

# **The Development of the Ner Tamid, Aleph and Shofer Awards**



# The Development of the Ner Tamid & Aleph Awards

- The Ner Tamid was originally designed as a two-step award.
- Boy Scouts completed the requirements for the Aleph Award before they could start work on the Ner Tamid. Answers to the Aleph Award questions were entered into a notebook, which was given to the Examining Board. Tenderfoot and First Class Scouts satisfying the requirements received a certificate, a pin and an application for the Ner Tamid Award.



*Aleph Award*



*Ner Tamid Award*

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- **September 1938** - Dr. Ray O. Wyland, B.S.A. National Director of Education and Relationships, proposed a religious merit badge to Frank L. Weil. The question was whether the Protestants, Catholics and Jews could agree on the requirements. Mr. Weil advised that it would be inadvisable to establish such a merit badge for doing something, which should be done without question.
- **1941** - The National Catholic Committee on Scouting instituted the Ad Atare Dei Award for Catholic Scouts. It proved very popular and work soon began on a religious award for Jewish Scouts.
- **March 25, 1942** - Dr. Ben M. Edidin of the Jewish Education Committee of New York reported that a Committee of Queens Rabbis was developing a religious and cultural award for Jewish Scouts. Their report was turned over to Dr. Edidin, who was developing the pamphlets, in cooperation with Mr. Edward Schifreen of the National B.S.A. office.
- **By October 22nd** - A Scoutmasters' Committee from Queens had completed review of what was known as the "*Ner Tamid*" (Eternal Light) award, and decided that the Borough of Queens would continue experimentation with the award.



*Ray O. Wyland*



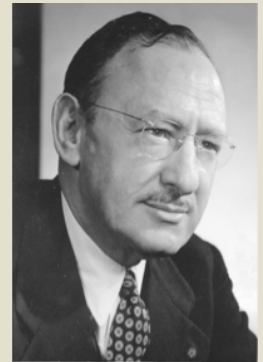
*Dr. Ben M. Edidin*



*Edward Schifreen*

# Sponsorship by the Synagogue Council of America

- About this time, Frank L. Weil approached the Synagogue Council of America and suggested that it consider sponsoring the two awards. The B.S.A. felt that the Synagogue Council of America was the one organization that would properly sponsor this award on behalf of the three branches of Judaism.
- Mr. Weil suggested that the Jewish Committee on Scouting would administer and finance the award in such a way that the Synagogue Council would have no financial obligation.
- The Queens Division of the Jewish Committee on Scouting would experiment with the award for one year. Mr. Weil suggested that a joint committee of the National Jewish Committee on Scouting and the Synagogue Council of America develop plans and supervise the experiment.
- The Synagogue Council of America initially withheld sponsorship until proof of success, but endorsed the Ner Tamid Award at a luncheon meeting on May 1, 1944.



*Frank L. Weil*

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- **Additional Testing** - By 1944, testing for the Ner Tamid and Aleph Awards had expanded beyond Queens, N.Y. to Ner Tamid Committees in Trenton, N.J. and Ithaca, N.Y.
- **Design of Awards** - Harry Lasker, B.S.A. National Director of Jewish Relationships, working with Dr. Ray O. Wyland of the Boy Scouts, designed the Ner Tamid and Aleph awards. The Ner Tamid award was patterned after the "*Ad Altare Dei*" religious award for Catholic Boy Scouts.
- **February 7, 1944** - Harry Lasker met with the Rabbis of Queens at the Jamaica Jewish Center to discuss the Ner Tamid Award. Rabbi William S. Malev reported that a meeting of seventeen Conservative Rabbis unanimously approved the Award. He agreed to act as advisor to the Conservative Rabbis on all matters relating to the Ner Tamid Award. Rabbi Samuel Berliant agreed to be the representative of the Orthodox group.
- **April 1944** - The Ner Tamid Award for Jewish Scouts was approved at the meeting of the National Jewish Committee on Scouting.



Harry Lasker



Rabbi William S. Malev



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- **October 8th, 1944** - Harry Lasker informed the members of the National Ner Tamid Committee that Rabbis Berliant, Opher and Salit were appointed Co-chairmen and that official approval of the requirements for the Award by the Synagogue Council of America would be given within two weeks.
- The Synagogue Council would have the responsibility of maintaining the highest religious standards for the Award in keeping with its significance and dignity.
- The National Ner Tamid Committee would be responsible to administer and promote the Award. Harry Lasker would work out the administration, patterning it after the Eagle Scout Award.
- He hoped that the Ner Tamid Award would be ready for release during Boy Scout Week of February 1945.



*Harry Lasker*



*Norman Salit*



*Rabbi Samuel  
Berliant*

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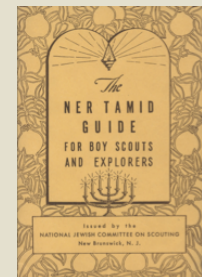
- **November 17, 1944** - First examination ever for the Aleph Award, at the Mishkan Israel Congregation, in Jamaica, New York. The actual examining committee consisted of the local Rabbi, the Scoutmaster, and the Chairman of the Troop Committee. Twenty-three Scouts appeared before the examining board with their Aleph Award notebooks containing the answers to the requirements. The Aleph Award cards were supposed to be presented at a special celebration Tuesday evening, December 28th in the Jamaica Jewish Center.
- **April 1945** - The first eight Scouts successfully completed the requirements for the Ner Tamid program.
- **March 1946** - The award was officially released with much fanfare and publicity.
- **December 1946** - The Ner Tamid Scout Award Guide was issued.
- **By June 1948** - Over 100 awards had been earned.
- **1952** - The 1,000th Ner Tamid Award was presented to Eagle Scout Bernard Brodsky of Brooklyn.



*Aleph Award*



*Ner Tamid Award*



*Ner Tamid Guide*

# The Development of the Shofer Award

- **1959** - The Bronx Jewish Committee on Scouting began experimenting with the “*Ram’s Horn Award*,” a Jewish award for adult Scouters. The Scouter supposedly sounded the ram’s horn and called Scouts to achieve the Ner Tamid Award.
- According to the Bronx requirements, the adult candidate must be:
  - Active in the Scout movement.
  - A member of his synagogue or temple.
  - One who actively promotes the “*Ner Tamid*” principal and ideals in Scouting.
  - One who promotes religious observance at Scout functions and activities.
  - One who promotes the American idea of brotherhood.
  - Receive three to four supporting letters or documents from Rabbis, his Boy Scout Executive, and the Chairmen of local Jewish committees, certifying that the candidate is worthy of the award.



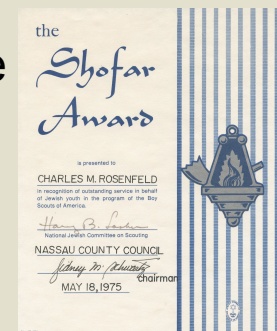
*Shofer Award*

# The Development of the Shofer Award

- Mark Stein of the Bronx Jewish Committee asked Harry Lasker to bring this award to the annual meeting of the National Jewish Committee on Scouting in San Francisco.
- **1960** - What would eventually be known as the “*Shofer Award*,” was discussed at the Annual Meeting of the National Jewish Committee on Scouting in Washington D.C. After some discussion it was referred to committee, which recommended, three votes to four, that the sponsorship of this award not be done on a National level.
- **1961** - The National Jewish Committee on Scouting accepted the recommendation of the committee at its Detroit meeting and left the award to be administered on a local basis.
- **1964** - Having achieved much publicity and good will, the National Jewish Committee on Scouting adopted the award at their annual meeting.



Harry Lasker



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David M. Malatzky  
dmalatzky@aol.com