



Jewish Symbols

Created by Adra Lustig, 2021



1) **Candlesticks**

The candle is a very important symbol for Jews. Fire is warm and inviting. The Kabbalah (Jewish Mysticism) says that the flame is a symbol of God's relationship to the world and to human beings.

2) **Chai**

Chai means "life" in Hebrew. This uplifting word is often found in Jewish jewelry and other Judaica objects, affirming one of the most important values in the Jewish religion: preserving and celebrating life. A common toast on Jewish occasions is L'Chaim, meaning "to life!" Spelled with the Hebrew letters chet and yud, the word chai has the numerical value of 18 (Chet=8, yud=10). Because of this it's common for Jews to give gifts or donate to charity in amounts that are multiples of 18.

3) **Crown of Torah**



The crown symbolizes majesty and the law of Torah. The rimmonim evoke the bells worn on the high priest's robe as described in the Book of Exodus.

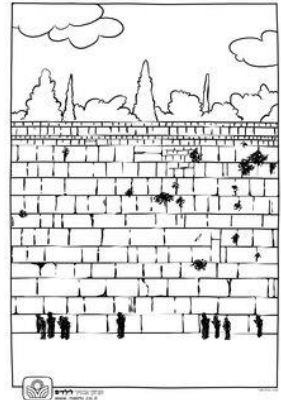
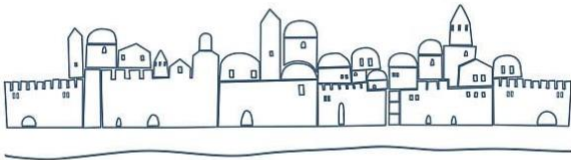


4) **Dove/Olive Branch**

Since the story of Noah and the great flood that nearly destroyed the world, the dove has been a universal symbol of peace and hope. The image of a dove holding an olive branch in its beak recalls this moment of profound hope and joy of Noah.

5) Flag of Israel / Jerusalem

The Land of Israel, and more specifically Jerusalem/Zion, has been a common theme within Jewish culture and art for millennia, especially for diaspora Jews who longed to return to the Promised Land.



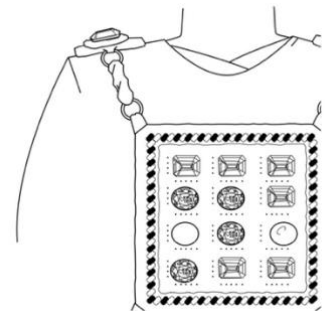
6) Hamsa



The Hamsa, meaning five in Arabic, is the hand-shaped symbol thought to ward off the evil eye and offer protection. It is a popular good luck charm that often incorporates other motifs, such as an eye, chai or star.

7) High Priests Breastplate – Ephod

Often found in synagogues, frequently embroidered on the curtain covering the holy ark that houses the Torah scrolls, the breastplate (choshen) was one of the eight priestly garments worn by the high priest (kohen gadol) while serving in the Holy Temple. It featured 12 precious gemstones, corresponding to the 12 tribes of Israel.



8) Lion of Judah



The official crest of the city of Jerusalem is a lion pictured against a background of the stones of the Western Wall, surrounded by stylized olive leaves, representing peace. It refers to the tribe of Judah, one of the twelve ancient Jewish tribes. When our Biblical patriarch Jacob was about to die, he bestowed one final blessing on each of his twelve sons who founded the twelve tribes of the nation of Israel. When Jacob blessed Judah, he compared him to a lion and said that one day his descendants would be among the most prominent Jews: “A lion cub is Judah; from the prey, my son, you elevated yourself. He crouches, lies down like a lion, and like an awesome lion, who dares rouse him? The scepter shall not depart from Judah nor a scholar from among his descendants” (Genesis 49:8-10).

9) Menorah

The official emblem of the State of Israel, the Menorah is a key Jewish emblem. The Torah relates how God Himself gave Moses instructions for building this holy seven-branched candelabra on Mount Sinai: “You shall make a menorah of pure gold...” (Exodus 25: 31-40). The golden menorah was placed in the Mishkan, the very first Jewish house of worship. When Jews conquered Jerusalem and built the ancient Temple there, they moved the menorah to the Temple, where it was kept lit all the time. The holiday of Hanukkah commemorates re-lighting this precious candelabra after it was desecrated by occupying Greek soldiers and Jewish soldiers recaptured and restored the Temple in the year 139 BCE.



10) Mezuzah

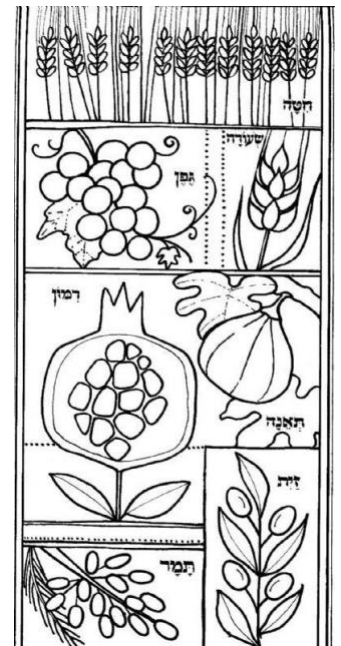
The mezuzah is a symbol attached to the doorways of Jewish homes that identifies them as 'Jewish'. The mezuzah has two parts – a parchment scroll on which certain prayers are written, and a protective container for the scroll. The protective container is usually decorated to make it attractive. Although the scroll usually cannot be seen inside the container, it is the most important part.

11) Pomegranates - Rimonim

The Pomegranate Is One of Israel's "Seven Species." In Jewish tradition, pomegranates are a symbol of fertility and love, winning them frequent mention in, among other biblical texts, the Song of Songs. The pomegranate is one of several symbolic foods incorporated into the Rosh Hashanah seder, a Sephardic ritual. Before eating the pomegranate seeds, Jews traditionally say, "May we be as full of mitzvot (commandments) as the pomegranate is full of seeds." The pomegranate is often said to have 613 seeds, corresponding to the 613 mitzvot (plural of mitzvah) derived from the Bible.

12) Seven Species

Scripture describes the seven species with which the land of Israel was blessed: wheat, barley, grapes, figs, pomegranates, olives and dates.⁴ Depictions of some or all of these are used often in synagogue decor and other Jewish places, and can be found in ancient archaeological ruins and on Jewish coins going back to the Bar Kochva period. Even in exile, the Jews maintained these symbols of their homeland.



13) Shema Yisrael

Shema is Hebrew for hear and Yisrael for Israel. “Hear, Israel...” is the beginning of the section of Torah that is a central Jewish prayer recited twice daily. The prayer, and symbol when worn on jewelry, is an affirmation of one God and the acceptance of God’s commandments.

14) Shin

The first letter of the word שָׁלוֹם (*shalom*) peace is *shin*. The letter *shin* represents the word שָׁלוֹם (*shalom*) peace which is also used one of G-d’s names. The ש is also the first letter of the word שְׁדַי (*shadai*) which is one of the names of G-d.

15) Shofar

The shofar is a polished ram’s horn used in Jewish services at certain times of the year. It is blown to bring in the New Year and mark important events.

16) Star of David

The six-pointed Star of David, *Magen David* – Shield of David. The Talmud mentions Magen David – literally, the Shield of King David – protecting King David and his descendants. This beautiful image is also found in Jewish liturgy: each Shabbat after we hear the Haftarah read in synagogue, the reader refers to the Divine as Magen David, the protector of David and the Jewish people.

17) Tallit

The tallit is known in English as a prayer shawl. It is worn during prayers and reminds us that God is protecting us and also symbolizes that we are wrapping God’s laws around us.

18) Tefillin

Each morning Jewish men bind tefillin (leather boxes containing four specific passages from the Bible) to their head and arm during prayers. This practice is meant to take them to a higher spiritual level.

20) Ten Commandments/ Torah



Jewish tradition tells us God gave the Ten Commandments and Torah to Moses and the Israelites at Mt. Sinai soon after the exodus from Egypt. As such, it is not uncommon to see Jewish jewelry motifs depicting the Ten Commandments or a Torah scroll as a representation of the theme of the Torah.

21) Tree of Life

The Torah and its commandments are compared with a “Tree of Life”. King Solomon wrote “It is a tree of life to those who grasp it, and its supporters are praiseworthy” (Proverbs 3:18). The term is first used in Genesis when God tells Adam and Eve that they can eat from any fruits in the Garden of Eden, with two exceptions: the Tree of Life, and the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil. Seduced by the evil snake, Adam and Eve broke this command and ate fruit from the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil. (The Tree of Life remained untouched.)

22) Tzitzit

It is a mitzvah (commandment) to put on tzitzit as a reminder that God is always there and that we should always follow his commandments. Tzitzit are ritual fringes, knotted a special way to symbolize the 613 mitzvot (commandments) in the Torah, and are worn on the corners of four-cornered garments. They are seen on the corners of a tallit (see above) or on an undergarment worn by more religious men.

23) Yad

The word 'yad' means 'hand' in Hebrew. The yad is a decorative pointer in the shape of a hand that is used to show what place the reader is up to while reading the Torah.