

The Children's Synagogue

by Rev. SIDNEY GOLD, B.A.,

Chief Minister, Birmingham Hebrew Congregation

No Synagogue would be complete which failed to make provision for the spiritual needs of its youth. "Call them not thy children but thy builders" is an oft quoted adage of our sages and, by tradition, a Cheder or classroom was an integral part of every house of God.

A more recent innovation has been the establishment of special Childrens' Synagogues. Here the younger members of the congregation are encouraged to conduct their own Sabbath and Festival Services, under adult supervision, and to familiarise themselves with the form and content of the Synagogue liturgy.

The Birmingham Hebrew Congregation determined to build such a Children's Synagogue as part of their Centenary Celebrations in 1956. In May 1959 our beautiful sanctuary was consecrated and named the Abraham Cohen Memorial Children's Synagogue as a tribute to the memory of Dr. Cohen, the beloved Chief Minister of the congregation, who had died in the period between the inception and completion of the building.

This small Synagogue is also used as a Beth Hamedrash and for morning and evening Services on weekdays.

The designs for the windows in the Children's Synagogue are deliberately simple and were chosen to appeal to the intellect of the young people who worship in this delightful setting. They illustrate, on the North Side, well-known stories about the Festivals, and on the South Side, familiar symbols of Jewish Life.



Pesach

2 — SHAVUOTH

The story of Ruth gleaning in the fields is associated with this Festival.

"In loving memory of their parents Annie and John Hoff by their children and grandchildren".



Succoth

1 — PESACH

The last night in Egypt before the Exodus is here depicted. The Angel of Death is seen passing over the house of an Israelite, who has completed his preparation for the journey and is sprinkling the blood of the lamb on the lintel of his door.

"In treasured memory of Hyman Silverstone dedicated in love by his wife Rebecca and family".



Shavuoth

3 — SUCCOTH

The Lulav and the Ethrog, which are carried in the Processions of Thanksgiving to the Almighty for the Bounty of the Harvest.

"Dedicated by Sidney Simon and Vivienne (daughter of the late Rev. Dr. Abraham Cohen) who were married here on the 9th October 1959".



Rosh Hashanah

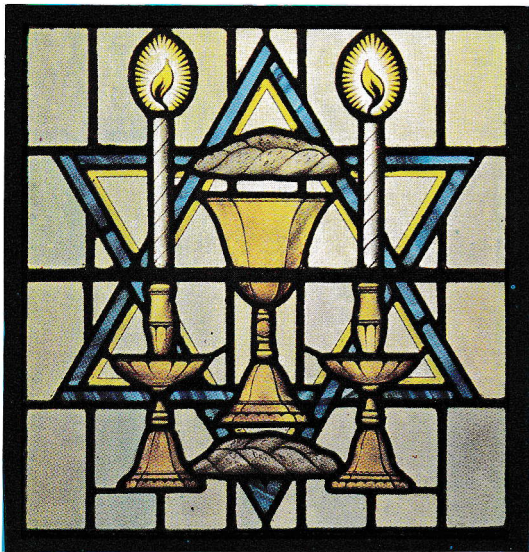
5—YOM KIPPUR

The story of Jonah, sailing on a ship in stormy seas with the whale in the foreground, forms the subject of this window. This prophetic book is recited on the Day of Atonement.

"In loving memory of our dear son Guy Martin Joseph, 18th October 1934 — 7th September 1956".



Yom Kippur



The Sabbath

4—ROSH HASHANAH

The Shofar and the pair of scales, symbolise the Day of Judgment.

"To the loving memory of Gerald and Sara Gompertz by their sons Harry, Geoffrey and Alan".

6—THE SABBATH

The candlesticks, two loaves of bread and wine seen here symbolise the atmosphere of the Sabbath and are, by tradition, found on the Sabbath table of the Jewish home.

"In revered and loving memory of Irene Lessar by her husband and son".



The Torah

7—THE TORAH

An open scroll of the Torah is here illustrated. The text reads:

וזאת התורה אשר שם משה לפני בני ישראל אל פי יי ביד משה

“And this is the Law which Moses set before the Children of Israel according to the commandment of the Lord by the hand of Moses”.

“Dedicated by Howard and Cicely Hirschfield in memory of their parents Adolphe and Gertrude Hirschfield and the Rev. Morris Brown and his wife Leah”.

8—THE TEMPLE MENORAH

The Seven-branched Candelabrum or Menorah which was a feature of the Temples of Solomon and Ezra.

“Dedicated by Mr. and Mrs. Ivan Shortt in memory of their beloved parents Samuel and Charlotte Schatz Bernhard and Rosalie Zurndorfer”.



The Temple Menorah



Tablets of the Law

9—TABLETS OF THE LAW

The Ten Commandments in Hebrew are seen against the background of the Magen David — Shield of David.

“With love to the memory of Sidney Shortt by his wife Sadie”.