

LIGHTING THE WORLD

HANUKKAH MENORAHS AROUND THE GLOBE

We are pleased to present this exhibition of Hanukkah menorahs from the Dr. Aharon Ben Zalman Collection, which showcases the rich diversity of Jewish practice around the world. In communities in Europe, Africa, Asia and the Americas, the Jewish people are united in the celebration of Hanukkah, but the style of their holiday lamps varies widely, reflecting the particular culture in which they were created. This collection highlights that range, spanning five continents and more than five centuries.

This guide has been prepared for the visitor wanting to know more about the individual lamps in the exhibition, which represent only a part of Dr. Ben Zalman's collection.

THE HANUKKAH STORY

Among the holidays on the Jewish calendar, Hanukkah is a minor one, yet it has captured the imagination of Jewish communities around the world. It takes its meaning from an event that occurred more than 1,800 years ago in ancient Israel at a time when the Greek king of the land, Antiochus IV, had forbidden the practice of all non-Greek religions. The Second Temple in Jerusalem was desecrated and turned into a shrine to Zeus, and Jews who refused to give up their religion were put to death. A group of rebels, who came to be called the Macabees, fought back, recaptured their Temple and reconsecrated it. Hanukkah celebrates this rededication, and the miracle of the temple's lamp that burned for eight days with only one day's supply of sacred oil. For the Jewish people worldwide, it is a time of rededication and renewal, and a recognition of the power of God and the ways in which He has helped the Jewish people. The world Hanukkah means "dedication."

LIGHTING THE HANUKKAH MENORAH

Hanukkah lamps all have the same basic form: eight lights -- either fonts for oil with wicks, or holders for candles -- and a shamash, or servant light, that is used to kindle the others. On the first night of Hanukkah, the first light is lit using the shamash. On each subsequent night, an additional light is ignited until on the final night, all the lights burn.

A prayer is said during the lighting: "We light these lights on account of the miracles, and wonders, triumphs and battles that you performed for our fathers through your holy priests in those days in this season. These lights are sacred throughout the eight days of Hanukkah; we are not permitted to make any use of them other than to look at them, so that we may praise your great name and your miracles, your wonders and your triumphs."

Songs such as "Rock of Ages" ("Maoz Tzur") may be sung. Foods that are traditional during the festival vary by location, but are often foods cooked in oil such as latkes (potato pancakes) or jelly doughnuts. It is important to place the Hanukkah menorah in a location where it can be seen by the public.

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

Ashkenazi: broadly, Jews of Central or Eastern European origin.

Hanukkiah (*plural, Hanukkiahs or Hanukkiyot*): the Hebrew word for Hanukkah lamp.

Inquisition: established starting in 1478 by Spanish monarchs Ferdinand and Isabella to maintain Catholic orthodoxy. A 1492 ruling required non-Catholic citizens to convert or leave, causing the mass migration of Spanish and Portuguese Jews.

Menorah: the Hebrew word for lamp. In most places in the world, menorah refers to the golden 7-branched candle holder made for the Temple in Jerusalem, a design described by Moses in Exodus. In the United States, the term popularly refers to Hanukkah lamps.

Mizrahi: descendants of Jewish communities in the Middle East from biblical times into the modern era.

Pillars or columns of the Temple: a decorative element in Hanukkah menorah design, it represents the Temple in Jerusalem that was rededicated by the Maccabees in the Hanukkah story.

Pogrom: an organized massacre of a particular group, most generally referring to that of Jews in Russia or Eastern Europe.

Repoussé: a metalworking technique where a design is hammered into the reverse side to produce a raised design on the side to be shown.

Servant light: *see shamash.*

Shamash: from the Hebrew for “servant,” the light used to ignite the nightly candles on a Hanukkah menorah.

Sephardic: derived from Hebrew and meaning “Spanish,” it is used broadly to describe Jewish people of Spanish or Portuguese origin. Sephardic Jews trace their ancestry to Jews expelled from the Iberian Peninsula during the 1492 Inquisition.

Seven-branched menorah: as described in the Bible, the seven-lamp (six branches) ancient Hebrew lampstand made of pure gold and used in the portable sanctuary set up by Moses in the wilderness and later in the Temple in Jerusalem. The 7-branched menorah has long been a symbol of Judaism.

Star of David: a six-pointed star that is a symbol of the Jewish people. The symbol came into use in the later 19th century and can be used to date Hanukkah lamps to that period or later if they feature the Star of David.

Wicks: older Hanukkah menorahs all used oil into which a wick was inserted and ignited. In India and North Africa, the difficult work of making wicks from household threads was done by women.

FROM THE COLLECTOR

The collecting of Hanukkah menorahs and lamps has been a passion of mine for over three decades.

I have always been intrigued with Jewish communities throughout the Diaspora. This collection focuses on Jewish communities all over the world. The theme is universal but each menorah contains unique elements and provides a window into Jewish history and civilization through the centuries, and into the particular Diaspora location and historical period in which the menorah originates. My collection links these communities historically, symbolically and culturally.

These lamps survived pogroms, the Holocaust, the consequences of the Inquisition and the rebirth of Israel. "If only they could talk."

Hanukkah is a universally celebrated holiday in the Jewish world and is celebrated by all types of Jews, both very religious and secular. Also in some way non-Jews have also embraced the holiday.

Collecting can be entered at any price level, from Italian Renaissance to modern Israel, thus allowing me early on to collect on a strict budget. It has brought me around the world with adventure, from lighting a menorah in my collection at the White House Hanukkah Party to negotiating for an additional example in a synagogue in New Delhi, India, with many other examples and personalities encountered.

Love of the Diaspora and the Jewish Journey through the millenniums has instilled my love of Beit Hatfutsot as well. I would like to thank the staff and curator at the Museum at Eldridge Street for their exceptional diligence, research and hard work, and for understanding that the Museum is the perfect venue historically, aesthetically and culturally to present such a collection.

Dr. Aharon Ben Zalman

Southern Europe

ITALY

The Italian Jewish community is the oldest in Europe. As early as the first century BCE, Jewish immigrants and slaves brought by Roman conquerors settled in Italy. Although subject to expulsions in different parts of the country, Italian Jews maintained a vibrant cultural and spiritual life. In the early 14th century, Ashkenazi Jews who were fleeing persecution in Germany and France, found their way to Italy, and after the 1492 expulsion, Sephardic Spanish and Portuguese Jews went to Italy as well. From the mid-16th century until 1800, Jews had to live in Ghettos, and were restricted in many ways. The word “ghetto” is thought to have a Venetian origin. During the 19th century, Jews struggled for their rights and regulations were gradually eased. Today about 50,000 Jews live in Italy.



1 Italy or Spain, 16th-17th century, brass

The date and origin of this lamp have been the subject of some debate, but lamps of this type and design are among the oldest known. It has an architectural form similar to medieval Christian churches with a tall, pointed pediment with a large rosette at the center. A row of keyhole windows could reference Islamic influence in Spain, and a palmette at the top, might refer to the period of the Golden Age in Spain when Jews lived there openly and peaceably, or to the Holy Land. The inscription, in elongated letters in Spanish-style script, reads “For the commandment is a lamp and the teaching is the light” (Proverbs: 23).



2 Italy, 17th (?) century, bronze

A frequent Italian style, with a tall flat backplate, this lamp has an architectural design with the pillars of the Temple at the sides and a scroll-work pediment with a hanger at the top. A 7-branch synagogue menorah is at the center. The hand emerging from the sky and pouring oil is a reference to the hand of God performing the miracle of Hanukkah. The oil receptacles are placed along the bottom above a tray that will catch spilled oil. The shamash is at the top left.



3 Italy, 17th century, brass

An angel at the top of the backplate, and two others blowing trumpets at the sides, give this menorah a Christian feel. The backplate may have been repurposed for this lamp, a suspicion made stronger because the hanging ring at the top partially covers the angel’s face. The faces of the figures on either side are worn away, either from use, or by an observant Jew concerned about the prohibition against graven images. The pointed oil fonts are characteristic of Italian lamps.



4 Italy, 19th century, cast bronze

This bench-style lamp is free standing, somewhat unusual for an Italian Hanukkah menorah and may have been made and used by Ashkenazi immigrants. At the center is a large urn of burning oil, flanked by two mythological creatures that are similar to Griffins (winged lions with the head of an eagle) but have curled fish tails. The winged lions may figures may indicate that the lamp was made in Venice, where the winged Lion of St. Mark is the city’s symbol.



5 Italy, 18-19th century, brass

This menorah has a familiar triangular shape for Italian lamps, and has mythological iconography like others found there. The backplate depicts the Judgment of Paris, a story from Greek mythology, which was one of the events that led to the Trojan War and to the foundation of Rome. Paris is seated at the left, with Hermes behind him as he hands the golden apple to Aphrodite. The subject matter is certainly an odd choice for a Hanukkah lamp, and is most probably just decorative. The faces appear to have been rubbed out, possibly by an observant Jew concerned about the prohibition against graven images.



6 Sicily (or possibly Poland), 18th - 19th century,

This lamp design was found all over Europe, but seems to have originated in Sicily during the 15th century. The design was used as a model for other lamps with slight variations in Italy, Poland (see number 35 in Case 3) and North Africa. The triangular backplate has a graceful arabesque topped with a palmette, which may refer to the Spanish monarchy and the Golden Age in Spain for the Jewish people before the Inquisition, or it may refer to Israel. Eight oil pans are aligned across the base. There is no servant light.



7 ITALY, late 18th century in 17th century style, brass

This flat ornamental style contrasts with Italian lamps that include mythological creatures and other recognizable forms. The graceful scrollwork arabesque may have its roots in Islamic patterning. A palmette at the top may be a reference to the “golden age” in Spain or to the Holy Land.

FRANCE

After the Expulsion of Jews from Spain and Portugal at the end of the fifteenth century, France allowed many of these expelled Jews to enter France under the guise of being “merchants.” These Jews settled in southern France and were extremely affluent, though not so religious. There were also Jews who settled along the Rhineland in the regions of Alsace and Lorraine and were of Ashkenazi descent; these Jews were more religious than the Sephardic French Jews and never truly blended into the French community as well as the Sephardic Jews. Jews in France were the first in Europe to get citizenship. There are about a half-million Jews in France today.



8 France, early 20th century, silver

This tall, graceful lamp is made in the Art Nouveau style that was popular in France at the turn of the 20th century. Its candle holders suggest floral buds atop supports that have the shape of stems and leaves.

GREECE

The Greek city of Thessaloniki, which is also known as Salonika, has been home to a Jewish community for 2,000 years, but its early history is not well documented. Following the expulsion from Spain in 1492, Sephardic Jews immigrated to Salonika. The community experienced a “golden age” in the 16th century, developing a strong culture. This changed in the mid-19th century when western European educators and entrepreneurs came there to develop schools and industry. In the 1920s, after Greece achieved independence from the Ottoman Empire, it made Jews full citizens. When the Germans occupied Greece during World War II, they persecuted Jews and in 1943, forced them into a ghetto, and finally deported them to concentration camps where most of the city’s 60,000 Jews died. Today only 1,200 Jews live in Salonika.

9 Greece, 19th century, brass



Lamps like this one were typical of Greece, especially Salonika in northern Greece, in the 19th century. There was a lot of trade between Greece and North African Jews, and the circular scrollwork here may relate to Islamic patterning found in North Africa. With a palmette at the top and a shield in the middle, this lamp has some similarities with Italian menorahs of this period (see number 7 in this case). The inscription reads: “Lighting the candle is a mitzvah commandment/The Torah is the light.” A bird is affixed at the top left, while the servant light occupies the same position on the right, with the oil pans below. It is made to be hung.

THE JUDITH MENORAHS

The figure of Judith, around whom a Jewish legend is centered, is prominently featured on Hanukkah lamps throughout Europe. In around 100 BCE, when the Assyrians besieged the Jewish city of Bethulia, Judith, a wealthy widow, risked her life to save her city. Dressed in beautiful clothing, she went to the enemy’s camp with her maid. There, she was welcomed into the tent of Holofernes, the Assyrian general, and fed him salty cheese and wine. Once Holofernes fell asleep, Judith and her maidservant decapitated the General, leaving his headless body behind and returning to Bethulia with the head of the enemy. Emboldened by Judith’s bravery, the Jews in Bethulia attacked the Assyrian camp. When the Assyrians discovered the headless body of their leader, they fled, leaving Bethulia free once again.

The story of Judith is not included in the canonized Jewish texts, but she is remembered as a strong, brave and beautiful woman who used her abilities to overpower a man and save the Jewish people. The story may be associated with Hanukkah because Judith may have been from a Hasmonean family, the people who saved the Jewish people in the Hanukkah story. Or perhaps it is because her story and the Hanukkah story both involve a dramatic tale of saving the Jewish people. Judith and Hanukkah are entwined in another way: there is a custom to eat dairy on Hanukkah, which commemorated the cheese that Judith fed to Holofernes. Because of their common themes, it makes sense that artisans around the world would have looked to Judith’s story for visual inspiration when crafting Hanukkiyot.

10 Italy, probably 19th century, brass



Judith appears at the top of this piece made in a Renaissance style. She holds a sword which has broken off. The significance Judith had in Italy for the Jewish people may have been more secular than religious. Judith signified a civil virtue; a struggle, which many Florentines dealt with in association with their Medici rulers. Judith is clothed in a revealing wrap rather than Biblical clothes. She is standing in a strong defiant way showing her courage.



11 Italy, 16th century, brass

This backplate may have served another purpose before being used to make this menorah. Two mythological sea-horse creatures called hippocamps and two mermaids are placed in a symmetrical composition with two putti at the top. Mythological and fantasy figures were thought to offer protection, and mermaids were historically symbolic of womanhood and can also be understood as representing Judith.



12 Continental Europe, possibly France, early 20th century, silver

The depiction of Judith on this menorah, which may have been made in France, is more recent. Here the heroine as the lamp's only decoration.



13 Poland, 18th century style made in the 20th century, pewter

This lamp was made by the Jewish Museum in New York and is a copy of an 18th century silver lamp made by Christian Gottlieb Muche (1717-72) in their collection. The original was made in Breslau, Poland. At the center, Judith holds her sword upright in her right hand and the head of Holofernes in her left. The hand of God appears from above and pours oil on her head, which could be said to equate the miracle of Hanukkah with Judith's triumph over Holofernes.



14 Germany, mid 19th century, bronze

A beautiful figure of Judith, holding a sword in her right hand the the head of Holofernes in her left, looks very young and very proud, and stands at the center of this lamp. Oil cups/candle holders are positioned on a cross arm that features a cut-out pattern of hearts and diamonds. The cut-out pattern is repeated around the shaft that holds the lights, and it rests on an elevated base.



15 Italy, 17th-18th century, brass

The female figure at the center may be Judith, although her sword and the head of Holofernes are no longer present. It appears that her face may have been rubbed off, perhaps because Jews do not use graven images. The lions represent strength and the Judean dynasty.

Northern Europe

THE NETHERLANDS

After the Jews were expelled from Spain, many Sephardic Jews went to the Netherlands. The first Jews in America, in the seventeenth century, came from Holland and were of Spanish descent. There are similarities between North African and Dutch menorahs since many Jews from both of these communities were originally from Spain and still kept in touch, as well as were in constant trade with each other. Dutch Jews generally were allowed to dress as they pleased, which was not something that many Jews in other parts of the world had the luxury of, therefore, on some menorahs made in the Netherlands there are images of actual people on the menorah, to show their freedom of dress. Today there are about 30,000 Jews in the Netherlands.



16 Dutch, mid 19th century, brass

Figures stand on either side of a 7-branched tree form which could represent the synagogue menorah. They hold long branches to light it and wear fashionable Dutch-style hats and coats typical of those worn by Sephardic Jews, a reminder that there were no regulations about how Jews were to dress in Holland. The style, with a tall, decorated backplate is typical of Dutch menorahs. The eyes of the figures have been punched out, perhaps because of the prohibition against graven images.



17 The Netherlands, 18th century, brass

This simple design has repoussé beads around the edge of a backplate that has an ogee shape, and resembles some lamps made in North Africa. The heart shapes may represent grapes as in Dutch lamps numbers 18 and 20 in this case.



18 The Netherlands, 18th century, brass

With cut-outs, repoussé work and etched details, this menorah's backplate is decorated with flowers and a bunch of grapes. The grapes may refer to the story of the "Spies in Canaan," as in lamp number 20 in this case. Grapes are also one of the seven species listed in the Bible as being the products of the Land of Israel, and which were the only acceptable offerings in the Temple.



19 The Netherlands, late 19th – early 20th century, brass

This menorah is made in a style common in the 18th-early 19th century, but the presence of the Star of David, gives it a later date. It has a sheet brass back with an insert made of cast brass. The word "Hanukkah" appears at the center, with fleurs-de-lis on either side. A servant light is affixed to the top middle, with the oil fonts below.



20 The Netherlands, 18th century, brass

The embossed back plate of this menorah features an illustration of the “Spies in Canaan” story related in Numbers: 13-14. It shows Joshua and Caleb whose report recommended entry into the land of Canaan as the land of “milk and honey.” They carry a bunch of grapes from Canaan so large that it required two men to transport it. The lamp’s servant light is at the upper right.



21 The Netherlands, 18th century, brass

Punch work of this type is common in Dutch lamps of this period. The design is made by tapping the metal from the back to make these raised dots on the front. The inscription at the center reads “Hanukkah,” and it sits below a Torah crown.

GERMANY

Jews have been living in Germany since the sixth century. The Jews in Germany were persecuted during the crusades, causing many Jews to migrate eastward, towards Poland and Russia. By the eighteenth century Jews in Germany slowly started getting rights and were able to prosper greatly. The Jews in Germany felt they were a part of German society, and participated in many positions that were not open to Jews in other countries (such as government office, universities, and military). Jews were able to prosper for a short period of time, though once Adolf Hitler rose to power in 1933, the Jews were persecuted and systematically murdered in a way that was never seen before. Many German Jews left or were killed, yet today Berlin is the largest growing Jewish community in Europe.



22 German, late 19th century, white metal

This graceful lamp has a flame-shaped finial at the top center and candle spikes in small bowls on each of eight curved arms. A remnant of where a shamash may once have been attached appear at the top of the vertical support. The base is plain.



23 German, early 20th century, silver

This Baroque candelabra-style menorah was made by a Jewish artisan named Lowenthal, and carries 19th century German silver makers marks. It features flower-shaped candle holders, including one for the servant light, and floral decoration on the base



24 German, probably early 19th century, pewter

Pewter lamps like this one were made in Germany in the 18th century and sometimes copied from earlier designs into the 19th century. All have the same basic form: a tall backplate, lamps in a removable row across the center, a base to catch drips and side supports. Most, like this one, are of simple design and have little decoration, possibly so that the pewter backplate could reflect the light from the lamp when lit.



25 German, 20th century, made in 19th century style, silver with gold inlay

Made in Germany after World War I in a style common in the 19th century, this lamp is highly ornamented. It features golden Ten Commandments tablets at the center, a large Torah crown at the top, and small oil jugs in the form of lions wearing crowns.



26 Germany, early 20th century, white metal or brass

The design of this piece may reflect the influence of Jugendstil, the German version of Art Nouveau style, or the approach of Art Deco and Bauhaus style. Its simplified, angular geometric forms include a star on the hexagonal base.

SWEDEN

Jews have lived in Sweden since the 17th century. Early on they were subject to many regulations, including being baptized into the Lutheran church. Later, Swedish law was altered to allow Jewish religious practice, but Jews were required to live in certain cities and be employed in specific ways. By the second half of the 19th century, these regulations were done away with. There has been little anti-Semitism in Sweden. Today the Jewish population there is about 20,000.



27 Swedish, 20th century, silver

The simple and graceful form of this menorah is characteristic of Swedish design style. Eight candle holders are arrayed on horizontal arms, with the servant light coming forward at the center. A Star of David is at the top.

ENGLAND

The first record of Jewish settlement in England dates to the 1070 during the reign of William the Conqueror. Settlement continued until King Edward I's Edict of Expulsion in 1290. After that, there was no openly Jewish community until the rule of Oliver Cromwell, when a small colony of Sephardic Jews in London was identified in 1656 and allowed to remain. The Jewish Naturalisation Act of 1752 attempted to legalize Jews in England, but remained in force for only a few months. At the insistence of Irish leader Daniel O'Connell, the 1846 British law requiring a special dress for Jews was repealed. Due to increasing freedoms and the lack of anti-Jewish violence in Britain in the 19th century, it acquired a reputation for religious tolerance and attracted immigrants from Eastern Europe, especially in the 1930s and 40s when Jews fled to England to escape the Nazis. Jews in Britain now number about 275,000.



28 English, early 20th century, pewter

Made in England in a style also seen in Poland (see Case 3, number 32) or Italy (see Case 1, number 2), this lamp has a tall back plate bordered by Pillars of the Temple topped with urns holding flames. Its curved pediment features flowers and a Torah crown at the top. In the center is a 7-branched synagogue menorah flanked by the Lions of Judah. Its candle holders are aligned across the base. The lamp bears the Sheffield mark on its back.

IRELAND

The history of the Jews in Ireland extends back nearly a thousand years. Although the Jewish community has always been small in numbers (not exceeding 5,500 since the late 19th century), it is well established and has generally been well-accepted into Irish life. Jews in Ireland have historically enjoyed a relative tolerance that was largely absent elsewhere in Europe. Chaim Herzog, the sixth president of Israel, was born in Belfast.



29 Irish, 20th century, brass and crystal

Made by the well-known Irish crystal manufacturer, Waterford, this lamp has a simple, elegant style with candle holders placed across a flat brass top. It was made for purchase by Jews worldwide.

Eastern Europe

EASTERN EUROPE

The first Jewish settlement in Eastern Europe began on the shores of the Black Sea during the 1st century CE, and was the only Jewish community in this part of the world until the 7th century when Jews began to immigrate from Byzantium and from Islamic countries. They had full religious and legal rights. From the end of the 12th century, organized Jewish communities in Eastern Europe began to form. At the beginning of the 16th century, the number of Jews in Eastern Europe was estimated at between 10,000 and 30,000; by the mid-18th century the Jewish population had increased to 750,000 due in large part to great migration from central Europe. Until the mid-17th century with the 1648 Cossack riots on Jewish population, Eastern European Jews lived in a relatively comfortable environment that enabled them to thrive.

By the late 18th century, the Jews of Eastern Europe were divided into two major geographic regions: a settlement controlled by the Russian Empire, and Galicia under the control of the Austro-Hungarian Empire. The Russian government imposed many restrictions specifically on Jews, including the requirement that they live in the region that became known as the Pale of Settlement. Despite many constraints, the Jewish communities in the Pale were able to maintain their traditions and religious practice. Between 1881 and 1914, harsh government-instituted pogroms led to the immigration of 2 million Eastern European Jews to the United States and Palestine. Many who immigrated to the United States settled on the Lower East Side and were among those who founded and worshiped at the Eldridge Street Synagogue. The national boundaries of Eastern Europe have changed many times since the late 19th century. Today, many American Jews trace their families back to this region.



30 Eastern Europe (Poland or Ukraine), 19th century, brass

Like others from this region, this Hanukkah lamp doubles as a Sabbath candle holder with a pair of candle holders at the bottom. Its eight oil receptacles are covered with a hinged lid through which wicks may be threaded. Lions of Judah with gracefully curved tails, a Torah crown at the top and a bird at the center are the primary elements of decoration.



31 Prague, 19th century brass

Called "The Prague Menorah," for its place of origin, this lamp features a lyre at the center. The sides are figures of Moses and Aaron. Levites played the lyre in Temple, and Moses was a Levite, and all priests are descendants of Aaron.



32 Poland, late 19th – early 20th century, brass

Probably made in Warsaw, this lamp is machine made and was widely available for purchase. Its inscription reads "Hanukkah." Eight oil holders are arranged across the base, with an additional pitcher to be used as the servant light attached at the upper left. The backplate design features the columns of the Temple, Lions of Judah, Ten Commandments tablets, a Torah crown and baroque scrollwork.



33 Eastern Europe, probably Poland, 18th – early 19th century, brass

This small lamp was probably made for traveling or for a child. It has lattice-work on both sides along with the pillars of the Holy Temple topped with birds. Candles placed in the attached holders may be used as the servant light to light the oil pans below, and may also be used for Sabbath candles. The cut work on the back plate includes two animal forms at the top which may be Lions of Judah or deer.



34 Galicia, 18th – 19th century, brass

A large lamp with a heavily weighted base, this menorah can use either candles or oil when it. Candle holders are set into oil pans with points for wicks. The combination of the holders and oil fonts gives the appearance of flowers, a feeling underscored by the supports which recall the branches of a plant or tree. The design recalls the instructions given in Exodus 25: 31-38 to Bezalel, chief artisan of the Tabernacle, for a golden candlestick with 7 lights and light cups shaped like almond flowers.



35 Eastern Galicia or Western Ukraine, 19th-early 20th century, brass

Probably made in Eastern Europe but very similar to lamps made in Italy (see number 6 in Case 1), this small brass lamp is simple in design, with a cut-out pattern as its backplate, and eight oil fonts but no shamash. Because of its small size, this may have been made for traveling or for a child.



36 Eastern Galicia or Western Ukraine, 19th-early 20th century, brass

This menorah is unusual in that it features a single lion instead of the usual pair. The lion is surrounded by a Torah crown. The inscription reads "To kindle the Hanukkah light." In 1927, B'nai B'rith in Prague made copies of this lamp to celebrate its 25th anniversary. Each was numbered and engraved with a Latin inscription. This example does not have the inscription, hence the earlier date.



37 Eastern European, 19th century, brass

The overall structure of lamps like this one has been given several explanations. It could be based on traditional wooden synagogues that were built during the 17th century in Eastern Europe, with the heavy horizontal bar at the top above the arched window colonnade representing the roofline of one of these buildings. Others speculate that the design elements are a combination of architectural elements from various regions. There is a palmette at the top, possibly a reference to the time that Jews lived peaceably in Spain. Birds perched on either side of the roof may be storks, signs of goodness and charity. Even today, people in this part of the world encourage storks to build nests next to their homes to bring good luck and enrich their lives. Below the colonnade are cut out windows and the pillars of

the Temple in Jerusalem. Eight oil fonts are at the bottom. Each side piece is in the shape of a lion, and candle holders with a pan to catch dripping wax are screwed into the tail of each lion. One of these candles may be used as a shamash; together they may serve as Sabbath candle holders.



38 Poland, 18th century, brass

Large and heavy, this Hanukkah lamp was polished by a previous owner, removing its centuries-old patina. Its backplate is formed with cast and engraved forms: a Torah crown at the top; a double-headed eagle, a symbol of empire and part of the coat of arms of Russia; the Lions of Judah; and a peacock at the bottom center. Two cast birds rest on small pans at the back, and the servant light rests on a rosette at the front. A second light allows this lamp to be used for Sabbath candles as well. The oil cups at the bottom screw into the base.



39 Eastern European, probably Poland, 18th century, brass

This menorah has a candle holder for the servant light and eight oil pans across the top supported by a simple arabesque attached to a tall stand. It is easily taken apart to be stored, cleaned or transported. The overall design resembles Sabbath candlesticks from Poland.



40 Galicia, 18th century, brass

This handmade folk art design includes columns of the Holy Temple at the sides, a drawing of a burning jug of oil at the center, a palmette at the top. The diamond shapes across the bottom are etched with drawings of animals and birds, including the double-headed eagle at either side, which is a symbol of empire and part of the Russian coat of arms. Other birds with long beaks and legs may be storks, which are considered to signal good fortune. A fantasy animal is drawn in the second diamond shape from the left.



41 Poland, late 19th – early 20th century, brass and copper

This exuberant lamp is a virtual catalog of the typical elements of Hanukkah menorah decoration, with the Lions of Judah, palm trees, grape leaves with scrolling vines and a Torah crown at the top. Eight oil receptacles are lined up along the base. Above is another to serve as the shamash. To make the lamp useful throughout the year, a second oil receptacle allows the lamp to be used as a weekly Sabbath lamp.



42 – Galicia or Ukraine, mid 19th-early 20th century, brass

This bench-form lamp features a Torah crown at the top, with the lions of Judah holding a heart-shaped plaque that reads: “To kindle the Hanukkah light.” Like other lamps from this region, it has two candle holders, one at each side. One may be used at a shamash; together they can be used to hold Sabbath candles. The irregularly-shaped form across the bottom front may be a reference to the roof-lines of wooden synagogues then prevalent in the area, or to the roof of a fortress-style synagogue, also found in Eastern Europe.

AUSTRIA

The earliest Jews in Austria were probably exiles from Judea during the Roman occupation. The status of Jews in Austria rose and fell over many centuries, with periods of prosperity and political equality, and others characterized by pogroms and deportations. During the Holocaust, Jewish Austrians were deported to concentration camps and murdered en masse. After World War II, only about 8,000 Jews remained in Austria. Today between 10 and 20,000 Jews live in Austria.



43 Austrian, early 20th century, silver

With an arched backplate and a bench “seat,” this “sofa style” lamp is characteristic of Austria, particularly Vienna, at the time it was made. Lions of Judah hold the Ten Commandments Tablets below a Torah crown. Flowers and scrolls complete the Baroque design. The oil fonts are made from spoons; there is no servant light.

The Americas

UNITED STATES

A small group of Sephardic Jews went to Brazil when it was under Dutch rule, and then from there, 23 refugees fled to North America, settling in 1654 in New Amsterdam, precursor of New York City. In 1790, George Washington wrote a letter to the President of Tuoro Synagogue in Newport, Rhode Island, assuring religious freedom and saying that the new government of the United States “gives to bigotry no sanction, to persecution no assistance.” In the early 19th century there were only a few thousand Jews in the U.S. Many Jews from Germany, Poland, Bohemia and Moravia immigrated between 1820 and 1880; they tended to embrace German culture and Reform Judaism.

The last and largest wave of Jewish immigration to the U.S. started around 1880 and lasted until immigration laws were changed in 1924. Most of these people came from Eastern Europe, where persecution and restrictions were growing and opportunities were limited. These immigrants were generally more orthodox than the Germans who had arrived earlier. Many settled on the Lower East Side and were among those who founded and worshiped at the Eldridge Street Synagogue. Many more came as refugees fleeing the Nazis before and during World War II. Today, the Jewish population in the U.S. is estimated to be between 5.5 and 6.5 million.



44 Colonial America, 18th century tin

This is the earliest American menorah in the collection, and was unearthed during an excavation in Newport, Rhode Island, home of Tuoro Synagogue, the oldest Jewish house of worship still standing in the United States. This may be one of the earliest American Hanukkah lamps known. It is made in a bench style similar to simple German menorahs of the same period, with oil receptacles across the bench, an arched back and a swag and three flowers made of dots pushed through from the other side of the metal. Tin is an unusual material for European lamps, but is common in the U.S.



45 United States, early 19th century, pewter

Made of pewter and small in size, this lamp may have been made for traveling. Its simple, practical design looks handmade. Wicks are threaded through the holes in the removable plate that rests above eight oil reservoirs. The shamash looks to have been attached at the top right where the metal appears to be broken. Despite its folk art origin, it carries 19th century pewter maker's marks.



46 United States, early 20th century, brass

A typical household menorah in the early years of the twentieth century, this lamp takes its form from the 7-branched synagogue menorah. A Star of David below the shamash dates the lamp to the 20th century. This is the kind of Hanukkah lamp that might have been made on the Lower East Side for newly arrived immigrant Jews like those who worshiped at the Eldridge Street Synagogue. Dr. Ben Zalman remembers his great-grandfather lighting a menorah just like this one.



47 United States, c. 1924-1940, brass

The word "Ivriah," which means "Jewess" in Hebrew is spelled out across this menorah. Ivriah was an organization of American women that was created by the Jewish Education Association in 1926 after a survey showed that 70% of Jewish children did not attend any sort of religious school. Their goal was to help immigrants adjust to life in American and also preserve their religious traditions. Providing ceremonial objects such as menorahs to families was one way they did this.



48 United States, late 19th century, tin

This folk art piece has a curved backplate with a cutout at the top and a hole for hanging or carrying. It features a Star of David done in punch work at the center, flanked by two attached rosettes in folded tin (the one on the right side is missing). Triangular oil receptacles are attached to the bottom; there is no shamash.



49 United States, early-mid 20th century, stamped tin

This piece is typical of inexpensive tin menorahs given to Hebrew School children in the early to mid-20th century in the United States. It is made from a single sheet of folded and stamped tin in a design patented by Tobias Cohn of New York City in 1909. This lamp has both candle holders and oil receptacles. Similar menorahs made in the later 20th century have only candle holders. The inscriptions read "To kindle the Hanukkah light" and "These lights are holy."



50 United States, 20th century, bronze with music box

This simple design has a straight support for candle holders, with curved arms below, and bears some resemblance to the Eastern European lamp number 39 in Case 3. It is unusual in that the base houses a wind-up music box that plays "Rock of Ages" (*Maoz Tzur*), a popular Hanukkah song. With lyrics written in the 13th century, the song addresses the challenges faced by the Jewish people that have been overcome with God's help. The song is often sung after the menorah is lit, a reminder of the Maccabees's fight for freedom in the Hanukkah story.



51 United States, 1950s, brass

Dr. Aharon Ben Zalman remembers having a small menorah like this one when he was a boy, when he was first introduced to the holiday of Hanukkah. Birthday candles are fit into the small holders. Sheet brass lamps like this one were common as menorahs for children in the mid-20th century



52 United States, early 20th century, brass

This unembellished design has a curved top that may represent the Ten Commandments tablets, and a large Star of David at the center. Wicks are threaded through a removable plate to the oil reservoirs below. The shamash stands at the right and is taller than the other lights.



53 United States, Manfred Anson, 1990

Created in 1990 by folk artist Manfred Anson, this lamp continues the themes seen in his 1986 Statue of Liberty menorah (see number 54 in this case). Its candle holders are Liberty Bells, each engraved with the name of a Jewish patriot, including Haym Solomon, Uriah H. Levy and Rebecca Gratz. The inscription on the Liberty Bell, reproduced here, is from Leviticus 25:10: "Proclaim liberty throughout all the land unto all the inhabitants thereof."



54 United States , Manfred Anson, late 20th century, silver

Manfred Anson (1922-2012) was born in Germany and survived the Holocaust, making his way to the United States in 1963. Once here, he began to collect souvenirs relating to American monuments like the Statue of Liberty. For the centennial of that monument in 1986, he had 9 Statues of Liberty cast from one of his figurines, and created this menorah as a celebration of American and Jewish traditions and the spirit of freedom evoked by Hanukkah. An American eagle rests above the shamash at the center, and significant dates in Jewish history are inscribed at the base of each Statue. A larger version of this menorah that Dr. Ben Zalman donated to the National Museum of American Jewish History was lit at President Barack Obama's Hanukkah Party at the White House in 2013.

MEXICO

It is said that the first Jews came to Mexico in 1519 with Spanish Conquistador Hernán Cortés, and were "Crypto-Jews," also called Conversos or Marranos, who were forcibly converted to Catholicism as a result of the Inquisition. A number of Jews came to Mexico during the Colonial period, but when the Portuguese won their independence from Spain in 1640, Portuguese merchants in New Spain were prosecuted by the Mexican Inquisition, eliminating the open practice of Judaism in the country. When the monopoly of the Roman Catholic Church in Mexico was replaced with religious toleration during the nineteenth-century, Jews could openly immigrate to Mexico. They came from Europe and later from the crumbling Ottoman Empire and what is now Syria continuing into the first half of the 20th century.

Today, most of the 40-50,000 Jews in Mexico are descendants of this immigration and still maintain aspects of their origins. Since the 1880s, there have been efforts to identify descendants of colonial era Conversos both in Mexico and the Southwestern United States, generally to return them to Judaism. Today, the Jewish population of Mexico is about 40-50,000, with most living in Mexico City.



55 Mexico, 1970s-80s, painted tin

This large and colorful menorah features a bird at the top of a Star of David that forms the lamp's central structure. The candle holders are surrounded by flower forms and a grape vine, with three large bunches of grapes reaching across the lower part of the Star of David. Grapes are used to signify the Promised Land. When Moses sent 12 men to Canaan to scout out the land as a home for his people, they came back with a bunch of grapes so large it took two men to carry. Like the other Mexican Hanukkah lamp in this case, this may have been made for tourists.



56 Mexico, mid -20th Century, silver

This silver lamp was likely made as a souvenir for Jewish tourists in Mexico in the mid-twentieth century. With its shamash at the top center, eight candle holders are arrayed across the largest of the circles that form the menorah's design. While some Jews maintain that the lights on a menorah must be in a straight line, these are not, another reason that may indicate that this was made by a non-Jew for tourists. A large Star of David is the lamp's central image.

CARIBBEAN ISLANDS - Antigua

The island of Antigua has had a small Jewish presence since Sephardic merchants arrived in the 17th and 18th centuries to find opportunity in commodities such as sugar and tobacco. A short-lived law was passed in 1694 that prevented Jews from trading commodities and participating in the slave trade. Although it was repealed by 1701 most Jews left the island and settled in North America.



57 Antigua, West Indies, 20th century, carved wood.

Because Antigua no longer has a sizable Jewish population this large carved wood menorah was likely made for tourists. Its simple horizontal design features candle holders made in overlapping U-shapes and decorated with scrolls and star forms. At the center is a carved Star of David. The piece is from "The Shipwreck Shop," in Antigua and is signed "Martino" on the bottom.

BRAZIL

Although the first Jews came to Brazil after the Inquisition reached Portugal in the 16th century, the Jewish population in Brazil was relatively small until the late 19th century, when Jews escaping the hardships of Eastern Europe immigrated to South America, with most settling in Brazil. Immigration to Brazil reached its peak between the mid-1920s and the early years of World War II. Today, there are about 120,000 Jews in Brazil.



58 Brazil, late 20th century, gold tone metal and semi-precious stones

A contemporary design made in Brazil, this lamp features overlapping U- shapes that place the candle holders in a straight line, with the shamash offset slightly to the right. The base is decorated with plant shapes and semi-precious stones like amethyst that are native to Brazil. .

Africa, Asia and the Middle East

NORTH AFRICA

Jewish communities in North Africa date to pre-Roman times, and possibly before. Mizrahi Jews (Jews who originated in Persia and other Middle Eastern locales) lived in Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia and Libya under Arab rule during the Middle Ages, long before the arrival of Sephardic Jews, who had arrived after being expelled from Portugal and Spain in 1492. These groups remained separate, with the Sephardic Jews maintaining their Spanish language and customs, although eventually they adopted local customs. Islamic rulers were mostly tolerant, but there were periods of violence and restriction. Jews were diplomats and merchants, and were known to be expert metalworkers. With foreign control in the 19th and early 20th centuries, Jewish communities lost autonomy. Algeria and Tunisia became French protectorates, and parts of Morocco were under Spanish and French control. With the establishment of the State of Israel in 1948, many North African Jews immigrated.



59 Morocco, 19th century, brass

Made of stamped and etched sheet brass, this lamp is dominated by architectural and floral elements. At the top, two rosettes etched with stylized Stars of David may represent the Decalogue. The Columns of the Temple here have onion-shaped domes, typical of Islamic architecture of the region. A large central rosette is cut out in a geometric pattern taken from Islamic window design. Additional rosettes and floral forms are found on the side panels. Like other lamps from this region, the oil pans are at the bottom with the servant light at the top center.



60 North Africa, brass, 18th century

This simple bench style has a triangular top with an arabesque form and a row of keyhole windows below that recall Islamic architecture. Birds crown the side pieces. Its awkwardly cut top may indicate that it was reproduced from another lamp that was finer in quality.



61 Morocco, 20th century, silver

Unusual in that it is made of silver, but made in a typical Moroccan style, this lamp has many cutouts, including the Ten Commandments, inscribed below the shamash at the center. Above are two birds and a cut floral pattern. Its designs are enhanced by etched lines and textures. Overall, it has a hand-made, folk art feel.



62 Morocco, 19th century, brass

Typical of North African Hanukkah lamps, this menorah has a tall backplate with a cutout design. At the top are four birds. There is a rosette design behind the shamash at the top, underneath a single keyhole window. Below, a row of keyhole windows runs the width of the lamp. These Moorish architectural elements are often found in lamps in North Africa. Eight oil pans are at the base. It may be hung by the ring at the top, which is crowned with a fleur de lis. This design was copied often in the 20th century. Some lamps with this same form have etched details.



63 North Africa, 20th century, brass

This handmade hammered brass menorah has a folk art feel. Two birds face each other at the top, with a palmette that serves as a hanger in between. Below, a flower has been applied. A central, cut-out rosette with a Star of David is flanked by two smaller rosettes which may represent the Decalogue. Columns of the Temple support an arch of repeated raised points. Eight oil fonts are at the base, while the shamash hangs from above the central star.



64 Algeria or Tunisia, 18th century, glazed terracotta

This tall earthenware lamp is painted in golden yellow and has a geometric pattern, including checker boards and pattern of triangles in black and red that resemble a landscape. Across the top, it has four oil cups and four conical holders, with a servant light at the back. It stands on a hollow base. In its shape and decoration, it is similar to Arab and Berber wares from North Africa, especially the Algerian city of Cabilia.



65 Tunisia, late 19th – early 20th century, brass

Fashioned from sheet brass with stamped designs, this lamp has an arched back plate with a perforated edge, and a platform at the bottom on which eight removable oil pans rest. Below are two rosettes holding tilted six-pointed stars with flowers at their centers; these may be representative of the Decalogue (Ten Commandments). The shamash is at the top center, flanked by two peacocks, symbols of protection, perched on branches. The peacock design may indicate that it was made in Persia (see number 66 in this case).

PERSIA (Iran)

Several Biblical books refer to the Jews of Persia, who have had a continuous presence in Iran since the 6th century BCE, when Cyrus the Great invaded Babylon and freed the Jews who lived there. Persian kings are credited with allowing Jews to return to Jerusalem and rebuild the Temple there. Today most Persian Jews live in Israel and the United States; the remaining Jewish population of Iran is about 10,000.



66 Persia, early 20th century, glazed ceramic

With a pointed arch for its backplate and a lively decorative scheme, this lamp features three palm trees, symbols of the Holy Land and peacocks, which are associated with Persian iconography, possibly suggesting the "Peacock Throne," which was stolen from India in 1739 when Nader Shah of Persia sacked Delhi.



67 Persia or possibly Turkey, 20th century, glazed ceramic

Probably dating from the 1930s, this ceramic lamp was made by using a mold made by pressing a metal lamp with a triangular arabesque design similar to Italian lamp number 7 in Case 1. Applied glazes give the design a floral appearance. Oil is placed in the receptacles at the base; there is no shamash. A hole at the top allows the lamp to be hung.

IRAQ

A Jewish community existed in Iraq starting in the 6th century BCE, when the Kingdom of Judah was conquered and expelled to Babylonia, which is now southern Iraq. Later, under the rule of successive empires, there were both periods of tolerance and persecution. By the 19th century, Jews had become an integral part of Muslim life in the area, holding government offices and trade positions. Once Iraq gained independence in 1932, the rights of Jews were limited, and after the establishment of the State of Israel in 1948, many Iraqi Jews immigrated there. Virtually no Jews remain in Iraq.



68 Baghdad, Iraq, 20th century, silver

This tall lamp was acquired from Iraq after the beginning of the second Gulf War in 2003. It can stand or swivel for wall mounting. A Star of David appears at the swivel pin. This style became popular after Iraqi independence in 1932, but rabbis said the candles must be far enough apart so that the lights are seen as being from different candles. Others said it was impossible to know the order in which to light the candles.

INDIA

Jews have lived in India since the time of the Kingdom of Judah (9th – 8th century BCE). Those who have lived in India for such a long time lived in small cities together, such as Cochin. They developed similar food, customs and physical characteristics as other Indian groups. Jewish immigrants arrived in India in the 16th century, after the expulsion from Spain and Portugal. Others arrived as merchants in the 18th century or from Iraq approximately 250 years ago.

A unique feature of life for Indian Jews is the safety and comfort they have experienced. Jews were never expelled from India and acts of anti-Semitism have been rare. The Jewish community in India was close to 20,000 people by the time the State of Israel was established in 1948. Most Indian Jews opted to leave for Israel. Today there are still a few Jewish communities in India.



69 New Delhi, India, 20th Century, wood, brass and holders for glass cups

This wall mountable lamp was purchased from the only synagogue in New Delhi. It has a design common in India. On its wooden back panel is a brass Star of David and the word "Zion," meaning Israel, written in Hebrew. Even living peacefully and comfortably in India, the Jews still yearned to go to Israel. This menorah is meant to hang, which is common among menorahs around the world (possibly to hang from a doorpost to show others the miracle of Hanukah). The rings are meant to hold glass cups of oil or candles, with the servant light above the others.



70 Colchin, India, late 19th – early 20th century, brass

This lamp is typical of those made in Colchin. The triangular backplate may have been made for another purpose, and adapted to make a Hanukkah menorah. Its triangular shape recalls southern European designs, but its detail is clearly Indian with a stylized lion at the center set against a background of swirling leaves and a repetitive geometric border. This menorah has eight oil fonts, but does not have a shamash – the light used to light the others. It is made to be hung.



71 India, made in Israel, 21st Century, brass with added color

This contemporary menorah was made for an Indian couple getting married in Israel. The architecture of the buildings gives the design an Indian feel, as do the elephants. In India, elephants can be used as a symbol of strength, wisdom, or even fertility for a young, newly-married couple. In this lamp design, Indian beliefs and local sights are adapted for Jewish life.

PHILIPPINES

There have been small Jewish communities in the Philippines since Jews fled Spain during the Inquisition at the end of the 15th century. When the Philippines became an American colony following the Spanish American War, Jewish servicemen, teachers and others settled there. From 1937 to 1941, American Jews in Manila helped bring approximately 1,300 European Jews escaping the Holocaust to the Philippines. Ironically, when the Japanese invaded in 1941, they did not differentiate between German Jews and non-Jews and considered them allies, but other Jews, including the Americas, were interned. Those interned were freed after the War was over, and the U.S. assisted in rebuilding the Jewish community, but the destruction was so widespread that most Jews left the Philippines. Today there are approximately 500 Filipino Jews.



72 Philippines, 20th century, wood

A simple wooden box design with candle holders across the top, this menorah is decorated in wood inlay with traditional symbols: lion, deer, a Star of David, Temple menorah and plants.

BUKHARA, UZBEKISTAN

Bukharian Jews are from Central Asia, Uzbekistan and Tajikistan and are believed to have come to the region from Iran through trade on the Silk Road. These Mizrahi Jews were living in Asia alongside Muslims, speaking a dialect of Farsi, until the nineteenth century when the Soviet Union took control of the region. Once the Soviet Union fell, the Bukharian Jews moved out of their centuries-old home and settled primarily in Israel and Queens, New York. The Bukharian Jewish community is one of the oldest Jewish communities and today can be heard speaking primarily Russian, though many of their songs are still sung in Farsi.



73 In the style of Bukhara, Uzbekistan; possibly made in Israel, 20th century, silver with inlaid stones

This lamp features a back plate shaped as an arched dome which could be said to recall the domes of Bukhara, which has a mostly Islamic population. At the Center is a synagogue menorah and two round jeweled shapes possibly representing the Decalogue. On either side are the columns of the temple in Jerusalem. To the right of the row of oil cups across the bottom is the servant light.

Cyprus and Israel

CYPRUS

The island of Cyprus, strategically located in the eastern Mediterranean, was annexed as a British colony in 1914. Between 1946 and 1949, the British operated 12 internment camps there for Jews who had attempted to immigrate to Palestine, then under British Mandate, in violation of British policy. On February 14, 1947, Great Britain informed the United Nations that it would no longer administer the Mandate for Palestine. After the State of Israel was established in 1948, those who remained interned in Cyprus were evacuated to Israel.



74 Cyprus, 1947, brass

This menorah was made in a post-World War II detention camp on the island of Cyprus by a craftsman who survived the Nazi camps of the Holocaust. Ironically, its candle holders are made from bullet casings. A simple but beautifully made folk art piece, the maker has etched a Star of David and leaves on the backplate which is decorated with a cut out pattern across the top. It is signed and dated on the back.

ISRAEL

The Jewish presence in the land of Israel dates back to Abraham in the second millennium BCE. The first kingship was established under Saul and David c. 1000 BCE, but the kingdom eventually split. The northern kingdom, Israel, was conquered by Assyrians and its people were dispersed in the late 8th century BCE. Later, the southern kingdom, Judah, was subject to the successive rule of the Babylonians, Persians, then Greeks. The Maccabean revolt reestablished independent kingship there until 63 BCE when the Romans took over. From the 7th century CE through 1917, the land was primarily under the control of Islamic empires, with the Ottoman Empire being the most recent. By the late 19th century, a movement began among European Jews to return to Israel and work the ancestral soil, and some migrated and established agricultural settlements and collectives, used Hebrew as their everyday language and looked toward establishing a Jewish state.

In late 1917, during World War I, the British Army drove the Turks out of Southern Syria, and British Foreign Minister, Lord Balfour, sent a public letter that became known as the Balfour Declaration of 1917, stating that the British Government was in favor of establishing a national home for the Jewish people in Palestine. The declaration provided the British with a pretext for claiming and governing the country. The period of British Mandate lasted until 1947, when the newly-formed United Nations accepted the idea to partition Palestine into a zone for the Jewish people – Israel – and a zone for the Arabs – Palestine. The State of Israel was officially established on May 14, 1948. Since then, there have been many conflicts between the Arabs and Israelis, and their uneasy co-existence continues without resolution.

BEZALEL, PAL BELL and TZEL-TZION

The **Bezalel Academy of Arts and Design** was founded in Jerusalem in 1906 by Boris Schatz, who wanted to create a national style of art for the hoped-for Jewish homeland. The distinctive style that emerged combined European Art Nouveau and Jugendstil influences with the traditional art of Persia and Syria. The school closed in 1929, but was reopened in 1935, and is now supported by the State of Israel. It was named after Bezalel, the chief artisan of the Tabernacle, who was instructed by Moses in Exodus to build the Ark of the Covenant and a golden, 7-branched synagogue menorah. Artist **Ze'ev**

Raban (1890-1970) was responsible for many of Bezalel's early designs. He received classical training and was exposed to Judendstil design in Europe before immigrating to Palestine in 1912. He became a teacher at the Bezalel school and was responsible for many of its designs.

Pal Bell was founded in Tel Aviv in 1939 by artist **Maurice Ascalon** (1913-2003), and operated until 1956. The company created Judaica, including many Hanukkah menorahs. Ze'ev Raban also created designs for Pal Bell and **Tzel-Tzion Company**, also located in Tel Aviv, which also produced mid-century Hanukkah lamps.



75 Palestine, early 20th century, brass

Artists of the Bezalel School sometimes took centuries-old styles and modernized them. This menorah takes its form from a Renaissance-era lamp like number 1 in Case 1. A plaque affixed to the back reads: "Made in Palestine at the Art Workshop Sharar Bezalel Jerusalem P.O.R. 729. Its triangular design includes a rosette at the top and a colonnade of arched windows. The inscription reads: "These lights are holy."



76 Palestine, 1920s-30s, brass

With an arched flat backplate and decoration in repoussé work, the form of this Bezalel-designed lamp resembles Italian designs like number 2 in Case 1. The central image at the top, an urn enclosed in a circle, may be taken from an ancient Jewish coin and meant to evoke currency minted by Hasmonean kings, and signifying independence. A large Star of David creates a rosette above a 7-branched synagogue menorah flanked by the Lions of Judah. The Pillars of the Temple form the sides of the design. Overall the images show the influence of Jugendstil style, popular at the time it was created. Its inscription reads "These lights are holy."



77 Israel, Maurice Ascalon, probably with Ze'ev Raban, mid-20th century, cast bronze

A product of the Pal Bell workshop, this design has two stories on two sides. On the side with the shamash, a modern-day Israeli woman on the left and a soldier on the right rest against the seal of the State of Israel under waving flags. Behind are views of modern and ancient Jerusalem. On the other side, a Maccabee lights the 7-branched menorah, rededicating the Holy Temple. On the left is a battle scene, on the right elephants used by the enemy.



78 Israel, Maurice Ascalon, possibly with Ze'ev Raban, 1950s, brass

This distinctive lamp was designed by Maurice Ascalon at the Pal Bell workshop, possibly collaborating with his friend Ze'ev Raban. A tall oil urn at the center has a Roman shape, and is flanked by olive branches, which generally signify peace. A separate servant light takes the form of a small ancient oil lamp, and is used to light eight others in the same form. The overall symbolism of this piece has been suggested to be a longing for peace, or the Hanukkah miracle of one day's supply of oil lasting for eight days.



79 Israel, Ze'ev Raban, 1950s, copper alloy

Artist Ze'ev Raban designed this lamp for the Tzel-Tzion Company. It has an arched back plate with a 7-branched palm tree, a symbol of the land of Israel, and also suggesting the 7-branched synagogue menorah. The tree is flanked by a pair of cornucopias, signifying plenty, and gazelles, which are native to Israel. The inscription reads "These lights are holy."



80 Israel, 1950s, brass

This menorah was made in the 1950's, probably by Pal Bell workshop, designed by Maurice Ascalon and Ze'ev Raban. It depicts a worker with a pick ax, and portrays a Hebrew pioneer, a man connected to the Land of Israel through his labor and working the land. The Hebrew inscription reads "These candles are holy."

OTHER ISRAELI HANUKKAH MENORAHS



81 Israel, mid-20th century, brass

This Hanukkah lamp style was one that was common in Israel in the 1950s. The ship backplate is designed to reference the many Jews from all over the world gathering together in Israel, "bringing them home by sea."



82 Israel, 20th Century, brass and shell casings

This menorah was made in the early days of the State of Israel. Its candleholders are made from large shell casings. After the United Nations established Israel as a country for the Jews, many wars took place. The Jewish people needed to defend their land, leading those who were working the land to also have to protect their land. Here, the secular demands of life are combined with religious belief.



83 Israel, 1960s, glazed ceramic

Representing the Maccabees with their swords and shields raised as they reclaim the Temple in Jerusalem, this stylized design is made in ceramic, with the servant candle holder at the right. Designs like this one were made as souvenirs for tourists to Israel. The inscription is an abbreviation for Maccabees in Hebrew. Maccabees were a frequent decorative theme for Israeli Hanukkah lamps.



84 Israel, 1950s, 1960s

This lamp is made in an Italian style (see number 2 in Case 1), with a tall backplate and a row of oil fonts across the base. The Lions of Judah support a map of the Holy Land, indicated by palm trees, a symbol of Israel. Jerusalem is indicated by the Tower of David at the bottom center. The inscription reads "Eretz Israel," the Land of Israel.



85 Israel, 20th century, brass

This lamp is made to be put outside in observance of the commandment to publicize the miracle of Hanukkah by placing the lights in a place where they can be seen by others. Large in size, this lamp has eight loose cups inside to hold candles or oil. The chimneys at the top allow the burning lights to vent and the lights to keep burning.



86 Israel, 1950s, glazed ceramic

The design of the blue-green glazed menorah recalls Bauhaus style and the art deco buildings of Tel Aviv. It was manufactured in Pehar, Israel. Many ceramic lamps were made in Israel at this time.



87 Israel, late 19th - early 20th century, brass

This lamp is believed to have belonged to Rabbi Joseph Sonnenfeld (1849- 1932), and may have been used for travel during Hanukkah, or just to provide light. Sonnenfeld was the first Rabbi of the separatist Orthodox community in Jerusalem and advocated the complete separation between the Orthodox and non-Orthodox.



88 Israel, 1965, brass and enamel

Made for families whose members adhere to both Jewish and Christian traditions, this playful design takes the form of a Christmas tree with a Star of David and shamash at the top and eight candle holders on the branches of the tree.



89 Jerusalem, Israel, stone and brass, mid-20th century

This menorah was made from stone of the Nea Church in Jerusalem, which was said to have been made from the remnants of the Second Temple that was destroyed by the Romans in 70 CE. Simple in design, this Hanukkah lamp has holders for eight candles and a shamash aligned across its top.

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The notes in this exhibition guide were written by Nancy Johnson, Curator of Temporary Exhibitions at the Museum at Eldridge Street and Leena Zelman, Museum Intern. They used information provided by the collector, Dr. Aharon Bel Zalman, and information found in the publications listed below. The dates, place of origin and iconography of many of the Hanukkah menorahs in Dr. Ben Zalman's collection are the subject of considerable debate. The authors of this guide chose the most convincing arguments for their notes, which are presented without attribution as guide for the visitors to the Museum at Eldridge Street to gain additional insight into this remarkable collection, and to stimulate further investigation.

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Tremendous thanks are due **Dr. Aharon Ben Zalman** for his encyclopedia knowledge about his collection, recalled from memory as we looked at each piece in his collection, and his enthusiasm for sharing his collection with our visitors in *Lighting the World: Hanukkah Menorahs Around the Globe*. This exhibition guide would not have been possible without the very able assistance of Brooklyn College student **Leena Zelman** who came to the museum as a volunteer intern this fall, just when we needed someone with exactly her expertise. Her well-considered insights and research abilities inform this guide at every turn. Her delight in the project was contagious. And finally, our sincere thanks to **Shula Bahat** of **Beit Hatfutsot of America and the American Friends of Beit Hatfutsot**, for introducing us to Dr. Ben Zalman.

Nancy Johnson, Curator

THE MUSEUM AT ELDRIDGE STREET



The Museum at Eldridge Street, a non-sectarian cultural organization, was founded to restore and interpret its home, the historic Eldridge Street Synagogue. Opened in 1887, the Eldridge Street Synagogue is the first great house of worship built in America by Jewish immigrants from Eastern Europe. Today it is the only remaining public marker of the great wave of Jewish migration to the Lower East Side. Exhibitions, tours, cultural events and educational programs tell the story of Jewish immigrant life, explore architecture and historic preservation, inspire reflection on cultural continuity, and foster collaboration and exchange between people of all faiths, heritages and interests.

BEIT HATFUTSOT



The Museum of the Jewish People at Beit Hatfutsot connects Jewish people to their roots and strengthens their personal and collective Jewish identity. The Museum of the Jewish People conveys to the world the fascinating narrative of the Jewish people and the essence of the Jewish culture, faith, purpose and deed while presenting the contribution of world Jewry to humanity.

OUR SUPPORTERS

This exhibition is supported, in part, by public funds from the NYC Department of Cultural Affairs in partnership with the City Council, NY State Council on the Arts with the support of Governor Andrew Cuomo and the NY State Legislature, Maury Donnelly & Parr/NTIS and GRoW @ Annenberg.

