

THE MENORAH EVOLUTION OF A SYMBOL THROUGH THE AGES

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THE SYMBOLISM OF THE MENORAH

From its inception the Menorah has appeared and developed as a symbol of the Jewish faith. This symbol is sacred due to the fact that the instructions for its design, according to tradition, came from God, the Creator of the world, to Moses, and from him to the architects of the Tabernacle (portable temple built in the desert after the Exodus from Egypt).

This tabernacle was sacred and journeyed with the Children of Israel in the desert, on their way to the Promised Land. In Biblical times, with the settlement of the twelve tribes in the Land of Israel and afterwards with the unification of the tribes and the unification of the rituals in the Temple of Jerusalem, the Menorah stood as a significant symbol for the Israeli beliefs. The Menorah was the most important instruction given to Moses in preparing the sacred objects in the Tabernacle. In describing the Menorah as quoted: "*And see that thou make them after their pattern, which is being shown thee in the mount*", there are expressions that emphasize its function, its purpose, its uniqueness and its holiness. The lyrical and festive language accentuates its importance alongside the ark. It was fashioned out of one solid piece of pure gold. The decorations on its surface were an inseparable part of it and not something added on after its creation. The identity between the elemental material from which it was made and the external decorations add an internal strength to its forcefulness and unity. The meaning of the Menorah is an unbreakable connection to its desert dwelling. Therefore we have to examine how these special values are intertwined with the central ideas connected to the dwelling which was built by the children of Israel and wandered with the nation through the desert for forty years till they reached the Promised Land.

In the description of the dwelling and the way it was built, we can detect its connection to the Creation.

A comparison between the description of the dwelling to the description of the Creation shows that identical terms were used. In the chapter on the dwelling we will examine the ideas that arise from this comparison.

In my description of the Menorah and its use the connection to the stories of the Creation are substantial. This arises from 3 main ideas: From the description of the structure of the Menorah that was taken from the Flora (world of plants), the ways it was used, how it was lit and its seven branches that connect it with the seven days of the Creation and the Sabbath. From the days of the second Temple, through the return to Zion in Zachary's vision, and the Menorah of the Maccabees and being taken captive by the Roman conquerors, as well as the destruction of the Temple and Jerusalem and the Menorah's display in Rome on Titus' Arch, the Menorah symbolizes and reminds the Jews of its glorious days. In the synagogues that arose in the land of Israel in Judea, the Galilee and the Golan, the Menorah stood out in the mosaics and engravings as hope for salvation.

It continues to fulfill this purpose as an idea and in the Law of the Mishnah. In the Talmud and in abundant sermons and literature of Medieval Jewry, it appears as a live and existing element - a symbol and memory of the Temple, Jerusalem and the Promised Land of Israel for those in the Diaspora.

With the conception of the Zionist Movement a hundred years ago and with the creation of the State of Israel, the Menorah was chosen in our day as the symbol of the Return to Zion and the revival of Hebrew as a live and creative language.

THE SYMBOLS OF ISRAEL

The Tablets of the Covenant, the Ram's Horn and the Menorah

The people of Israel from their first appearance in history presented a new and challenging world outlook on the purpose of man in the world. This world and its ramifications were the creation of a single God who strove for good and perfection. Man was meant to assist in this creation. According to this outlook the world is a dynamic reality where the creator determined it "*was good*" and planned for its perfection through the actions of man through the generations.

The Biblical stories of the first generations of man are a chronicle of their failures to fulfill these goals. As an answer to these failures no longer will the world be cleansed by flood or dependence on one righteous man but rather teach mankind to accept a more perfect way of life for himself and the world. Abraham and his family were chosen to begin this process, and the Covenant between Abraham and God represents this commitment to the path till its final realization. From enslavement in Egypt to the Exodus and conveyance of the commandments these were set as an example for all mankind of its morals and laws.

This represented the acceptance of the Jewish people of the way of life of the Torah. Three symbols are representative of the commitment: The Tablets of the Covenant, the Menorah and the Ram's horn. Each one represents an aspect of this covenant. The tablets contain the basis for a just society. The Menorah symbolizes the willingness of the people to accept the foundations. The Ram's horn announces its acceptance. These are symbols of Israel of the faith in making the world better with man as an active partner.

SYMBOLS OF THE JEWISH PEOPLE

The Star of David, the National Flag

The Star of David is an ancient symbol. Archeological artifacts from the times of Ahab 800 B.C. show that the Star of David was used as a decoration. After the destruction of the Second Temple it appeared on amulets. In the times of the Gaonim mystics wrote of the connection between its geometric shape and the writing of the name of God with 72 letters. During this time, it appeared as an artistic motif amongst the Christians and Muslims.

In twelfth century Kurdistan it was a magic symbol which could bring about salvation. It also appeared in Kabalistic decorations and was a symbol of many European Jewish communities. With the invention of the printing press in the fifteenth century it began to appear on printed Hebrew flags. By the nineteenth century it was the most recognized symbol of the Jewish people. It was adopted by the Zionist movement as the national symbol and it remains the main symbol of the Zionist Movement and the Jewish People.

How was the national flag born? The problem was which flag would decorate the hall where the first Zionist Congress was to be held. The colors chosen were white and blue which were the colors of the prayer shawl with the Star of David in the middle and so that was how the national flag was determined. The origins of the symbol of the Star of David are rooted deeply in the history of the Jewish people.

RESEARCH INTO THE CONSTRUCTION OF THE MENORAH AS DESCRIBED IN THE BIBLE

The Menorah is described as being made of pure solid gold with seven branches decorated with flowers, cups and knobs. Compared to other items whose dimensions are accurately recorded the dimensions of the Menorah are not mentioned. Just that it had to be made from one block of gold and with no attachments. Its height, according to the Sages was 1.65 meters. The description of the Menorah in the Bible on the surface seems technical but a deeper reading into it reveals that it conceals various ideas and values.

The design of the Menorah according to the Scriptures has contributed to an understanding of the building of the Menorah. Only seven sentences refer to the construction of the Menorah and not much is revealed so much so that even Moses had problems understanding its conception. We see that the number of passages describing the Menorah is the same as the number of branches. Is there a connection?" The word Menorah is repeated seven times and the number seven appears on the seventh passage. The number of passages before the sentence that describes the central branch and the number after it are three. That is the symmetry of the passages equals the symmetry of the Menorah. There is further symmetry connected to the six arms and the passages describing them There are two short passages, two of medium length and two that the lengthy and one very short in the middle.

In contrast to the ark, the altar and other items in the Tabernacle, NO measurements as to height, width and length are mentioned for the Menorah. Just one block of gold, i.e. the weight of the material from which the Menorah was to be made into a hollow mold of stone and gold was poured in seven branches – to seven passages.

THE MENORAH IN NATURE

The similarity in shape and decorations of the Menorah to a plant causes us to ascertain which plant resembles the Menorah. There are three principle plants – the almond, the date and the Jerusalem sage. The shape of the Menorah resembles the stem of the plant which splits into parallel branches from one central spot. Three sets of boughs branch out upwards from three points on the stem. Most perennial plants have branches that form alternatively along the stem. Similar to the salvia the Jerusalem sage is connected to the mountain in the land of Moriah where Isaac was to be sacrificed. Salvia (the Jerusalem Sage) has its origins in Latin meaning salvation. It was sacred to the Romans and has medicinal properties. The medicinal properties of the plant appear in the Talmud as well. Although the petals fall quickly, the cups stay on the branches for a longer time and are attractive. These cups are similar to the flower of the almond tree, which is sometimes associated with the tree of life. The flower consists of six petals. The Menorah was built such that the knob was inside the cup and on it the flower with six petals, so that the branch that extended outward symbolized the seventh central part.

The many properties of the Jerusalem Sage, its special shape, smell and taste and its purple-pink flowers may possibly have been why the Menorah was cast in this shape.

THE MENORAH IN THE TABERNACLE AND THE TREE OF LIFE IN THE GARDEN OF EDEN

The Menorah having the shape of a plant signifies to the Israeli nation the correlation between parts of the Creation and the striving of mankind to bring the world to perfection. From the description of the Tabernacle in the Bible, its connection to the story of Creation in the book of Genesis is clear. The Garden of Eden according to the Biblical storytellers is perceived as the dwelling place of God with man serving him. The description of the Tabernacle is identical to that of the Garden of Eden. The Tabernacle is a human reproduction of the Garden of Eden and a model of the ideal temple.

In the midst of the garden stands the tree of life and many have argued that the Menorah as it stands in the Tabernacle is a symbol of the same values. The motif of the "tree of life" is very popular in folk literature and in Israel from early times up to the present. It just changes according to rituals, literary ideas that grow and are integrated within it.

THE PLACE OF THE MENORAH

According to one tradition, the Menorah stood east to west. If the High Priest (the Cohen) found two candles on the east side, he would light the second one, the western one, which would be closer to the holy of holies.

According to the description of Joseph Ben Mattathias, the Menorah in the Temple stood on an angle south to east, a bit removed from the wall. Perhaps this was done so as not to blacken the white robes of the High Priest.

Therefore the Menorah should not be near a wall and the candles pointing north. There is a connection today between its position in the synagogue and the arguments as to its position in the Temple.

The Menorah in synagogues is used for Hanukkah. It reminds us not only of the miracle of Hanukkah but also the Menorah of the Temple. The argument over its exact position is still with us.

There are those who believe that the Menorah should stand east to west and others north to south. The influence of this argument can be seen in the different synagogue traditions. For the most part the Menorah is close to the Cantor's (Hazan's) place to the right of the ark with it facing north.

THE MENORAH AND THE SABBATH

For Moses, the seventh day was a celebration of the heavens and earth and the living things upon it, because the number seven signified harmony. That is why Moses commanded the people of Israel to embrace and celebrate the Sabbath and cease all work in the fields, and shops and trade of goods for repose and relaxation from all worries.

The Menorah with seven branches made of pure gold reflects the days of Creation and the day of rest – the Sabbath.

The seventh day, The Sabbath (Shabbat), signifies the completion of the Creation and the feeling of accord and perfection in the final result. The Sabbath reminds us of the Covenant between God and the people of Israel and the Exodus from Egypt. Therefore it symbolizes the meta-physical connection between the Creation, and the

mission of the people of Israel in the world as having a Covenant with God. The lighting of the Menorah, with its seven branches, by the High Priest, the representative of the Jewish nation, is the physical expression of this agreement. The six candle flames from the six branches were directed according to tradition towards the central candle which faced the holy of holies and was called the Western Candle.

VIRGIN OLIVE OIL

The importance of virgin olive oil is in its purity. Olive oil was used for the candles of the Tabernacle and afterwards for the candles of the Temple. For all other purposes it was permitted to use other types of oil. Leviticus 24:2 "*Command the children of Israel, that they bring unto thee pure oil olive beaten for the light*".

The wick was made from old clothing of the High Priests, the threads taken from articles of clothing made of linen. Since the clothing was considered holy, so too was the wick. All the tools that were used for preparing and keeping the wicks were special and made of the same pure gold as the Menorah. The rigid following of the details in treating the wicks of the Menorah attest to the importance of the function of the High Priests. Lighting the candles of the Menorah was alike to kindling the light that was created during the seven days in the beginning.

ADDITIONAL COMMENTARIES ON THE LIGHTING OF THE MENORAH

As mentioned before the High Priest had to light the Menorah in a certain order. This order symbolized the idea of the unity of the Children of Israel, where all the candles from the left or the right direct their efforts for one purpose. This idea of the unity of Israel was emphasized by the Menorah being made of one material i.e. one solid block of gold.

THE MENORAH IN THE DAYS OF THE SECOND TEMPLE

The Second Temple was built by returning exiles and those who had remained in Israel, in the years following Nebuchadnezzar's declaration. Its construction was initially delayed because of conflicts with Samaritans and was completed in 516 B.C. One of the first undertakings was placing the artifacts of the Temple inside it. Part of these artifacts had been returned from Persia, but it seems that the Menorah was rebuilt. This time only one was placed in the Temple which resembled the Menorah of the Tabernacle. This Menorah stood in the Temple till the days of Antiochus who plundered and stole the Menorah when he conquered Jerusalem in 168 A.D. The Maccabeans renewed the work in the Temple after their victory over Antiochus' army and placed a new Menorah and dedicated it in the Temple. The commentaries tell us that the Menorah was built from metal due to the lack of alternative materials.

In the course of time a new Menorah was built which stood in the Temple the entire period of the Maccabeans and during The Roman period until the destruction of the Temple in 70 A.D. The Menorah was taken to Rome and placed in the Arch of Titus as a symbol of the victory of the Romans over the Jews. From that time it is not clear what its fate was and many different traditions exist. In 1994 the Minister of Religion

of Israel requested that Pope John Paul II search the Vatican vaults for its possible existence.

THE MENORAH ON THE COIN OF MATTATHIAS ANTIGONUS AS A SYMBOL OF THE LAST REVOLT OF THE MACCABEAN DYNASTY

A model of the Menorah appears only once on ancient Jewish coins, on those of Mattathias Antigonus, the last of the Maccabeans (37-40 B.C.). Mattathias Antigonus fought a cruel and determined war with Herod who had arrived as Octavius' envoy to be throned the King of the Jews. (Octavius is known later as the Emperor Augustus). The Maccabeans objected to Augustus' appointment of Herod as their king. Mattathias Antigonus was the first to issue coins illustrated with the artifacts of the Second Temple including the seven branched Menorah. In his footsteps later leaders of the Jewish revolt including Bar- Kochva used these symbols on their coins to arouse the national religious emotions of their soldiers. The first coins appeared in the year 40 B.C.

THE DESTRUCTION OF THE TEMPLE AS TOLD BY JOSEPH BEN MATTATHIAS (JOSEPHUS FLAVIUS)

Josephus Flavius describes the burning of Temple on the ninth day of the Hebrew month of Av. This was the same day that the first Temple was destroyed by Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon. The Temple that Solomon had built stood for one thousand one hundred and thirty years and seven months. The Second Temple built by the Prophet Haggai lasted six hundred and thirty nine years and forty five days.

THE MENORAH AT THE ARCH OF TITUS

The most famous of all the Menorahs is the victory arch of Titus in Rome depicting the triumphant march of the returning army from Jerusalem carrying the artifacts of the Temple and in the center the seven-branched Menorah. The upper part of the Menorah is identical to the description given in the Bible and according to the tradition, however the branches are shorter. This could be explained by necessities of the Romans at the time of the building of the Arch. A question is raised here in reference to the base of the Menorah, which is different from most descriptions and proportions. Researchers believe the Romans changed the base on the Arch because the drawings depicted on it are not true to the Judaic art of that period and are irreconcilable with Jewish Law that forbid the depiction of animals. The Romans may have changed the form to conform to their own beliefs and Style. Excavations have revealed similar shaped bases on the Menorah. Furthermore the Romans wanted to emphasize their victory over Judaism and therefore kept the authentic objects as they were presented on the Arch.

THE MENORAH AFTER THE DESTRUCTION OF THE TEMPLE

After the destruction of the Temple, the Menorah had a different significance. It became the central symbol of the Jewish nation, instead of the Second Temple. The different number of branches on the Menorah can be explained from a decree issued in the Babylonian Talmud which forbids the construction of a Menorah that is similar to the one in the Tabernacle. This explains the Menorah with nine branches that is lit during Hanukkah.

In more than two hundred synagogues which have been discovered in Israel from the third century A.D., are depictions in mosaics of a Menorah. These represent the desire to rebuild the Temple and the collective memory of the people (nation) to rebuild a better world. With other Jewish symbols it expressed the hope for salvation and the coming of the Messiah.

The Symbol of the Menorah Outside of Israel

Menorahs are carved into the rocks of Sinai. Along the caravan routes across Sinai, menorahs were carved by travelers throughout generations. Most of the inscriptions were in the Nabatian language but some were in Hebrew as well.

The Menorah in the days of the Mishnah and Talmud

Today we have many remnants of ancient synagogues that were built after the destruction of the Second Temple. These are spread out from the Golan Heights in the North and Ein Gedi and Sussita in the South. With the onset of Christian rule, new synagogues were forbidden to be built, so effort went into decorating the existing ones with mosaic floors, for instance. In at least fifty of these synagogues the seven branched Menorah is the central decoration.

In Jericho:

A mosaic floor of a synagogue is decorated with geometric design and an Aramaic inscription. In the center there is a circle with a Menorah in it. On one side of it is a ram's horn and on the other a date palm underneath of which is the inscription "*Peace to Israel*".

In the Star of Jordan:

On the walls of the Crusader fortress of Belvoir, there are remains of an ancient synagogue from which these stones were removed. On one of these stones is the depiction of a seven branched Menorah and an ark on both sides. This stone stands in the Israel Museum in Jerusalem today.

In Beit Alpha:

The mosaic floor of the synagogue at Beit Alpha is one of the most complete and preserved in Israel. It dates from the 6th century and is divided into three panels. The first depicts the Sacrifice of Isaac, the central one is a mosaic zodiac with the sun in the middle, the stars around it and the four seasons in its corners. In the southern part of the structure near where the Holy Ark would be is the sacred area. In the middle of this panel the Holy Ark and accessories of the temple are depicted. Above it appear two identical Menorahs with seven branches.

In Zippori (Sepphoris):

Zippori in the lower Galilee was an important city in its time with many synagogues. On the mosaic floor of one of them from the fifth century is the seven branched Menorah standing on three lion's feet and above it an inscription in Greek.

THE MENORAH IN CHRISTIANITY

As Christianity developed it incorporated a similar symbolic meaning to the Menorah. The Church saw itself as the rightful successor to Judaism. Therefore the Tabernacle and the Temple of Solomon are the examples of the true Church. In addition, the Menorah was perceived as the forerunner of the coming of Christ.

Another source of the image of the Menorah as a symbol of the Christian Church is in Yochanan's (John's) prophesy, where he saw seven candles representing the seven original Christian communities and his vision reminds him of the Tabernacle in the desert. Heavenly Jerusalem with the Menorah as a symbol of the Church was an inseparable aspect of Medieval Christian art.

THE MENORAH IN RABBINICAL WRITINGS

From the rabbinical writings of medieval times, we can see how much the Menorah served as a basic object of day to day Jewish living in the Diaspora. It is a symbol of the study of the Torah and Torah studies. Many books were named in connection to the Menorah.

THE KABBALAH

According to the Kabbalah which developed during the middle ages numerous symbolic meanings were given to the Menorah. In the mysticism of the Kabbalah, the Menorah continued as the symbol of God's light and the tree of life. The seven branches representing the seven days of Creation and its lights the seven celestial objects, the sun, the moon and the five planets. But mainly it was the symbol of the numerological structure which according to Kabbalistic philosophy influences the world. The central theme is that the Menorah is one solid object and that the parts of it which are unified represent the wholeness of God.

THE MENORAH IN MODERN TIMES

From the beginning of the emancipation (which sought new symbols), the Menorah lost its predominance to the Star of David.

The old symbols were seen as irrelevant to the needs of the Jews who were emerging from the Ghettos and sought to integrate within their surrounding society. The Menorah was one of the victims of this process. In spite of this, the Menorah continued to accompany the Jew wherever he went: In the synagogue, during Hanukkah with the lighting of the candles and on tombstones which were decorated with Menorahs. This pertains solely to Western Jewry. In Eastern and Oriental Jewry, religion was an inseparable aspect of their daily life.

With the Zionist awakening the Menorah received an additional symbolic meaning. Little by little, it began to represent the Jewish renewal and rebirth of the Jewish nation. It was evident in art of the time and as a symbol of the new Jewish organizations. Jabotinsky suggested incorporating the Menorah in the flags of the Jewish Brigades that went off to fight in WWI.

THE MENORAH IN JEWISH ART

The Jewish National Expression in art

In the beginning of the 20th century, the various Jewish art streams took their content from Jewish motifs and symbols. Coupled with this were the powerful historical episodes of the century. This combination was the expression of Jewish art in the 20th century. The Cultural reawakening of Jewish nationalism found its expression in art in the period between the two world wars. All over the world artists, such as Marc Chagall, El (Lazar Marcovich) Lissitzky and Louis Ribak tried to develop a national Jewish artistic style. They tried to weave into their creations folk art and modern painting.

Marc Chagall (1887-1985):

In all of the works of the most famous and productive of the Jewish artists was seen the strong influence of Vitebsk, in Belarus, his childhood village and the Jewish life in it. Until the 1930's the Menorah does not appear. During this period the Sabbath candlesticks, the Torah, The Kiddush cup, the tablets of the Covenant and the ark in the synagogue are prevalent.

The Menorah appears in his works pertaining to the persecution of the Jews and the Holocaust. The Menorah appears in a circle of light, it radiates in contrast to the fear, suspicion and destruction around it. Perhaps the Menorah becomes a memorial candle to their memory.

In the painting "the Crucifixion" the angel offers the Menorah for crucifixion as if the hope and the rescue will come from a national origin. It is interesting that the fish, which symbolizes the life of the village, bring the book for crucifixion. It could be that the fish and book represent Judaism and the religious rituals, whereas the Menorah represents the national awakening.

THE BEZALEL ACADEMY OF ART

The Bezalel School of the Arts was founded in 1906 by Boris Schatz. The rationale of the school as presented by Martin Buber at the Zionist Congress was to teach and educate culturally and aesthetically to be the tool for self –faith, as a cultural pioneer for the nation and the world.

Buber called upon the artists to use the old traditions as a basis for the new Jewish art. On the roof of the School, Schatz placed a menorah modeled after the Menorah depicted on the Arch of Titus, which is a Menorah which symbolizes the Temple and national independence. The Menorah motif appeared in many of the creations of the Bezalel artists.

In a relief by Schatz named "In Memory of Herzl" (1904), the combination of the Menorah with modern elements, emphasizes the connection between the Temple and the Zionist movement for national independence.

POPULAR ZIONIST ARTISTIC CREATIONS

Until the creation of the State of Israel, Zionism was seen in the way it wanted to be seen – full of hope, just and righteous – the only way that could guarantee the survival of the people. It was meant to bring redemption to the people, an end to anti-Semitism and suffering. The ingathering of the exiles in Zion and renewal of Jewish independence would lead to a better world and a national revival.

The transference of these ideals through visual means was not only a form of propaganda by the Zionist leadership but was common among all parts of the population. This made it part of the folk art of the times, the most popular being the Star of David with the word Zion or with the Israeli flag. The Menorah was not common but still appeared. Not only famous artists but fervent Zionists used these symbols in their publications. The lion, the Star of David, the Menorah, and the Tablets of the Covenant all were the art forms used in the early art and culture publications from 1912 on.

The traditional New Year's greetings used these symbols as well, the Menorah symbolizing growth and renewal. On monuments commemorating fallen soldiers the most common design on them is the Star of David, but many incorporated the Menorah when the soldiers were of officer rank, along with an olive branch and a sword. This is an expression of the State as represented by the Menorah and the soldier who has given his life for it.

One special memorial shape appeared in the 1960's and used metal parts of guns and weapons to form a Menorah as a way of strengthening the association between the soldier and his weapon and the State.

THE MENORAH ON RITUAL ARTICLES

The ritual articles of all Jewish communities were ornately decorated and made from precious metals. The origin is from the Bible.

This art form developed around the first millennium possibly to contend with the magnificent churches and mosques.

The art form centered mainly on the Holy Ark and the Torah and the objects that accompany it: the crown, the pointer, the pomegranates all of them made of precious metals and materials. The Menorah is one of the motifs that appeared on these articles.

The ornate inscription "*Shaviti Ha L'Negdi Tamid*" - "I have set the Lord always before me" (Psalms 16:8), is usually placed opposite the prayer pole of a public emissary. This is called a "Shaviti" and was a common practice in the synagogues during medieval times. The Shaviti is found on amulets, ornamental curtains covering the front of the Holy Ark in the synagogue and on jewelry. The two essential elements of the Shaviti are the verse of Psalm 16:8 and the menorah with Psalm 67 inscribed in its seven branches. The verse of the Psalm is credited with magic powers. Protective powers are ascribed also to the combination of the menorah and the Psalm 67. Shaviti, then, is also used as an amulet to protect one in prayer, the synagogue and the entire community.

THE MENORAH ON ISRAELI STAMPS

The stamps although being a form of payment for sending mail, are a method of representing Israel all over the world. This way millions of people from all over learn about the State of Israel, its culture, holidays' history and traditions. In the early years of the State, the Menorah was a prominent item on Israeli stamps. Today it is hardly used.

THE SYMBOLS OF THE STATE

With the declaration of the creation of the State of Israel in the midst of the War of Independence, the government set up a committee for designing the symbols of the New State. The committee had to decide on the design of the flag as well. After discussions, the flag of the Zionist movement remained as the flag of the new state with a change of color to blue and white. From these important first meetings, the Menorah was chosen for the wall of the Knesset (parliament) building.

The aim was to unite the people around a symbol that represents them all. Therefore it was necessary to create a symbol that would express the uniqueness of the Israel nation and identifiable for all the varied communities in Israel and in the Diaspora. This symbol must express the roots of the country and its aspirations for the future. An open competition was held in the first month of the Jewish State until July 14, 1948. Already in the formal announcement it was determined that the Menorah had to be included. We can understand from this that the founders of the country saw in the Menorah as the most obvious symbol of the Nation of Israel along with the seven stars and the Star of David.

The design chosen included the Menorah from the Arch of Titus and seven stars. The Menorah symbolized the ability of the Nation to stand against all obstacles and survive.

While the Menorah was unanimously accepted there was disagreement over the seven stars. After many disagreements and discussions between the religious and secular elements, a final design was accepted. It consists of three elements, the Menorah from the Arch of Titus, two olive branches and the word Israel between them.

"We have brought home the Menorah" was the intent of the designers of the symbol and of the general public. Everyone found in the Menorah the Jewish value which was important in his heart- either secular or religious.

The Menorah on the Commemorative Coins

The Menorah appears on many of the coins of Modern Israel. It appeared on the commemorating the 10th anniversary of the State of Israel on the back of the coin. As well in 1961 on the five piece coin, on a special issue coin of the Israel Museum in 1965, on the coin commemorating the 25th anniversary of Israel and so on till today.

CLOSING REMARKS

On May 15, 1948, the captured Menorah on the Arch of Titus was returned to a free and independent State of Israel. 1874 years ago (70 AD) the Menorah along with other sacred objects of the Second Temple were paraded through the streets of Rome on the shoulders of captured soldiers. Titus was certain that he had extinguished the Menorah forever and had taken the Jewish God into captivity never to be rekindled. Throughout the ages the seven candles burned in the hearts of the Jewish people. The Zionist movement redeemed the Menorah and returned the light with the building of the country and returned the Menorah as the symbol of Israel. The first ceremony of the lighting of the torches on Mount Herzl occurred on the third Independence Day in May, 1951. As the first speaker of the Knesset Joseph Shprinzak lit the first torch a giant Menorah, the symbol of the country, was raised on Mount Scopus. The Speaker told the symbolic meaning of the torches as thousands were lit all across the country from Dan to Eilat. The ceremony ended with our national anthem *HATIKVA* – Hope.

הגני יקירי

קראתי את התרגום. סך הכל התרגום טוב והחומר המופיע בו מתאים לקהל היעד עד כמה שאני מכיר אותו (חייתי בארה"ב 4 שנים אמנם לא בתקופה זו אבל המנטליות פחות או יותר נשארה אותו הדבר). כמה הערות:

א) בעמ' הראשון (=תוכן העניינים) ניסיתי לתקן את סדר הדברים: במקור נכתב: **the & period of the Talmud** **Mishna** וכמובן יש לתקן: משנה (נחתמה בידי רבי יהודה הנשיא שנת 200 לספירה פחות או יותר) קודמת לתלמוד. הנסיון שלי לא נקלט.

ב) בעמ' 2 במקום לכתוב בספרות 3 יש לכתוב במילים: שלוש.

ג) גאונים יש לכתוב: **Ge'onim** ולא כפי שכתוב שם.

ד) יוסף בן מתתיהו שם זה מוכר למי שמתעסקים בנושא. לעומת זאת השם: יוספוס פלאביוס (**Yosefus Or Josephus**) **Flavbius** מוכר יותר.

ה) אנטיוכוס - ישנם 13 מלכים יוונים בשם זה. ארבעה או חמישה מהם קשורים בתולדות ישראל. לפיכך יש צורך להזגיש שהמדובר באנטיוכוס (הרביעי) אפיפנס 168 לפני הספירה (B.C) ולא אחרי

**הספירה (A.D). הוא אנטיוכוס שרדף את היהודים וגזר עליהם
גזירות קשות.**

**(עמ' 11) שויתי ה' לנגדי תמיד (=ביטוי המופיע בכל בתי
הכנסת בעמוד שלפני החזן= שלית הציבור) הצורה "המתורגמת
" לאותיות לטיניות אינה נכונה ויש לכתוב כך: Shiviti Adonay
Lenegdi Tamid**

וכך יש לתקן את כל המילים: Shiviti

אלה הן הערותי עד כה. אחזור ואקרא ועם יש הערות בלתי נסבלות (ואיני חושב
שאמצא כאלה) אמהר לכתוב אליך. מצטער שלקח זמן עד שהגבתי על מכתבך. הסיבות
ידועות ועמך הסליחה והמחילה ואני בטוח ומשוכנע שהחומר הזה בילוי התמונות
(וצריך הרבה) יהיה להיט בארה"ב. ודרך ארה"ב יחזור לארץ.

שלך יוסי

בהצלחה!!

נ.ב. אם תזדקק לעזרה בנושא זה אני עומד לרשותך