

THE MEANING BEHIND THE MENORAH



Amanda Buys' Spiritual Covering

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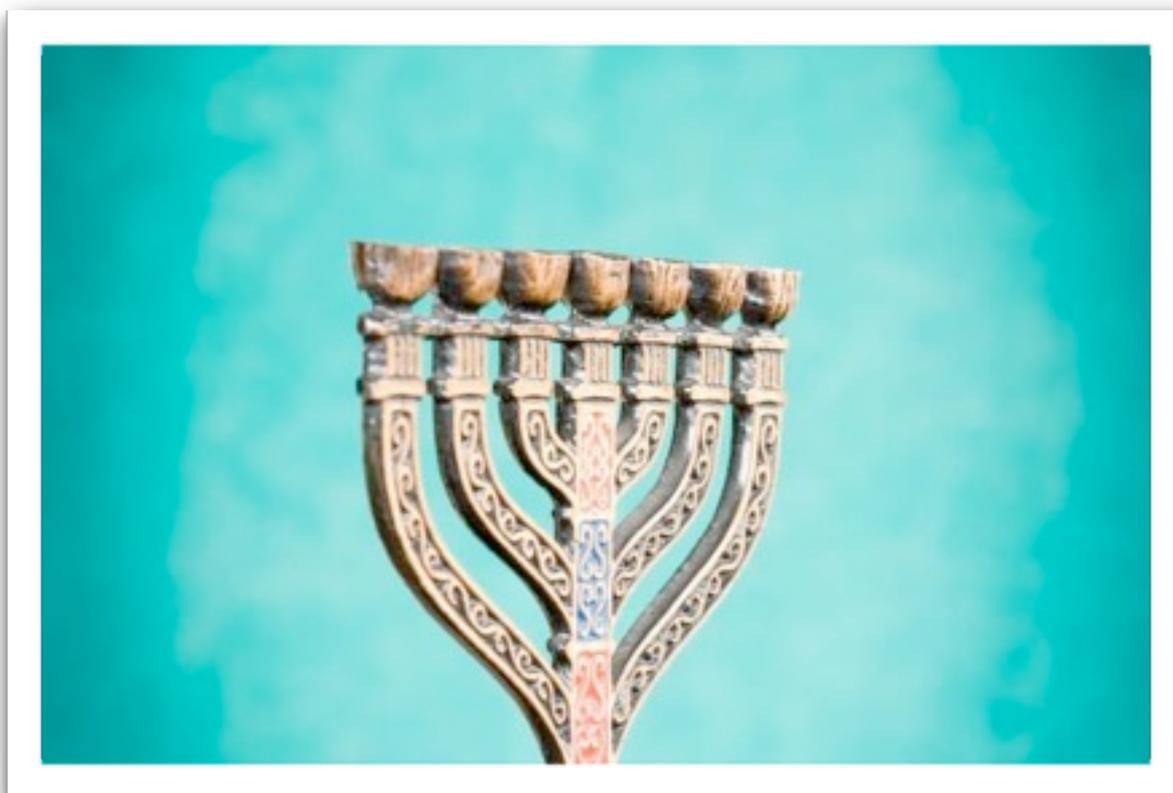
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If you look at the ancient buildings and archaeological findings in Israel, you will notice that the symbol of the menorah appears time and time again. For millennia, it was the symbol of the people of Israel, long before the Star of David. But historians don't really know why this symbol rather than any other. Perhaps the New Covenant has some answers?

The menorah has always been God's idea. It first appears in Exodus chapter 25, as God instructs them how to make it:

"You are to make a menorah of pure gold. It is to be made of hammered work; its base, shaft, cups, ring of outer leaves and petals are to be of one piece with it. It is to have six branches extending from its sides, three branches of the menorah on one side of it and three on the other. On one branch are to be three cups shaped like almond blossoms, each with a ring of outer leaves and petals; likewise on the opposite branch three cups shaped like almond blossoms, each with a ring of outer leaves and petals; and similarly for all six branches extending from the menorah... Make seven lamps for the menorah, and mount them so as to give light to the space in front of it." (verses 31-37, Complete Jewish Bible)

When we see the instructions that God gives to Moses on how precisely to build the tabernacle, we are struck by the incredible amount of detail involved. Every tiny detail has been considered to perfection. It might seem strange to our ears sometimes, but if we are willing to "seek diligently" as the two central words of the Torah say, then we can find some wonderful truths hidden in God's law.

¹ <https://www.oneforisrael.org/bible-based-teaching-from-israel/the-meaning-behind-the-menorah/>

The book of Hebrews gives us some help on our quest, reminding us in chapter 8 that all the items God told Moses to make **“serve as a copy and shadow of the heavenly things.”**

“...For when Moses was about to erect the tent, he was instructed by God, saying, “See that you make everything according to the pattern that was shown you on the mountain.” But as it is, the Messiah has obtained a ministry that is as much more excellent than the old as the covenant he mediates is better, since it is enacted on better promises.” Hebrews 8:5-6

By studying the tabernacle with all its details, we can learn about heavenly things. They are a shadow, a pattern of what was to come in the Messiah. But let’s look at the original lampstand commissioned by God. Solid gold, with seven stands but made of one piece, and adorned with almond blossoms...

Light

First of all, the light given by the massive menorah in the dark tent would have been a powerful symbol of God’s light and holiness in our dark and sinful world. Jewish tradition holds that it reminds the people of Israel that they are also called to be his “Light to the nations” as God prescribed in Isaiah 42:6. Gently spreading light without force – *“Not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit, says the LORD”*, in Zechariah 4:6, when the prophet asks about the menorah. It’s a symbol of bringing God’s glory, truth, and light into the world. And his people are called to be his representatives in bringing that light too. Yeshua teaches in Matthew 5 that we too are called to be that light to the world:

“You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden. Nor do people light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a stand, and it gives light to all in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven.” The light is a witness to and of God.

In John 8, we see Yeshua speaking in the temple, declaring, *“I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life.”* The Pharisees challenged him, *“Here you are, appearing as your own witness; your testimony is not valid.”* Verse 20 tells us that *“He spoke these words while teaching in the temple courts near the place where the offerings were put.”* He was standing close to the huge temple menorah, declaring himself to be that ultimate light and witness, as indeed he is. The menorah was a shadow of the coming Messiah, and his chosen witnesses to the world: the body of believers.

Seven branches

As we know, seven is God’s number of completion, but despite the plurality of lamps, it is made of one ‘piece’. Seven in one, like a rainbow, or a week. We know that it is to represent the presence of God among in the midst of them, and in Revelation we also see the lampstands representing the Spirit’s presence in the churches to whom John writes the messages from Yeshua. There are seven churches listed, but one bride of Yeshua.

The other aspect of the seven branches design is that it resembles a tree. In Jewish tradition, the menorah is reminiscent of the Tree of Life from the creation story. We can see from the New Testament in the book of Revelation that the tree is equated with eternal life. Adam and Eve were banished from it, and Revelation 22 tells us that those with clean robes have the right to eat from it. Thus, the menorah speaks of eternal life with God for his bride, made available to us all, only through the blood of the Messiah. Yeshua said *“I am the true vine, you are the branches”* in John 15. He is the tree, and only in him can we live spiritually and produce fruit.

Almond blossom

And why [almond blossoms](#) on the menorah? Every detail is significant with God, and no word is wasted. Almond trees are mentioned elsewhere in the Bible in significant ways – the first time was when Aaron’s priestly authority was questioned, and his staff budded, bloomed and produced fruit overnight as validation from God. The second is when God shows Jeremiah an almond branch in a vision. God uses a Hebrew word-play, as the word for ‘almond’ is also root of the word to be ‘diligent and hard-working’, because the tree blooms and produces fruit before any other tree – in the middle of winter. It is a metaphor for haste and determined work. God assures Jeremiah that he is diligently watching over his word to fulfill it, in Jeremiah 1:12, and so almond blossoms are a symbol of God’s determination to carry out his plans. In Zechariah 4, we see the prophet bewildered by a vision of a menorah with two olive trees either side, providing oil for the lamps. Again, if we turn to the New Testament to look for two olive trees, we hear Paul describing Jews and Gentiles in Romans 11 as two olive trees; the wild Gentile tree being grafted into the cultivated Jewish tree, through Yeshua. The two become one in him:

*“But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ. For he himself is our peace, who has made us both one and has broken down in his flesh the dividing wall of hostility by abolishing the law of commandments expressed in ordinances, that he might create in himself **one new man** in place of the two, so making peace, and might reconcile us both to God in one body through the cross, thereby killing the hostility. And he came and preached peace to you who were far off and peace to those who were near. For through him we both have access in one Spirit to the Father. So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God, built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus himself being the cornerstone, in whom **the whole structure, being joined together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord. In him you also are being built together into a dwelling place for God by the Spirit.**”*

The items in the desert tabernacle spoke of what was to come in the New Covenant – one bride of Messiah: Jew and Gentile called together, brought purified and clean before God to dwell with him. What a powerful symbol, and what riches are spoken by the God-designed menorah. How wonderful it is to have been brought into the New Covenant, and that we can see the fulfillment in Yeshua! Let’s pray for more of our dear Jewish brothers and sisters to come to experience new life in their Messiah – the One to whom their menorah points.

SHALOM