

The Menorah

by: Rabbi Jeremy Rosen

The seven-branch menorah that stood in the Tabernacle and the Temple, made of solid gold, was the symbol of God's presence amongst us. One light, the westernmost, was kept burning all the time, the wicks were changed, oil added once every twenty-four hours. In the desert where the people wandered after they left Egypt, this Divine presence was represented by cloud during the day and fire at night, both of which had practical functions, shade and illumination. But once they were settled the single light replaced them both.

The difference was that the cloud and the fire were provided for them. The menorah on the other hand, they needed to take care of themselves.

And so it is with us. When we start our lives our parents are responsible for keeping the flame of our tradition alive and tending our needs both spiritual and physical. But as we grow and become independent, we are then responsible for making the effort ourselves.

So too as many of our community head off to their summer homes and away from the support structure of our community, one will have to try that much harder to make sure the Jewish component of our lives is not diluted and suppressed by the material delights and distractions of our summer lives.

This message is also reinforced by the famous phrase we read this week "Vayehi Binsoah HaAron" "When the Ark begins to move we say, "Arise God and scatter your enemies." When we are on the move we are more vulnerable, not just physically but spiritually, unfamiliar territory, new challenges. That's when we need to reinforce our Jewish life.