

OHAV EMETH

SYMBOLISM OF THE 9 STAINED GLASS WINDOWS

By Ron Henig

OVERVIEW BY THE ARTIST

With these windows, I wanted to convey the power of miracles in our daily lives. To this end, I drew upon miraculous events in Jewish history from the time of Moshe Rabbeinu to the present day and beyond - to the final Redemption of Moshiach.

The overarching idea is to illustrate how Hashem has always been the Master of the world who can turn nature, as well as human affairs, to unexpected conclusions when that suits His will and His intended destiny for Klal Yisrael. This is meant to give us hope and Bitachon in the uncertain times of our personal lives as well, that behind the "Hester Panim", there is a loving, caring Redeemer who, ultimately, will not let his faithful falter.

The following describes what the illustrations in each window represent from the left when you are standing inside the sanctuary.



WINDOW #1: The Miracle of Chanukah

This window depicts a Menorah and an amphora of oil which was used to refill it eight times, although it had the capacity to do so only once! This open miracle occurring outside of biblical times, indicated Hashem's seal of approval for the hard-won war the Jews had just fought against Hellenization and for the rededication of the temple.

In fact, the miracle of Chanukah became the example for the principle of "Pirsumei Nissa", a rabbinic mitzva to propagate and publicize the occurrence of a miraculous happening among the public.

Inscribed in the lower pane are the words "Neis Gadol Hayah Shum", a great miracle happened there. The first letter of each of these words appear on the side the dreidel. Dreidels in Israel replace the letter Shin with a letter Peh, to represent the phrase *nes gadol hayah poh* ("a great miracle happened here").



WINDOW #2: The Miracle With Eliyahu at Mt. Carmel

This is, undoubtedly, the most dramatic moment in the Prophet Eliyahu's life. He is surrounded by a throng of Israelites and hundreds of the priests of the then popular Baal dieties, whom Eliyahu challenged to a contest to see whose god answers prayers. While the Baal priests are given all day to beseech their gods to consume their bull-ock offering, nothing happens, of course.

At the very last moment of the day, with his life greatly imperiled, Eliyahu issues the simplest of prayers, "Answer me, Hashem, answer me!". A flash immediately descends from heaven consuming Eliyahu's sacrifice. At that moment, the people repent from their Baal worship, prostrate them-selves and cry out, "Hashem is G-d, Hashem is G-d!"

This story, from Melachim (Kings) I, Ch. 18, emphasizes the miraculous power of even a simple three word prayer, "Aneini, Hashem, Aneini", which is inscribed in the lower pane.



WINDOW #3: The Burning Bush

Fire, in the physical world, is necessarily a destructive phenomenon, as it can only exist by virtue of the consumption and conversion of its host matter into energy. Spiritual fire, however, might look the same, but does the opposite. It infuses its host matter with energy, strengthening and bolstering it to greater heights!

There were two miraculous aspects to this event that drew Moshe's attention. One was the revelation that spiritual fire can exist and interact within this lower world. The other was that it would manifest within so lowly a host as a bush! This was especially appealing to Moshe, the iconoclast, who would forgo the favor of a mighty king to defend the dignity of a lowly slave. Through this event, Hashem intimated to Moshe that He is, indeed, the Protector and Restorer of the lowly.

The inscription in the lower pane reads, "vehasneh einnu uchal" - "And the bush was not consumed!" is taken from the biblical text.



WINDOW #4: MIRACLE OF THE REBIRTH OF ISRAEL

For thousands of years, the land of Israel lay largely barren and desolate. With the return of a significant "Yishuv" - settlement of Jews in the 19th Century, the land began a transformation to being lush and fruitful once again, as in the days of old.

Though it took much exhausting labor and sweat, the success of the yield is widely acknowledged to have been one of the miracles of our history!

The Montefiore windmill, built in Jerusalem in 1857 to grind flour for the new community, remains a symbol of this success.

The lower pane is inscribed with the Pasuk from Isaiah, 35, "vatageil arava vatifrach" - "And the desert shall rejoice and bloom", was a prophecy, like many others, finally being fulfilled in our age!



WINDOW #5: THE MOSHIACH MIRACLE

The center window, the main stem of the Menorah pattern, fittingly, has a Moshiach theme, symbolizing the culmination of history and the penultimate of all Nissim (miracles), second only to Creation, itself!

The Moshaich era is here represented by elements from the prophecies in Isaiah 11, about "the lion lying down with the lamb", as well as a depiction of the Beit Hamikdash. A shofar, representing the "Shofar of Moshiach", floats in the heaven above, calling out to the world.

The Pasuk inscription in the lower window, taken from Isaiah, 11, reads "Unesah neiss lagoyim, va'asef nidchei yisrael" - meaning: "And a symbol shall be raised to the nations, and I shall gather the remnants of Israel".

"Neiss" is commonly known as "miracle" but can also mean a "symbol" - meaning, a symbol of some type will be raised to the nations, that will prompt the return of the Jewish people to the land. This is how the commentaries translate it in this context.

However, what that symbol might actually be is not made clear.

That is why it is posited that this "symbol for the nations" is one that is called in Isaiah, 56, the "house of prayer for all the nations", namely, the Beit Hamikdash! This Pasuk, thus strongly suggests that its rebuilding will be the harbinger for the return of the people.



WINDOW #6: KRIAS YAM SUF (SPLITTING OF THE SEA)

The Talmud recounts that the wonders that were observed by the humblest at the splitting of the sea, far exceeded all the wondrous revelations of the prophet Yechezkel (Ezekiel) in his visions of the workings of heaven!

In truth, this is not difficult to understand. To the poor Israelites trapped between the sea and the pursuing Egyptian army, the miracles of their salvation were far more relevant and personal and therefore, arguably more inspiring!

This window depicts the Egyptians following the Israelites into the opening between walls of water, with Hashem's protective cloud and pillar of smoke separating the two.

The Pasuk in the lower panel is taken from Shemos (Exodus) Ch.15, and reads, "Nora tehillos osseh pelleh" - "the awesome One of prayers, Doer of wonders".



WINDOW #7: MIRACLE OF ELISHA REVIVING THE DEAD

This event is chronicled in Melachim (Kings) II, Ch. 4, regarding a boy whom Hashem granted to a deserving, but hitherto, childless woman that the prophet Elisha blessed for showing him kindness.

During his adolescence, this boy fell ill into bed and died. The grieving mother insistently brought Elisha to him, and he was able to revive the boy through the first ever recorded case of artificial resuscitation!

This story is rife with important lessons for the ages about the powers of hope, faith and perseverance, as well as the preciousness of life.

The lower panel features the Pasuk, "Vayifkach hanaar es einav"- "...and the lad opened his eyes." What a sight that must have been then, and continues to be today for those blessed to have their loved ones restored to them!





WINDOW #8: GIVING OF THE TORAH

This window depicts the greatest event in the annals of history, Kabbalos Hatorah the revelation of G-d giving the Torah on Mt. Sinai the seminal event of Jewish history when an entire nation heard G-d speak to them from fire.

In fact, the miracles of Mount Sinai are to be remembered each day of our lives and we are given a separate mitzvah each day to remember those events and all the miracles of G-d who performed them . The Wonders of the Al-mighty Himself speaking and revealing Himself from fire to the entire nation of Israel

The remembrance of The revelation of Sinia will be essential to the process of teshuva in effecting the renewal of the Jewish people as is happening in our world today with so many of our brothers and sisters returning to the traditions of our Torah.

The Pasuk, Hanehiyeh kadavar hagadol hazeh, "Has there every been anything like this great thing", Devarim 4:32, has a people ever heard the voice of G-d speaking from the midst of the fire as you have heard and survived? And why were we shown? To know that Hashem is G-D and there is none besides him!



WINDOW #9: THE MIRACLE OF PURIM

This window depicts the major symbols of the Rabbinic holiday of Purim. A Megilla and the drinking of wine. These became the instruments that effected the miracle, namely, that King Achashverosh's wrath was turned upon his erstwhile co-conspirator, Haman, who had schemed to annihilate the Jews in all the vast kingdom!

The first step in the turning point was the king's inexplicable urge to read his chronicles one night, and happened upon an entry detailing how the Jew, Mordechai, had saved his life. The second step was the wine party organized by Esther, during which Haman made a fatal blunder and offended the king. T

The pasuk, taken from the Megilla, is Layehudim Hayita Orah "for the Jews there was light".