

August 3, 2016

Dear Mel Wacks, Bill Hyder and Members and Guests of the TAMS and AINA,

I am sorry I cannot be with you today but may I say that it is indeed a great honor to have been presented the Ben and Sylvia Odesser Memorial Award for my article published in *The Shekel* on **Anti-Semitic Bigotry as Chronicled by Historical Medals**. Having the many distinguished numismatists and scholars among the previous recipients of this prestigious award makes it even more special for me.

Religious, racial and ethnic bigotry is surely one of the most important issues facing human society, as is obvious from just a perusal of today's headlines. But while prejudice exists towards many religious and ethnic groups, bigoted acts against the Jewish people as a group have been, through the ages, among the most severe, prevalent and unrelenting.

Many forms of art have been used to perpetrate calumnies against Jews, historical and commemorative medals being just one means by which Jews have been maligned.

The article I wrote attempts to chronicle the history of anti-Semitism as reflected by historical medals and the means by which Jews have been denigrated through the issuance and distribution of these medals. As I write in the Conclusion: "In reviewing the history of intolerance against the Jewish people, as reflected in historical and commemorative medals, and the role medals have played in recording and even promoting such religious bigotry, we find that a wide variety of anti-Semitic medals were produced as early as the 16th century and continue into present times. These medals were engraved by highly regarded medallists, using historically recognizable iconographies and often employing religious passages taken directly from both the Old and New Testaments of the Bible as supportive evidence for the slander the medals portray."

As a personal commentary, I long to see the day when we not merely *tolerate* the views of others different from ours but rather *celebrate* our diverse customs and beliefs.

Again I thank the joint sponsors of this award, the Token and Medal Society and the American Israel Numismatic Association, for bestowing on me the Ben and Sylvia Odesser Memorial Award.

My sincere best wishes to you all,

Ben Weiss