruction of the Second Temple

The First Proposal for an Israeli National Symbol. This suggestion includes a seven branched menorah, seven stars representing Herzl’s dream of the seven hour workday and olive branches mentioned in the prophecy of Zecharia.

(The Shamir brothers, 1948)



(70 CE) which was definitely *not* the original menorah. It was most probably Judah the Maccabee’s menorah. For in 169 BCE Antiochus the IV, Emperor of the Greek Syrian empire, confiscated “the gold altar and the menorah” from the Temple in order to use it to pay off his political debts:

“Antiochus entered the Temple in his arrogance and took the golden altar, the menorah, etc. Taking them all he carried them away to his own country. He massacred people and spoke most arrogantly. Great was the sadness in Israel.”³⁵

The shame of the plunder of the Temple evoked the deepest anguish in Judah the Maccabee’s father, Mattathias, one of the priests of the period:

“Wretched am I, why was I born to behold
The dissolution of my people and the
destruction of the holy city,
To sit idly by while it is given into the hand
of its enemies,

The sanctuary into the hand of foreigners?
Her people have become as a man without
honor,

Her glorious treasures captured, taken
away;

Her infants have been killed in her streets,
Her young men, by the sword of the
enemy.

What nation has not shared

And what kingdom has not seized her
spoil?

All her adornment has been taken away,
Instead of a free woman, she has become a
slave.

Look, our sanctuary and our beauty,

And our glory have been laid waste!

The Greeks have profaned them.

Why then should life continue for us?”

Mattathias and his sons tore their clothes,
put on sackcloth, and mourned bitterly.

When his son Judah succeeded in
recapturing and rededicating the Temple in

33. *Zecharia* 4: 1-14

34. *Ezra* 1:7

35. *I Maccabees* 1:21 ff

In Germany, the hexagram received the intriguing name of Drydenfuss and was regarded as representing the footprint of a *trud* or *incubus* — a special kind of demon. It could serve alike to conjure demons or to keep them at bay, and it is mentioned frequently in the magical charms attributed to the celebrated Doctor Faustus. Sometimes its efficacy was further enhanced by its being combined with the sign of the Cross!

Moreover, even in modern times, a common German charm against dangers and hazards was to carry upon the person a small hexagonal amulet covered with the skin of a lamb that had been torn to pieces by lions or bears. This was known specifically as a "David's Shield," and the practice was justified by reference to the words of *I Samuel*,³⁸ "Your servant (*i.e.*

David) killed both the lion and the bear, and this uncircumcised Philistine (*i.e.* Goliath) shall be like one of them, seeing he has defied the armies of the living God!"

Just why the hexagram came to be used as a magical symbol is again a problem. Perhaps the most plausible answer yet advanced is that the design originated as a combination of the familiar alchemical symbols: a triangle with base down ▲ = fire, and a triangle with base on top ▼ = water. In Hebrew, these elements are called respectively *esh* and *mayim*, and it was fancifully supposed that together they composed the word *shamayim*, "heaven," a recognized paraphrase for God.

37. Theodore Gaster, p. 219-220

38. 17:34

165 BCE, he ordered "that new holy utensils be manufactured and a new menorah, incense altar and table be installed in the Temple."

[This was a personal tribute to his father Mattathias.]³⁶

The Menorah of the State of Israel and its Olive Branches

As we noted, Israel chose in 1949 to make the menorah portrayed on Titus' arch the symbol of the new state. The choice of Judah's menorah for the Israeli emblem was no accident, as we have seen. The new Israeli government felt its sense of mission in reversing the historic wrongs of 70 CE and in reviving the spirit of the Maccabees of 165 BCE. Since the War of Independence had just been completed as the new emblem was approved on Feb. 11, 1949, Israel chose to emphasize its peaceful intent by using the olive branches of Zecharia to flank the menorah.

What do those olive branches connote? First, those olive branches symbolize peace. Some of the rejected designs for the emblem included the phrase "Peace over Israel" that

appears under a menorah on a mosaic floor of a 6th century CE synagogue uncovered in Jericho. Secondly, perhaps the olive branches also recall the end of Noah's long journey after the apocalypse of his era, the Flood. In 1949 the Jewish people were home from 2000 years of dispersion, after an unspeakable "flood" — the Holocaust — and after 2000 years of political servitude. Finally, the organic imagery of the olive branches was also attractive to a generation enamored of the return to agriculture in its own land. In the original menorah in the Bible there is organic imagery in the "branches" which are described as resembling the stem, the bell and the flower of a plant native to Israel. Some scholars hold that this organic imagery connects the menorah to the ancient Near Eastern Tree of Life.

All of this contributed to the choice of the menorah with olive branches to signify the miracle of 1948. Out of desecration and death the menorah and its people were revived and began to give off a new light. The base of the menorah has its roots in the past, while its branches are its present growth and its flames represent its future light unto the nations.

As we have seen, the hexagon, the seal of

36. *I Maccabees* 4:49

Solomon, later known as the Star of David, which had become a Jewish national symbol only in the 19th century, came to adorn the flag of the new nation state. But the official emblem of the old-new Jewish land became the seven-branched menorah whose roots go back to the Bible and whose model was taken

from the menorah of Judah the Maccabee. Ironically, we often think of the eight or nine-branched Hanukkah menorah as the symbol of the Maccabees, but for Judah as for the modern State of Israel, the seven-branched Temple menorah, later captured by Titus, is the authentic symbol of Jewish revival.

Designing the Jewish Flag³⁹

How did the national movement of the Jewish people get the familiar blue and white flag now identified with the State of Israel?

The early Russian Zionist Hibbat Zion Societies⁴⁰ (1882) inscribed the word “Zion” in a star of David as their symbol. The Zionist flag in its present form — two blue stripes on white background with a Shield of David in the center — was first displayed in Rishon le-Zion in 1885. Theodor Herzl, who was not aware of the emblem used by the Hibbat Zion movement, made the following entry in his diary (June 12, 1895):

“The flag that I am thinking of is perhaps a white flag with seven gold stars. The white background stands for our new and pure life; the seven stars are the seven working hours: we shall enter the Promised Land under the sign of work.”

This was also the flag that he proposed in *The Jewish State* (1896). However, under the influence of the Zionist societies he accepted the Shield of David as the emblem for the Zionist movement. But Herzl insisted that the six stars should be placed on the six angles of the Shield of David, and the seventh above it. In this

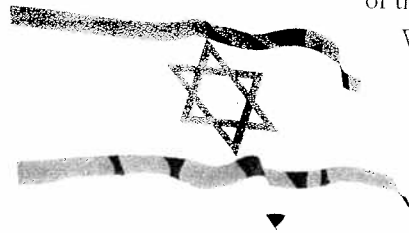
form, with the inscription “*Aryeh Yehudah*” (The Lion of Judah) in the middle, the Shield of David became the first emblem of the Zionist Organization.

Ultimately, the Zionist activist David Wolfsolhn created the flag of Zion on the model of the tallit, which, as he pointed out, was the traditional flag of the Jewish people, adding the Shield of David. This was also the flag, which, by a special order issued by Winston Churchill, became the official flag of the Jewish Brigade Group in World War II.

The combination “blue and white” as the colors of the Jewish flag is first mentioned in the latter part of the 19th century. In his poem, “The Colors of Eretz Yisrael,” written about 1860,

the poet L.A. Frankl writes:

“All that is sacred will appear in these colors:
White — as the radiance of great faith
Blue — like the appearance of the firmament.”



39. Based on *EJ*. Vol. 6:1335-1337.

40. *L'Or HaMenorah*, Rachel Arbel, “Between the Menorah and the Shield of David: the Crystallization of a Zionist Symbol,” p. 187 (Israel Museum, 1998).

Suggested Activity 13: Chanukiyah Basics

1. "Lighting a Chanukiyah."

Olitzky, Kerry and Isaacs, Ronald. *The How-To Handbook for Jewish Living*.
Hoboken: Ktav, 1993, 73-75.

Lighting a Chanukiyah

הַדְּלָקַת חֲנֻכִּיָּה

The source:

“The rabbis taught: The laws of Chanukah require one light for a person and household; those who want to be more careful may use one light for each member of the household. For those who want to be even more careful, the school of Shammai suggested that on the first day of the festival, eight candles are to be lit and we light one fewer each progressive night. Hillel suggested that on the first day, one candle is lit and one candle is added each night. Shammai reasoned that the number of candles corresponds to the number of days to come; Hillel reasoned that the number of candles corresponds to the days already passed” (Babylonian Talmud, Shabbat 21b).

What you need to know:

Place one new candle in the *chanukiyah* for each night of Chanukah, increasing one candle per night (plus the *shamash*). Olive oil may be used. Candles should be placed from right to left. Light the *shamash* first and use it to light from the left.

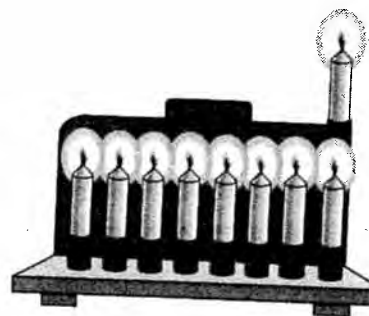
חֲנֻכִּיָּה
שָׁמַשׁ

Then say the blessings:
(on each night)

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם אֲשֶׁר קִדְּשָׁנוּ בְּמִצְוֹתָיו וְצִוָּנוּ
לְהַדְלִיק נֵר שֶׁל חֲנֻכָּה:

*Baruch atah Adonai elohaynu melech ha'olam asher kid-
shanu bemitzvotav vetzivanu lehadlik ner shel Chanukah.*

Praised are You, Adonai our God, Sovereign of the Universe, who has made us holy by mitzvot and instructed us to light the Chanukah candles.



(on each night)

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יי אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם שְׁעָשָׂה נִסִּים לְאַבוֹתֵינוּ
בְּיָמִים הָהֵם בְּזִמְנֵי הַזֶּה:

*Baruch atah Adonai elohaynu melech ha'olam she'asah
nisim lavotaynu bayamim hahaym bazman hazeh.*

Praised are You, Adonai our God, Sovereign of the
Universe, who performed miracles for our ancestors
at this season in ancient days.

(on first night only)

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יי אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם שֶׁהַחַיֵּנוּ וְקִיַּמְנוּ וְהִגִּיעָנוּ
לְזִמְנֵי הַזֶּה:

*Baruch atah Adonai elohaynu melech ha'olam she-he-
cheyanu vekimanu vehigiyanu lazman hazeh.*

Praised are You, Adonai our God, Sovereign of the
Universe, who has given us life, sustained us, and
helped us to reach this day.

Using the *shamash*, light the candles, one for each night,
beginning with the current night first, from left to right.
While some communities blow out the *shamash* each night
and use it for the duration of the festival, most people
let it burn down each night and use a new *shamash* for
succeeding nights.

הַנֵּרוֹת הַלְלוּ After you have lit the candles, read the following prayer
called *Hanerot Hallalu*.

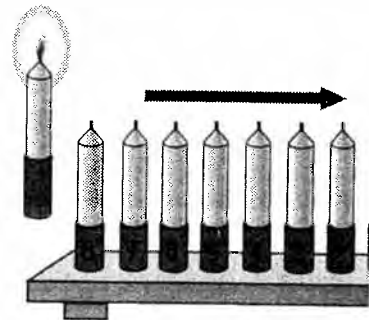
הַנֵּרוֹת הַלְלוּ אֲנַחְנוּ מִדְּלִיקִין עַל הַנִּסִּים וְעַל הַנִּפְלְאוֹת וְעַל
הַתְּשׁוּעוֹת וְעַל הַמְּלַחְמוֹת שְׁעָשִׂיתָ לְאַבוֹתֵינוּ בְּיָמִים הָהֵם
בְּזִמְנֵי הַזֶּה עַל יְדֵי כְּהֵנִיף הַקְּדוֹשִׁים. וְכָל-שְׁמוֹנֶת יָמֵי חֲנֻכָּה
הַנֵּרוֹת הַלְלוּ קֹדֶשׁ הֵם, וְאִין לָנוּ רְשׁוֹת לְהַשְׁתַּמֵּשׁ בָּהֶם אֶלָּא
לְרְאוֹתָם בְּלִבָּד, כְּדֵי לְהוֹדוֹת וּלְהַלֵּל לְשִׁמְךָ הַגָּדוֹל, עַל נִסִּיךָ
וְעַל נִפְלְאוֹתֶיךָ וְעַל יְשׁוּעָתְךָ:

In order to recall the miracles and wonders that You
performed for our ancestors through the agency of

holy priests, we kindle these lights. We hold these flames sacred throughout the eight-day Chanukah period; we shall not make any profane use of them. Instead, we will simply look at them so that we may recall Your reputation as a God who makes miracles, does wonders, and delivers our people.

Things to remember:

1. Light from the right; light from the left.
2. Place your *chanukiyah* in the window nearest the street so that all can see.
3. Candle holders in traditional *chanukiyot* are all on the same level, with a higher or separate *shamash*.
4. On Shabbat Chanukah, light the Chanukah candles before you light the Shabbat candles.
5. Light your candles after nightfall but early enough so that people can see them.
6. At the end of Shabbat Chanukah, do Havdalah and then light the Chanukah candles.
7. Don't use the lights of Chanukah for practical purposes, like reading.



Key words and phrases:

Ner נֵר. Candle.
Or אור. Light.
Shemen שֶׁמֶן. Oil.

If you want to know more:

Elias Bickerman, *The Maccabees* (New York, 1947).
Encyclopaedia Judaica (Jerusalem, 1973) 7:1280-1315.

Suggested Activity 14: Temple Tour: The Depiction of the Menorah in Our Communal Space

1. Temple Tour Observation Sheet

Temple Tour Observation Sheet

1. Where did you find a menorah?
2. How is it being used?
3. Do you think its use or appearance relates to any of the texts or images we have studied? Which ones, and how?
4. What symbolism do you see in this example of a menorah?

Temple Tour Observation Sheet

1. Where did you find a menorah?
2. How is it being used?
3. Do you think its use or appearance relates to any of the texts or images we have studied? Which ones, and how?
4. What symbolism do you see in this example of a menorah?

Unit 5: Sefer Torah

Resources

1. Encyclopaedia Judaica: Sefer Torah

Rothkoff, Aaron, and Louis I. Rabinowitz. "Sefer Torah." *Encyclopaedia Judaica: CD Rom Edition*. Judaica Multimedia, 1997.

Encyclopaedia Judaica: Sefer Torah

Also: Scroll of the Law; Torah Scroll

SEFER TORAH (pl. *Sifrei Torah*; scroll of the law), scroll containing the Five Books of Moses written on parchment according to strict rules and used mainly for reading at public worship (see Torah Reading). The *Sefer Torah* is normally written by a specialist known as a *sofer* ("scribe").

The Writing of the Scroll

The tools and materials used by the scribe are parchment, quill, ink, stylus and ruler, and *tikkun* ("guide")—a book with the Torah text. The Torah is written on parchment manufactured from specified sections of the hide of a kosher animal. The hide consists of three layers, but only the flesh side of the inner layer and the outer side of the hairy layer may be used for Torah parchment (Shab. 79b). The method of cleaning and softening the hide, which must be of the best quality, has changed throughout the centuries. During talmudic times, salt and barley flour were sprinkled on the skins which were then soaked in the juice of gallnuts (Meg. 19a). There is, however, a reference to the use of dogs' dung for this purpose (Yal. Ex. 187). Nowadays the skins are softened by soaking them in clear water for two days after which the hair is removed by soaking the hides in limewater for nine days. Finally, the skins are rinsed and dried and the creases ironed out with presses. The processor must make a verbal declaration when soaking the skins that his action is being performed for the holiness of the *Sefer Torah*. Whereas reeds were used as pens in the days of the Talmud, quills are used today, the quill of the turkey feather, which is sturdy and long lasting, being preferred. The *sofer* cuts the point of the feather to give it a flat surface, which is desirable for forming the square letters, and then slits it lengthwise.

The ink must be black, durable, but not indelible. During talmudic times a viscous ink was made by heating a vessel with the flame of olive oil, and the soot thus produced on the sides of the vessel was scraped off and mixed with oil, honey, and gallnuts (Shab. 23a). Ink is now made by boiling a mixture of gallnuts, gum arabic, and copper sulfate crystals. Some scribes also add vinegar and alcohol. To ensure that the letters will be straight and the lines equally spaced, 43 thin lines are drawn across the width of the parchment with a stylus and ruler. Two additional longitudinal lines are drawn at the end of the page to ensure that all the lines end equally. To enhance the appearance of the printing on the parchment a four inch margin is left at the bottom, a three inch margin at the top, and a two inch margin between the columns.

Although there is no law regulating the number of pages or columns a Torah must have, from the beginning of the 19th century a standard pattern of 248 columns of 42 lines each was established. Each column is about five inches wide since by tradition there must be space enough to write the word *MhyTheQml* (Gen. 8:19), the longest occurring in the Torah, three times.

Before the *sofer* begins his daily work, he performs ritual ablution in a *mikveh*. To avoid mistakes talmudic *soferim* copied from another scroll, and according to one tradition there was a copy of the Torah kept in the Temple which scribes used as the standard (Rashi to MK 3:4, TJ, Shek. 4:3, 48a). Before commencing, the scribe tests the feather and ink by writing the name "Amalek" and crossing it out (cf. Deut. 25:19). He then makes the declaration, "I am writing the Torah in the name of its sanctity and the name of God in its sanctity." The scribe then looks into the *tikkun*, reads the sentence aloud, and proceeds to write it. Before writing the name of God the *sofer* repeats, "I am writing the name of God for the holiness of His name."

The Torah is written in the square script known as *Ketav Ashuri*, of which there are two different types: the Ashkenazi, which resembles the script described in the Talmud (Shab. 104a), and the Sephardi, which is identical with the printed letters of the Hebrew alphabet currently used in sacred texts. The thickness of the letters vary and it is often necessary for the *sofer* to make several strokes to form a letter. The scribe holds the feather sideways to make thin lines, and flat, so that the entire point writes, to make thick lines. Particular care must be given to those letters that are similar in appearance (e.g., *dalet* and *resh*) so that they can be easily distinguished. Each letter must be complete, with the exception of the "split *vav*" in the word *shalom* in Numbers

25:12. Although Hebrew is read from right to left, each individual letter in the Sefer Torah is written from left to right. Six letters are written particularly small (e.g., the *alef* in the first word of Lev. 1:1) and 11 letters are written very large (e.g., the *bet* in the first word of Gen. 1:1). There must be a space between the letters, a greater space between the words, and a nine letter gap between the portions. A four line separation is made between each of the Five Books of Moses.

Seven of the 22 letters of the alphabet have special designs on the upper left hand corner of the letter called *tagin*. Shaped somewhat like the letter *zayin*, three such *tagin* are placed above the letter, touching it lightly. The center *tag* is slightly higher than the two on the ends. The Torah contains no vowels or punctuation marks. However, there are a number of dots over several words (e.g., Deut. 29:28; see *Tikkun Soferim*). There are two *shirots* or songs in the Torah which are written in unique fashion. *Shirat ha-Yam* (Ex. 15:1–19) has a nine letter gap in the middle of each sentence, and these gaps are so spaced that they appear like "half bricks set over whole bricks" (Meg. 16b; Shab. 103b). *Shirat Ha'azinu* (Deut. 32:1–43) also contains a nine letter separation in the middle of each sentence, but these blank spaces form a single space down the center of the entire column.

After the copying of the Torah has been completed, the sheets of parchment are sewn together with *giddin*, a special thread made of tendon tissue taken from the foot muscles of a kosher animal. Every four pages are sewn together to form a section or *yeri'ah*. These sections of parchment are sewn on the outer side of the parchment, with one inch left unsewn both at the very top and bottom. To reinforce the *giddin*, thin strips of parchment are pasted on the top and bottom of the page. After connecting the sheets the ends are tied to wooden rollers, called *azei hayyim*, by inserting the *giddin* in holes in the rollers. The *ez hayyim* consists of a center pole, with handles of wood and flat circular rollers to support the rolled-up scroll. Besides serving as a means of rolling the scroll, the *azei hayyim* also prevent people from touching the holy parchment with their hands. In oriental and some Sephardi communities, the flat rollers are not employed since the Torah scrolls are kept in an ornamental wooden or metal case (*tik*).

[Aaron Rothkoff]

Invalid and Disqualified Scrolls

Mistakes in the Torah scroll can generally be corrected, since the ink can be erased with a knife and pumice stone. However, a mistake in the writing of any of the names of God cannot be corrected since the name of God may not be erased, and such faulty parchments must be discarded. When a mistake is found in a Sefer Torah, the wimple is tied round the outside of its mantle as a sign that it should not be used until the mistake has been corrected. According to the Talmud a Sefer Torah which has less than 85 correct letters is to be discarded (Yad. 3:5; Shab. 116a). This number is the number of letters in Numbers 10:35–36, which is sometimes regarded as a separate book (hence the references to seven instead of five books of the Torah: Gen. R. 64:8; Lev. R. 11:3). However, it was later laid down that too extensive corrections rendered the scroll unsightly and therefore invalid (for this and other details see *Haggahot*). If a scroll is beyond repair, it is placed in an earthenware urn and buried in the cemetery.

It was customary to bury such scrolls alongside the resting place of a prominent rabbi (Meg. 26b). The Mishnah (Git. 4:6) permits the purchase of a Sefer Torah from a non-Jew at its market value and the Talmud (*ibid.*, 45b) even records that Rabban Simeon b. Gamaliel permitted the purchase of those written by a non-Jew. Another tradition, however, laid it down that a scroll written by a non-Jew must be stored away, while one written by a heretic must be burned since it is feared that he may have maliciously altered the text (*ibid.*).

The Duty to Possess a Sefer Torah

It is regarded as a positive biblical commandment for every Jew to possess a Sefer Torah, the word "song" in Deuteronomy 31:19, "now therefore write ye this song for you," being interpreted to apply to the Torah as a whole. Even if he has inherited one from his father he is still obliged to have one of his own (Sanh. 21b). He may write it himself, or have it written on his behalf by a

sofer, or purchase one, but "he who writes it himself is regarded as though it had been given to him on Mt. Sinai" (Men. 30a).

On the basis of the statement of the Talmud (*ibid.*) to the effect that he who corrects even one letter in a Sefer Torah is regarded as though he had himself written it, a custom has developed which both gives every Jew a portion in a *Sefer Torah* and symbolically regards him as having fulfilled the command of writing one. The *sofer* writes only the outlines of the words in the first and last passages of the *Sefer Torah* and they are completed at a ceremony known as *Siyyum ha-Torah* ("the completion of the Torah"). Those present are honored by each being invited to fill in one of the hollow letters, or formally authorize the *sofer* to do so.

Sanctity of the Sefer Torah

The Sefer Torah is the most sacred of all Jewish books. A valid *Sefer Torah* must be treated with special sanctity and great reverence (Yad, Sefer Torah 10:2). Its sanctity is higher than that of all other scrolls of the books of the Bible, and therefore, though one *Sefer Torah* may be placed on top of another, or on the scroll of another book, another scroll must not be placed on it (Meg. 27a).

It is obligatory to stand in the presence of a Sefer Torah (Mak. 22b; Kid. 33b) both when the ark is opened to reveal the scrolls and when it is being carried, and it is customary to bow reverently or kiss it when it passes. The bare parchment must not be touched with the hand. So insistent were the rabbis on this that they declared "He who touches a naked *Sefer Torah* will be buried naked," although the statement was modified to mean either "naked of good deeds" or "naked of the reward for good deeds" which he would otherwise have had from reading it (Shab. 14a). For this reason the *yad* ("pointer") is used for reading and the Sephardim cover the outside of the parchment with silk for the same reason.

It was forbidden to sell a Sefer Torah except to provide the means for marrying, studying (Meg. 27a), and for the ransom of captives. Should a *Sefer Torah* accidentally fall to the ground, the whole congregation is obliged to fast for that day. It was permitted and even enjoined to disregard the Sabbath in order to save not only the *Sefer Torah* but even its case from destruction (Shab. 16:1), and should it be burnt one had to rend one's garment (MK 25a); if one saw it torn one had to rend the garment twice, "once for the writing and once for the parchment" (*ibid.* 26a, cf. the statement of Hananiah b. Teradyon when he was being burnt at the stake wrapped in a scroll, "I see the parchment burning but the letters soar aloft" (Av. Zar. 18a)). The *Sefer Torah* must not be carried about unless for religious purposes, and even for the purpose of reading from it at services held at a temporary place of worship, such as a *shivah*, it may not be taken there unless it is read on at least three occasions. When it is transferred to a permanent site it is usually done with full ceremonial. The *Sefer Torah* is carried through the streets under a canopy and the procession is accompanied by songs and dances.

Among the Sephardim before the reading of the law, and among the Ashkenazim at its conclusion, the Sefer Torah is ceremoniously held aloft (*Hagbahah*), its writing exposed to the congregation, who recite "and this is the Torah which Moses set before the children of Israel (Deut. 4:44), according to the commandment of the Lord by the hand of Moses." One must make every effort to acquire a beautiful *Sefer Torah* (Shab. 133b). Unless it is corrected, a text of the *Sefer Torah* that is in error may be kept only 30 days (Ket. 19b).

Other Uses

In addition to its main use for reading the scriptural portions in synagogue (see Reading of the Torah), the Sefer Torah is used on a large number of ceremonial occasions. According to the Mishnah (Sanh. 2:4) it accompanied the king in battle, and on the occasions of public fasts for drought the ark with the *Sifrei Torah* was taken out into the public square and the supplications and exhortations were recited in front of it (Ta'an. 2:1). It also played a central role in the ceremony of *Hakhel*.

During the Middle Ages the solemnity of taking an oath was enhanced by the vower making it while grasping a Sefer Torah. For the same reason three leading members of the congregation stand round the *hazzan* while he is reciting *Kol Nidrei* on the eve of the Day of Atonement.

In modern times it is extensively used. Seven *Sifrei Torah* are taken out for the circuits with the four species on Hoshana Rabba, and on the next day (in the Diaspora two days later) the sevenfold circuit of the synagogue with all the *Sifrei Torah* is the central part of the ceremonial of Simhat Torah. The custom of the worshippers joyfully dancing with the Sefer Torah on this occasion is widespread.

[Louis Isaac Rabinowitz]

Encyclopaedia Judaica: CDRom Edition. Judaica Multimedia, 1997.

Suggested Activity 2: Torah Synectics

1. "Synectics: A Model to Develop Creativity"

Joyce, Bruce and Marsha Weil. *Models of Teaching*. Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, 1972.

MODELS
OF
TEACHING

Bruce Joyce and Marsha Weil
Columbia University Teachers College

PRENTICE-HALL, INC., ENGLEWOOD CLIFFS, NEW JERSEY

openness, and self-directedness. The Classroom Meeting Model (Figure 13-1) is thus primarily a nurturant model.

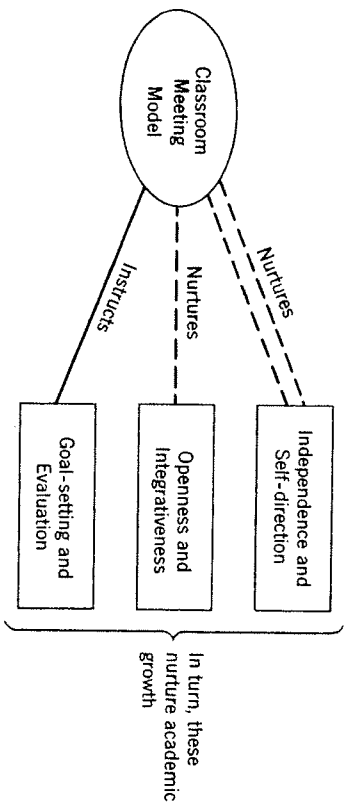


Figure 13-1

TABLE 13-1 Summary Chart: Classroom Meeting Model

Syntax:	Phase One	Phase Two	Phase Three
	Teacher establishes climate of involvement.	Teacher or student exposes problem for discussion.	Teacher gets student to make a personal value judgment.
	Phase Four	Phase Five	Phase Six
	Teacher and students identify alternative courses of action.	Student makes a behavioral commitment.	Teacher or group provide behavioral follow-up.
<i>Principles of Reaction:</i>	Teacher's behavior is governed by three principles:		
	1. principles of involvement.		
	2. teacher, but not the class, is non-judgmental.		
	3. together with the class, the teacher identifies, selects, and follows through with alternative courses of behavior.		
<i>Social System:</i>	<i>Moderate Structure.</i> Teacher controls much of the action but in certain phases she shares the initiation or closure of activity with the students.		
<i>Support System:</i>	Chief qualities of the classroom teacher:		
	1. warm personality.		
	2. skillful in interpersonal and discussion techniques.		

SYNECTICS

A Model to Develop Creativity

Synectics is an interesting new approach to the development of creativity designed by William J. J. Gordon and his associates. Gordon's initial work with Synectics procedures was confined to the development of creativity groups within industrial organizations, that is, groups of men who are trained to work together to increase their creativity and who function as problem-solvers or product-developers within the organization. In recent years, Gordon has adapted Synectics for use with school children, and materials containing many of the Synectics activities are now being published.

The Synectics procedure depends on a number of assumptions about the processes of creativity themselves and also on a stance toward group dynamics and its relationship to the development of creativity.

ORIENTATION OF THE MODEL

BASIC ASSUMPTIONS

Gordon begins with the important assumption that the creative process is not mysterious—it can be described and it is possible to train persons to increase creativity. "This assumption places Synectics theory in direct conflict with the theory that any attempt to analyze and train imagination, and those aspects of the human psyche associated with the creative process,

threatens the process with destruction."¹ The assumption is directly opposed to those stances toward creativity which allege that by bringing a creative process into consciousness we would destroy it. By holding that creativity is enhanced by conscious behavior, it makes creativity amenable to description and thus to training procedures which can be learned and applied in a wide variety of settings.

A second assumption is that creativity or invention in the arts or in science and engineering are similar and characterized by the same fundamental intellectual processes. In other words, the theatre and the sciences are seen to be similar, describable, and trainable. Again, this goes counter to many people's beliefs that creativity in the arts is a special and mystical process which cannot be described or trained and which is quite different from the process of creativity in the sciences and engineering.

A third assumption is that the process by which an individual invents is directly analogous to the processes of group invention. This is an important assumption because it makes it possible to assume that there is no conflict between the way an individual will work alone and the way he will work in a group as far as the fundamental processes are concerned. This does not mean that some people do not work better alone than in a group. No doubt that is the case, but if the fundamental intellectual processes of group and individual creativity are the same, then we can study and train creativity under group conditions without feeling that we are violating the way individuals invent. More positively, the multiplicity of ideas and reactions generated as a result of the emotional and experiential diversity in the group will facilitate the initial development or strengthening of creativity in the individual so that he is able at a later time to function more creatively alone. A group following Synectics procedures can, according to Gordon, "compress into a few hours the kind of semi-conscious mental activity which might take months of incubation for a single person."²

The actual Synectics procedures are developed from a further set of assumptions or hypotheses. The first of these is that by bringing the creative process to consciousness and by developing conscious aids to creativity, we can increase the creative capacity of individuals and of groups—"creative efficiency in people can be markedly increased if they understand the psychological processes by which they operate."³ If we teach people to understand what they do as they create, then we give them symbolic control over the process of creativity and thus the ability to increase their creative capacities.

The second hypothesis is that "...in creative process, the emotional component is more important than the intellectual, the irrational more

important than the rational."⁴ Nonrational interplay leaves room for open-ended thoughts, and it is part of the process which spirals up toward increasing coherence. "Ultimate solutions to problems are rational; the process of finding them is not."⁵ Gordon does not by any means undersell the intellect. In fact, if one wishes to train persons to inventions in engineering, he assumes that technical competence of various kinds would be very useful, and that intelligent, well-educated people who can grasp the field are more likely to develop solutions than persons who do not have those characteristics. However, he does operate on this hypothesis, that creativity is essentially an emotional process, and that it actually requires elements of irrationality and emotion which capitalize on or enhance intellectual processes.

The third hypothesis on which Synectic processes are created is that "it is these emotional, irrational elements which must be understood in order to increase the probability of success in a problem-solving situation."⁶ In other words, although the irrational is the key to creativity, it is assumed that the irrational and the emotional can be subject to analysis, and that this analysis can actually give the individual and the group control over their irrationality and their emotionality in order to increase their creativity.

THE ESSENCE OF SYNECTICS TRAINING

After many years of working with creativity groups, Gordon was able to identify four interrelated "psychological states" that are present when an individual reaches breakthroughs en route to his final solution. These four states which he feels are basic to the creative process are: (1) detachment and involvement, (2) deferment, (3) speculation, and (4) autonomy of the object.⁷ Unfortunately, Gordon also found that these states cannot be directly induced. We can't persuade a person to be intuitive, detached, or involved by merely naming or even describing these complex activities. The goal of Synectics theorists, then, was to design procedures which would draw individuals into the "psychological states" necessary to bring about creative activity.

The basic mechanism for generating creativity is metaphorical activity. Metaphor introduces conceptual distance between the student and the subject matter which is conducive to innovation and imagination, to breaking set! It provides the freedom and the structure for moving into creativity. Analyzing the adequacy of the metaphor forces the individual into seeing familiar situations in new contexts and from new viewpoints. But the creative state is also helpful for getting unfamiliar topics or problems under control and internalized. That is, a familiar analogy puts unfamiliar subject-matter

¹ William J. J. Gordon, *Synectics* (New York: Harper & Row, 1961), p. 5.

² *Ibid.*, p. 10.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 6.

⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 11.

⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 6.

⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 18.

into a recognizable language so that it can be clarified and organized. The activities in this process are referred to by Gordon as "Making the Familiar Strange" and "Making the Strange Familiar."

Synecetics procedures are actually built upon three metaphorical forms. The first is personal analogy and entails getting the individual subjectively involved with the problem so that he actually identifies with and feels that he has become part of the physical elements of the problem. It involves identification with a person, plant, or animal, or non-living thing. The emphasis is on empathetic involvement. Gordon gives the example of a problem situation in which the chemist personally identifies with the molecules in action. He might ask, "How would I feel if I were a molecule?" and then feel himself being part of the "stream" of "dancing molecules." Gordon notes that the application of the personal analogy demands extensive loss of self. Some individuals habitually are so wed to rigid inner control and rational behavior that any alternative behavior is anxiety inducing.

The second metaphorical form is direct analogy. This involves making analogies which are inclusive, though not necessarily identical in all respects, of the conditions of the real problem situations but which transpose them to another situation. For example, Gordon cites the experience of an engineer watching a shipworm tunneling into a timber. As the worm ate its way into the timber by constructing a tube for itself and moved forward, the engineer, Sir March Isunbard Brunel, got the notion of using caissons in order to construct underwater tunnels.⁸ Another example of direct analogy occurred when a group was attempting to devise a new kind of can that could be opened so that the top could be used to cover the can once it had been opened. In this instance, the analogy of the pea-pod gradually emerged. Further analysis of the analogy produced the idea of the seam which could be placed a distance below the top of the can, thus permitting a removable lid. To use direct analogy, the Synectics trainees practice analogizing the conditions of their problems into new settings. This involves (1) selecting the new setting so that it will be productive (as Alexander Graham Bell analogized the problem of creating an earpiece for a telephone to that of creating sound within the human ear), and (2) working out the analogies in an attempt to generate problem solutions, as the canning group did once they came upon the pea-pod idea.

The third metaphorical form, compressed conflict, is a two-word description of an object where the words seem to be opposites or contradict each other. "Life-saving destroyer" and "nourishing flame" are two of the examples Gordon gives. He also cites Pasteur's expression, "safe attack." Compressed conflict, according to Gordon, provides the broadest insight into a new subject and maximizes the surprise factor. It is developed by an ana-

lytical process and requires the subject to observe the object from two frames of reference. A compressed conflict is developed from the traits used to define the characteristics of the object in the personal or direct analogy. Compressed conflicts reflect the student's ability to incorporate two frames of reference with respect to a single object. The greater the distance between the frames of reference (opposition), the greater the mental flexibility to creative development.

CLASSROOM APPLICATION

In recent years, Gordon and his associates have turned their attention to the application of Synectics procedures in the classroom. Synectics techniques as applied to teaching embrace the following purposes: "(1) to increase the depth of students' understanding, (2) to use metaphors to link areas of substantive knowledge, and (3) to teach a method of hypothesis formation."⁹ In other words, metaphorical activity can be used by classroom teachers to learn substantive information as well as to solve problems. In general, acquiring substantive information relates to the function of exploring unfamiliar content, and problem-solving relates to creating something new, i.e., a new perspective on a familiar phenomenon. "The metaphorical tool is not intended to replace substantive knowledge. Rather it is designed to enhance and enliven the substantive world by showing children how to interact personally with the world—how to bring into their own selves the facts and theories that would otherwise be external to them."¹⁰ Metaphoric activity is designed to provide a supportive structure in which students can free themselves and develop imaginative insight into everyday activities.

The classroom procedures and materials employ the three metaphorical forms of direct analogy, the personal analogy, and the compressed conflict. However, in transferring the Synectics industrial techniques to the classroom, Gordon provides teachers with additional conceptual, instructional, and evaluative tools by distinguishing different qualitative gradations of metaphorical activity (or levels of involvement) for each metaphorical form. The gradations of strangeness provide the means by which we can further refine Synectics procedures and modulate our instruction according to the student's level of creative development. They also provide an evaluative tool for assessing the student's progress. We will review the forms only briefly here. A more thorough explanation and a plentiful supply of examples are provided in Gordon's work.¹¹

⁹ William J. J. Gordon, *The Metaphorical Way of Learning and Knowing* (Cambridge, Mass.: Synectics Education Press, 1970), p. 5.
¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 4.
¹¹ *Ibid.*

⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 40-41.

The direct analogy, as discussed earlier in the chapter, is a simple comparison of two objects or concepts. Gordon points out that the comparison can be very close or very distant and that the usefulness of the analogy is directly proportional to the distance. The greater the distance, the more likely the student has come up with something new. Gordon has identified five levels of strangeness which can separate the inorganic-inorganic comparison from an organic-organic. For instance, an automobile wheel can be compared to the following objects that rotate as they move:

1. the cutter on a can opener
2. the rotor of a helicopter
3. the orbit of Mars
4. a spinning seed pod
5. a hoop snake¹²

Gordon provides us with an analysis of each of these comparisons in terms of the level of strangeness and comparative degree of imagination.¹³

Personal analogy emphasizes empathetic involvement. Gordon discriminates between the role-playing type of personal analogy and empathetic identification with inorganic elements. As in the case of direct analogy, he describes different levels of involvement in personal analogy:

1. First Person Description of Facts: the person recites a list of well-known facts but he presents no new way of viewing the object or animal and shows no empathetic understanding.
2. First Person Identification with Emotion.
3. Empathetic Identification with a Living Thing: the student identifies both emotionally and kinesthetically with the subject of the analogy.
4. Empathetic Identification with a Non-Living Object.¹⁴

Gordon and his associates have trained teachers to use Synectics procedures in all grades, with all kinds of students and in most subject areas. In addition they have developed a math and science curriculum, a language arts curriculum, and a social studies curriculum using Synectics principles. We are fortunate that the available Synectics material includes many excellent illustrations of the use of Synectics procedures in the classroom. As we examined the protocols which Gordon has provided, they fell into three categories. The first, Stretching Exercises, simply attempts to get the students to loosen up, to get familiar with and comfortable in metaphorical activities. These exercises are a series of short, rather loose comparisons to which the student is asked to make a verbal or written response. They may be direct analogies, personal analogies, or compressed conflicts. Here

are some examples that Gordon has used with students getting them to make a written response.

How is a beaver chewing On a Log like a typewriter?¹⁵
Which is softer—a Whisper or a Kitten's Fur?¹⁶

Imagine that you are a spider who is trying to spin a web on a rainy, stormy day, BE THE THING! As the spider, what does the storm do to you and how do you feel about it?¹⁷

Delicate Armor describes

An example of REPULSIVE ATTRACTION is

18

19

The second category of Synectics materials illustrates a teaching strategy (as we use the term) which we call Exploring the Unfamiliar. Its objective is to increase the student's understanding and internalization of substantially new or difficult material.

The format consists of presenting (can be an oral or written experience) the student with the substantive material, then providing him with a relevant (familiar) metaphor. At first he is asked simply to describe the analogy and then to "Be the Thing." Next, he is asked to make connections with the substantive material and then to explain the connections. Secondly, he is asked to explain where the analogy doesn't hold. Finally, as a measure of his understanding, the student is asked to present his own analogy for the new material. The instructional mediator in this strategy can be the teacher or the materials themselves.

EXPLORING THE UNFAMILIAR

The following illustration complete with sample student responses demonstrates the process of Exploring the Unfamiliar. The strategy, as we have described it earlier, includes a personal analogy. We feel that asking the student to "Be the Thing" before asking him to make intellectual connections will increase the richness of his thinking. The sample presented here does not include that phase.²⁰

"In this example the student first is presented with a short, substantive paragraph:

Democracy is a form of government that is based on the highest possible respect for the individual. All individuals have equal rights, protected by law. Since each person has a vote, when the people so desire they can change

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 13.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 17.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 19.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*

²⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 2-7.

¹² *Ibid.*, p. 3.

¹³ *Ibid.*

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 8.

the law to further protect themselves. The role of education in a democracy is critically important because the right to vote carries with it the responsibility to understand issues. An uneducated voting public could be led by a power-hungry political group into voting away their right to freedom. Thus democracy puts all its faith in the individual, in all the people... democracy's respect for the individual is expressed in the right of individuals to own property such as industries whose purpose is to make profit in competition with others.

"Next the student is told:

List the connections you see between the description of democracy and the human body. Certain elements of the human body are written in the left-hand column. In the right-hand column jot down the elements in the paragraph on democracy that you think are parallel.

<i>BODY</i>	<i>DEMOCRACY</i>
each cell	each individual
muscles	education
brain	law
body as whole	democratic country
disease	loss of freedom

"After the student has filled in his connection list he is asked to: 'Write a short paragraph showing your analogical connections. Be sure to point out where you think the body analogue fits and where it doesn't.'

"A sample response:

Each body cell is an individual. It may not look like it to the naked eye, but that's how it looks under a microscope. The muscles are education because they must be taught (except for automatic things such as blinking and digestion and there may be teaching here that we don't know about) to do certain acts; walking, games, knitting, etc. The brain is the law. If I do something wrong my mind tells me and my brain is in my mind. The body as a whole is democratic because it depends on the health of all the cells. When there is disease the body loses freedom and a power-hungry disease takes over. The body dies when the disease takes over all the cells.

Non-fit. In democracy the people control the government by voting, and they can always repair bad laws. You can't always repair a body that is growing older... it will finally die.

"So far in this sample exercise the student has been held by the hand. An analogue was presented to him, and all he had to do was make the connections as he saw them. The final skill taught in this exercise is *aphlication*. The student's program tells him:

Now think up your own analogue for democracy. Draw on the non-living world to make sure that your analogue is not like the body analogue. Write

your choice of analogue on the line below. If your analogue doesn't fit, pick a new one. REMEMBER that analogues never fit exactly, they are just a way of thinking.

Use this list form to get you going. Fill in the elements of your analogue and add more elements about democracy if you want.

Your Analogue	
automobile	democracy
each part	each individual
education	design of parts
car itself	democracy
no gas	loss of freedom

"In the final phase of the programmed exercise he is told:

Now write your connections in the best prose you can. First get your connective thoughts down; then go back and worry about grammar. Don't let grammar get in your way while you are trying to say what you mean. Grammar is a skill that makes it easier for your reader, so do it later. Try *not* to write more than the following lines allow. QUALITY not QUANTITY. Remember, show the fits and the non-fits."

"The student writes:

"All parts of a car are like the individuals in a democracy. When they are all in good shape they are free and the car runs well. The way each part was made, was its education. God gave men the right to be free and God gave the car's engine the right to run—how the gases explode in the engine is God's gift. If democracy is neglected, then no freedom. If the car runs out of gas then no freedom."

"... one further small phase is necessary to make sure the students realize that analogues are not exact parallels... The student is told: 'on the lines below explain where your analogue doesn't fit.'"

A sample response follows:

"In a democracy, all the people must neglect the country. In a car it is the owner who neglects when he forgets to fill her up. Also I tried to find 'profit' in a car—and couldn't. Any competition is a race in a car—not like competition in a democracy. Also, there are so many freedom laws in a democracy and the only law I can think of for a car is the science law that makes the engine run."

The Strategy of Exploring the Unfamiliar is decidedly analytical. That is, the original objective of increasing understanding is met by comparing and contrasting analogies. In the next strategy, which we call *Creating Something New*, the analogies are used to create conceptual distance rather than the closeness produced from comparison. Except for the final step in which the student returns to the original problem or task, he does not make comparisons. In this strategy the analogues are generated and explored for their own sake not for comparative purposes.

CREATING SOMETHING NEW

The objective of this second strategy is to create something new, that is, to see familiar things in unfamiliar ways. Depending on the original tasks, this might include a new understanding, i.e., more empathetic view of a showoff or bully; a new design for a doorway or a city; new ideas for solutions to many social or interpersonal problems such as improving relations between the police and the community and fighting between two students, or dealing with a personal problem regarding How Can I Get Myself to Do My Math Lesson.

The format for Strategy Two consists of first, describing the present conditions ("If you were to design a city, how would you go about it? What might it look like?") and second, stating the problem or task ("All right, we have some ideas. Our job now is to design a city. Let's see if we can do this in a way that makes us go beyond some of the suggestions here"). Next the teacher rotates the discussion through a series of analogies, first direct, personal, compressed conflict, etc. ("Can anyone think of an animal?" Let's use the example of the jellyfish. How would you feel if you were a jellyfish? Now, you mentioned many things about the jellyfish and how it felt to be a jellyfish. Here are some of them. "Can you pick two words that fight with each other?") The teacher continues rotating the analogue until the students have moved far enough along in conceptual distance from the original problem. Then, she gets them to move back into the original task. ("Using the ideas we talked about in our analogies, how would we go about designing our city now?") Following is a transcript of a class in which the teacher is using Synectics procedures to get the students to develop unique characterizations reflecting empathetic thought. We have annotated the transcript to illustrate some of the points we have mentioned.

It is very important to understand the purpose of the following class discussion... The goal was for each student to develop a sense of a process for going beyond stereotypes. The verbal descriptions produced in class acted as conceptual jump-off points for written work that expanded on these descriptions.

- Teacher: Do you have any ideas? Whom should we pump our life into?
- Student: Charlie Brown! (Groans from the class.)
- Student: Prince Valiant! (Groans from the class.)
- Student: How about a hood? A male hood? (Class likes the idea.)

Teacher: Where?
Student: Cincinnati.

1. Teacher: Now the problem is how to present this hood so that he's the hoodiest of hoods; but also a special, individualized person.

Student: He robs the Rabbinical School.

Student: Let's name him.

Student: Trog.

Student: Al.

Student: Slash.

Student: Eric.

Teacher: His names don't matter all that much. Let's call him Eric. What can we say about Eric?

Student: Black, greasy hair.

They all have black, greasy hair.

Student: Long, blonde hair—bleached—peroxidized—With baby-blues. Eyes, I mean.

Student: Bitten finger nails.

Student: He's short and muscular.

Student: Maybe he should be scrawny.

Student: Bow-legged and yellow teeth and white, tight lewis.

2. Teacher: Is there anything here that's original? If you wrote that and backed off and read it, what would you think?

Class: No! Stereotyped! Standard! No personality! Very general! Same old stuff!

Teacher: I agree. Eric, so far, is like every other hood. Now we have a problem to attack!

Teacher: We must define a personality for this hood, for Eric.

Student: He's got to be individualized.

Student: He has to have a way of getting money.

3. Teacher: That's still an over-general idea of Eric. Let's put some strain into this idea. Hold it. Suppose I ask you to give

1. Phase One: *Describing the Problem or Present Condition.*

2. Phase Two: *Problem Statement and Task.* Teacher is getting students to state the problem...

and define the task.

3. Phase Three: *Direct Analogy.* Teacher moves the students into analogies. He asks for a direct analogy. He also speci-

ifies the nature of the analogy, i.e., a machine, in order to assure getting one of some distance (organic-inorganic comparison).

me a Direct Analogy, something like Eric, but it's a machine. Tell me about a machine that has Eric's qualities as you see him. Not a human being, a machine.
 Student: He's a washing machine. A dishwasher.
 Student: An old beat-up car.
 Student: I want him to be a rich hood.
 Student: A beer factory.
 Student: A pinball machine in a dive.
 Student: Roulette.

4. Teacher reflects to students what they are doing so that they can be pushed to more creative analogies.

4. Teacher: You're focusing on the kinds of machines that Eric plays with. What is the thing that has his qualities in it?
 Student: An electric can opener.
 Student: A vacuum cleaner.
 Student: A neon sign.
 Student: A jelly mold.

5. Teacher lets students select the analogy to go with, but he provides the criteria for selection, "strangest comparison."

5. Teacher: What is the machine that would make the strangest comparison between it and Eric? Go ahead and vote.
 (The class voted for the dishwasher.)

6. Teacher moves students simply to *explore* (describe) the thing they selected before making comparisons to their original source.

6. Teacher: First of all, how does a dishwasher work?
 Student: People put in the dirty dishes and the water goes around and around and the dishes come out clean.
 Student: There's a blower in the one that's in the common room.
 Student: It's all steam inside.
 Hot!
 Student: I was thinking that if you want to make an analogy between the washer and the boy...

7. Teacher controls responses to keep students from pushing to a comparison too soon. No comparisons to original source are made before moving on to another analogy.

7. Teacher: Hold it. Just stay with me. Don't look backward and make an analogical comparison too soon... and now is probably too soon.

8. Teacher: O.K. Now, try being the dishwasher. What does it feel like to be a dishwasher? Tell us. Make yourself the dishwasher.
 Student: Well, all these things are given to me. Dishes are dirty. I want to get them clean. I'm trying. I throw off some steam and finally I get them clean. That's my duty.

8. Phase Four: *Personal Analogy*. Teacher asks for personal analogy.

9. Teacher: Come on now people! You've got to put yourself into the dishwasher and be it. All she's told us is what we already know about a dishwasher. There's none of her in it. It's hard, but try to be the dishwasher.
 Student: It's very discouraging. You're washing all day long. I never get to know anybody. They keep throwing these dishes at me, and I just throw the steam at them. I see the same type of dishes.
 Student: I get mad and get the dishes extra hot, and I burn people's fingers.
 Student: I feel very repressed. They keep feeding me dishes. All I can do is shut myself off.
 Student: I get so mad at everybody maybe I won't clean the dishes and then everybody will get sick.
 Student: I just love garbage. I want more and more. The stuff that falls off the dishes is soft and mushy and good to eat.

9. Teacher reflects to students the fact that they are describing the dishwasher, not what it *feels* like to be a dishwasher.

10. Teacher: Let's look at the notes I've been making about your responses. Can you pick two words that argue with each other?
 Student: "used" vs. "clean"
 Student: "duty" vs. "what you want to do."
 Teacher: How can we put that more poetically?

10. Phase Five: *Compressed Conflict*. Teacher asks for compressed conflict as outgrowth of the personal analogy: "Can you pick two words that argue with each other?"

Student: "duty" vs. "inclination."
 Student: "duty" vs. "whim."
 Student: "discouraging fun."
 Student: "angry game."
 11. Teacher: All right. What one do you like best? Which one has the truest ring of conflict?
 Class: "Angry game."

11. Teacher ends enumeration of possible compressed conflicts and asks them to select one. The teacher furnishes the criteria, "Which has the truest ring of conflict?"
 12. Phase Six: *Direct Analogy*. Recycling the analogies; compressed conflict is not explored in itself but serves as the basis of the next direct analogy, an example from the animal world of "angry game." There is no mention of the original.

12. Teacher: All right. Can you think of a Direct Analogy, an example from the animal world, of "angry game?"
 Student: A lion in the cage at the circus.
 Student: Rattlesnake.
 Student: A pig ready for slaughter.
 Student: A bear when it's attacking.
 Student: Bullfrog.
 Student: A bird protecting its young.
 Student: Bullfight.
 Student: A fish being caught.
 Student: A skunk.
 Student: A horse.
 Student: A charging elephant.
 Student: A fox hunt on horseback.
 Student: Rodeo.
 Student: Porcupine.
 Teacher: Does anyone know where we are?
 Student: We're trying to put personality into Eric, trying to make him more original.
 13. Teacher: All right. Which of all the things you just thought of do you think would make the most exciting Direct Analogy? (Class chooses the bullfight.)
 Teacher: Now we go back to Eric. How can we get the bullfight to describe Eric for us? Does anyone know what I mean by that?
 14. (Class doesn't respond.)

13. Teacher ends the enumeration of direct analogies. Again he has the student select one but he gives the criteria, "Which of all the things you just thought of do you think would make the most exciting direct analogy?"

14. Students are not into the analogy of the bullfight yet.

15. Teacher: All right. What do we know about a bullfight?
 Student: He'll have to be the bull or the matador. I say he's the bull.
 Student: Bull runs into the ring and he's surrounded by strangeness.
 Student: They stick things into him and goad him...
 Student: ...from horses and from the ground.
 Student: But sometimes he doesn't get killed.
 Student: And every time the bull is downgraded the crowd yells.
 16. Teacher: What happens at the end?
 Student: They drag him off with horses.
 Teacher: How do they finish him off?
 Student: A short sword.

15. Teacher gets students to explore the characteristics of the bullfight, the analogy.
 16. Teacher tries to obtain more information about the analogy.

17. Teacher: How can we use this information to tell us something about Eric? How will you talk about Eric in terms of the material we've developed about a bullfight?
 Student: He's the bull.
 Student: He's the matador.
 Student: If he's the bull, then the matador is society.
 Teacher: Why don't you write something about Eric in terms of the bullfight? Talk about his personality and the outward signs of it. The reader opens your story about Eric, and he reads. It is your reader's first introduction to Eric.
 (Three-minute pause for students to write.)
 Teacher: All finished? All right, let's read your stuff, from left to right.

(Here are a few examples of students' writing.)

Student: In rage, running against a red neon flag and blinded by its shadow, Eric threw himself down on the ground. As if they were going to

fall off, blood throbbled in his ears. No use fighting anymore. The knife wound in his side; the metallic jeers that hurt worse than the knife; the flash of uniforms and the flushed faces of the crowd made him want to vomit all over their clean robes.

Student: He stood there in middle of the street staring defiantly at the crowd. Faces leered back at him. Scornful eyes, huge red mouths, twisted laughs; Eric looked back as the crowd approached and drew his hand up sharply as one man began to speak. "Pipe down kid. We don't want any of your nonsense."

Student: He was enclosed in a ring, people cheering all around for his enemy. He has been trained all his life to go out and take what he wanted and now there was an obstacle in his course. Society was bearing down and telling him he was all wrong. He must go to them and he was becoming confused. People should cheer at the matador.

Student: The matador hunts his prey. His claim to glory is raised by the approving approval of the crowd. For although they brought all their holiday finery, the bull is goaded, and the matador smiles complacently. You are but my instrument and I hold the sword.²¹

The media for creative expression are numerous. The products of Synectics need not remain conceptual and verbal. Students can "build" the window, paint the picture, design the city (while actually manipulating their concrete analogues), redo the script, film or picture, re-enact the role-play, or change one's behavior. Creativity applies to feelings, actions, pictures, and concrete objects as well as words! It is important, however, for the learner and the teacher to have the student's initial conception on some identifiable form. That is, discussion, painting, role-playing, and/or writing should take place before and after the metaphoric experience. In this way, the individual's new insights or understanding are externalized for his recognition.

MODEL

SYNTAX

Synectics principles, as we have seen, can be used in several ways. In developing a Model of Teaching we have made some adaptations in the format by distinguishing two instructional strategies with differing objectives, each having its own syntax and principles of reactions. However, the heart of both strategies is still the metaphorical mechanism. Strategy One is referred to as Exploring the Unfamiliar. Its objective is to help the student better understand and internalize new information by comparing and contrasting a familiar analogy to the unfamiliar material. In this strategy, Phase One is the substantive input. In Phase Two the teacher or students suggest a direct analogy. Phase Three involves being the familiar analogy (personal analogy). In Phase Four the students make connections between

the analogy and the substantive material and then explain the connections. That is, they identify and explain the points of similarity. Next, Phase Five, they examine the differences between analogies. As a measure of their understanding of the new information, the students can suggest and analyze their own familiar analogies.

Strategy Two is called Creating Something New. As its title suggests, the objective is to produce something newer, a more creative viewpoint, a new product, a solution to a social problem. Unlike Strategy One, the metaphorical mechanism is not used for analysis but for creating conceptual distance. In Phase One the students are asked to describe the condition or problem as they now see it. In Phase Two the teacher states the task. Phases Three through Five include the rotation of analogies through the cycle of direct analogy, personal analogy, and compressed conflict. This may be repeated as many times as necessary. In Phase Six the students move back into the original task; how is the original problem looked at now?

PRINCIPLES OF REACTION

The training agent guides himself by noting the extent to which individuals seem to be tied to regularized channels or patterns of thinking and he manipulates among and within the operational mechanisms in order to induce psychological states more likely to generate a creative response. In addition, he must display a use of the non-rational himself to encourage the reluctant student to indulge in a play-of-fancy; the use of irrelevance, fantasy, symbolism, and other devices which are necessary in order to break out of his channels of thinking. The teacher as exemplar is probably an essential of the method. Consequently, he has to learn to accept the bizarre and the unusual. He must be acceptant of all student responses in order to ensure that students feel no external judgment on their creative expression. The more difficult the problem is to solve, or seems to be, the more it is necessary for him to accept far-fetched analogies in order to help individuals break sets, and develop fresh perspectives on problems.

In Strategy Two, the teacher guards against premature analyses. He also reflects the students' problem-solving behavior to them by clarifying and summarizing the progress of the learning activity.

Social System

The model is moderately structured with the teacher initiating the sequence and guiding the use of the operational mechanisms. He also helps the students intellectualize their mental processes. The students, however, have a good deal of freedom in their open-ended discussions as they engage in the metaphorical problem-solving. Norms of cooperation, "play of fancy," and intellectual and emotional equality are essential to establishing the setting for creative problem-solving. The rewards are internal. They come from the students' satisfaction and pleasure with the learning activity.

²¹ Gordon, *The Metaphorical Way of Learning and Knowing*, pp. 7-11.

The group needs most of all facilitation by a leader competent in Synectics procedures. It also needs, in the case of scientific problems, a laboratory in which it can build models and other devices to make problems concrete and to permit practical invention to take place. In general also, it needs a work space which it can regard as its own, and an environment in which creativity will be prized and utilized.

In a classroom, all of these solutions can probably be brought about, except that a classroom-sized group is probably somewhat large for many of the kinds of activity which are necessary. Hence, smaller groups would have to be created for the purpose of Synectics training.

APPLICABILITY OF THE MODEL

The method of Synectics has been explicitly designed to improve the creativity of individuals and groups. However, the implicit learning from this model is equally vivid. Participation in a Synectics group invariably creates a unique shared experience that fosters interpersonal understanding and sense of community. Members learn a great deal about one another as each person reacts to the common event in his unique way. Individuals become acutely aware of their dependence on the various perceptions of each member of the group. Each thought, no matter how prosaic, is valued for its potential catalytic effect on one's own. Synectics procedures manifest a community of equals in which simply having a thought is the sole basis for status. This norm and that of playfulness quickly give support to even the most timid participant.

Synectics procedures may be used with students in all areas of the curriculum, the sciences as well as the arts. In addition, they are useful for gaining new insights into human behavior and social problems and for reaching deeper levels of understanding into the dynamics of personality and interpersonal relationships.

Synectics procedures can be implemented in both the interactive teaching situation and in materials-mediated learning experience. However, because Synectics is a process whose creative richness is often supported and produced from the emergent ideas of the group, the interactive teaching situation may be preferable. It permits the teacher to update the programming and feed-back to the students: "Come on; you are not putting yourself into this object. Let's talk about what it feels like to be a tractor, not how you look." Dynamic feedback and self-correction are not possible with Synectics materials.

Synectics principles have also been applied at the curricular level. They have governed the selection and sequence of the content. For instance, Gordon has developed a sixth-grade textbook integrating biology, history,

arithmetic, and music. Particular units employing Synectics exercises were designed. One compares the settlement of American colonies with the musical development of Beethoven's "Fifth Symphony"; another gets the student to draw comparisons among volcanoes, the American Revolution, and the development of numbers.²²

Our student-teachers have worked quite successfully and enthusiastically with Synectics procedures in the classroom. They have found it especially suited to creative writing. Strategy Two seems especially applicable to children of all age levels with one note of caution. Moving back into the original condition or problem requires analytical thinking, an activity which is beyond the capacity of very young children. Although the final product has always been more creative than the original (it is quite useful to both students and teachers to have a tangible basis for comparison), the magnitude of creativity probably varies with analytical ability. We have also found that most students are quite unused to "play-of-fancy." It is probably best to move into a Synectics model gradually, first spending a few days on stretching exercises.

INSTRUCTIONAL AND NURTURANT VALUES

As shown in Figure 14-1, the Synectics Model contains strong elements of both types of values. Through his belief that creative process can be made clear and communicable and that it can be improved through direct training, Gordon is led to the development of specific instructional techniques (as contrasted to those who feel that creativity is mysterious, personal, and can only be taught indirectly). On the other hand, Gordon emphasizes a social environment which encourages creativity and uses group

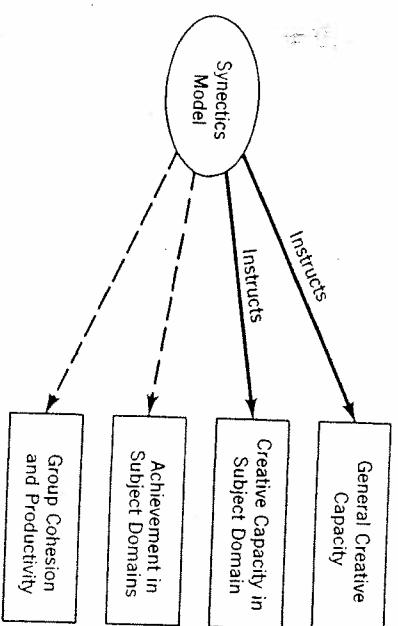


Figure 14-1

²² William J. J. Gordon, *Making It Whole* (Boston: Synectics Incorporated, 1968).

AWARENESS TRAINING

A Model to Increase Human Awareness

cohesion to generate energy which enables the participants to function interdependently in a metaphoric world. Synectics is applied not only to the development of general creative power but also to the development of creative responses over a variety of subject-matter domains. Gordon clearly believes that the creative energy will enhance learning in these areas.

TABLE 14-1 Summary Chart: Synectics Model

Syntax:

Strategy One: Exploring the Unfamiliar

<i>Phase One</i>	<i>Phase Two</i>	<i>Phase Three</i>
Substantive Input. Teacher provides information on new topic.	Direct Analogy. Teacher suggests direct analogy and asks students to describe the analogy.	Personal Analogy. Teacher gets students to "be the direct analogy."
<i>Phase Four</i> Comparing the Analogies. Student identifies and explains the points of similarity between the new material and the direct analogy.	<i>Phase Five</i> Explaining the Differences. Student explains where the analogy doesn't fit.	<i>Phase Six</i> Exploration. Students re-explore the original topic on its own terms.
<i>Phase Seven</i> Generating Analogy. Students can provide their own direct analogy and explore the similarities and differences.	<i>Phase Two: Creating Something New</i>	
<i>Phase One</i> Description of Present Condition. Teacher gets students' description of situation as they now see it.	<i>Phase Two</i> Problem Statement and Task Definition. Teacher states problem and defines task.	<i>Phase Three</i> Direct Analogy. Students suggest direct analogies, select one, and explore (describe) it further.
<i>Phase Four</i> Personal Analogy. Students "be the analogy" they selected in Phase Three.	<i>Phase Five</i> Compressed Conflict. Students take their descriptions from Phases Three and Four and make a compressed conflict.	<i>Phase Six</i> Direct Analogy. Students generate and select another direct analogy based on the compressed conflict.
<i>Phase Seven</i> Reconsider Original Task. Teacher gets students to move back to original task or problem utilizing last analogy and/or entire synectics experience.		

Recent years have seen an explosion of interest in freeing the human being to develop more fully, particularly in helping human beings to develop more possibilities for fulfillment in interpersonal relations. For many, this quest begins with a recognition that most of us are only shadows of what we could be, and that somehow we have surrounded ourselves with invisible chains which keep us from reaching out and becoming more than we are. While there has been much attention to physical development, emotional development, personal expression, and other forms of individual development, it is in the interpersonal realm that the movement has found its fullest expression. This may be because many of those interested in expanding personal awareness have used interpersonal training methods even when they are concerned with personal development, or it may simply be that the interpersonal realm is more clear than the other possibilities. In any event, we have chosen to focus on a model described by William Schutz, especially in *FIRO: A Three-Dimensional Theory of Interpersonal Behavior* and more recently in *Joy: Expanding Human Awareness*, which emphasizes interpersonal training as a means of increasing awareness or joy (defined as the feeling that one is fulfilling one's potential).¹

Since many of the therapists and educators who have been concerned

¹ William Schutz, *FIRO: A Three-Dimensional Theory of Interpersonal Behavior* (New York: Holt, Rinehart & Winston, 1958); *Joy: Expanding Human Awareness* (New York: Grove Press, 1967).

Suggested Activity 5: “Torah” in the Torah

1. Translating “Torah”

Adapted from a lesson by Jocee Hudson, 2005.

2. Definition of *torah*

Brown, F., S. Driver, and C. Briggs. *The Brown-Driver-Briggs Hebrew and English Lexicon*. Peabody: Hendrickson, 2001.

Translating “Torah”

Exodus 12:49

There shall be one **torah** for the citizen and for the stranger who dwells among you.

Leviticus 6:18

Speak to Aaron and his sons thus: This is the **torah** of the sin offering: the sin offering shall be slaughtered before Adonai, at the spot where the burnt offering is slaughtered: it is most holy.

Deuteronomy 31:26

Take this book of **torah** and place it beside the Ark of the Covenant of Adonai your God, and let it remain there as a witness against you.

Isaiah 2:3

And the many peoples shall go and say: “Come, Let us go up to the Mount of Adonai, To the House of the God of Jacob; That He may instruct us in His ways, And that we may walk in His paths.” For **torah** shall come forth from Zion, The word of Adonai from Jerusalem.

Proverbs 6:20

My son, keep your father’s commandment; Do not forsake your mother’s **torah**.

Nehemiah 8:1

The entire people assembled as one man in the square before the Water Gate, and they asked Ezra the scribe to bring the scroll of the **torah** of Moses with which Adonai had charged Israel.

⊗ וְיִנְיָם, see Ges^{176(2) e}; *Imv.* ירה 2 K 13¹⁷; *Inf.* abs. ירה Ex 19¹³; cstr. ליר(ו)ת ψ 11² 64⁵; *Pt.* ירה Pr 26¹⁸; pl. יורים 1 Ch 10³; ירים 2 Ch 35²³; — 1. *throw, cast*, with acc.: cast lots Jos 18⁶ (E); army into (י) the sea Ex 15⁴ (song). 2. *cast (=lay, set)*, corner-stone Jb 38⁶; pillar Gn 31³¹ (E; v. Zinj. supr.) 3. *shoot arrows*, abs. Ex 19¹³(E) 2 K 13¹⁷; acc. of arrows 1 S 20^{36,37} Pr 26¹⁸; acc. pers. Nu 21³⁰ (song, E) ψ 64⁵; with ל pers. 11²; יורים(ו) archers 1 Ch 10³ 2 Ch 35²³. 4. *throw water, rain*: Ho 6³, but v. יורה early rain (cf. Hiph. 3). **Niph. Impf.** יורה shot through (with arrows) Ex 19¹³ (E). **Hiph. Pf.** 3 ms. sf. הרני Jb 30¹⁹ (הרני Baer); הורה; 2 K 12³; הורהתי ψ 119¹⁰²; 1 S הורהתי Ex 4¹⁵ 1 S 12²³; sf. הרהיך Pr 4¹¹; הרהיך Ex 4¹²; *Impf.* יורה ψ 25⁸ + 5 t.; 2 K 13¹⁷ (for this and other forms see Ges^{176(2) e}); ירהני Pr 4¹¹; יורני Ju 13³ + 2 t.; ירני ψ 25¹² Is 28²⁶; יורהני Ex 15²⁵; ירהם 2 K 17²⁷ ψ 64⁸; 2 f. sf. הורהך ψ 45⁵; הורהך Jb 12^{7,8}; 2 m. sf. הורהם 1 K 8³⁶ = 2 Ch 6²⁷; 1 s. אורה 1 S 20²⁰ Jb 27¹¹; sf. אורהך ψ 32⁸; 3 mpl. יורה Dt 24⁸ + 3 t.; ירה 2 S 11²⁰ 2 Ch 35²³; יורהך ψ 64⁵; יורהך Dt 17¹⁰ + 2 t.; *Imv.* sf. הרני Jb 34³²; הורהך ψ 27¹¹ + 2 t.; pl. sf. הורהני Jb 6²⁴; *Inf. cstr.* הורת Gn 46²⁸ + 3 t.; הורהם Ex 24¹²; *Pt.* מורה 1 S 20³⁶ + 5 t.; מרה Pr 6¹³; pl. מורים 1 S 31³ + 2 t.; sf. מרהיך Pr 5¹⁰; מורהיך Is 30^{20,20}; — 1. *throw, cast*, with ל into the mire Jb 30¹⁹. 2. *shoot (arrows)* 1 S 20^{20,36} 2 S 11²⁰ 2 K 13¹⁷ 19³² = Is 37³³; with ל, of pers. 2 Ch 35²³; acc. pers. ψ 64^{5,8}; מורים archers 1 S 31^{3,3} 1 Ch 10³. 3. *throw water, rain*: יורה יורהם Ho 10¹² and rain righteousness for you (Thes al. under 5); hence מורה early rain (cf. Qal 4). 4. *point out, shew*: להורה לפני גשנה Gn 46²⁸ (J) to point out before him (the way) to Goshen; מרה באצבעותיו Pr 6¹³ pointing out with his fingers; acc. pers. et rei Ex 15²⁵ (JE) ψ 45⁵ Jb 6²⁴. 5. *direct, teach, instruct*: a. of men, abs. Bezalel in handicraft Ex 35³⁴(P); c. acc. pers., a father his son Pr 4¹; the ancients Job Jb 8¹⁰; the animals and the earth, the friends of Job 12^{7,8}; c. 2 acc. Is 28⁹; ברהך in the way 1 S 12²³ ψ 25⁸ 32⁸ Pr 4¹¹; ברהאל concerning the hand of El Jb 27¹¹. — שקר מורה teaching lies is used of prophet Is 9¹⁴. b. specially of the authoritative direction (v. הורה) given by priests on matters of ceremonial observance, with acc. rei and ל pers. Dt 33¹⁰ (song), they teach thy judgments to Jacob, and thy direction (law) to Israel; double acc. 17^{10,11} according to the direction, wherewith they direct thee; 24⁸ (on

leprosy), Lv 10¹¹ (P), abs. 14⁵⁷ (P), 2 Ch 15³ אתרעמי ירו Ez 44²³ the Zadokite priests פהן מורה; בין קנש להל Mi 3¹¹ the priests give such 'direction' for hire; less technically, of Moses Ex 24¹² (E), of Jehoiada 2 K 12³, of the Samaritan priests 2 K 17^{27,28}. c. of God: c. acc. pers. Is 28²⁶ ψ 119¹⁰²; double acc. Ex 4^{12,15} (J), Ju 13⁸ Jb 34³² 1 K 8³⁶ (= אל הרהך 2 Ch 6²⁷), ψ 27¹¹ 86¹¹ 119³³; acc. pers. ברהך ψ 25¹²; מרהך of his ways Is 2³ = Mi 4². d. of idol-image Hb 2¹⁸ (מורה שקר), v¹⁹.

† יורה n.pr.m. בני one of the families of the restoration Ezr 2¹⁸ (⊗ Ουρα, Ιωρα) = קריף Ne 7²⁴ (⊗ Απειφ).

† יורה n.[m.] early rain, which falls in Palestine from the last of October until the first of December, opp. מלקוש: Dt 11¹⁴ Je 5²⁴ Ho 6³ (where MT makes יו Pt., or Hiph. Impf., but v. We); cf. also 1. מורה. Vid. further Rob BR 1, 429 f. Chaplin PEF 1883, 8 ff. Klein ZPV iv, 72 f.

† I. מורה n.m. v^{84,7} (early) rain (cf. יורה); — Jo 2²³ (|| מלקוש, גשם) v²³ (del. We), ψ 84⁷.

† II. מורה n.m. Is 30.20 teacher; — abs. in אלון מרה Gn 12⁶ (J) = אלוני מרה Dt 11³⁰ (Sam ⊗ אלון), the teacher's terebinth (see אלון) near Shechem; cf. הפועה המורה Ju 7¹ teacher's hill near the plain of Jezreel, prob. Little Hermon, Nebi Dah Bd Pal 244; the terebinth being a holy tree from which divine teaching was given, and the hill of the teacher the seat of a holy place whence divine teaching was given; see also (of God) Jb 36²²; here belong prob. likewise מרה Pr 5¹³, and מרהיך Is 30^{20,20}.

† תורה n.f. Dt 1.5 direction, instruction, law (poss. in first instance from casting lots, We G 1, 410; H 394 (less confidently We Skizzen III, 167), SS Sm AT Rel. Gesch. 36 Benz Arch. 408 Now Arch. II, 97, opp. by Kö Offenb. II, 347 Baud Priesterthum 207); — ת, Ex 12⁴⁹ + 88 t.; cstr. תורה Ex 13⁹ + 65 t.; sfs. תורהיך ψ 78¹ + 16 t.; תורהיך Je 32²³; תורה 44²³ + 34 t. sfs.; pl. תורות Ne 9¹³; תורה Is 24⁵ + 2 t.; sf. תורהיך Ez 44²⁴; תורתו 43¹¹ 44⁵ + 5 t. sfs.; — 1. *instruction*: a. human: of a mother Pr 1⁸ 6^{20,23}; of a father 3¹ 4² 7²; of sages 13¹⁴ 28^{4,4,7,9} 29¹⁸; of a poet ψ 78¹; תורהיך kind instruction (of a wise wife) Pr 31²⁶. b. divine || אמרים Jb 22²²; through his servants Is 30⁸ Je 8⁸; || אמרה Is 5²⁴; || דבר Is 1¹⁰; || תעורה 8^{16,20}; || חוון La 2⁹; pl. תורות Dn 9¹⁰. c. a body of prophetic (or sometimes perh. priestly) teaching Is 42^{21,24} Je 9¹² 16¹¹; in the heart Is 51⁷

3139

3138

4175

4175

4176

8451-52

4175

דְּבָרִים || 89³¹ ψ משפטים || Hb 1⁴ משפט || 37³¹ 40⁸ ψ
 Je 6¹⁹ 26⁴ Zc 7¹² || חקים Am 2⁴ || חקות Je 44^{10,20};
 myriads of precepts Ho 8¹². **d. instruction in**
Messianic age Is 2³ = Mi 4⁴, Is 42⁴ 51⁴ Je 31³³.
e. a body of priestly direction or instruction
 relating to sacred things Ho 4⁶ Je 2⁸ 18¹⁸ Ez 7²⁶
 Hag 2¹¹ Mal 2^{6,7,8,9} Zp 3⁴ Ez 22²⁶; || תורה ||
 לא תורה 2 Ch 15³. **2. law (prop. direction):**
 viz. **a.** of special laws, sg. of Feast of Massoth
 Ex 13⁹ (J), sabbath 16⁴ (J); of direction given
 by priests in partic. case Dt 17¹¹; of statutes
 of priest's code Ex 12⁴⁰ (P), Lv 6^{2,7,18} 7^{1,7,11,37} 11⁴⁶
 12⁷ 13⁵⁹ 14^{2,32,54,57} 15³² Nu 5^{28,30} 6^{13,21,21} 15^{16,29} 19^{2,14}
 31²¹ (P); || תורה הַתּוֹרָה Ez 43^{12,12}; || לְמִצְוָה 2 Ch
 19¹⁰; pl. תורות laws, || חקים Ex 18^{16,20} (E); of
 decisions in civil cases given by Moses, ψ 105⁴⁶;
 || חקים Ex 16²⁸ (J); || מצות, מצותות Gn 26⁵ (J); || חקים
 משפטים Lv 26⁴⁶ (H); || ברית חק Is 24⁵; || משפטים
 חקים Ne 9¹³; the laws of the new temple
 Ez 43¹¹ 44^{5,24}; those laws in which men should
 walk Je 32²⁹ (Kt). **b. of codes of law, (1)**
 as written in the code of the covenant, || המצוה
 Ex 24¹² (E); || ספר תורת אלהים Jos 24²⁶ (E); prob.
 also Dt 33⁴; || משפטים v¹⁰, || ברית Ho 8¹ ψ 78¹⁰,
 || ערות v⁵; (2) the law of the Deuteronomic code,
 in D and Deuteronomic sections of Kings and
 sources of Chr., התורה הַתּוֹרָה Dt 1⁵ 4^{5,44} 17¹⁸ 31^{9,11};
 27²⁶ 31²⁴ + כל 17¹⁹ 27^{3,8} 28⁵⁶ 29²⁸
 ספר התורה הוּוּהוּ 28⁶¹; ספר הַתּוֹרָה הוּוּהוּ
 29²⁰ 30¹⁰ 31²⁶ Jos 1⁸; ספר התורה 8³⁴ 2 K 22⁸ =
 2 Ch 34¹⁹; דברי התורה Jos 8³⁴ 2 K 23²⁴; so התורה
 Jos 1⁷, similarly 22⁵ 2 K 17^{3,34,37}
 21⁸; ספר תורת משה (ספר) Jos 8^{31,32} 23⁶ 1 K 2³ 2 K 14⁶
 דְּבָרֵי סֵפֶר הַתּוֹרָה 2 Ch 25⁴, 2 K 23²⁹; ספר הַתּוֹרָה
 2 K 22¹¹ = דְּבָרֵי הַתּוֹרָה 2 Ch 34¹⁹; דְּבָרֵי הַתּוֹרָה
 2 K 10³¹. It is probable that ת in ψ 1²² 94¹² and
 some other parts of Chr., e.g. 1 Ch 22¹² 2 Ch 6¹⁶
 (= 1 K 8²⁵ without ת), refers to Deuteronomic
 code. (3) other passages of Chr. may refer to
 code of D, but most of them certainly refer to
 the law of the Priests' code. The same is true of
 Mal Dn and late ψψ. The phrases are: (ספר)
 2 Ch 23¹⁸ 30¹⁶ Ezr 3² 7⁶ Ne 8¹ Mal 3²²
 Dn 9^{11,13}; ספר תורת יהוה (ספר) Ezr 7¹⁰ Ne 9³ 1 Ch 16⁴⁰
 2 Ch 12¹ 17⁹ 31^{3,4} 34¹⁴ 35²⁶ ψ 19⁸ 119¹; (ספר)
 דְּבָרֵי הַתּוֹרָה Ne 8¹⁸ 10^{29,30}; ספר הַתּוֹרָה Ne 8^{27,14}
 v^{9,13}; התורה 2 Ch 14³ 31²¹ 33⁸ Ezr 10³ Ne 8^{27,14}
 10^{35,37} 12⁴⁴ 13³; פִּיךָ 2 Ch 19⁷²; תורתך Ne 9^{26,29,34}
 Dn 9¹¹ ψ 119^{18,29,34,44,51,55,55,61,70,77,85,92,97,109,113,126,136,142}.
 150,153,163,165,174, תורה (indef.) חקים || Ne 9¹⁴.
3. custom, manner: תורת האדם 2 S 7¹⁹ the manner
 of man, not of God, i.e. deal with me as man
 with man, Thes, law for man RV, but Ew

Gesch. III. 189 reads (וּתְרַאֲנִי) hast shewed me
 generations of men; so We Dr.—On ת further Dr on Dt 1¹⁰ 24³ 33¹⁰ and reff.

† יוֹרֵי (= יוֹרֵיָהּ whom Yah teacheth) n.pr.m. 3140
 chief of the tribe of Gad 1 Ch 5¹³, Ⓞ Ιωρεε.

† יְרוּסָאֵל (founded of El) n.pr.loc. 3385
 2 Ch 20¹⁶, Ⓞ Ιερυσάλ, not identified, prob. part of
 wilderness of Judah, near Ziz (Wady Hūsāsah).

† יְרוּסָאֵל (= יְרוּסָאֵל) n.pr.m. chief of tribe 3400
 of Issachar, 1 Ch 7², Ⓞ Ρευθα, Ιερηθα; Ⓞ Ι.
 Ιαρουθα.

† יְרִיָהּ 1 Ch 23¹⁹ 24²³, יְרִיָהּ 26³¹ n.pr.m. 3404
 (cf. יְרִיָאֵל) chief of one of the Levitical courses,
 Ⓞ Ιδουδ, Ιερια, Ιεδδυ, Ιεδειμος, etc.

† [יְרִיָהּ] vb. only Qal Impf. 3 mpl. תרהו 7207
 Is 44⁸ (van d. H. Baer, but prob. תרהו si vera l.,
 so Thes): ? be stupefied (cf. Ar. یرى, Thes al.),
 but Frey fatuus et stolidus fuit; < Ew al.
 who rd. יראו הוּוּהוּ (פחד ||).

† יְרוּשָׁלַיִם, יְרוּשָׁלַיִם n.pr.loc. Jerusalem 3389
 (in As. Ursalim, Tel Amarna, Zim 2A, 1801, 252, 254,
 Ursalimnu. COT^{Gloss.}; Ⓞ Ιερουσαλημ; ✓ and
 mng. dub.; Rel Ew al. der. fr. ירוש שלם possession
 of peace (or Salem's possession); Thes al.
 fr. ירה, i.e. ירוש + שלם a foundation of peace; Grill
 ZAW, 1884, 134 ff. foundation of Shalem (Sh. = God
 of peace, = ש); but name not certainly Hebr.;
 acc. to Sayce Acad. Feb. 7, 1891, 138; Higher Crit. 176
 (opposed by Zim 2A, 1891, 283), Jastr. JEL xi, 1892, 105 = Uru
 (city) + Salim, n.pr.div.);—usu. יְרוּשָׁלַיִם (Qr per-
 petuum), Jos 10³⁰ +; יְרוּשָׁלַיִם 1 S 17⁵⁴ +;
 5 t. acc. to Mas. (vid. Frensdorff^{Mass. Magna}, 293), viz.
 Je 26¹⁸ 1 Ch 3⁵ 2 Ch 25¹ 32⁹ (c. ה loc.), Est 2⁶,
 (but יְרוּשָׁלַיִם 1 Ch 3⁵ van d. H. Baer), so Maccab.
 coins, Levy Gesch. d. Jüd. Münz. 421.; c. ה loc. יְרוּשָׁלַיִם
 1 K 10² Is 36² Ez 8¹; יְרוּשָׁלַיִם 2 Ch 32⁹ supr.);
 יְרוּשָׁלַיִם 2 K 9²⁸; with prefixes: בְּיְרוּשָׁלַיִם 2 S 9¹³ +;
 יְרוּשָׁלַיִם 2 K 18²² +; בְּיְרוּשָׁלַיִם 2 S 15¹¹ +; יְרוּשָׁלַיִם
 23¹ +;—Jerusalem, renowned as capital of all
 Israel, afterwards of southern kingdom, seat of
 central worship in temple, first named as city
 of Canaanite Adoni-Sedek † Jos 10^{1,3,5,23} (all
 JE), cf. 12¹⁰ (D); inhabited by Jebusites Jos
 15^{63,63} (P), Ju 1^{21,21}, cf. v⁷ (Adoni-Bezek); identif.
 with יבוס Ju 19¹⁰, and יְבוּסִי (q.v.) Jos 15⁸ 18²⁸
 (both P); captured by Judah Ju 1⁸; first named
 in connexion with David 1 S 17⁵⁴ +; taken pos-

Suggested Activity 6: The Dichotomy of Oral and Written

1. Deuteronomy 31:19
2. Joshua 1:8
3. Ezekiel 3:1
4. Nehemiah 8
5. 2 Chronicles 17:9
6. Introduction to *Oral World and Written Word*.
Niditch, Susan. *Oral World and Written Word*. Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 1996.

Deuteronomy 31:19

ספר דברים: לא:יט

יט וְעַתָּה כְּתֹב לְךָ אֶת־הַשִּׁירָה הַזֹּאת וְלַמָּדָה אֶת־בְּנֵי־יִשְׂרָאֵל
שִׁמְנָה בְּפִיהֶם לְמַעַן תִּהְיֶה־לִּי הַשִּׁירָה הַזֹּאת לְעֵד בְּבִנְיַי־יִשְׂרָאֵל:

¹⁹ Therefore, write down this poem and teach it to the people of Israel; put it in their mouths, in order that this poem may be My witness against the people of Israel.

Joshua 1:8

ספר יהושע: א:ח

ח לֹא-יָמוּשׁ סֵפֶר הַתּוֹרָה הַזֶּה מִפִּיךָ וְהִגִּיתָ בוֹ יוֹמָם וְלַיְלָה לְמַעַן
תִּשְׁמַר לַעֲשׂוֹת כְּכֹל-הַכְּתוּב בּוֹ כִּי-אָז תִּצְלִיחַ אֶת-דְּרָכֶךָ וְאָז תִּשְׁכַּל:

⁸ Let not this Book of the Teaching cease from your lips, but recite it day and night, so that you may observe faithfully all that is written in it. Only then will you prosper in your undertakings and only then will you be successful.

Ezekiel 3:1

ספר יחזקאל: ג:א
א וַיֹּאמֶר אֵלַי בְּוֹ-אָדָם אֶת אֲשֶׁר-תִּמְצָא אֶכֹּל אֶכֹּל אֶת-הַמְּגִלָּה
הַזֹּאת וְלֵךְ דַּבֵּר אֶל-בֵּית יִשְׂרָאֵל:

¹ He said to me, "Mortal, eat what is offered you; eat this scroll, and go speak to the House of Israel."

Nehemiah 8

ספר נחמיה: ח

א וַיֹּאסְפוּ כָּל־הָעָם כְּאִישׁ אֶחָד אֶל־הֶרְחוֹב אֲשֶׁר לִפְנֵי שַׁעַר־הַמַּיִם
וַיֹּאמְרוּ לְעִזְרָא הַסֹּפֵר לְהַבִּיא אֶת־סֵפֶר תּוֹרַת מֹשֶׁה אֲשֶׁר־צִוָּה יְהוָה
אֶת־יִשְׂרָאֵל: ב וַיְבִיא עִזְרָא הַכֹּהֵן אֶת־הַתּוֹרָה לִפְנֵי הַקְּהָל מֵאִישׁ
וְעַד־אִשָּׁה וְכָל מִבֵּין לְשִׁמְעַע בְּיוֹם אֶחָד לַחֲדָשׁ הַשְּׁבִיעִי: ג וַיִּקְרָא־בּוֹ
לִפְנֵי הֶרְחוֹב אֲשֶׁר | לִפְנֵי שַׁעַר־הַמַּיִם מִן־הָאוֹר עַד־מַחְצִית הַיּוֹם נִגְדוּ
הָאֲנָשִׁים וְהַנְּשִׂים וְהַמְּבִינִים וְאֲזָנֵי כָּל־הָעָם אֶל־סֵפֶר הַתּוֹרָה:
ד וַיַּעֲמֵד עִזְרָא הַסֹּפֵר עַל־מַגְדֵּל־עֵץ אֲשֶׁר עָשׂוּ לַדָּבָר וַיַּעֲמֵד אֶצְלוֹ
מִתְתַּיָּה וְשִׁמְעַע וְעֵנְיָה וְאוּרִיָּה וְחַלְקִיָּה וּמַעֲשִׂיָּה עַל־יְמִינוֹ וּמִשְׁמָאֵלוֹ
פְּדִיָּה וּמִישָׂאֵל וּמִלְכִּיָּה וְחִשָּׁם וְחִשְׁבַּדְנָה זְכַרְיָה מִשְׁלָם: ה וַיִּפְתַּח
עִזְרָא הַסֹּפֵר לְעֵינֵי כָּל־הָעָם כִּי־מַעַל כָּל־הָעָם הָיָה וּכְפָתְחוּ עַמּוּדוֹ
כָּל־הָעָם: ו וַיְבַרְךְ עִזְרָא אֶת־יְהוָה הָאֱלֹהִים הַגָּדוֹל וַיַּעֲנוּ כָּל־הָעָם
אָמֵן | אָמֵן בְּמַעַל יְדֵיהֶם וַיִּקְדּוּ וַיִּשְׁתַּחֲוּוּ לַיהוָה אֲפִים אֲרָצָה: ז וַיִּשְׁוַע
וּבְנֵי וְשֹׂרְבֵיָה | יָמִין עֲקוֹב שִׁבְתֵּי | הוֹדִיָּה מַעֲשִׂיָּה קְלִיטָא עֲזַרְיָה יוֹזְבֵד
חֲנַן פְּלֹאִיָּה וְהַלּוּיִם מְבִינִים אֶת־הָעָם לַתּוֹרָה וְהָעָם עַל־עַמּוּדָם:
ח וַיִּקְרָאוּ בַסֵּפֶר בְּתוֹרַת הָאֱלֹהִים מִפְּרֹשׁ וּשְׁוֹם שְׁכָל וַיְבִינוּ בַמִּקְרָא:
ט וַיֹּאמֶר נְחֻמְיָה הוּא הַתַּרְשֵׁתָא וְעִזְרָא הַכֹּהֵן | הַסֹּפֵר וְהַלּוּיִם
הַמְּבִינִים אֶת־הָעָם לְכָל־הָעָם הַיּוֹם קֹדֶשׁ־הוּא לַיהוָה אֱלֹהֵיכֶם
אֶל־תִּתְאָבְלוּ וְאֶל־תִּבְכוּ כִּי בּוֹכִים כָּל־הָעָם כְּשִׁמְעָם אֶת־דְּבַר־י
הַתּוֹרָה: י וַיֹּאמֶר לָהֶם לִכּוּ אֲכָלוּ מִשְׁמַנִּים וּשְׁתּוּ מִמִּתְקִים וּשְׁלַחוּ
מְנוֹת לְאִין נָכוֹן לוֹ כִּי־קִדּוּשׁ הַיּוֹם לְאֲדַנְיָנוּ וְאֶל־תַּעֲצִבוּ כִּי־חֲדוֹת
יְהוָה הִיא מַעֲזֹכֶם: יא וְהַלּוּיִם מַחֲשִׂים לְכָל־הָעָם לֵאמֹר הִסּוּ כִּי־הַיּוֹם
קִדֵּשׁ וְאֶל־תַּעֲצִבוּ: יב וַיִּלְכוּ כָּל־הָעָם לֶאֱכֹל וּלְשִׁתּוֹת וּלְשַׁלַּח מְנוֹת
וּלְעֲשׂוֹת שְׂמֵחָה גְדוֹלָה כִּי הִבִּינוּ בְּדַבְרֵים אֲשֶׁר הוֹדִיעוּ לָהֶם:
יג וּבַיּוֹם הַשְּׁנִי נֹאסְפוּ רָאשֵׁי הָאָבוֹת לְכָל־הָעָם הַכֹּהֲנִים וְהַלּוּיִם
אֶל־עִזְרָא הַסֹּפֵר וּלְהַשְׁכִּיל אֶל־דְּבַר־יְהוָה: יד וַיִּמְצְאוּ כְּתוּב
בְּתוֹרָה אֲשֶׁר צִוָּה יְהוָה בְּיַד־מֹשֶׁה אֲשֶׁר יָשְׁבוּ בְנֵי־יִשְׂרָאֵל בְּסִכּוֹת בְּחָג
בַּחֲדָשׁ הַשְּׁבִיעִי: טו וְאֲשֶׁר יִשְׁמִיעוּ וַיַּעֲבִירוּ קוֹל בְּכָל־עֲרֵיָהֶם
וּבִירוּשָׁלַם לֵאמֹר צְאוּ הָהָר וְהִבִּיאוּ עֲלֵי־אִת וְעֲלֵי־עַץ שָׁמֹן וְעֲלֵי הַדָּס
וְעֲלֵי תַמְרִים וְעֲלֵי עֵץ עֵבֶת לַעֲשׂוֹת סִכַּת כְּכַתוּב: טז וַיִּצְאוּ הָעָם וַיְבִיאוּ
וַיַּעֲשׂוּ לָהֶם סִכּוֹת אִישׁ עַל־גֹּזוֹ וּבְחִצְרֵיהֶם וּבְחִצְרוֹת בֵּית הָאֱלֹהִים
וּבְרְחוֹב שַׁעַר הַמַּיִם וּבְרְחוֹב שַׁעַר אֲפְרָיִם: יז וַיַּעֲשׂוּ כָּל־הַקְּהָל
הַשְּׁבִיִם מִן־הַשְּׁבִי | סִכּוֹת וַיִּשְׁבּוּ בְּסִכּוֹת כִּי לֹא־עָשׂוּ מִימֵי יִשׁוּעַ
בּוֹנֵנוּ כֵּן בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל עַד הַיּוֹם הַהוּא וַתְּהִי שְׂמֵחָה גְדוֹלָה מְאֹד:
יח וַיִּקְרָא בַסֵּפֶר תּוֹרַת הָאֱלֹהִים יוֹם | בְּיוֹם מִן־הַיּוֹם הָרִאשׁוֹן עַד
הַיּוֹם הָאַחֲרוֹן וַיַּעֲשׂוּ־חָג שִׁבְעַת יָמִים וּבַיּוֹם הַשְּׁמִינִי עֲצַרְתָּ כַּמִּשְׁפָּט:

¹ the entire people assembled as one man in the square before the Water Gate, and they asked Ezra the scribe to bring the scroll of the Teaching of Moses with which the LORD had charged Israel. ² On the first day of the seventh month, Ezra the priest brought the Teaching before the congregation, men and women and all who could listen with understanding. ³ He read from it, facing the square before the Water Gate, from the first light until midday, to the men and the women and those who could understand; the ears of all the people were given to the scroll of the Teaching. ⁴ Ezra the scribe stood upon a wooden tower made for the purpose, and beside him stood Mattithiah, Shema, Anaiyah, Uriah, Hilkiyah, and Maaseiah at his right, and at his left Pedaiah, Mishael, Malchijah, Hashum, Hashbaddanah, Zechariah, Meshullam. ⁵ Ezra opened the scroll in the sight of all the people, for he was above all the people; as he opened it, all the people stood up. ⁶ Ezra blessed the LORD, the great God, and all the people answered, "Amen, Amen," with hands upraised. Then they bowed their heads and prostrated themselves before the LORD with their faces to the ground. ⁷ Jeshua, Bani, Sherebiah, Jamin, Akkub, Shabbethai, Hodiah, Maaseiah, Kelita, Azariah, Jozabad, Hanan, Pelaiah, and the Levites explained the Teaching to the people, while the people stood in their places. ⁸ They read from the scroll of the Teaching of God, translating it and giving the sense; so they understood the reading. ⁹ Nehemiah the Tirshatha, Ezra the priest and scribe, and the Levites who were explaining to the people said to all the people, "This day is holy to the LORD your God: you must not mourn or weep," for all the people were weeping as they listened to the words of the Teaching. ¹⁰ He further said to them, "Go, eat choice foods and drink sweet drinks and send portions to whoever has nothing prepared, for the day is holy to our Lord. Do not be sad, for your rejoicing in the LORD is the source of your strength." ¹¹ The Levites were quieting the people, saying, "Hush, for the day is holy; do not be sad." ¹² Then all the people went to eat and drink and send portions and make great merriment, for they understood the things they were told. ¹³ On the second day, the heads of the clans of all the people and the priests and Levites gathered to Ezra the scribe to study the words of the Teaching. ¹⁴ They found written in the Teaching that the LORD had commanded Moses that the Israelites must dwell in booths during the festival of the seventh month, ¹⁵ and that they must announce and proclaim throughout all their towns and Jerusalem as follows, "Go out to the mountains and bring leafy branches of olive trees, pine trees, myrtles, palms and *other* leafy trees to make booths, as it is written." ¹⁶ So the people went out and brought them, and made themselves booths on their roofs, in their courtyards, in the courtyards of the House of God, in the square of the Water Gate and in the square of the Ephraim Gate. ¹⁷ The whole community that returned from the captivity made booths and dwelt in the booths -- the Israelites had not done so from the days of Joshua son of Nun to that day -- and there was very great rejoicing. ¹⁸ He read from the scroll of the Teaching of God each day, from the first to the last day. They celebrated the festival seven days, and there was a solemn gathering on the eighth, as prescribed.

II Chronicles 17:9

ספר דברי הימים ב: ח:ט
ט וַיִּלְמְדוּ בְּיְהוּדָה וְעַמָּהֶם סֵפֶר תּוֹרַת יְהוָה וַיֵּסְבוּ בְּכָל־עָרֵי יְהוּדָה
וַיִּלְמְדוּ בָעָם:

⁹ They offered instruction throughout Judah, having with them the Book of the Teaching of the LORD. They made the rounds of all the cities of the LORD and instructed the people.

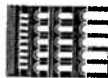
Oral World and Written Word

Ancient Israelite Literature

LIBRARY OF ANCIENT ISRAEL

Douglas A. Knight, *General Editor*

SUSAN NIDITCH



WESTMINSTER JOHN KNOX PRESS
LOUISVILLE, KENTUCKY

Introduction

We think of the Bible as a book, neatly bound, printed, read silently or quoted or studied, a set text. If we are readers of English, we may prefer the King James Version or the Revised Standard Version. The New Revised Standard Version may come to mean Bible to a new generation of readers who make its text their own.

Turning our ancestors into ourselves, we call the Israelites "people of the book" and reinforce this proverbial image of a community well versed in the skills of literacy with scholarly treatments of the last century that seek to explain the genesis of the Hebrew Bible and to explore the relationships between the literature and actual Israelites. For example, behind the documentary hypothesis associated with Julius Wellhausen but still influential today is the assumption that written layers or sources—the earliest dating back to the Davidic monarchy of the tenth century B.C.E.—underlie large portions of scripture. These written sources, it is suggested, were woven together and edited in a cumulative process of writing. Other more recent studies emphasize "intertextuality" in the Bible, one writer's quotation of another's written, fixed text. Other scholars regard large portions of scripture as the product of modern-style literati or of ancient historiographers, all of whom rely upon the resources or reflect the values of an essentially literate culture.

Neglected in all these approaches is the importance of the oral world for understanding the Bible's written words. Interesting exceptions to the dominant trends in scholarship are found in the work of various exemplars of the so-called Scandinavian school of scholarship (e.g., H. S. Nyberg, Ivan Engnell, Eduard Nielsen). While some of their suggestions are now dated and others are idiosyncratic, they did emphasize the importance of oral traditions for understanding the literature and culture of ancient Israel.¹

This study approaches anew the idea that large, perhaps dominant, threads in Israelite culture were oral, and that literacy in ancient Israel must be understood in terms of its continuity and interaction with the oral world.

What do we mean by oral culture? What do we mean by literacy in the ancient world?

Even adherents of a documentary hypothesis or proponents of a single historiographer's theory might agree that behind the written work of the Hebrew Bible are oral compositions. Images of these oral contributions to the biblical tradition, however, tend to be condescending or romanticized and frequently include an evolutionary notion whereby oral means early, primitive, and unsophisticated—prebiblical. We suggest rather that the oral world lives in the words of scripture, but not necessarily the oral world as described by Hermann Gunkel.

Influenced by the Brothers Grimm's own artificial portrait of the German folk, Hermann Gunkel, the father of biblical form criticism, provided generations of biblicalists with romantic portraits of an Israelite folk and the oral culture in which they participated:

In the leisure of a winter evening the family sits about the hearth, the grown people, but more especially the children, listen intently to the beautiful old stories of the dawn of the world which they have heard so often yet never tire of hearing repeated.²

In his great commentary on Genesis,³ in *The Folktales in the Old Testament*,⁴ and in other works, Gunkel portrays the participants in an Israelite oral culture as naive—even literally, as in the above, young—rural, either pastoral or agrarian, living in a world of family-centered societies without kings or bureaucracy. Influenced by Axel Olrik's 1908 study "Epic Laws of Folklore,"⁵ Gunkel perceived the material to which these Israelite folk listened to be poetic, repetitive, simple, and single-stranded in plot. Finally, he suggested that these oral compositions and their oral cultures predated the Bible, having been reworked and transformed in the written sacred traditions of Israel that became the Bible. Indeed he asks:

However—and the reader will have certainly long since asked the question—what has the Bible to do with folktales? Is it not an attack on the prestige of the holy book to seek in it products of the imagination? And how can the lofty religion of Israel—to say nothing of the New Testament—contain material filled with what may be creative, yet nevertheless entirely subordinate, belief? These questions must be answered, first, by saying that the Bible hardly contains a folktale anywhere. . . . The elevated and rigorous spirit of biblical religion tolerated the folktale as such at almost no point and this near total eradication from the holy tradition is one of the great acts of biblical religion.⁶

Scholars used to place an oral stage for the Bible or for its separate compositions in a premonarchic phase of Israelite history, be it nomadic or pa-

triarchal— notions of Israel's early history that have increasingly fallen into disrepute. Nowadays scholars describe participants in a highland culture practicing subsistence agriculture and write of the village- and kinship-based decentralized world of Israel's origins. These scholars, however, agree with their precursors that the monarchy brings a state, urbanization, schools and writing, courtly records, recorders, and literate authors imagined to be of various kinds. Gerhard von Rad's phrase was "Solomonic Enlightenment."⁷

This diachronic approach to orality and literacy is, however, misguided, devaluing the power of oral cultures and misconstruing the characteristics of orally composed and oral-style works. Such an approach ignores the possibility that written works in a traditional culture will often share the characteristics of orally composed works. It misrepresents ancient literacy as synonymous with literacy in the modern world of print, books, and computers and draws too artificial a line, chronological and cultural, between oral and written literatures.

Orally composed and oral-style works can be rural or urban, unsophisticated, rustic, and parochial or sophisticated, aristocratic, and cosmopolitan, concerned with farm or court, village or city, composed by men or women. There is no one oral genre or oral culture in a society but a range of sorts of compositions, styles, contexts, and composers. Orally composed and oral-style works need not be short and simple but may, like the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*, be lengthy and filled with complex characters and subplots.⁸

Seemingly more rural works need not be imagined in Israelite social history as confined to "early times." Even once there are kings in ancient Israel and a state—which some would say begins with David or Solomon in the tenth century B.C.E., others not until the eighth century B.C.E., well into the northern and southern monarchies—the vast majority of people continue to lead agrarian lives. They work the land, live in villages led by elders, and continue to tell stories, preserve custom and law, and cite proverbs orally. Some people were probably regarded by their communities as especially good weavers of narration or preservers of genealogy who learned from their elders and had special skills or training, but all would have shared in the oral culture. To ignore these Israelites and their lives we might ask, to paraphrase Gunkel, "What have the Israelites to do with the Bible?" And yet this does not mean that no one in the villages and towns could write or read or that writing was not used in commercial transactions and letters or found upon commemorative stones or that writing was unfamiliar to people.

Once there were monarchies and royal cities, a scribal class would have developed. Kings could finance big inscriptional projects. Priests might copy down favorite compositions. Those versed in oral traditions might create oral-sounding works in writing. The use of writing in commercial contexts would escalate, its use by the military become prominent in the process of sharing tactical information, sending orders, and provisioning outposts. Nevertheless the oral culture could well dominate even a world in which an elite is able to read and write complex works of various genres and in which writing for pragmatic purposes is quite common. Literacy in ancient Israel may have been a quite different phenomenon from literacy in our world while works composed in writing may be difficult to distinguish from orally composed works. And, of course, in a courtly and urbane setting other oral traditions would have been produced and maintained: bardic tales honoring a king's victories, songs created by priests for temple ritual, oracles delivered by prophets to support or critique the leadership.

In approaching issues of oral and written, we err if we view oral and written cultures, oral and written literatures, as incompatible. It is, for example, probably wrong to suggest that the oral tradition lives in the villages from the tenth century B.C.E. on, but that at court the culture is literate in our sense. It is probably also wrong to assert that those who compose in the oral mode are necessarily illiterate, or that a work in the oral style is necessarily composed extemporaneously in the fashion described for bards in Albert B. Lord's classic *The Singer of Tales*,⁹ or to suggest that once reading and writing are available the oral culture dies. All of these notions are largely passé among those who study early and oral literatures.

Rather, as John Foley, Ruth Finnegan, and others have shown, there is an interplay between the oral and the written in traditional cultures, modern or ancient, and a continuum or sliding scale of oral styles. Late in his career, Albert Lord also acknowledged, for example, that an oral culture continues in traditional societies even once literacy becomes more general and indeed that the traits typical of literature orally composed by those who do not read or write can appear in written works as well. Lord spoke of an "oral-traditional" style. John Foley, using communications language, refers to an "oral register."¹⁰ Beowulf, Genesis 27, and a work Foley has collected from an illiterate Serbian farmer may all be somewhere in their own culture's oral registers, exhibiting, for example, the trait of fresh variation on conventionalized language and content typical of oral-style works. If one turns to the poems of e. e. cummings or a novel by Dostoyevsky, on the other hand, the oral-traditional signals will be much more faint.

One of our present interests is to explore that "oral register" or "tradi-

tional style" as it is found in the Hebrew Bible, and to uncover and describe some of the various oral styles employed by Israelite authors and preserved in the written texts of scripture.

Clearly the Hebrew Bible presents a case in which "written" and "oral" interact, for characteristics of oral-style works are exhibited in biblical literature as Gunkel saw, although we may define the traits of orality differently and more variously than did Gunkel. The Bible makes constant direct reference to the spoken words that constitute various compositions, to orally delivered messages and sung stories, and yet the Bible exists because of writing and the assumptions of people in a writing culture of some variety. How have the oral and the written met in scripture? How does the literature of the Hebrew Bible relate to actual Israelites and the cultural settings in which they lived? How do issues in Israelite orality and literacy relate to theories about the composition and preservation of biblical traditions? Several possibilities should be kept in mind as we ask about the genesis of the Hebrew Bible in terms of the relationship between oral and written composition, communication, transmission, and preservation. Some material in the Hebrew Bible may well be a transcription of an oral performance. In this case, the oracle or tale would be created orally but delivered slowly enough to be copied down. An oral performance may be written down later from memory—people's memories in traditional cultures in which people are not used to printed or written texts are sometimes extraordinary. Or a writer well versed in the oral tradition may create an idealized written text based on many performances of a narrative or hymn or epic. Orally performed works may be composed extemporaneously by people able to read or by illiterate participants in the tradition. Those who can read may use brief notes to help in their creation of an orally performed work. The one who preserves the work in writing may also, of course, take notes during an oral rendition and use these to recreate the text in writing. A writer versed in oral style may himself or herself create a work that rings true to an oral register in writing. A written work may then be reoralized, told aloud from memory, or made the thematic core of a new orally created and/or delivered work that is then written down in one of the ways described above; the earlier written work may then be lost. Even works created in writing may be meant to be delivered aloud. Very few people in the culture we are envisioning know written works because they have seen and read them; they have received the works' messages and content by word of mouth. Even if they have read the works themselves, they quote from memory.

These are the sorts of possibilities we need to keep in mind if we allow that Israelite culture reflects a traditional society in which people did not

regularly rely on reading and writing as we do. A combination of the sorts of processes and relationships described above went into the composition of the Hebrew Bible: oral creation and performance; composition in writing based on specific oral works or influenced by the styles of orally produced or performed works; preservation or passing on of works, oral or written, without the aid of written texts; the importance of memory and oralization, with implicit possibilities for variation, transformation, and multiplicity. There were no printed books, available in multiple copies in local libraries.

But why should we assume that these images capture the process of composition in ancient Israel and that an oral culture is still reflected in what is now a set book, the Bible? How can we test this model and what are its implications for other biblicalists' suggestions about the composition of the Hebrew Bible and the relationship between biblical literature and the ancient Israelites?

Our first step is to uncover a particular aesthetic grounded in the traditional cultures of ancient Israel, grounded we will argue in an oral-traditional mentality. This aesthetic produced by a range of recurring rhetorical features spans the biblical corpus and is well represented in nonbiblical Israelite evidence from paleographic finds. On the one hand, this aesthetic or poetic is common to Israelite literature of various periods and persuasions. On the other hand, within this overarching aesthetic in the oral register are a variety of differing styles that serve as markers of their authors' particular interests, messages, and settings. Oral-traditional style is never one monolithic phenomenon. Moreover, the use of orally derived styles by writers leads to all sorts of interesting possibilities of contextualization. Thus our work in chapters 1–3 is both synchronic and diachronic.

A second major objective of our work is to discover how Israelites themselves understood orality and literacy. What are Israelite attitudes to the oral and the written, to reading and writing? It is our contention that scholars have misunderstood and misrepresented Israelite literacy and thus have been inaccurate in presenting essential aspects of Israelite culture.

Chapters 3 and 4 discuss a host of contemporary studies by students in folklore, comparative literature, and early and oral literatures concerning the relationship between orality and literacy in a variety of traditional cultures ranging from ancient Greece to medieval Europe and twentieth-century Yugoslavia. The work of scholars including John Foley, Rosalind Thomas, M. T. Clanchy, Gregory Nagy, and Mary O'Brien O'Keefe is directly relevant for the biblical case. These studies place in new light not only orality but literacy as it relates to the culture and literature of ancient Israel, raising

questions (1) about the purposes of writing and the nature of literacy in ancient societies that often employ writing in commercial and pragmatic rather than creative enterprises; (2) about the ways in which archives in ancient cultures tend to serve iconic and memorial purposes rather than modern-style record-keeping functions; and (3) about the many ways in which traditional societies simply rely less on reading and writing than we do. Concentrating on examples of nonbiblical Israelite writing, I hope to show that none of the evidence often adduced for Israelite literacy is in conflict with what I mean by an essentially oral world, and that "literacy" in traditional cultures is not the sort of modern literacy with which it is confused.

Chapters 5–7 explore attitudes to writing in the Hebrew Bible with concern for the oral-literary continuum: (1) passages that convey attitudes toward writing typical of those who neither read nor write, endowing written texts with a magical, transformative capacity; (2) passages that emphasize literacy somewhat more in the modern sense (e.g., use of writing to communicate across distances; references to archives and records; specific references to what is written in the Torah that purport to quote a written text); and (3) passages that richly indicate the ways in which the oral culture and the written culture fully interact and intertwine in the implicit attitudes of Israelite authors. Even those passages that seem to be at the oral and literary ends of the continuum evidence the presence of writing in the oral culture and orality in the writing/reading culture.

The final, most difficult, perhaps most intriguing aspect of our study returns to questions about the composition, preservation, and transmission of the Hebrew Bible. If the proposed model for Israelite culture in its oral and literary aspects is a good one and if our descriptive work in chapters 1–7 is accurate, then current theories of biblical composition are seriously flawed. After reviewing some of the major theories of biblical composition that are grounded, we would argue, in outmoded notions of Israelite literacy, we offer some alternate possibilities for the complex interplays between orality and literacy that produced the collection, the Hebrew Bible. This chapter begins to take soundings, to offer hypotheses, and to lay out a framework for further speculation and work.

The heart of our study, however, is descriptive as we seek more deeply to appreciate the nature, meaning, and context of a legacy of Israelite self-expression, preserved in written form.

Suggested Activity 7: The Second Commandment

1. Make Your Own Talmud Page

2. Icon Definitions

3. “The Thin Line Between Text and Image.”

Nichols, Elizabeth. *The Torah as an Icon*. Amherst College: unpublished thesis, 2001.

MAKE YOUR OWN TALMUD PAGE

3. Write an Aggadah (story/allegory) related to the law and its commentary which expands/exemplifies an aspect of the law. It might be an example of someone who follows the law and receives a reward, a dispute about the law, etc.

4. Write a modern-day application of the law and its commentaries, including why we should or should not follow this law or how it needs to be modified for modern times.

1. Read the verse written below and discuss its meaning. Write a law stemming from the verse which would bring the idea into action.
You shall not make for yourself a sculptured image, or any likeness of what is in the heavens above, or on the earth below, or in the waters under the earth. – Exodus 20:4

2. Raise questions – and provide answers – regarding the law above in terms of practicalities and logistics, i.e. when, where, how, who, what – the details. Also include any differences of opinion that arise within your group, and write down the majority opinion if you reach one.

Icon Definitions

If a religion is **Iconic** it has, and uses, icons in its practice.

If a religion is **Aniconic** it does not have, or use, icons in its practice.

Material Aniconism is the worship of a physical object that is not figurally representative of a living object.

The Thin Line Between Text and Image

With an absence of universal imagery, it should not be surprising that ancient Judaism focused on text, and that writing became more than a means of communication, “conceived of as integral to the religious and cultural experience of the ancient Jews.”¹ During the formative years of Jewish law, Ancient Israel was essentially an oral culture. The words of Torah were not available to everyone, but were sacred words communicated to the people through the priests. As Susan Niditch discusses in *Oral World and Written Word*, writing in oral cultures achieves a level of sacredness: “Writing comes to be regarded as capable of transformation and magic, the letters and words shimmering with the very power of the gods.”²

Combining the prohibitions engendered by the Second Commandment and the sanctity of writing, Jewish artists have found a meeting place between word and image. The Judaic tradition of micrography clearly illustrates this trend. Sometimes using entire texts of biblical books, micrography creates pictures out of words, outlining images with minute lines of script (Figure 2). In another example of the intersection of text and imagery from the *Kennicott Bible*, Joseph ibn Hayyim fills in his colophon with humans and animals (Figure 3). The blurring of the line between word and image demonstrates the human need to create visual representations of beliefs. Freedberg writes, “We can say to ourselves that what is on the page is always a text; but it becomes an image. The need for figured representation could not be plainer than in these subversions of the everyday notion of text as nonrepresentational.”³

Micrography stretches the line between iconism and aniconism by creating images out of word. The Torah, I believe, also sits on this complex line. Although it is a text, it is made an image through ritualized form and practice. The Torah is Judaism’s sacred text, but it is also a living image.

Text excerpted from:

Nichols, Elizabeth. *The Torah as an Icon*. Amherst College: unpublished thesis, 2001.

¹ Sharon R. Keller, ed., *The Jews: A Treasury of Art and Literature* (New York: Hugh Lauter Levin Associates, 1992) 9.

² Susan Niditch, *Oral World and Written Word* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 1996) 44.

³ Freedberg 56.

Suggested Activity 8: Commandment to Write a Torah

1. Writing a Torah: Babylonian Talmud Sanhedrin 21b

Writing a Torah: Babylonian Talmud Sanhedrin 21b

סנהדרין דף כא.ב

וכותב ספר תורה לשמו. תנא: ובלבד שלא יתנאה בשל אבותיו.
אמר רבא: אף על פי שהניחו לו אבותיו לאדם ספר תורה - מצוה
לכתוב משלו, שנאמר (דברים ל"א) ועתה כתבו לכם את השירה

And he shall write in his own name a sefer Torah. A Tanna taught: And he must not take credit for one belonging to his ancestors.

Rabbah said: Even if one's parents have left him a sefer Torah, yet it is proper that he should write one of his own, as it is written: *Now therefore write ye this song for you* (Deut 31:19).

Suggested Activity 9: Woman Wisdom

1. Proverbs 1:20-33
2. Wisdom of Solomon 10
3. Baruch 3 and 4
4. Sirach 24

Proverbs 1:20-33

ספר משלי: א-כ-לג

כ חֲכָמוֹת בַּחוּץ תִּרְנֶה בְּרַחֲבוֹת תִּתֵּן קוֹלָהּ: כֹּא בְּרֹאשׁ הַמַּיּוֹת תִּתְקַרֵּא
 בַּפְּתָחֵי שְׁעָרִים בְּעִיר אֲמַרְיָהּ תֹאמֶר: כִּבְעַד־מַתִּי | פְּתִיחַ תִּתְאַהֲבוּ פְתֵי
 וְלֵצִים לְצוֹן חָמְדוּ לָהֶם וְכִסִּילִים יִשְׁנְאוּ־דַעַת: כִּג תִּשׁוּבוּ לְתוֹכְחָתִי
 הִנֵּה אֲבִיעָה לְכֶם רוּחִי אֹדִיעָה דְבַרִּי אֶתְכֶם: כֹּד יַעַן קָרָאתִי וְתִמְאַנּוּ
 נְטִיתִי לְדִי וְאֵין מִקְשִׁיב: כֹּה וְתִפְרָעוּ כָּל־עֲצָתִי וְתוֹכְחָתִי לֹא אֲבִיתֶם:
 כּו גַּם־אֲנִי בְּאִידְכֶם אֲשַׁחֵק אֲלַעַג בְּבֹא פְחָדְכֶם: כּז בְּבֹא כְשֵׁאוֹה
 [כְּשׁוֹאָה] | פְּחָדְכֶם וְאִידְכֶם כְּסוּפָה יֵאָתֶה בְּבֹא עֲלֵיכֶם צָרָה וְצוּקָה:
 כח אִזּוּ יִקְרָאנִי וְלֹא אֶעֱנֶה יִשְׁחַרְנֵנִי וְלֹא יִמְצְאוּנִי: כט תַּחַת כִּי־שְׁנְאוּ
 דַעַת וַיִּרְאֵת יְהוָה לֹא בַחֲרוּ: ל לֹא־אָבוּ לַעֲצָתִי נֶאֱצוּ כָּל־תוֹכְחָתִי:
 לא וַיֹּאכְלוּ מִפְּרֵי דֶרֶכָם וּמִמַּעֲצָתֵיהֶם יִשְׁבְּעוּ: לב כִּי מְשׁוּבֵת פְּתִיחַ
 תִּתְהַרְגֶם וְשִׁלּוֹת כְּסִילִים תִּתְאַבְּדוּם: לג וְשִׁמְעֵ לִי יִשְׁכֹּן־בְּטַח וְשִׁאֲנוּ
 מִפְּחַד רָעָה:

²⁰ Wisdom cries aloud in the streets, Raises her voice in the squares. ²¹ At the head of the busy streets she calls; At the entrance of the gates, in the city, she speaks out: ²² "How long will you simple ones love simplicity, You scoffers be eager to scoff, You dullards hate knowledge? ²³ You are indifferent to my rebuke; I will now speak my mind to you, And let you know my thoughts. ²⁴ Since you refused me when I called, And paid no heed when I extended my hand, ²⁵ You spurned all my advice, And would not hear my rebuke, ²⁶ I will laugh at your calamity, And mock when terror comes upon you, ²⁷ When terror comes like a disaster, And calamity arrives like a whirlwind, When trouble and distress come upon you. ²⁸ Then they shall call me but I will not answer; They shall seek me but not find me. ²⁹ Because they hated knowledge, And did not choose fear of the LORD; ³⁰ They refused my advice, And disdained all my rebukes, ³¹ They shall eat the fruit of their ways, And have their fill of their own counsels. ³² The tranquillity of the simple will kill them, And the complacency of dullards will destroy them. ³³ But he who listens to me will dwell in safety, Untroubled by the terror of misfortune."

Wisdom of Solomon 10

¹ Wisdom protected the first-formed father of the world, when he alone had been created; she delivered him from his transgression,² and gave him strength to rule all things.³ But when an unrighteous man departed from her in his anger, he perished because in rage he killed his brother.⁴ When the earth was flooded because of him, wisdom again saved it, steering the righteous man by a paltry piece of wood.⁵ Wisdom also, when the nations in wicked agreement had been put to confusion, recognized the righteous man and preserved him blameless before God, and kept him strong in the face of his compassion for his child.⁶ Wisdom rescued a righteous man when the ungodly were perishing; he escaped the fire that descended on the Five Cities.⁷ Evidence of their wickedness still remains: a continually smoking wasteland, plants bearing fruit that does not ripen, and a pillar of salt standing as a monument to an unbelieving soul.⁸ For because they passed wisdom by, they not only were hindered from recognizing the good, but also left for humankind a reminder of their folly, so that their failures could never go unnoticed.⁹ Wisdom rescued from troubles those who served her.¹⁰ When a righteous man fled from his brother's wrath, she guided him on straight paths; she showed him the kingdom of God, and gave him knowledge of holy things; she prospered him in his labors, and increased the fruit of his toil.¹¹ When his oppressors were covetous, she stood by him and made him rich.¹² She protected him from his enemies, and kept him safe from those who lay in wait for him; in his arduous contest she gave him the victory, so that he might learn that godliness is more powerful than anything else.¹³ When a righteous man was sold, wisdom did not desert him, but delivered him from sin. She descended with him into the dungeon,¹⁴ and when he was in prison she did not leave him, until she brought him the scepter of a kingdom and authority over his masters. Those who accused him she showed to be false, and she gave him everlasting honor.¹⁵ A holy people and blameless race wisdom delivered from a nation of oppressors.¹⁶ She entered the soul of a servant of the Lord, and withstood dread kings with wonders and signs.¹⁷ She gave to holy people the reward of their labors; she guided them along a marvelous way, and became a shelter to them by day, and a starry flame through the night.¹⁸ She brought them over the Red Sea, and led them through deep waters;¹⁹ but she drowned their enemies, and cast them up from the depth of the sea.²⁰ Therefore the righteous plundered the ungodly; they sang hymns, O Lord, to your holy name, and praised with one accord your defending hand;²¹ for wisdom opened the mouths of those who were mute, and made the tongues of infants speak clearly.

Baruch 3-4

¹ O Lord Almighty, God of Israel, the soul in anguish and the wearied spirit cry out to you. ² Hear, O Lord, and have mercy, for we have sinned before you. ³ For you are enthroned forever, and we are perishing forever. ⁴ O Lord Almighty, God of Israel, hear now the prayer of the people of Israel, the children of those who sinned before you, who did not heed the voice of the Lord their God, so that calamities have clung to us. ⁵ Do not remember the iniquities of our ancestors, but in this crisis remember your power and your name. ⁶ For you are the Lord our God, and it is you, O Lord, whom we will praise. ⁷ For you have put the fear of you in our hearts so that we would call upon your name; and we will praise you in our exile, for we have put away from our hearts all the iniquity of our ancestors who sinned against you. ⁸ See, we are today in our exile where you have scattered us, to be reproached and cursed and punished for all the iniquities of our ancestors, who forsook the Lord our God. ⁹ Hear the commandments of life, O Israel; give ear, and learn wisdom! ¹⁰ Why is it, O Israel, why is it that you are in the land of your enemies, that you are growing old in a foreign country, that you are defiled with the dead, ¹¹ that you are counted among those in Hades? ¹² You have forsaken the fountain of wisdom. ¹³ If you had walked in the way of God, you would be living in peace forever. ¹⁴ Learn where there is wisdom, where there is strength, where there is understanding, so that you may at the same time discern where there is length of days, and life, where there is light for the eyes, and peace. ¹⁵ Who has found her place? And who has entered her storehouses? ¹⁶ Where are the rulers of the nations, and those who lorded it over the animals on earth; ¹⁷ those who made sport of the birds of the air, and who hoarded up silver and gold in which people trust, and there is no end to their getting; ¹⁸ those who schemed to get silver, and were anxious, but there is no trace of their works? ¹⁹ They have vanished and gone down to Hades, and others have arisen in their place. ²⁰ Later generations have seen the light of day, and have lived upon the earth; but they have not learned the way to knowledge, nor understood her paths, nor laid hold of her. ²¹ Their descendants have strayed far from her way. ²² She has not been heard of in Canaan, or seen in Teman; ²³ the descendants of Hagar, who seek for understanding on the earth, the merchants of Merran and Teman, the story-tellers and the seekers for understanding, have not learned the way to wisdom, or given thought to her paths. ²⁴ O Israel, how great is the house of God, how vast the territory that he possesses! ²⁵ It is great and has no bounds; it is high and immeasurable. ²⁶ The giants were born there, who were famous of old, great in stature, expert in war. ²⁷ God did not choose them, or give them the way to knowledge; ²⁸ so they perished because they had no wisdom, they perished through their folly. ²⁹ Who has gone up into heaven, and taken her, and brought her down from the clouds? ³⁰ Who has gone over the sea, and found her, and will buy her for pure gold? ³¹ No one knows the way to her, or is concerned about the path to her. ³² But the one who knows all things knows her, he found her by his understanding. The one who prepared the earth for all time filled it with four-footed creatures; ³³ the one who sends forth the light, and it goes; he called it, and it obeyed him, trembling; ³⁴ the stars shone in their watches, and were

glad; he called them, and they said, "Here we are!" They shone with gladness for him who made them.³⁵ This is our God; no other can be compared to him.³⁶ He found the whole way to knowledge, and gave her to his servant Jacob and to Israel, whom he loved.³⁷ Afterward she appeared on earth and lived with humankind.¹ She is the book of the commandments of God, the law that endures forever. All who hold her fast will live, and those who forsake her will die.² Turn, O Jacob, and take her; walk toward the shining of her light.³ Do not give your glory to another, or your advantages to an alien people.⁴ Happy are we, O Israel, for we know what is pleasing to God.⁵ Take courage, my people, who perpetuate Israel's name!⁶ It was not for destruction that you were sold to the nations, but you were handed over to your enemies because you angered God.⁷ For you provoked the one who made you by sacrificing to demons and not to God.⁸ You forgot the everlasting God, who brought you up, and you grieved Jerusalem, who reared you.⁹ For she saw the wrath that came upon you from God, and she said: Listen, you neighbors of Zion, God has brought great sorrow upon me;¹⁰ for I have seen the exile of my sons and daughters, which the Everlasting brought upon them.¹¹ With joy I nurtured them, but I sent them away with weeping and sorrow.¹² Let no one rejoice over me, a widow and bereaved of many; I was left desolate because of the sins of my children, because they turned away from the law of God.¹³ They had no regard for his statutes; they did not walk in the ways of God's commandments, or tread the paths his righteousness showed them.¹⁴ Let the neighbors of Zion come; remember the capture of my sons and daughters, which the Everlasting brought upon them.¹⁵ For he brought a distant nation against them, a nation ruthless and of a strange language, which had no respect for the aged and no pity for a child.¹⁶ They led away the widow's beloved sons, and bereaved the lonely woman of her daughters.¹⁷ But I, how can I help you?¹⁸ For he who brought these calamities upon you will deliver you from the hand of your enemies.¹⁹ Go, my children, go; for I have been left desolate.²⁰ I have taken off the robe of peace and put on sackcloth for my supplication; I will cry to the Everlasting all my days.²¹ Take courage, my children, cry to God, and he will deliver you from the power and hand of the enemy.²² For I have put my hope in the Everlasting to save you, and joy has come to me from the Holy One, because of the mercy that will soon come to you from your everlasting savior.²³ For I sent you out with sorrow and weeping, but God will give you back to me with joy and gladness forever.²⁴ For as the neighbors of Zion have now seen your capture, so they soon will see your salvation by God, which will come to you with great glory and with the splendor of the Everlasting.²⁵ My children, endure with patience the wrath that has come upon you from God. Your enemy has overtaken you, but you will soon see their destruction and will tread upon their necks.²⁶ My pampered children have traveled rough roads; they were taken away like a flock carried off by the enemy.²⁷ Take courage, my children, and cry to God, for you will be remembered by the one who brought this upon you.²⁸ For just as you were disposed to go astray from God, return with tenfold zeal to seek him.²⁹ For the one who brought these calamities upon you will bring you everlasting joy with your salvation.³⁰ Take courage, O Jerusalem, for the one who named you will comfort you.³¹ Wretched will be those who mistreated you

and who rejoiced at your fall. ³² Wretched will be the cities that your children served as slaves; wretched will be the city that received your offspring. ³³ For just as she rejoiced at your fall and was glad for your ruin, so she will be grieved at her own desolation. ³⁴ I will take away her pride in her great population, and her insolence will be turned to grief. ³⁵ For fire will come upon her from the Everlasting for many days, and for a long time she will be inhabited by demons. ³⁶ Look toward the east, O Jerusalem, and see the joy that is coming to you from God. ³⁷ Look, your children are coming, whom you sent away; they are coming, gathered from east and west, at the word of the Holy One, rejoicing in the glory of God.

Sirach 24

¹ Wisdom praises herself, and tells of her glory in the midst of her people. ² In the assembly of the Most High she opens her mouth, and in the presence of his hosts she tells of her glory: ³ "I came forth from the mouth of the Most High, and covered the earth like a mist. ⁴ I dwelt in the highest heavens, and my throne was in a pillar of cloud. ⁵ Alone I compassed the vault of heaven and traversed the depths of the abyss. ⁶ Over waves of the sea, over all the earth, and over every people and nation I have held sway. ⁷ Among all these I sought a resting place; in whose territory should I abide? ⁸ "Then the Creator of all things gave me a command, and my Creator chose the place for my tent. He said, 'Make your dwelling in Jacob, and in Israel receive your inheritance.' ⁹ Before the ages, in the beginning, he created me, and for all the ages I shall not cease to be. ¹⁰ In the holy tent I ministered before him, and so I was established in Zion. ¹¹ Thus in the beloved city he gave me a resting place, and in Jerusalem was my domain. ¹² I took root in an honored people, in the portion of the Lord, his heritage. ¹³ "I grew tall like a cedar in Lebanon, and like a cypress on the heights of Hermon. ¹⁴ I grew tall like a palm tree in En-gedi, and like rosebushes in Jericho; like a fair olive tree in the field, and like a plane tree beside water I grew tall. ¹⁵ Like cassia and camel's thorn I gave forth perfume, and like choice myrrh I spread my fragrance, like galbanum, onycha, and stacte, and like the odor of incense in the tent. ¹⁶ Like a terebinth I spread out my branches, and my branches are glorious and graceful. ¹⁷ Like the vine I bud forth delights, and my blossoms become glorious and abundant fruit. ¹⁸ ¹⁹ "Come to me, you who desire me, and eat your fill of my fruits. ²⁰ For the memory of me is sweeter than honey, and the possession of me sweeter than the honeycomb. ²¹ Those who eat of me will hunger for more, and those who drink of me will thirst for more. ²² Whoever obeys me will not be put to shame, and those who work with me will not sin." ²³ All this is the book of the covenant of the Most High God, the law that Moses commanded us as an inheritance for the congregations of Jacob. ²⁴ ²⁵ It overflows, like the Pishon, with wisdom, and like the Tigris at the time of the first fruits. ²⁶ It runs over, like the Euphrates, with understanding, and like the Jordan at harvest time. ²⁷ It pours forth instruction like the Nile, like the Gihon at the time of vintage. ²⁸ The first man did not know wisdom fully, nor will the last one fathom her. ²⁹ For her thoughts are more abundant than the sea, and her counsel deeper than the great abyss. ³⁰ As for me, I was like a canal from a river, like a water channel into a garden. ³¹ I said, "I will water my garden and drench my flower-beds." And lo, my canal became a river, and my river a sea. ³² I will again make instruction shine forth like the dawn, and I will make it clear from far away. ³³ I will again pour out teaching like prophecy, and leave it to all future generations. ³⁴ Observe that I have not labored for myself alone, but for all who seek wisdom.

Suggested Activity 10: Kabbalistic Images: Removing the Torah's Garments

1. The Old Man and the Beautiful Maiden

Matt, Daniel Chanan. *Zohar: The Book of Enlightenment*. New York: Paulist Press, 1983, 121-126.

2. PaRDeS: Four Levels of Interpretation

Zohar

The Book of Enlightenment

TRANSLATION AND INTRODUCTION

BY

DANIEL CHANAN MATT

PREFACE

BY

ARTHUR GREEN



PAULIST PRESS
NEW YORK • RAMSEY • TORONTO

THE OLD MAN AND THE BEAUTIFUL MAIDEN

Rabbi Hiyya and Rabbi Yose met one night at the Tower of Tyre.
They stayed there as guests, delighting in each other.
Rabbi Yose said, "I am so glad to see the face of *Shekbinah*.
For just now, the whole way here, I was pestered by an old man,
a donkey driver, who kept asking me riddles the whole way:

'What is a serpent that flies in the air and wanders alone,
while an ant lies peacefully between its teeth?
Beginning in union, it ends in separation.

What is an eagle that nests in a tree that never was?
Its young who have been plundered,
who are not created creatures,
lie somewhere uncreated.
When they go up, they come down; coming down, they go up.
Two who are one, and one who is three.

What is a beautiful maiden who has no eyes
and a body concealed and revealed?
She comes out in the morning and is hidden all day.
She adorns herself with adornments that are not.'

All this he asked on the way; I was annoyed.
Now I can relax!
If we had been together, we would have engaged in words of Torah
instead of strange words of chaos."

Rabbi Hiyya said, "That old man, the donkey driver,
do you know anything about him?"

He answered, "I know that there is nothing in his words.
If he knew anything, he should have opened with Torah;
then the way would not have been empty!"

ZOHAR

Rabbi Hiyya said, "That donkey driver, is he here?
For sometimes in those empty fools, you discover bells of gold!"

He said to him, "Here he is! Fixing up his donkey with food."

They called to him; he came before them.
He said to them, "Now two are three, and three are like one!"

Rabbi Yose said
"Didn't I tell you that all his words are empty nonsense?"

He sat before them and said
"Rabbis, I turned into a donkey driver only a short time ago.
Before, I wasn't one.
But I have a small son, and I put him in school;
I want him to engage Torah.
When I find one of the rabbis traveling on the road
I guide his donkey from behind.
Today I thought that I would hear new words of Torah.
But I haven't heard anything!"

Rabbi Yose said, "Of all the words I heard you say,
there was one that really amazed me.
Either you said it out of folly, or they are empty words."

The Old Man said, "And which one is that?"

He said, "The one about the beautiful maiden."

The Old Man opened and said
"YHVH is on my side; I have no fear.
What can any human do to me?
YHVH is by my side, helping me. . . .
It is good to take refuge in YHVH. . .'
(Psalms 118:6-8).

How good and pleasant and precious and high are words of Torah!
But how can I say them in front of rabbis
from whose mouths, until now, I haven't heard a single word?
But I should say them

ZOHAR

because there is no shame at all in saying words of Torah
in front of everyone!"

The Old Man covered himself. . . .

The Old Man opened and said

"'Moses went inside the cloud and ascended the mountain . . .'

(Exodus 24:18).

What is this cloud?

The one of which it is written: 'I have placed My bow in the cloud'
(Genesis 9:13).

We have learned that the Rainbow took off Her garments
and gave them to Moses.

Wearing that garment, Moses went up the mountain;
from inside it he saw what he saw,
delighting in the All, up to that place."

The Comrades approached and threw themselves down
in front of the Old Man.

They cried, and said, "If we have come into the world
only to hear these words from your mouth,
it is enough for us!"

The Old Man said

"Friends, Comrades, not for this alone did I begin the word.

An old man like me doesn't rattle with just a single word.

Human beings are so confused in their minds!

They do not see the way of truth in Torah.

Torah calls out to them every day, in love,

but they do not want to turn their heads.

Even though I have said that Torah removes a word from her sheath,
is seen for a moment, then quickly hides away—

that is certainly true—

but when she reveals herself from her sheath

and hides herself right away,

she does so only for those who know her intimately.

A parable.

To what can this be compared?

To a lovely princess,

beautiful in every way and hidden deep within her palace.

ZOHAR

She has one lover, unknown to anyone; he is hidden too.
Out of his love for her, this lover passes by her gate constantly,
lifting his eyes to every side.
She knows that her lover is hovering about her gate constantly.
What does she do?
She opens a little window in her hidden palace
and reveals her face to her lover,
then swiftly withdraws, concealing herself.
No one near the lover sees or reflects,
only the lover,
and his heart and his soul and everything within him
flow out to her.
And he knows that out of love for him
she revealed herself for that one moment
to awaken love in him.

So it is with a word of Torah:
She reveals herself to no one but her lover.
Torah knows that he who is wise of heart
hovers about her gate every day.
What does she do?
She reveals her face to him from the palace
and beckons him with a hint,
then swiftly withdraws to her hiding place.
No one who is there knows or reflects;
he alone does,
and his heart and his soul and everything within him
flows out to her.
That is why Torah reveals and conceals herself.
With love she approaches her lover
to arouse love with him.

Come and see!
This is the way of Torah:
At first, when she begins to reveal herself to a human
she beckons him with a hint.
If he knows, good;
if not, she sends him a message, calling him a fool.
Torah says to her messenger:
'Tell that fool to come closer, so I can talk with him!'

ZOHAR

as it is written:

'Who is the fool without a heart?

Have him turn in here!

(Proverbs 9:4).

He approaches.

She begins to speak with him from behind a curtain she has drawn,
words he can follow, until he reflects a little at a time.

This is *derasha*.

Then she converses with him through a veil,
words riddled with allegory.

This is *haggadah*.

Once he has grown accustomed to her,
she reveals herself face to face
and tells him all her hidden secrets,
all the hidden ways,
since primordial days secreted in her heart.

Now he is a perfect human being,
husband of Torah, master of the house.
All her secrets she has revealed to him,
withholding nothing, concealing nothing.

She says to him, 'Do you see that word,
that hint with which I beckoned you at first?
So many secrets there! This one and that one!'

Now he sees that nothing should be added to those words
and nothing taken away.

Now the *peshat* of the verse, just like it is!
Not even a single letter should be added or deleted.

Human beings must become aware!
They must pursue Torah to become her lovers! . . ."

He was silent for a moment.
The Comrades were amazed;
they did not know if it was day or night,
if they were really there or not. . . .

ZOHAR

"Enough, Comrades!
From now on, you know that the Evil Side has no power over you.
I, Yeiva Sava, have stood before you
to awaken your awareness of these words."

They rose like one who is awakened from his sleep
and threw themselves down in front of him,
unable to utter a word.
After a while they began to cry.
Rabbi Hiyya opened and said
"Set me as a seal upon your heart,
as a seal upon your arm'
(Song of Songs 8:6). . . .
Love and sparks from the flame of our heart will escort you!
May it be the Will
that our image be engraved in your heart
as your image is engraved in ours!"

He kissed them and blessed them, and they left.

When they rejoined Rabbi Shim'on
and told him everything that happened,
he was delighted and amazed.
He said, "You are so fortunate to have attained all this!
Here you were with a heavenly lion,
a powerful hero compared with whom many heroes are nothing,
and you did not know how to recognize him right away!
I am amazed that you escaped his punishment!
The Blessed Holy One must have wanted to save you!"

He called out these verses for them:

"The path of the righteous is like the light of dawn,
growing brighter and brighter until the day is full.
When you walk, your stride will be free;
if you run, you will not stumble.

Your people, all of them righteous, will inherit the land forever;
a sprout of My planting, the work of My hands, making Me
glorious!"

PaRDeS: Four Levels of Interpretation

- ● ● ● *pardes* is an acronym for four levels of textual interpretation.

- stands for *p'shat* – the most basic understanding of the text.

- stands for *remez* – the hinted or figurative meaning of the text.

- stands for *d'rash* – the allegorical interpretation of the text.

- stands for *sod* – the secret, or esoteric meaning of the text.

Suggested Activity 11: Every Crown has Meaning

1. Moses and Akiva: Babylonian Talmud Menachot 29b.

Moses and Akiva: Babylonian Talmud Menachot 29b

מנחות דף כט.ב

אמר רב יהודה אמר רב: בשעה שעלה משה למרום, מצאו להקב"ה שיושב וקושר כתרים לאותיות, אמר לפניו: רבש"ע, מי מעכב על ידך? אמר לו: אדם אחד יש שעתיד להיות בסוף כמה דורות ועקיבא בן יוסף שמו, שעתיד לדרוש על כל קוץ וקוץ תילין של הלכות. אמר לפניו: רבש"ע, הראהו לי, אמר לו: חזור לאחורך. הלך וישב בסוף שמונה שורות, ולא היה יודע מה הן אומרים, תשש כחו כיון שהגיע לדבר אחד, אמרו לו תלמידיו: רבי, מנין לך? אמר להן: הלכה למשה מסיני, נתיישבה דעתו.

Rab Judah said in the name of Rab, When Moses ascended on high he found the Holy One, blessed be He, engaged in affixing coronets to the letters. Said Moses, 'Lord of the Universe, Who stays Thy hand?' He answered, 'There will arise a man at the end of many generations, Akiba b. Joseph by name, who will expound upon each tittle heaps and heaps of laws.' 'Lord of the universe,' said Moses, 'permit me to see him.' He replied, 'Turn thee round.' Moses went and sat down behind eight rows [and listened to the discourses upon the law]. Not being able to follow their arguments he was ill at ease, but when they came to a certain subject and the disciples said to the master 'Whence do you know it?' and the latter replied 'It is a law given unto Moses at Sinai' he was comforted.

Suggested Activity 12: Torah as Talisman

1. Deuteronomy 17:18-19.
2. The King's Torah: Mishnah Sanhedrin 2:4.
Neusner, Jacob. *The Mishnah: A New Translation*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1988.
3. The King's Torah: Babylonian Talmud Sanhedrin 21b

Deuteronomy 17:18-19

ספר דברים: יז: יח-יט

יח וְהָיָה כְּשִׁבְתּוֹ עַל כִּסֵּא מַמְלַכְתּוֹ וְכָתַב לוֹ אֶת־מִשְׁנֵה הַתּוֹרָה הַזֹּאת
 עַל־סֵפֶר מְלִפְנֵי הַכֹּהֲנִים הַלְוִיִּם: יט וְהִיתָה עִמּוֹ וְקָרָא בּוֹ כָּל־יְמֵי חַיָּו
 לְמַעַן יִלְמַד לְיִרְאָה אֶת־יְהוָה אֱלֹהָיו לְשָׁמֵר אֶת־כָּל־דְּבָרֵי הַתּוֹרָה
 הַזֹּאת וְאֶת־הַחֻקִּים הָאֵלֶּה לַעֲשׂוֹתָם:

¹⁸ When he has taken the throne of his kingdom, he shall have a copy of this law written for him in the presence of the levitical priests. ¹⁹ It shall remain with him and he shall read in it all the days of his life, so that he may learn to fear the LORD his God, diligently observing all the words of this law and these statutes,

The King's Torah: Mishnah Sanhedrin 2:4

מסכת סנהדרין פרק ב

ד) ומוציא למלחמת הרשות על פי בית דין של שבעים ואחד...
וכותב לו ספר תורה לשמו. יוצא למלחמה, מוציאה עמו. נכנס,
מכניסה עמו. יושב בדין, היא עמו. מסב, היא כנגדו, שנאמר (שם)
והיתה עמו וקרא בו כל ימי חייו:

[The king] calls out [the army] to [wage] a war fought by choice on he instructions of a court of seventy-one...*And he writes out a scroll of the Torah for himself* (Deut 17:17) – When he goes to war, he takes it out with him; when he comes back, he brings it back with him; when he is in session in court, it is with him; when he is reclining, it is before him, as it is said, *And it shall be with him, and he shall read in it all the days of his life* (Deut 17:19).

The King's Torah: Babylonian Talmud Sanhedrin 21b

סנהדרין דף כא.ב

וכותב ספר תורה לשמו. תנא: ובלבד שלא יתנאה בשל אבותיו.
 אמר רבא: אף על פי שהניחו לו אבותיו לאדם ספר תורה - מצוה
 לכתוב משלו, שנאמר (דברים ל"א) ועתה כתבו לכם את השירה
 איתיביה אביי: וכותב לו ספר תורה לשמו, שלא יתנאה בשל
 אחרים. מלך - אין, הדיוט - לא - לא צריכא, לשתי תורות. וכדתניא
 (דברים י"ז) וכתב לו את משנה וגו' - כותב לשמו שתי תורות, אחת
 שהיא יוצאה ונכנסת עמו, ואחת שמונחת לו בבית גנזיו. אותה
 שיוצאה ונכנסת עמו (עושה אותה כמין קמיע, ותולה בזרועו,
 שנאמר (תהלים ט"ז) שויתי ה' לנגדי תמיד כי מימיני בל אמוט),

And he shall write in his own name a sefer Torah. A Tanna taught: And he must not take credit for one belonging to his ancestors.

Rabbah said: Even if one's parents have left him a sefer Torah, yet it is proper that he should write one of his own, as it is written: *Now therefore write ye this song for you* (Deut 31:19).

Abaye raised an objection: 'He [the king] shall write a sefer Torah for himself, for he should not seek credit for one [written] by others.' [Surely, this implies] only a king [is thus enjoined], but not a commoner? – No, it is necessary here to teach the need for two Scrolls of the Law [for the king], even as it has been taught: *And he shall write him the repetition of this law* (Deut 27:18), he shall write for himself two copies, one which goes in and out with him and the other to be placed in his treasure-house. The former which is to go in and out with him, he shall write in the form of an amulet and fasten it to his arm, as it is written *I have set God always before me, surely He is at my right hand, I shall not be moved* (Ps 16:8).

Suggested Activity 13: Legalized Kavod LaTorah

1. Excerpts from the *Kitzur Shulchan Aruch*

Ganzfried, Solomon. *Code of Jewish Law (Kitzur Shulchan Aruch)*. Trans. Hyman E. Goldin. New York: Hebrew Publishing Company, 1961.

2. Excerpts from *Mishneh Torah: Hilchot Sefer Torah*

Touger, Eliyahu. *Maimonides Mishneh Torah: The Laws Governing Tefillin, Mezuzah, and Torah Scrolls and The Laws of Tzitzit*. New York: Moznaim Publishing, 1990.

CODE OF JEWISH LAW

ing the parchment it would come off, then it may be so done; otherwise, we may not read out of it. When the fat or the wax covering the Divine Name, is removed on weekdays, care must be taken that none of the letters be erased, God forbid, but the reverse side of the parchment should be slightly warmed so that the wax or the fat comes off of itself.

CHAPTER 25

Laws Concerning Ashre and Uva Letziyon

1. *Ashre* (Happy are they) and *Tehillah ledavid* (A Psalm of Praise of David) (Psalms 145) are then recited, and we must concentrate well while so doing, especially when we read the verse *Poteah et yadeha* (Thou openest Thy hand).

2. Thereafter, we read (Psalm 20) *Lamenatzeah* (For the Chief Musician). This Psalm is omitted on the following days: *Rosh Hodesh*, *Hanukkah*, *Purim*, (the same applies to the fourteenth and fifteenth days of the month *Adar I* in an intercalated year), the day before Passover, the day before *Yom Kippur*, and on *Tisheah Beav*. Neither is it said in the house of a mourner. On the day the Psalm *Lamenatzeah* is omitted, *El ereh appayim* (O God who art long-suffering) is likewise omitted.

3. The *kedushah* contained in the prayer *Uva letziyon* (and a redeemer shall come to Zion) should be recited with the *Targum* (Aramaic translation). Care should be taken to recite it with great devotion; and the *Targum* should be recited silently.

4. No one should leave the synagogue before reciting this *kedushah*.

5. One should strive to recite this *Kedushah* together with the congregation, and therefore, if a worshiper arrives at the synagogue when the congregation is reciting it, he should recite it with them even before he has said his prayers. He may recite this *kedushah* even before saying the two verses that precede it: *Uva letziyon goel* and *Vaani zot beriti* (And as for Me, this is My covenant), and upon concluding the *kedushah*, he says these two verses. Needless to add, that he may skip *Ashre* and *Lamenatzeah* in order to say this *kedushah* together with the congregation, and say afterwards what he had omitted.

6. Then we say the prayer *Alenu leshabeah* (it is our duty to praise), and this should be said with great awe and reverence. This prayer was instituted by Joshua upon the conquest of Jericho. Thereafter, we recite the *Yom* (Psalm for the day) and the other Psalms, every one according to the custom prevailing in the community.

7. Upon leaving the synagogue, we recite the verse (Psalms 5:9): *Adonai naheni* (O Lord, lead me) etc., and we bow toward the Ark, in the manner of a pupil taking leave of his master. When leaving the synagogue, we must not turn our backs towards the Ark, but we must walk out sideways; and so must it be done when moving away from the reading desk (after being called up to the Torah).

The Reading of The Torah

1. The person who takes the *sefer torah* out of the holy ark to carry it to the reading desk, should walk with it northward, which is on his right side, and when he takes it back to the ark, he should walk with it southward. The *sefer torah*, however, should always be carried on the right arm. It is the duty of every person past whom the *sefer torah* is carried, to accompany it to the reading desk.
2. He, who is called up to the reading of the Torah should wrap himself in a fringed *tallit*, and take the shortest way going up to the reading desk, and the longest way going down. If the two ways are of equal distance, he ascends at his right and descends at his left. It is customary for the person called up to the Torah, not to descend until after the one called up after him had said the last benediction.
3. The Scroll is opened, and the one who is called up, looks at the passage to be read, and taking hold of the two handles, he closes his eyes, and says: *Barhu et adonai hamevorah* (Bless ye the Lord who is to be blessed). He should recite this aloud, so that the entire congregation may hear and respond: *Baruh adonai hamevorah leolam vaed* (Blessed is the Lord who is to be blessed forever and ever). If the congregation has not heard the person who recites the benediction, even though they hear the Reader responding, they must not respond with him, but wait until he concludes it, and then respond *Amen*. After the congregation responds: *Baruh adonai hamevorah leolam vaed*, the person called repeats it, and continues with the benediction: *Asher bahar banu* (He who has chosen us) etc., to which the congregation responds *Amen*. He then removes his left hand from the Scroll and holds on to it with his right hand only. The Reader then reads the prescribed portion and the one who is called up, follows him silently. The Reader is not allowed to begin reading the portion until the entire congregation has responded *Amen*. It is the duty of the congregation to listen with close attention to the reading of the Torah. After the reading, the one called up takes hold of the Scroll with his left hand also, rolls it up and says the benediction: *Asher natan lanu* (Who hast given us), etc.
4. It is forbidden to take hold of the Scroll with bare hands. It must be held either by means of the *tallit* or by its rollers. Some are more strict about it, and do not touch even the rollers with their bare hands, but by means of the *tallit*.

5. Both the one called up and the Reader, must stand while the Torah is read. They are forbidden to lean against anything, but must stand erect with awe; for, just as the Torah was given in an atmosphere of awe, so must we stand before it in awe. But a feeble person is permitted to lean slightly if necessary.
6. When the one that is called up says *Barhu* (bless ye) the congregation responding: *Baruh adonai hamevorah leolam vaed*, must remain standing, but when he recites the benediction: *Asher bahar banu*, also while the Torah is read, and during the reciting of the last benediction, the congregation need not stand. However, people who are meticulous in the performance of precepts remain standing, and this is the proper thing to do. However, at the interval between the calling up of persons, it is not necessary to be so strict.
7. If the Reader himself is called to the benediction of the Torah, somebody must stand along side of him; for, just as the Torah was given through an intermediary, our teacher Moses, peace be unto him, so we, too, must proceed in the same manner.
8. During the reading of the Torah, it is forbidden to indulge in conversation, even regarding matters of the Law, and even between the calling up of persons. It is forbidden to leave the synagogue when the Torah is read, but between the calling up of persons, when the Scroll is rolled up, one may leave the synagogue, if very urgent.
9. If there is a *Kohen* in the synagogue, he must be called up first. Even if he is an unlearned person, but an honest man, he has preference over a Sage. Even if the *Kohen* is willing to waive his right to be called first, it is of no avail. After the *Kohen* a *Levi* is called, and if there is no *Levi*, the *Kohen* is called again in his stead, and we say *Bimekom levi* (in the stead of the Levi). If there is no *Kohen* present, a *Levi* or an Israelite is called in his stead, but it is proper that the one who is the most learned among those present should be called. And we say: *Im en kan kohen, levi bimekom kohen* (if there is no *Kohen*, a *Levi* in the stead of a *Kohen*) or *Yisrael bimekom kohen* (an Israelite in the stead of a *Kohen*). If an Israelite is called up instead of a *Kohen*, then a *Levi* should not be called after him. In a community where all inhabitants are *Kohanim* or *Levites*, a competent Rabbi should be consulted how to act in such a case.
10. If a *Kohen* is reciting *Shema* or the *Shemoneh esreh*, he must not be called to the Torah, even if there is no other *Kohen* present. It is not necessary

CODE OF JEWISH LAW

mouth, and thou shalt meditate on it," etc. The person who pronounces the words with his lips fulfills the precept of "And ye shall study them," although he does not understand the meaning of the words. Therefore, every unlearned person pronounces the benediction over the Torah every morning before reading the verses, and also when he is called up to the reading of the Torah. Whoever makes an endeavor to study the Torah, but is unable to understand it will merit the reward, to understand it in the world to come.

CHAPTER 28

The Scroll and Other Holy Books

1. It is a definite precept devolving upon every Israelite to write for himself a *sefer torah* (Scroll of the Law), for it is written (Deuteronomy 31:19): "And ye shall write for yourselves this song," and our Rabbis, of blessed memory, received it by tradition that the meaning of this command is, that we must write the whole Torah which contains this song (of Moses). If a person inherits a Scroll from his father, he must, nevertheless, write another one for himself. If a person hires one to write a Scroll for him, or if he has bought one and found it defective and he corrected it, it is accounted as though he had written it. A *sefer torah* must not be sold, but in case of dire need, one should consult a competent rabbi.

2. It is also the duty of every man to buy other holy books, such as the Holy Scriptures, the *Mishnah*, the *Talmud*, and commentaries for himself to study and to lend them to others. If one cannot afford to buy both a *sefer torah* and other books for study, then the latter should have preference. Our Rabbis, of blessed memory, said: "It is written (Psalms 111:3): 'And this righteousness endureth forever,' this refers to one who writes or buys books and lends them to others."

3. A man must treat the *sefer torah* with the utmost respect, and he must assign to it a special place which must be treated with reverence, and beautifully decorated. He must not expectorate in front of the *sefer torah*, and he must not handle the *sefer torah* without its cover or mantle. When he sees a *sefer torah* being carried, he must rise and remain standing until it is brought to its place or until it is out of sight. In the synagogue, when the *sefer torah* is taken out or replaced, it must be followed by those before whom it is being carried until it reaches its destination. Also, the one who has raised it and the one who has rolled it up must follow it.

4. Other sacred books, also must be treated with respect. If they are on a bench, it is forbidden to sit on this bench unless they are placed on something which is at least one hand-breadth (four inches) in height. Needless to say, it is forbidden to place sacred books on the floor. It is forbidden to place

4. The [following] are all considered to be sacred articles: a container that was prepared to be used for a Torah scroll and within which a scroll had actually been placed,⁵ and similarly, a mantle, a movable ark or cabinet in which a Torah scroll is placed⁶ - [this applies] even though the scroll is within its container - and similarly, a chair that was prepared for a Torah scroll to be placed upon it⁷ and upon which a scroll had actually been placed. They are forbidden to be discarded. Instead, when they become worn out or broken, they should be entombed.

In contrast, the platform on which the *chazan* stands while holding the Torah scroll⁸ and tablets used for the instruction of children⁹ are not sacred in nature.¹⁰

Similarly, the decorative silver and gold pomegranates that are made for a Torah scroll are considered sacred articles and may not be used for mundane purposes, unless they were sold with the intention of purchasing a Torah scroll or *chumash* with the proceeds.¹¹

5. It is permissible to place a Torah scroll on another Torah scroll and, needless to say, upon *chumashim*.¹² *Chumashim* may be placed upon books of the Prophets or of the Sacred Writings.¹³ In contrast, books of the Prophets or the Sacred Writings may not be placed on *chumashim*, nor may *chumashim* be placed on Torah scrolls.

All sacred writings, even texts of Torah law and allegories, may not be thrown.¹⁴ It is forbidden to enter a lavatory wearing a talisman containing verses from the sacred writings unless it is covered with leather.¹⁵

to use a mantle for this purpose, there is no obligation to entomb it in this fashion. It may be buried with other sacred articles.

5. The Rambam is alluding to the concepts mentioned in Chapter 4, Halachah 9, that for an article to be considered as sacred in nature, it must have been made for a holy intent and actually used for that purpose. The container he mentions refers to the Sephardic custom in which a Torah scroll is held in a wooden or metal box.

6. Our translation follows Rav Kapach's commentary, which explains that a *teivah* is a movable ark with a flat roof; a *migdal*, a movable ark with a slanted roof. Others have noted that the term *migdal* could refer to the permanent ark described in *Hilchot Tefillah* 11:2-3.

7. When two scrolls are taken out for the communal Torah reading, one is placed on this chair while the other is being read. Many authorities require the second scroll to be held by a person while the first scroll is being read.

8. See *Hilchot Tefillah* 11:3.

9. This would appear to refer to tablets used to teach children to read. If the tablets contain a Biblical verse, they also must be treated as sacred articles.

10. They do not have the same level of holiness as a Torah scroll. They are endowed - as

6. A person should not enter a bathhouse, lavatory, or cemetery while holding a Torah scroll, even if it is covered by a mantle and placed in its container. He should not read from the scroll until he moves four cubits away from the corpse or from the lavatory.

A person should not hold a Torah scroll while naked. It is forbidden to sit on a couch on which a Torah scroll is placed.

7. It is forbidden to engage in sexual relations in a room where a Torah scroll is located,¹⁶ until one either:

- a) removes the scroll;
- b) places it in a container, and then places that container in a container that is not intended for it. If, however, the container is intended for it, even ten containers, one over the other, are considered as a single entity;¹⁷ or
- c) constructs a divider at least ten handbreadths high.¹⁸

Although the passages in tefillin are covered by leather, there are distinct differences between them and these talismans:

- a) The compartments of the tefillin are also holy and are made for the specific purpose of holding the tefillin. Therefore, they are not considered to be a container. See Halachah 7 (*Kinat Eliyahu*).
- b) The *shin* - one of the letters of God's name - is embossed on the tefillin (Rabbenu Manoach).

Commentary, Halachah 6

A person should not enter a bathhouse, lavatory, - since it is unbecoming to bring a Torah scroll into such places. (See also Chapter 7, Halachah 3.)

or cemetery while holding a Torah scroll - It is forbidden to perform mitzvot next to a corpse or in a cemetery, because by doing so, one appears to be mocking the dead, who cannot serve God in this manner (*Berachot* 18a). Holding a Torah scroll itself fulfills a mitzvah even when one does not study from it (*Kesef Mishneh*).

even if it is covered by a mantle and placed in its container. - As explained in the previous and the following halachot, a Torah scroll that is covered by its usual containers is considered as if it is openly revealed.

He should not read from the scroll until he moves four cubits away from the corpse - See Chapter 4, Halachah 23; *Hilchot Kri'at Shema* 3:2.

or from the lavatory. - See Chapter 4, Halachah 17; *Hilchot Kri'at Shema* 3:8.

There are certain versions of the *Mishneh Torah* that state: "until he moves four cubits away from the corpse, bathhouse, or lavatory." Since the Rambam does not mention the obligation of moving away from a bathhouse in Chapter 4 or in Chapter 3 of *Hilchot Kri'at Shema*, we can assume that he does not feel that it is necessary, and that as soon as one steps outside of the bathhouse he may recite words of Torah.

[The above applies] only when there is no other room available. If there is another room available, one may not engage in sexual relations unless one removes the Torah scroll.

8. Any impure person, even [a woman in] a niddah state or a gentile, may hold a Torah scroll and read it. The words of Torah do not contract ritual impurity.¹⁹ This applies when one's hands are not soiled or dirty with mud. [In the latter instance,] one should wash one's hands and then touch the scroll.

9. Whenever a person sees a Torah scroll being carried, he must stand before it. Everyone should remain standing until the person holding the scroll reaches his destination and stands still, or until they can no longer see the scroll.²⁰ Afterward, they are permitted to sit.²¹

10. It is a mitzvah to designate a special place for a Torah scroll²² and to honor it and glorify it²³ in an extravagant manner. The words of the Ten Commandments are contained in each Torah scroll.

A person should not spit before a Torah scroll, reveal his nakedness before it, take off his footwear before it,²⁴ or carry it on his head like a burden. He should not turn his back to a Torah scroll unless it is ten handbreadths higher than he is.

11. A person who was journeying from one place to another with a Torah scroll should not place the Torah scroll in a sack, load it on a donkey, and then ride on [the beast]. If, however, he is afraid of thieves, it is permissible. If there is no danger, he should carry it in his bosom while riding the animal, and journey [onward].

Anyone who sits before a Torah scroll should sit with respect, awe, and fear, because [the Torah] is a faithful testimony [of the covenant between God and the Jews] for all the inhabitants of the earth, as [Deuteronomy 31:26] states: "And it will be as a testimony for you."²⁵

19. Note a slightly different application of this concept in *Hilchot Kri'at Shema* 4:8.

20. *Kiddushin* 33b states: If we stand in honor of a Torah sage, surely we should stand before the Torah itself. (Compare to the laws governing standing before a sage, *Hilchot Talmud Torah* 5:7, 6:1.)

21. Note the *Shulchan Aruch* (*Orach Chayim* 149:1), which states that after the Torah is read, it is customary to accompany it back to where it is kept.

A person must honor a Torah scroll [to the full extent] of his potential. The Sages of the early generations²⁶ said: "Whoever desecrates the Torah will have his person²⁷ desecrated by people. Whoever honors the Torah will have his person honored by people."²⁸

Torah will be "testimony for you," while previously he spoke of its being "testimony for all the inhabitants of the earth." This difficulty can be resolved by interpreting the proof-text, "It will be testimony about you" - i.e., the Torah will be testimony to all the inhabitants of the world that an essential bond exists between God and the Jewish people. The awareness that the Torah communicates this concept should naturally, without effort, bring a person to "sit with respect, awe, and fear" in the presence of a Torah scroll (*Likkutei Sichot*, Shavuot 5747).

Suggested Activity 15: The Lifecycle of a Torah

Resources for Consecration of a Torah

1. TORAH DEDICATION CEREMONY at The Reconstructionist Havurah of Cleveland

<http://www.kolhalev.net/album/torah/torah.html>

2. Haknasat Torah

<http://www.sofer.net/synagogue.htm>

3. Siyum HaTorah Press Release

<http://www.templejudea.com/viewnews.php?id=675>

4. Siyyum HaTorah

By Mordechai Pinchas

<http://www.bayit02.freemove.co.uk/html/siyyum.html>

Resources for a Damaged Torah

5. Torah and Kashrut

http://www.sofer.net/sofer_stam.htm

6. Excerpts from *Mishneh Torah: Hilchot Sefer Torah*

Touger, Eliyahu. *Maimonides Mishneh Torah: The Laws Governing Tefillin, Mezuzah, and Torah Scrolls and The Laws of Tzitzit*. New York: Moznaim Publishing, 1990.

TORAH DEDICATION CEREMONY at The Reconstructionist Havurah of Cleveland

The celebration that welcomed our Sefer Torah began at 5:00 pm with a singing processional including children, B'nai Mitzvahs, adults of several ages, and the rabbis. The service highlighted themes of passing Judaism on through generations and linking communities. The new Sefer Torah was passed from member to member.

We also heard from a representative of the congregation that was the former home of our new scrolls and learned more about their history

Young men and women who had been Bar Mitzvah or Bat Mitzvah at the Havurah read from the new Sefer Torah.

Members had brought their prayer shawls and joined their *tallitot* together to form a *chuppah* for the symbolic wedding of the congregation with its new scrolls.

We proclaimed our individual and communal commitment to, and responsibility for, the Torah and its principles by the reading of our Havurah Torah *Ketubah*.

And, as is customary at weddings, we danced.

As a gift for the bride, Havurah members have designed and started work on a beautiful cover for the table on which the Torah scrolls will be placed when being read.

Source:

<http://www.kolhalev.net/album/torah/torah.html>

Haknasat Torah

The commandment of writing a Torah Scroll is not fulfilled unless the Torah Scroll is completely written and assessed to be correct. Only then a congregation may bring it to the synagogue and read from it. Bringing in a Torah Scroll is considered one of the great holidays of the community, it usually involves dozens and hundreds participant's eager to view how the scroll is finished and dedicated. Put under the wedding canopy, the Torah Scroll marches together with congregates to the synagogue followed by songs, blessings and music. Some follow the custom of saying the blessing 'Shehecheyanu' when they get their first aliyah in the new Torah.

At a consecration services for the new Torah Scroll the custom is to open the new scroll and publicly read therein the concluding eleven verses until the end. Rabbis, say, that each person enters in full possession of the Torah Scroll when he gets an aliyah by virtue of being called to read from it. Thus anyone who is called to make a blessing over a Torah Scroll fulfills the mitzvah of having it in his full possession, as required by the Law.

Source:

<http://www.sofer.net/synagogue.htm>

Siyum HaTorah Press Release

May 18, 2003- TARZANA, CALIFORNIA -- In a day of dedication and celebration, Temple Judea will re-enact the moment when the Jewish people first received the Torah by marching its own newly-created scroll on May 18 from its campus on Valley Circle in West Hills to its Tarzana location on Lindley Avenue. The holy scroll will be carried under a wedding canopy or chuppah by hundreds of families who actually helped pen the Torah throughout the past year.

“Our Year of Torah project represents all the contributions to Judaism that Temple Judea has made in the past 50 years, as well as the promise of continued life as a congregation for all the years to come,” said Rabbi Dan Moskovitz. “Every member of our temple had the opportunity to actually write a letter in the new Torah scroll that we commissioned more than a year ago. Along with our two scribes, we have completed one of the most important mitzvahs or commandments in Jewish life, that of passing on the Torah to future generations.”

Jewish tradition says that a new Torah is to be welcomed into a community just as one welcomes a bride and groom. Accordingly, Temple Judea’s new Torah will be presented to the Temple’s religious school students at 11 a.m. at the temple’s West Hills campus with Rabbi Moskovitz, dressed in biblical garments, descending from atop the site’s hillside just as Moses did thousands of years ago at Mt. Sinai. The congregation will lead a brief service recognizing the importance of passing the Torah from generation to generation, and then the Torah will begin its nine-mile trek to the temple’s Tarzana campus. Every family that participated in the writing of the Torah will be given a spot along the route to carry the sacred scroll. Marchers will be accompanied by hundreds of other celebrants as well as a klezmer band to add a joyous touch.

As the Torah arrives later that day at the Tarzana sanctuary, the final letters of the scroll will be penned by many of the families who wrote the first letters last year. The Torah will take its place of honor in the holy Ark, and the celebration will continue with a joyous ceremony featuring an adult choir, children’s choir and BBQ dinner. Congregants Sandra and Irving Klasky are serving as co-chairs of the entire day’s events.

“I’m looking forward to our Siyyum event, especially because this entire year of writing Torah has been so meaningful and emotional,” said Rabbi Don Goor. “We have learned and gained so much from our Torah project, and it will be wonderful to welcome the new Torah into our spiritual home. I can only imagine how emotional it will be to carry the Torah and pass it from generation to generation. Torah will come alive in a new sense!”

Temple Judea’s new Torah was written by both an Orthodox scribe, Rabbi Shmuel Miller of Los Angeles, and a Reform scribe, Rabbi Neil Yerman of New York. A Torah scribe, known in Hebrew as a sofer, is a scholar who writes and restores the scrolls of the Torah, or “The Five Books of Moses”. During the past year, every Temple family was invited to share of the creation of this new Torah, by helping the scribes actually write the Hebrew letters on the parchment using a

quill and ink.

“During the year it has taken to write the Torah, nearly all of our synagogue programming reflected the significance of this experience,” explained Temple President Michael Robbins. “Festivities included special Shabbat services, learning opportunities with the Torah scribes, and special Religious School curriculum. All of our congregants had the opportunity not only to write in the Torah, but to learn more about its traditions.”

Source:

<http://www.templejudea.com/viewnews.php?id=675>

Siyyum HaTorah

When a torah is finished it marks a great accomplishment and mitsvah and will be marked by communal festivities known as a **siyyum hatorah** (completion of the torah). Various customs have developed over the years and indeed new customs will spring up all the time. The customs below are culled in part from the Sefer Chinnuch Sefer Torah as found in the book, the 613th commandment with a few modern interpolations.

Amidst song and dance the new sefer torah covered by a **chupa** (canopy - usually a **tallit** suspended by four poles) is brought to the synagogue. Various people could be selected to carry the new torah, the donor, the rabbi, the scribe, a kohen or levi (to symbolise the process when King David bought the Ark into the Temple). The person (or persons - one could organise a relay of sorts within reason) granted the honour should be called up:

Ya'amod [insert Hebrew name], **mechubad be kavod hatorah** (arise.....who is honoured to give honour to the torah).

At the entrance to the synagogue a person holding one, three (symbolising **kadosh kadosh kadosh** (holy holy holy [is the Lord of Hosts) or **kohanim, levi'im** and **yisraelim**, or **torah, avodah** (service) and **gemilut chassidim** (good deeds)) or indeed all of the sifrey torah greet the new torah and excerpt it towards the ark.

If not all the sifrey torah are out the remainder are removed from the ark.

The **shema** is chanted.

All the sifrey torah encircle the **bimah** (platform) and the new sefer torah is then opened and laid on a surface for completion.

Traditionally the 18 last letters are completed (symbolising the word **chai** - life) 18 people could therefore be called for the honour each completing a letter.

These people are usually either major donors towards the cost of the scroll and/or people that the congregation wish to honour because of special service. However any number of letters may be written (more or less).

The scribe and other writers should wash their hands and recite the **bracha (blessing) ...al netilat yadayim**.

There are various ways of completing the letters. If the person feels confident and have practiced then they may be able to write the letter themselves. More often the person will hold the arm of the scribe as he completes the letter on their behalf acting as their agent. Some scribes will draw the outline of the letters and then people may fill in the outline or have the scribe fill it in whilst they hold his arm. The very last letter may be completed by the rabbi or the major donor.

Before 'writing' each person must say:

Hareyni ani kotev (kotevet) leshem k'dushat sefer torah (behold I am writing for the sake of the holiness of the sefer torah). There are no specific **brachot** for the writing or completion of a scroll as the mitsvah is similar to those of sukkah and shofar. One does not say a blessing when one has made a **sukkah**, but rather when one has dwelt in it. One does not say a blessing having made a **shofar** out of a rams horn, rather only when blows it. The mitsvah is bound up

with the use of a torah (for which there are specific blessings) not merely its writing.

A nice touch is for each letter to be written with a newly cut quill and for those who received the honour to receive the quill along with a **teudah** (certificate) commemorating the occasion.

As each letter is written the scribe sounds it out (as is the case with all letters).

One very nice **minhag** (custom) I saw for the first time recently had children parading round the synagogue with 18 giant letters as each letter was called out one child rose with their golden letter and walked round.

One of those responsible for the checking of the torah (it should have been read through by three rabbis) might then wish to declare publicly that the scroll is now fit for public use.

The last portion of the torah is then read (without a blessing). An alternative would be to read a section containing Deut:31:19 which contains the commandment to write a scroll. However one must wait until the ink is dry before rolling back to this place - an excuse for the singing of more songs.

On completion of the reading all should chant **chazak chazak v'nitchazek** (be strong be strong and we will be strengthened)

The donor or rabbi then recites the **shehecheyanu** blessing which thanks God for keeping us alive to see this event.

The prayer **yedid nefesh** is sung.

A special prayer then can be made for the donors or contributors to the mitsvah and their families.

The **shofar** is sounded

A sermon, **d'var torah** or programme takes place followed by a seudat mitsvah, a special meal marking the occasion.

Most importantly the celebrations should be joyous as if we were receiving torah from Mount Sinai.

Source:

By Mordechai Pinchas

<http://www.bayit02.freeserve.co.uk/html/siyyum.html>

Torah and Kashrut

There is quite a number of rules and regulations of the correction of the error in Sefer Torah. Most of the letters can be erased by a knife or a pumice stone. But the name of the Almighty can not be erased. By no means the scribe may diminish the holiness of the Divine name, and erasing it physically from the parchment would be without doubt a serious transgression. In that case, God forbid, the whole eriah has to be cut of the Sefer Torah and buried in a specially designated place, called geniza (holding).

Geniza is usually a special room in the basement of the synagogue or a specially built contingent building that is used as a holding for any sheet of paper that contains the Name of the Almighty yet that can not be any more used. Sometimes geniza is built at the cemetery or dug in the ground.

Holy books or Sifrei Torah should be restored by all means, yet if the restoration is no more possible and cost of it exceeds the actual cost of a new Sefer, they should be buried in the geniza. Thus, Sifrei Torah used for hundred years by dozens of generations and unsolvable from the point of view of a professional scribe should be placed in the geniza. However, as a rule the sofer is at pains to save a Sefer Torah applying his utmost technical skills to salvage it through replacements and corrections. According to the most rigorous requirements, a used Sefer Torah checked and repaired by the professional scribe has now less status in terms of Jewish Law than a new one, except for its aesthetic features.

Source:

http://www.sofer.net/sofer_stam.htm

t) that the parchments were sewn together using [thread made from anything other] than animal sinews.

Any other factors were mentioned only as the most proper way of fulfilling the mitzvah and are not absolute requirements.

2. A proper Torah scroll is treated with great sanctity and honor. It is forbidden for a person to sell a Torah scroll even if he has nothing to eat. [This prohibition applies] even if he possesses many scrolls or if he [desires to] sell an old scroll in order to purchase a new one.

A Torah scroll may never be sold except for two purposes:

- a) to use the proceeds to study Torah;
- b) to use the proceeds to marry.

[Even in these instances, permission to sell is granted only] when the person has nothing else to sell.

3. A Torah scroll that has become worn or disqualified should be placed in an earthenware container¹ and buried next to a Torah sage. This is the manner in which it should be entombed.

The mantle² of a scroll that has become worn should be used to make shrouds for a corpse that has no one to bury it.³ This is the manner in which it should be entombed.⁴

t) that the parchments were sewn together using [thread made from anything other] than animal sinews.; - See Chapter 9, Halachah 13.

Any other factors were mentioned only as the most proper way of fulfilling the mitzvah and are not absolute requirements. - *Sefer Kovetz* adds one more disqualification: that a Torah scroll was written with half of God's name within the line and half added outside the line (Chapter 1, Halachah 16).

Commentary, Halachah 2

A proper Torah scroll is treated with great sanctity and honor. - This general principle is the foundation for the remaining halachot in this chapter.

It is forbidden for a person to sell a Torah scroll even if he has nothing to eat. - The Rambam's words (quoted from *Megillah* 27a) should not be taken absolutely literally. Surely, if a person is in danger of dying of hunger, he may sell a Torah scroll. Rather, this refers to an instance when a person lacks a source of income and is required to sustain himself from charity (*Kessef Mishneh*). (See also Ramah, *Yoreh De'ah* 270:1; *Siftei Cohen* 270:2.)

[This prohibition applies] even if he possesses many scrolls or if he [desires to] sell an old scroll in order to purchase a new one. - Rabbenu Manoach explains that the reason for the latter ruling is that, despite one's resolve, circumstances may arise, and ultimately, one may never buy the new scroll. Accordingly, if the new scroll has already been completed and an agreement concluded, the old scroll may be sold. The

4. The [following] are all considered to be sacred articles: a container that was prepared to be used for a Torah scroll and within which a scroll had actually been placed,⁵ and similarly, a mantle, a movable ark or cabinet in which a Torah scroll is placed⁶ - [this applies] even though the scroll is within its container - and similarly, a chair that was prepared for a Torah scroll to be placed upon it⁷ and upon which a scroll had actually been placed. They are forbidden to be discarded. Instead, when they become worn out or broken, they should be entombed.

In contrast, the platform on which the *chazan* stands while holding the Torah scroll⁸ and tablets used for the instruction of children⁹ are not sacred in nature.¹⁰

Similarly, the decorative silver and gold pomegranates that are made for a Torah scroll are considered sacred articles and may not be used for mundane purposes, unless they were sold with the intention of purchasing a Torah scroll or *chumash* with the proceeds.¹¹

5. It is permissible to place a Torah scroll on another Torah scroll and, needless to say, upon *chumashim*.¹² *Chumashim* may be placed upon books of the Prophets or of the Sacred Writings.¹³ In contrast, books of the Prophets or the Sacred Writings may not be placed on *chumashim*, nor may *chumashim* be placed on Torah scrolls.

All sacred writings, even texts of Torah law and allegories, may not be thrown.¹⁴ It is forbidden to enter a lavatory wearing a talisman containing verses from the sacred writings unless it is covered with leather.¹⁵

to use a mantle for this purpose, there is no obligation to entomb it in this fashion. It may be buried with other sacred articles.

5. The Rambam is alluding to the concepts mentioned in Chapter 4, Halachah 9, that for an article to be considered as sacred in nature, it must have been made for a holy intent and actually used for that purpose. The container he mentions refers to the Sephardic custom in which a Torah scroll is held in a wooden or metal box.

6. Our translation follows Rav Kapach's commentary, which explains that a *teivah* is a movable ark with a flat roof; a *migdal*, a movable ark with a slanted roof. Others have noted that the term *migdal* could refer to the permanent ark described in *Hilchot Tefillah* 11:2-3.

7. When two scrolls are taken out for the communal Torah reading, one is placed on this chair while the other is being read. Many authorities require the second scroll to be held by a person while the first scroll is being read.

8. See *Hilchot Tefillah* 11:3.

9. This would appear to refer to tablets used to teach children to read. If the tablets contain a Biblical verse, they also must be treated as sacred articles.

10. They do not have the same level of holiness as a Torah scroll. They are endowed - as

Suggested Activity 16: Priestly Garments

1. Exodus 28

2. Model of Priestly Dress

Levine, Moshe. *The Tabernacle: Its Structure and Utensils*. London: Soncino, 1968.

3. "The Well-Dressed Torah"

Grishaver, Joel Lurie. "The Well-Dressed Torah." *Keeping Posted*. Vol. 30.4.

4. "The Torah's Priestly Garments"

Nichols, Elizabeth. *The Torah as an Icon*. Amherst College: unpublished thesis, 2001.

Exodus 28

ספר שמות: כח

א ואתה הקרב אליך את אהרן ואת בניו אתו מתוך בני ישראל לכהנו לי אהרן נדב ואביהוא אלעזר ואיתמר בני אהרן: ב ועשית בגדי קדש לאהרן אחיד לכבוד ולתפארת: ג ואתה תדבר אל כל חכמי לב אשר מלאתי רוח חכמה ועשו את בגדי אהרן לקדשו לכהנו לי: ד ואלה הבגדים אשר יעשו תשן ואפוד ומעיל וכתנת תשבץ מצנפת ואבנט ועשו בגדי קדש לאהרן אחיד ולבניו לכהנו לי: ה והם יקחו את הזהב ואת התכלת ואת הארגמן ואת תולעת השני ואת השש: ו ועשו את האפד זהב תכלת וארגמן ותולעת שני ושש משזר מעשה חשב: ז שתי כתפת חברת יהיה לו אל שני קצותיו וחבר: ח וחשב אפדתו אשר עליו כמעשהו ממנו יהיה זהב תכלת וארגמן ותולעת שני ושש משזר: ט ולקחת את שתי אבני שהם ופתחת עליהם שמות בני ישראל: י ששה משמותם על האבן האחת ואת שמות הששה הנותרים על האבן השנית כתולדתם: יא מעשה חרש אבן פתוחי חותם תפתח את שתי האבנים על שמות בני ישראל מסבת משבצות זהב תעשה אתם: יב ושמת את שתי האבנים על כתפת האפד אבני זכרון לבני ישראל ונשא אהרן את שמותם לפני יהוה על שתי כתפיו לזכרון: יג ועשית משבצת זהב: יד ושתי שרשרת זהב טהור מגבלת תעשה אתם מעשה עבת ונתתה את שרשרת העבתת על המשבצת: טו ועשית חשן משפט מעשה חשב כמעשה אפד תעשנו זהב תכלת וארגמן ותולעת שני ושש משזר תעשה אתו: טז רבוע יהיה כפול זרת ארפו וזרת רחבו: יז ומלאת בו מלאת אבן ארבעה טורים אבן טור אדם פטדה וברקת הטור האחד: יח והטור השני נפד ספיר ויהלם: יט והטור השלישי לשם שבו ואחלמה: כ והטור הרביעי תרשיש ושהם וישפה משבצים זהב יהיו במלואתם: כא והאבנים תהיון על שמות בני ישראל שתיים עשרה על שמותם פתוחי חותם איש על שמו תהיון לשני עשר שבט: כב ועשית על החשן שרשת גבלת מעשה עבת זהב טהור: כג ועשית על החשן שתי טבעות זהב ונתת את שתי הטבעות על שני קצות החשן: כד ונתתה את שתי עבתת הזהב על שתי הטבעת אל קצות החשן: כה ואת שתי קצות שתי העבתת תתן על שתי המשבצות ונתתה על כתפות האפד אל מול פניו: כו ועשית שתי טבעות זהב ושמת אתם על שני קצות החשן על שפתו אשר אל עבר האפוד ביתה: כז ועשית שתי טבעות זהב ונתתה אתם על שתי כתפות האפוד מלמטה ממול פניו לעמת

מחברתו ממעל לחשב האפוד: כח וירכסו את החשן מטבעתו
אל טבעת האפוד בפתיל תכלת להיות על חשב האפוד ולא יזח
החשן מעל האפוד: כט ונשא אהרן את שמות בני ישראל בחשן
המשפט על לבו בבאו אל הקדש לזכרון לפני יהוה תמיד: ל ונתת
אל חשן המשפט את האורים ואת התמים והיו על לב אהרן בבאו
לפני יהוה ונשא אהרן את משפט בני ישראל על לבו לפני יהוה
תמיד: לא ועשית את מעיל האפוד כליל תכלת: לב והיה פיראשו
בתוכו שפה יהיה לפיו סביב מעשה ארג כפי תחרא יהיה לו לא
יקרע: לג ועשית על שוליו רמני תכלת וארגמן ותולעת שני
על שוליו סביב ופעמני זהב בתוכם סביב: לד פעמן זהב ורמון
פעמן זהב ורמון על שולי המעיל סביב: לה והיה על אהרן לשרת
ונשמע קולו בבאו אל הקדש לפני יהוה ובצאתו ולא ימות:
לו ועשית ציץ זהב טהור ופתחת עליו פתוחי חתם קדש ליהוה:
לז ושמת אתו על פתיל תכלת והיה על המצנפת אל מול
פני המצנפת יהיה: לח והיה על מצח אהרן ונשא אהרן את עון
הקדשים אשר יקדישו בני ישראל לכל מתנת קדשיהם והיה
על מצחו תמיד לרצון להם לפני יהוה: לט ושבתת הכתנת שש
ועשית מצנפת שש ואבנט תעשה מעשה רקם: מ ולבני אהרן תעשה
כתנת ועשית להם אבנטים ומגבעות תעשה להם לכבוד ולתפארת:
מא והלבשת אתם את אהרן אחיד ואת בניו אתו ומשחת אתם
ומלאת את ידם וקדשת אתם וכהנו לי: מב ועשה להם מכנסים
לכסות בשר ערוה ממתנים ועד ירכים יהיו: מג והיו על אהרן
ועל בניו בבאם | אל אהל מועד או בגשתם אל המזבח לשרת
בקדש ולא ישאו עון ומתו חקת עולם לו ולזרעו אחרייו:

¹ Then bring near to you your brother Aaron, and his sons with him, from among the Israelites, to serve me as priests-- Aaron and Aaron's sons, Nadab and Abihu, Eleazar and Ithamar. ² You shall make sacred vestments for the glorious adornment of your brother Aaron. ³ And you shall speak to all who have ability, whom I have endowed with skill, that they make Aaron's vestments to consecrate him for my priesthood. ⁴ These are the vestments that they shall make: a breastpiece, an ephod, a robe, a checkered tunic, a turban, and a sash. When they make these sacred vestments for your brother Aaron and his sons to serve me as priests, ⁵ they shall use gold, blue, purple, and crimson yarns, and fine linen. ⁶ They shall make the ephod of gold, of blue, purple, and crimson yarns, and of fine twisted linen, skillfully worked. ⁷ It shall have two shoulder-pieces attached to its two edges, so that it may be joined together. ⁸ The decorated band on it shall be of the same workmanship and materials, of gold, of blue, purple,

and crimson yarns, and of fine twisted linen.⁹ You shall take two onyx stones, and engrave on them the names of the sons of Israel,¹⁰ six of their names on the one stone, and the names of the remaining six on the other stone, in the order of their birth.¹¹ As a gem-cutter engraves signets, so you shall engrave the two stones with the names of the sons of Israel; you shall mount them in settings of gold filigree.¹² You shall set the two stones on the shoulder-pieces of the ephod, as stones of remembrance for the sons of Israel; and Aaron shall bear their names before the LORD on his two shoulders for remembrance.¹³ You shall make settings of gold filigree,¹⁴ and two chains of pure gold, twisted like cords; and you shall attach the corded chains to the settings.¹⁵ You shall make a breastpiece of judgment, in skilled work; you shall make it in the style of the ephod; of gold, of blue and purple and crimson yarns, and of fine twisted linen you shall make it.¹⁶ It shall be square and doubled, a span in length and a span in width.¹⁷ You shall set in it four rows of stones. A row of carnelian, chrysolite, and emerald shall be the first row;¹⁸ and the second row a turquoise, a sapphire and a moonstone;¹⁹ and the third row a jacinth, an agate, and an amethyst;²⁰ and the fourth row a beryl, an onyx, and a jasper; they shall be set in gold filigree.²¹ There shall be twelve stones with names corresponding to the names of the sons of Israel; they shall be like signets, each engraved with its name, for the twelve tribes.²² You shall make for the breastpiece chains of pure gold, twisted like cords;²³ and you shall make for the breastpiece two rings of gold, and put the two rings on the two edges of the breastpiece.²⁴ You shall put the two cords of gold in the two rings at the edges of the breastpiece;²⁵ the two ends of the two cords you shall attach to the two settings, and so attach it in front to the shoulder-pieces of the ephod.²⁶ You shall make two rings of gold, and put them at the two ends of the breastpiece, on its inside edge next to the ephod.²⁷ You shall make two rings of gold, and attach them in front to the lower part of the two shoulder-pieces of the ephod, at its joining above the decorated band of the ephod.²⁸ The breastpiece shall be bound by its rings to the rings of the ephod with a blue cord, so that it may lie on the decorated band of the ephod, and so that the breastpiece shall not come loose from the ephod.²⁹ So Aaron shall bear the names of the sons of Israel in the breastpiece of judgment on his heart when he goes into the holy place, for a continual remembrance before the LORD.³⁰ In the breastpiece of judgment you shall put the Urim and the Thummim, and they shall be on Aaron's heart when he goes in before the LORD; thus Aaron shall bear the judgment of the Israelites on his heart before the LORD continually.³¹ You shall make the robe of the ephod all of blue.³² It shall have an opening for the head in the middle of it, with a woven binding around the opening, like the opening in a coat of mail, so that it may not be torn.³³ On its lower hem you shall make pomegranates of blue, purple, and crimson yarns, all around the lower hem, with bells of gold between them all around--³⁴ a golden bell and a pomegranate alternating all around the lower hem of the robe.³⁵ Aaron shall wear it when he ministers, and its sound shall be heard when he goes into the holy place before the LORD, and when he comes out, so that he may not die.³⁶ You shall make a rosette of pure gold, and engrave on it, like the engraving of a signet, "Holy to the LORD."³⁷ You shall fasten it on the turban with a blue cord; it shall be on the front

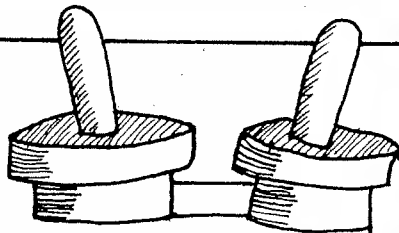
of the turban.³⁸ It shall be on Aaron's forehead, and Aaron shall take on himself any guilt incurred in the holy offering that the Israelites consecrate as their sacred donations; it shall always be on his forehead, in order that they may find favor before the LORD.³⁹ You shall make the checkered tunic of fine linen, and you shall make a turban of fine linen, and you shall make a sash embroidered with needlework.⁴⁰ For Aaron's sons you shall make tunics and sashes and headdresses; you shall make them for their glorious adornment.⁴¹ You shall put them on your brother Aaron, and on his sons with him, and shall anoint them and ordain them and consecrate them, so that they may serve me as priests.⁴² You shall make for them linen undergarments to cover their naked flesh; they shall reach from the hips to the thighs;⁴³ Aaron and his sons shall wear them when they go into the tent of meeting, or when they come near the altar to minister in the holy place; or they will bring guilt on themselves and die. This shall be a perpetual ordinance for him and for his descendants after him.



TORAH IS THE HEBREW NAME FOR THE FIRST FIVE BOOKS OF THE BIBLE.

JEWS USUALLY STUDY THE TORAH FROM EDITIONS WHICH ARE PRINTED AND BOUND LIKE REGULAR BOOKS; BUT IN EVERY SYNAGOGUE A HAND-WRITTEN **SEFER TORAH** IS KEPT IN THE ARK. THE **SEFER TORAH** IS WRITTEN ON A SCROLL AND IT IS CLOTHED IN SPECIAL GARMENTS AND ORNAMENTS AND TREATED WITH SPECIAL CEREMONY.

THE **SEFER TORAH** IS MORE THAN JUST A COPY OF THE TORAH, IT IS ALSO A SYMBOL. WE CAN LEARN A LITTLE OF WHAT THE TORAH MEANS TO US BY THE WAY THE TORAH IS DRESSED.



THE TORAH SCROLL IS ROLLED ON WOODEN ROLLERS CALLED AN **ETZ CHAYIM**—TREE OF LIFE.

ACCORDING TO TRADITION, TORAH IS A LIVING AND GROWING ENTITY WHICH GIVES WISDOM AND LIFE, JUST LIKE THE TREE IN THE GARDEN OF EDEN.

SOME TORAH SCROLLS COVER THE **ETZ CHAYIM** WITH FANCY ORNAMENTS. THESE ARE CALLED **RIMONIM** WHICH MEANS POMEGRANATES. SYMBOLICALLY THEY ARE THE FRUIT OF THE TREE OF LIFE.

POMEGRANATES ARE THOUGHT TO BE SPECIAL BECAUSE A FOLK TRADITION TEACHES THAT THEY HAVE 613 SEEDS. 613 IS THE NUMBER OF **MITZVOT** FOUND IN THE TORAH. THIS MAKES COMMANDMENTS THE FRUIT OF OUR STUDY.

TORAH SCROLLS ARE TIED TOGETHER WITH FANCY GIRDLES WHICH ARE CALLED TORAH BINDERS.

GERMAN JEWISH MOTHERS USED TO TAKE THEIR SONS' SWADDLING CLOTHES AND MAKE THEM INTO FANCY TORAH BINDERS CALLED WIMPLES. ON THE WIMPLE, THEY WOULD EMBROIDER OR PAINT THEIR SON'S NAME PLUS THE FOLLOWING:

"EVEN AS HE HAS BEEN ENTERED INTO THE COVENANT, SO MAY HE BE ENTERED INTO TORAH, MARRIAGE, AND A LIFE OF GOOD DEEDS."



THE WIMPLE TIED TORAH TO A JEW'S WHOLE LIFE.

OVER THE TORAH, ASHKENAZIC JEWS PLACED A FANCY OUTER COVER OF BEAUTIFUL CLOTH.

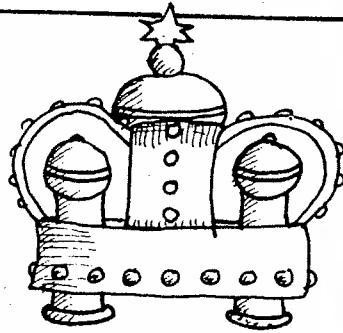
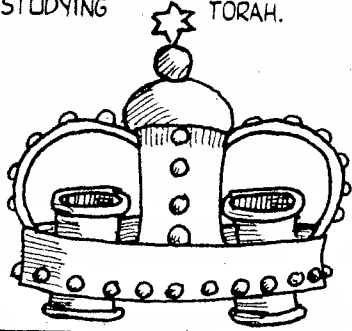
THE COVER, CALLED A **MANTLE**, WAS VERY MUCH A REGAL ROBE, MADE OF THE MOST EXPENSIVE CLOTH, DECORATED WITH JEWISH SYMBOLS AND SUCH ANIMALS AS LIONS AND DEER. GOLD AND SILVER THREAD AND FANCY BEADWORK WERE USED TO MAKE THE MANTLE BEAUTIFUL AND UNIQUE.

THE WELL-DRESSED TORAH

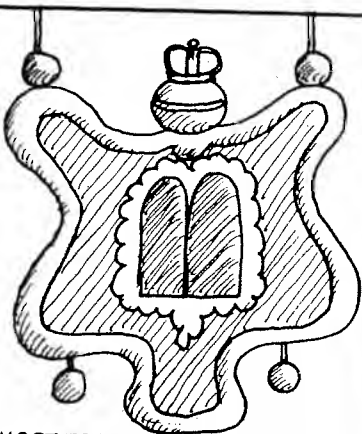
JOEL

OTHER TORAH SCROLLS HAVE CROWNS PLACED ON THEIR ETZ CHAYIM. THIS MAKES THEM LOOK LIKE ROYALTY.

JEWISH TRADITION SPEAKS OF THE "CROWN OF TORAH," MEANING WISDOM AND SENSITIVITY FROM STUDYING TORAH.



WHEN ITALIAN JEWS MADE CROWNS FOR THE TORAH, THEY USED BOTH IDEAS: THEY MADE THE TORAH LOOK LIKE ROYALTY BY GIVING IT A CROWN AND THEY MADE THE MITZVOT THE FRUIT OF TORAH STUDY BY ALSO INCLUDING RIMONIM.

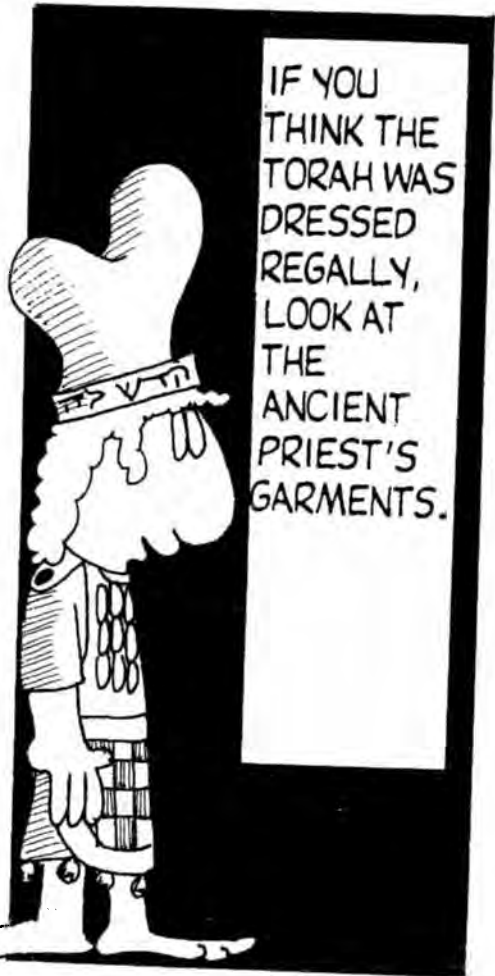
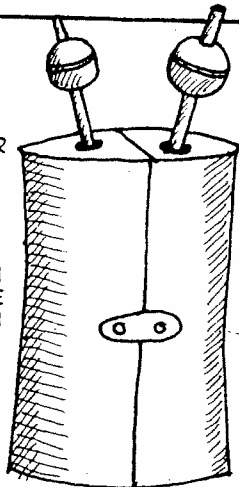


MOST TORAH SCROLLS HAVE A BREASTPLATE PLACED OVER THE MANTLE. THE BREASTPLATE WAS BOTH A BADGE OF AUTHORITY AND A SHIELD OF PROTECTION FOR THE TORAH.

SEPHARDIC JEWS PLACE GREAT EMPHASIS ON PROTECTING THEIR TORAH SCROLLS.

THEY PUT EACH TORAH IN ITS OWN CASE—JUST THE WAY THE CHILDREN OF ISRAEL PUT THE ORIGINAL TORAH IN THE ARK WHEN THEY CARRIED IT THROUGH THE WILDERNESS.

JEWS ARE CONCERNED WITH PROTECTING BOTH THE SCROLL AND THE MEANING OF THE TORAH.



IF YOU THINK THE TORAH WAS DRESSED REGALLY, LOOK AT THE ANCIENT PRIEST'S GARMENTS.

THE TORAH CLEARLY DESCRIBES THE CLOTHING WORN BY THE HIGH PRIEST. (EXOD. 28)

ON HIS HEAD, THE HIGH PRIEST WORE A GOLD HEADBAND WHICH SAID: "HOLY TO THE LORD."

HIS CLOTHING BEGAN WITH AN UNDERGARMENT FOR MODESTY. THIS WAS COVERED WITH A WHITE TUNIC AND TIED WITH A GIRDLE. NEXT CAME A BLUE ROBE WITH POMEGRANATE BELLS AT THE BOTTOM.

OVER THESE WENT AN EMBROIDERED APRON (OR COVER) CALLED THE EPHOD. OVER THIS THE HIGH PRIEST WORE A GOLD BREASTPLATE WITH TWELVE PRECIOUS STONES, ONE FOR EACH OF THE TWELVE TRIBES.

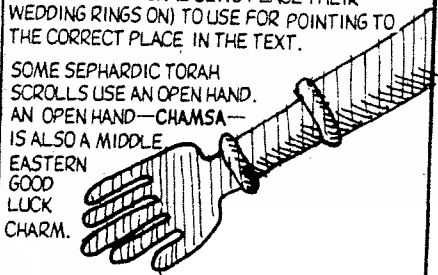
RIE GRISHAVER



MOST TORAH SCROLLS ALSO HAVE A YAD, POINTER, HANGING ON THEM. YAD MEANS HAND AND IT IS USED TO KEEP READERS FROM TOUCHING AND SMUDGING THE HANDWRITTEN SCROLL.

THE YAD ON ASHKENAZIC TORAH SCROLLS HAS AN OUTSTRETCHED INDEX FINGER (THE SAME FINGER TRADITIONAL JEWS PLACE THEIR WEDDING RINGS ON) TO USE FOR POINTING TO THE CORRECT PLACE IN THE TEXT.

SOME SEPHARDIC TORAH SCROLLS USE AN OPEN HAND. AN OPEN HAND—CHAMSA—IS ALSO A MIDDLE EASTERN GOOD LUCK CHARM.



The Torah's Priestly Garments

One common interpretation of the Torah's "dress" is in imitation of the priesthood. In ancient Judaism the priests officiated at the Temple in Jerusalem and directed the Israelite sacrificial cult. In Exodus, following the description of the building of the tabernacle, is a lengthy description of the garments of the priesthood.⁴ A basic dress was common to the entire priesthood, but the Torah specifies additional garb for the high priest: "These are the vestments they are to make: a breastpiece, an ephod, a robe, a fringed tunic, a headdress, and a sash..."⁵ For each item, the Torah specifies the material, including the proportion of wool to linen, the color, and the detail. The breastplate is to be made of mixed fabric with twelve precious stones affixed, each engraved with the name of one of the twelve tribes of Israel. The ephod is an apron that the high priest wore over both a fringed tunic and a robe. The robe is fringed, with golden bells and pomegranates, made of wool and linen, alternating suspended from the bottom. The headdress is made up of a golden diadem and a turban.

The Torah is dressed in a removable fringed mantle, similar to the fringed tunic of the high priest.⁶ A breastplate hangs over the two staves. The breastplate has many uses and connections. The label of breastplate and the general shape connect to the breastplate worn by the high priest. Originally, breastplates had a more practical usage: they included an interchangeable plaque with the name of a festival or special Shabbat. These plaques served to identify the portion to which the scroll was rolled. Labeling the scroll allowed congregations with multiple scrolls to roll them to the proper place ahead of time. Although the breastplate does not often have stones symbolizing the twelve tribes, as did that of the priest, artists often decorate it with symbols of the Jewish people.

Two traditions exist about the crowning of the Torah, both relating to the attire of the priesthood. In one tradition two separate crowns cover the two poles of the scroll. Bells often hang from the crowns. The Hebrew word for these crowns is *rimmonim*, meaning pomegranates. Both the bells and the label of pomegranate are reminiscent of the fringe on the high priest's robe. The second tradition is to have one crown covering both staves. This tradition is more directly connected to the headdress of the priesthood. For both the priest and the Torah the crown, or headdress, acts as a sign of authority. The tradition of crowning the Torah also alludes to a famous saying in *Pirke Avot*: "There are

⁴ See Exod 28 for the full description.

⁵ Exod 28:4.

⁶ This description of the Torah's garments refers to the Ashkenazi customs. In Sephardic custom, the Torah is kept in a case, rather than a mantle. The case, called a *tik*, is cylindrical or polygonal. The case hinges open, and the Torah remains in the case while it is read.

three crowns: the crown of Torah, the crown of priesthood, and the crown of royalty...”⁷

Some scholars resist the connection of the Torah’s dress with that of the priesthood, maintaining instead that both have a connection to a motif of royalty.⁸ Another Torah ornament, the *yad*, or pointer, is consistent with the image of royalty. Because of the prohibition against touching a Torah a reader uses a *yad* to keep his place. Joseph Gutmann compares this to a royal scepter.⁹ Whether the Torah’s dress is connected to the priesthood or to a general image of royalty does not change the fact that the Torah is dressed. By dressing the Torah, Jews establish a concept of iconicity for the Torah.

Text excerpted from:

Nichols, Elizabeth. *The Torah as an Icon*. Amherst College: unpublished thesis, 2001.

⁷ *Pirke Avot 4:17*. Translation from *Gates of Prayer* 24.

⁸ Joseph Gutmann, *The Jewish Sanctuary* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1983) 5.

⁹ Gutmann 9.