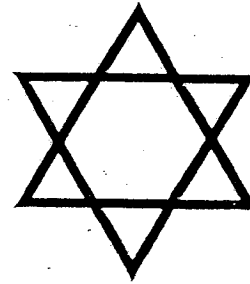
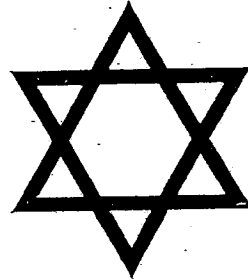
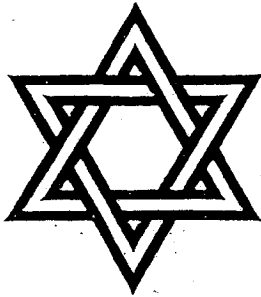


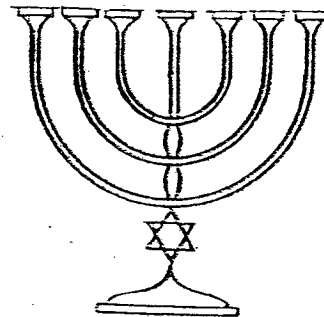
The Symbols of Judaism

The Star of David according to legend is based upon the shape of King David's shield, though it probably dates from a later period. It is comprised of two triangles superimposed on each other symbolizing the balance of the universe between two forces: the triangle pointing upwards representing the sun, fire and masculine energy, and the triangle pointing downwards representing the moon, water and feminine energy.



HEXAGRAM an ancient sign for the Jewish kingdom.

The menorah is a 7, 8 (really 9, since the center candle is the "servant candle used to light the others) candle candelabra symbolising the freedom of the Jewish nation. The seven candle menorah can represent the seven days of the week, or the sun and moon and five principal planets, with the three U-shaped arms representing wisdom, strength and beauty. The eight candle menorah is used to celebrate Hanukkah, the festival of lights, when eight candles are lit on 8 consecutive nights to recall the miracle when after the successful Maccabean revolt in 164 B.C.E. the shortage of candle oil provided enough oil for only one day in the Temple and miraculously the candles remained lit for all eight days.



Additional significant Jewish symbols include the following:

The mezuzah is a small container posted on the front doors (and sometimes on interior doors also) containing a small scroll inscribed with the Shema. It is lightly and sincerely touched upon entering or leaving the room or house to affirm God's call to love God totally.

The Western Wall in Jerusalem is the only surviving section of the Second temple destroyed by the Romans in 70 C.E. It symbolizes both the Temple and the Jewish nation and is the most holy place in Judaism for pilgrimage and for worship.

Orthodox Jews use special articles of clothing (skull caps called yarmulke's or kippah's for men to wear on their heads, and scarves or other head covering for women). For worship services men wear a small leather box on the forehead called teffilin containing an inscription of the Shema, leather straps also called teffilin around the left arm and a prayer shawl called a tallit around the shoulders. All of these articles symbolize humility before the holiness of God.

During Passover celebrations commemorating the Exodus of the Jew from slavery in Egypt under the pharaoh, special foods are used to symbolize the experience of that ancient yet spiritually contemporaneous liberation:

- an egg symbolizes sacrifice**
- fresh lettuce stands for the frugal meals they had to eat during slavery**
- a bone from a lamb recalls the lambs sacrificed at the first passover**
- nuts and fruit paste symbolize the bricks and mortar the Jews used to build cities under their cruel oppressors**
- bitter herbs remind them of the bitterness of slavery**
- a dish of saltwater represents the tears shed during slavery**
- the matzah bread is a flat and unleavened bread reminding Jews of having to hurriedly flee from Egypt without time to collect flour for baking.**

Additional symbols are seen in the deep respect Jews hold for Torah scrolls of the holy scriptures, published prayer books, ritual books used during special services at Passover and Hanukkah as well as copies of the Talmud and other important writings, all of which reflect the abiding significance Jews hold for the reading and studying of such writings.