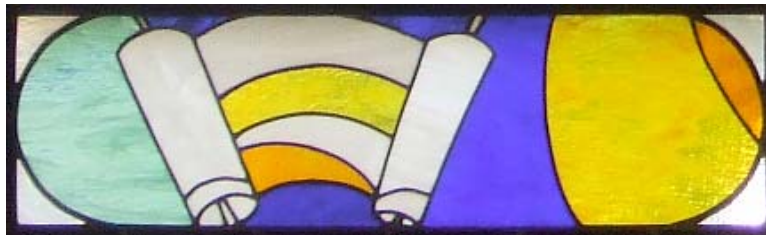


Guide to Our Stained Glass Windows



HIGHLAND PARK
CONSERVATIVE TEMPLE
Congregation Anshe Emeth

Introduction

The stained glass windows in our main sanctuary were first dedicated in 1982 by individuals and families honoring or memorializing their loved ones. The windows were designed by Phillip Ratner of Washington, D.C. Some of his other works are in the permanent collection of the United States Supreme Court, the Library of Congress, B'nai B'rith International Building, Hillel House in London, and in leading synagogues throughout the country. Mr. Ratner was commissioned by the United States Government to create thirty statues at Ellis Island and the Statue of Liberty Park.

World-renowned Greenland Studios fabricated the windows. After the sanctuary was destroyed by fire in August of 2006, the windows were restored by Heimer and Co., a family-run glassworks firm in Clifton, New Jersey. The windows became the showpiece of our new sanctuary, which was dedicated on May 2, 2010.



The stained glass windows are 36 statements depicting Jewish history and universal Jewish values. The outside columns on each side are critical statements reflecting the faith and aspirations of the Jewish people; they are the source of the Jewish people's commitment to God, *Torah* and Israel as well as the Messianic Era of universal peace and freedom.

Right-Hand Panel



NOTE: The windows are designed to be read from right-to-left and top-to-bottom. The following text explains them in that order.

Many lines or shapes begin in one panel and continue into subsequent ones, depicting continuing themes or elements of Jewish history. So after you have read about the individual panels, you may find it rewarding to revisit the window as a whole and notice how the panels interact.

- 1 The שמע (*Shema*) – “Hear, O Israel, the Lord Our God, the Lord is One.” The ancient yet eternal statement of the Jews proclaims their uncompromising faith in the unity of God. Although it is a statement addressed to Israel, it is also a statement of the universality of God, for our God is the one God of all the universe. This monotheistic belief of the Jews was to be Israel’s gift to humankind, forever changing its perception towards the Creator. Thus, the *Shema* is the source of all Jewish belief and practice.



- 2 The six circles depict the first six periods of **Creation**. The superimposed Hebrew letter **ש** (shin) which unites the circles represents *Shabbat*, the culmination of Creation, and *Shaddai*, a name meaning God the Almighty. The first and last letters of the Hebrew alphabet **א** (*alef*) and **ת** (*tav*), symbolize the whole of Creation.



3



In Genesis 14:13 Abram is called **העברי** (*Ha-Ivri*, the Hebrew), the one from the other side; this panel represents the passage of Abram from one side of the river to the

other. The right side is gold, which will consistently appear as the color of the world around the Jewish people. The open tents are symbolic of **Abraham's** hospitality; he was the first to perform the *mitzvah* of **הכנסת אורחים** (*hachnasat orchim*, welcoming guests). (Gen. 18:1-8).

- 4 “And he dreamed, and behold a ladder set up on the earth and the top of it reached to heaven; and behold the angels of God ascending and descending on it.” (Gen. 28:12).



The rungs on **Jacob's ladder** which are close to earth are small and easy to climb; the largest and most difficult step represents Jacob's leap of faith. We are continually choosing freely and struggling in this upward climb.

5



The **Exodus** from Egypt is symbolized by the door placed between the pyramids and the path leading to freedom. The bright red on the **מזוזה** (*mezuzah*,

doorpost) illustrates the public assertion of Jewish identity (Ex. 12:7). This act, which signified the Jewish family's experience of fulfilling the paschal lamb *mitzvah*, made the transition to freedom possible more than three thousand years ago.

- 6 The two tablets of the **ברית** (*Brit*, Covenant) and the **תורה** (*Torah*, the five Books of Moses) depicted by the Hebrew letters **י** are the substance of the *Brit* between God and the Jewish people. This covenant given at **Mount Sinai** serves as the link (the ladder) between God and Israel. The red again introduces the element of profound personal commitment that is critical to the *Brit*. The gold is the world in which Jews function while maintaining their individuality.



- 7 “And let them make Me a sanctuary, that I may dwell among them.” (Exodus 25:8). The **י** represents the Community of Israel; the incomplete **י** symbolizes the spiritual presence of the people of Israel yet unborn. “Neither with you only do I make this *Brit* and this oath; but with him that standeth here with us this day before the Lord our God, and also with him that is not here with us this day.” (Deut. 29:13-14). The seven-branched *menorah* stands in the midst of the panel, just as the **Tabernacle** stood in the midst of the community.



- 8 Journeying to **Canaan**, the Jews cross the River Jordan. Spies sent by Moses to explore the country saw grapes and a land of milk and honey, but they focused more on the emptiness of the barren vine rather than on the abundance symbolized by the cluster of grapes.



- 9 **Deborah**, the prophetess and judge known as a mother in Israel (Judges 5:7) lived in the 12th Century B.C.E. She sat under a palm tree while the children of Israel came to her for judgments. The scales of justice are white (the



Jewish world) and gold (the rest of the world). Jews know that there is another scale of justice in the world, but they also know that they have their own. The sphere in this panel symbolizes the sun, shining on the First Temple in the panel below.

- 10 King David, the Psalmist, unified his people into a nation and established Jerusalem as its capital. The eleven divisions on the frame of the harp represent eleven tribes; the twelfth tribe of Levi is symbolized by the strings of the harp. Just as the strings give voice to the instrument, the tribe of Levi, the religious leaders of the period, challenged the Jewish people to express their spirituality. (11th - 10th centuries B.C.E.)



- 11



The structure in this panel is symbolic of the **First Temple**, built by King Solomon in the 10th Century B.C.E. The foundations of the Temple extend to the panel

below which speaks of Micah's historic message to the Jewish people, thus making clear that a sanctuary of Judaism must be rooted in these principles if it is to endure. The sphere in the panel above symbolizes the shining sun, for the Temple was to introduce a spiritual light for all ("For my house shall be called a house of prayer for all peoples." - Isaiah 56:7).

- 12 The prophet **Elijah**, known as the harbinger of peace, confronts his fellow Jews, who were increasingly developing pagan habits and values; the two colors at the base of Elijah's cup represent the divided Jewish community. Elijah's cup is symbolic of the Messianic Era, when the world will be at peace; this will come into being through the constant challenge of making choices. Hence, the two ovals also illustrate these choices, which at times are as subtle as the differences in the two colors. (9th Century B.C.E.)



13



Micah, one of the twelve minor prophets, said, “It has been told thee, O man, what is good. And what the Lord doth require of thee: Only to do justly, and to

love mercy and to walk humbly with thy God.” (Micah 6:8). Each command is represented by an oval and the **ש** (*shin*) once again is superimposed, symbolizing God's essence manifest through the fulfillment of these *mitzvot*. The gold shows the universality of Micah's message; the deep blue is symbolic of the Jewish commitment to *Torah* and *mitzvot*. (8th Century B.C.E.)

14 The 8th Century B.C.E. prophet

Isaiah, often described as the prophet of faith, speaks of the Messianic Era: “And the wolf shall dwell with the lamb. And the leopard shall lie down with the kid.” (Is. 11:6). We see the paw prints of two animals and a hand symbolic of the priestly blessing, which tells us that the fulfillment of God's blessing is *shalom*, universal peace.



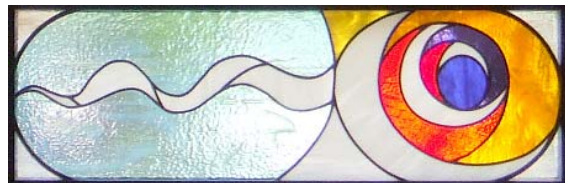
15



“I the Lord have called thee in righteousness. And have taken hold of thy hand. And kept thee, and set thee for a covenant of the people, for a **light unto the**

nations.” (Is. 42:6). Thus, Isaiah describes Israel's God-given mission to the other nations of the world, herein depicted by the *Magen David* radiating in all directions.

16 “The appearance of the wheels and their work was like unto the color of a beryl; and they four had one likeness; and their appearance and their work was as it were a wheel within a wheel.” (Ezekiel 1:16). In his visions, the prophet



Ezekiel describes the metaphysical Divine Chariot and the wheels which

gave it mobility. Ezekiel thus introduces the mystical concept that the **שכינה** (*Shechinah*, God's presence) joined the children of Israel as they were exiled from Jerusalem. The concentric circles represent the link between the Divine and the human. The white object that appears to be floating in space represents the unanswerable in life, the mystical or metaphysical, possibly the imponderable. (6th Century B.C.E.)

17



Once more we see **Isaiah's** devotion to Israel's divine mission earlier expressed in its destiny to be a “light unto the nations.” Illustrated here is the moment of

fruition when “they shall beat their swords into plowshares. And their spears into pruning hooks.” (Is. 2:4). The artist has transformed the spear into a pruning hook in the midst of a plowshare that once was a sword.

18 The fragments representing broken pillars are symbolic of the **destruction of the First Temple** on the 9th of Av in 586 B.C.E.



Above the fragments of destruction, the **א** transcends the ruins. Jews retained their faith in the destiny of Jewish nationhood in spite of the loss of national sovereignty.

19



Upon his return from Babylon to Jerusalem, **Ezra** the Scribe reads the *Torah* to the Jewish people and compels them to face the imperative of moral choices. The

color gold appears in the midst of the *Torah*, representing the confrontation of the *Torah* and the world; the *Torah* remains intact. With the reestablishment of a Jewish nation in the Jewish land (5th Century B.C.E.), Ezra insists that the *Torah* must be the central force and that the structure of the Jewish family be safeguarded. Our synagogue logo is derived from this panel.



לא ישא גוי אל גוי חרב ולא ילמדו עוד מלחמה. Nation shall not lift up sword against nation; neither shall they learn war any more. (Isaiah 2:4). The message of the ancient Hebrew prophet is one of universal reverence of God, the cherished dignity of each individual, and the striving for a world truly at peace.

Left-Hand Panel



21 **אני מאמין באמונה שלמה בביאת המשיח.** “I believe with a perfect faith in the coming of Messiah.” The Rambam, Maimonides, expressed the indestructible faith of the Jew in the ultimate redemption of the world. In spite of historic persecution, oppression and exile, Jews never compromised their commitment to the principle that the Messianic period will ultimately usher in an era of human dignity, faith in God and universal peace.



22 The **conflict between Judaism and Hellenism**

was internal as well as external; many Jews cast aside their heritage and assimilated into Greek culture. The Greek letter alpha and the Hebrew letter א (*alef*) are shown in the same color; note that the א on the blue background is dominant over the alpha in a field of gold. Chanukah honors the Maccabees, who confronted both the Jewish and the Hellenistic forces in a struggle for religious identity and freedom. (4th - 2nd centuries B.C.E.)



23



The breastplate and open book are symbolic of the conflict between the **Sadducees and the Pharisees**. The Sadducees (aristocrats and priests),

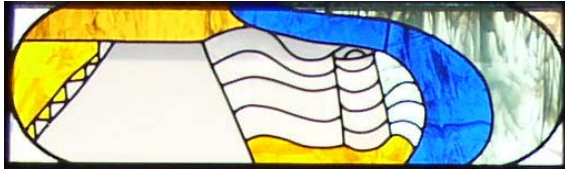
represented by the breastplate, focused on the letter of the written law, especially concerning the Temple, the priesthood and the sacrificial system. The separatist Pharisees (largely rabbis and scholars), represented by the open book, insisted that the study of *Torah* and its continuous interpretation and application through the performance of *mitzvot* should be central to Judaism. The world and the forces of history, depicted by the gold color, make the confrontation inevitable. (3rd - 1st centuries B.C.E.)

24 The broken stones depict the final **destruction of the Second Temple**

by the Roman invaders on the 9th day of Av, 70 C.E. In the midst of destruction is the tear, which also represents a flame of light. In the total field of blue, there is a glimmer of white; there has always been at least one small Jewish community somewhere in the land of Israel. One might also view the white as the indestructible Western Wall, which is our link with the ancient Temple in Jerusalem.



25



This panel depicts the conflicting reactions that developed at the time of the destruction of the Jewish Commonwealth in 70 C.E. Zealots insisted on a

continuous battle at all costs, resulting in the tragic events on **Masada**. More moderate elements insisted upon the establishment of the Institute of Torah at Yavneh, thus securing the future of the Jewish people. The open scroll symbolizes the Rabbinic conviction. Note the philosophy of the Pharisees in the panel above has been transmitted to the Rabbinic tradition, as evidenced by the dark blue color flowing from the open book down to the scroll.

26



&

27

Judaism's ability to function in every society and culture was in part made possible through the Oral Law. The **Mishna**, based on *Torah*, was the Rabbinic legal development (*Halacha*) that gave formal structure to Jewish philosophy and values, resulting ultimately in the *Gemara*. The *Mishna* and the *Gemara* together form the *Talmud*. The **Midrash** is a collection of homiletic interpretations, sermons and legends that lend philosophic insights into *Torah* and often culminate in pragmatic values. (2nd - 15th centuries)

28

Kabala is a study of the esoteric, the essence of God and the universe, and the relation between the metaphysical and the physical. *Kabala* applies a unique interpretative system to the *Torah* as a vehicle to penetrate the metaphysical world and to better understand the essence of God, humankind, and eternity. The link between **עין סוף** (*ein sof*, the transcendent infinity of God) and the limited tangible aspects of man is herein depicted in the ten spheres **ספירות** (*sefirot*, from the Hebrew word for sapphire, referring to the sapphire-like pure radiance of God). These are ten steps in ascending order of Jewish metaphysical philosophy.



29



The Golden Age of Spain (11th - 15th centuries), depicted by the quill, was a period of great cultural and academic creativity. As shown by the dominance of gold in this

panel, Jews were very much a part of the larger scientific, philosophic and literary communities, while simultaneously creating a lasting heritage of Jewish culture and scholarship. This glorious period came to an end with the expulsion of the Jewish people from Spain in 1492.

30

Hasidism, a religious and social movement which started with Rabbi Israel Baal Shem Tov in the 18th Century, touched a demoralized Eastern European community



during a time of pogroms and poverty exacerbated by the impact of the false messiah movement of Shabbetai Tzvi. Eastern European Jews who responded to Hasidism were given a sense of worthiness. The hands are symbolic of reaching out towards each other, and then upwards to God. The Jews no longer stood alone; they clasped hands in song, dance and joy while they worshipped together. The fragmented hands when joined together are strengthened.

31



With the 1791 French Law Relating to Jews giving equal rights to its citizens of the Jewish faith, the **Age of Emancipation** begins. The open door and the broad path symbolize

a new world which both challenges and threatens. The gold represents the culture of the majority; the blue is the path Jews will take to freedom while keeping their religious integrity intact.

32

The open scroll encompassing the world reflects the Jewish community's **commitment to Torah** while **confronting the expanding world** of an open society. This period saw the



development of the early Reform movement in Germany in the beginning of the 19th Century, followed by the Orthodox and Conservative movements which came into being as responses to the perceived threat of Reform Judaism.

33



Political **Zionism**, which first appeared at the end of the 19th Century, is a movement whose aim was the re-establishment of a homeland for the Jewish people in

Eretz Yisrael. The severed map of Israel seen on the globe of the world depicts the Jewish people's striving to rejoin the nations of the world as a sovereign state. The white path of the Jew and the gold path of the world converge through Zionism; the sovereign Jewish nation ultimately rejoins the history of the world.

34 The beacon light of the Statue of Liberty welcomed millions of **Jewish immigrants** to the United States of America. In 1925 4.5 million Jews lived in the United States, compared to 280,000 in 1880. Pogroms, war, upheaval and revolution in Eastern Europe contributed to this vast emigration from the old country. Never in history had such a large number of Jews been welcomed into a new country.



35




In the early decades of the 20th Century foundations are being established for great centers of **Jewish learning** in America: Hebrew Union College, Jewish

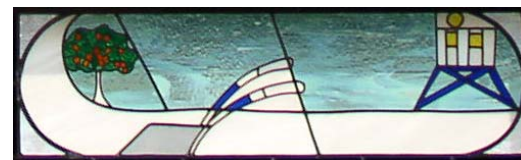
Theological Seminary and Yeshiva University (the first institution to offer both advanced Judaic and secular studies). The white, gold and blue books in the field of blue with a path of gold symbolize the interaction in society of a free intellectual spirit of worldly knowledge and Judaic studies.


- 36 There is no way of depicting the Holocaust other than total darkness, the absence of light. There is no symbol, no statement for this period of history when the world fell into total darkness. The destruction of the European Jewish community is depicted by ten ם (yuds), the minyan, the microcosm of the Jewish community. The panel appears to be broken; indeed, the Holocaust is a void which can never be filled. This panel is totally disconnected from and unlinked to any other panel, just as the Holocaust stands alone in the history of mankind.



- 37  “Proclaim liberty throughout the land unto all the inhabitants thereof.” (Lev. 25:10). **American Jewry** not only supports but contributes to the democratic ideal of America. The artist again employs bright red to manifest the public affirmation of the Jewish community in our contemporary society, just as he introduced bright red to reflect the Jewish commitment expressed in Egypt and at Sinai over three thousand years ago.

- 38 The historic vision of a Jewish homeland is now coming to fruition with the establishment of the **State of Israel**. The watchtower symbolizes the early **חלוצים** (*chalutzim*, pioneers) facing an environment of hostile neighbors and a barren land; the plow speaks of conquest through agricultural development; the lovely orange tree shows the fruitful results of the dedicated efforts of these early pioneers in the land of Israel.



- 39  The broad stroke of red connecting this panel with the one directly above depicts the link between two dynamic Jewish communities who freely and publicly proclaim their identity; one as a proud and free

minority within a larger civilization; the other, the sovereign State of Israel, a Jewish nation resolved to maintain its national identity. We see the **כתל המערבי** (*Kotel HaMa'aravi*, Western Wall) symbolizing the central position Jerusalem has had for the Jewish people ever since the Kingdom of David. The ascent of the sun holds out the promise of universal peace and freedom for all mankind.



40 ויש תקוה לאחרייתך נאם ה' ושבו בנים לגבולם. "And there is hope for thy future, says the Lord; and thy children shall return to their own border." (Jeremiah 31:16). Our generation experienced the תקוה (*tikvah*, hope) in the midst of total darkness and witnessed the fulfillment of Jeremiah's vision – the return of the children of Israel from the four corners of the earth to the sovereign Jewish State of Israel.