

**"WE DEDICATE OURSELVES TO THE SACRED TASK OF NEVER  
ALLOWING THE WORLD TO FORGET."**

Rabbi Samuel L. Porrath

**THE TEMPLE BETH TZEDEK HOLOCAUST MEMORIAL**  
Rededication - November 8, 2009

*The art piece*

The Holocaust Memorial was designed by Maurice Ascalon and sculpted by his sons, David and Adir Ascalon. It took two and one-half years to complete. The Ascalon Studio is known for works of art gracing synagogues, public places, and galleries throughout the United States, Mexico, and Israel.

"So many perished leaving no kin to recite the '*Kaddish*' (prayer for the deceased) after them. We have become the ones who have the *Mitzvah* (performing a good deed) to do it," said the late Rabbi Samuel Porrath in 1986, when the piece was first dedicated at the former Temple Beth El.

This piece is dedicated to the Holocaust survivors of our congregation, Temple Beth Tzedek. All who come here will know that the story has been told, today, and for all the days to come. We will remember.



## What the symbols mean

### *Electrified Barbed Wire Fence*

Placed as a backdrop of this sculpture, electrified barbed wire fences were used by the Nazis to surround every death camp and enclose the victims in order to prevent escape and to dehumanize.

Throughout the sculpture we notice flames surging heavenward, burning, devouring, consuming our holiest possessions – human beings, men, women, and children by the millions. Our sacred books, holy writing and sanctified possession, as well, are all going up in smoke.

### *Torah Scroll*

In flames, with a tear through the Hebrew word ‘*zachor*’ (remember) in the story of Amalek’s evil deeds. In biblical times, Amalek committed atrocities against the children of Israel simply because they were Israelites, as did Pharaoh before him and Haman after him, among others. In more recent times, Hitler took over Amalek’s ideology of annihilation of the Jews.

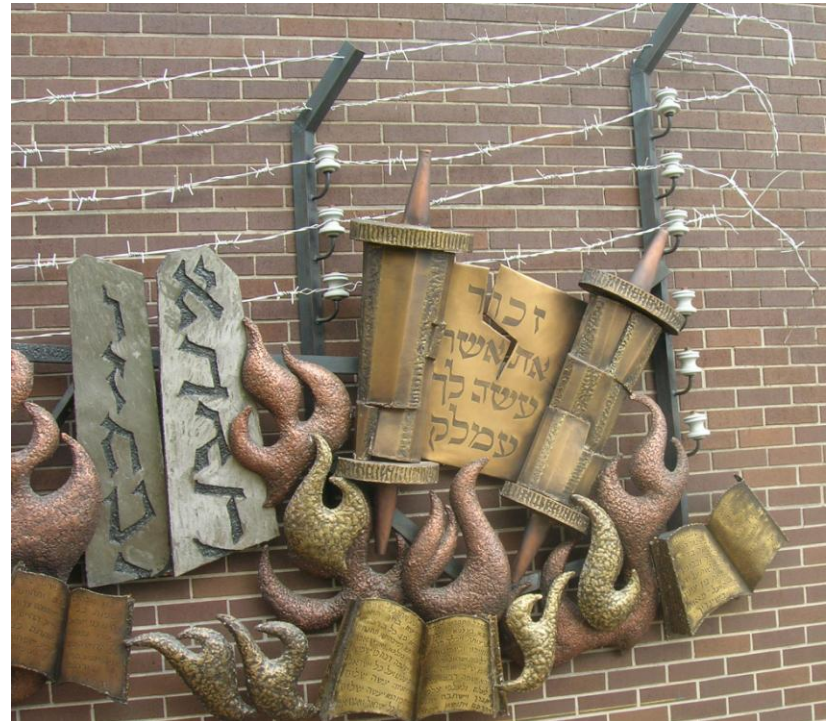
### *Three Open Prayer Books – In Flames*

These prayer books direct us to age old declarations of faith by the Jewish people.

Book one (right): *Sh’ma*: Hear O Israel, the Lord is our God, the Lord is One.

Book two (center): The prayer of the *Kaddish*, the eternal memorial for the dead, calling on the living to maintain trust and courage despite the loss of loved ones.

Book three (left): The prayer of *Yizkor* – the calling upon God to remember the sacrifices of the martyrs and to place their souls under God’s care.



### *The Ten Commandments*

From early times, the basic importance of the Ten Commandments has been universally the great influence on the moral and social life of men. The Ten Commandments were the source of spiritual nourishment for the Jewish people. They were also the fundamental moral laws handed down to the entire world. The broken tablets here signify the breaking of God's moral and civil law by the Nazis in order to crush the Jewish faith and spirit during the Holocaust.

### *The Menorah*

The broken candelabra being toppled represents the destruction of the first Temple in Jerusalem. The light that emanates from it stands for peace, love, ethics, and truth...truth the Nazis tried to subvert with lies. Despite all the attempts to obviate these teachings, the menorah is ready to be erected once more, to continue to influence life for the good, for compassion, for brotherly love, and for peace.

### *The Six Tree Trunks*

The trees, cut off in their prime, represent the six million murdered Jewish martyrs of the Holocaust. The different sizes of the tree trunks symbolize the men, women, and children of all ages, who fell victims to Nazi persecution. The new branches seen sprouting out of the trunks show the redemption and rebirth of the Jewish people through the establishment of the State of Israel.

Flames below form the word *ZACHOR* (remember). The lessons of the Holocaust have imposed on us this responsibility, a sacred duty to tell this story to future generations, thus turning horror to hope.



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