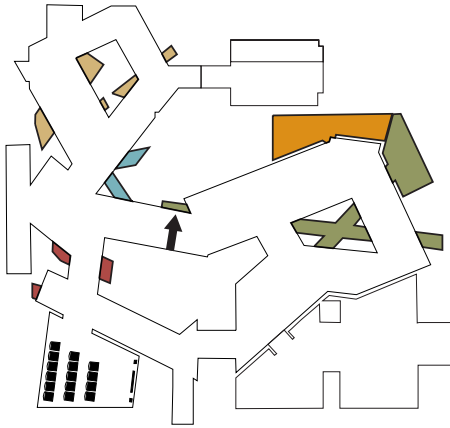


TRADITIONS

The traditions are a common space and direct connection between Jews wherever and whenever they may be. Observing rituals or owning Jewish ritual objects is a concrete way of relating to one's Jewish identity. Every single Danish Jew lives with the traditions in his or her own way: As religious duty, as a common culture, as a link with history or perhaps as abstract inspiration.

The traditions and rituals of Judaism speak to the senses. Candles are lit, spices are scented, old books are consulted, special clothes are worn and symbolic food is eaten. Much paraphernalia is needed, and the ritual objects are often crafted with great care and finesse. Many of them tell long stories, because it is always possible to bring things to one's new home.

ALPHABET, WRITING AND BOOKS



Jewish culture and tradition are irrevocably bound to the Hebrew alphabet, scripture and books. Hebrew is read from right to left. It is unique to Jewish culture that the books of the Bible are still written by hand on parchment scrolls and used in the synagogue. Contrary to the Torah, which is not decorated, Jewish handwritten texts for private use are often richly decorated. Especially the dramatic stories of the Exodus from Egypt, Haggadah, and the Book of Esther, Megillat Esther, have inspired colourful illustrations. The Danish-Jewish style is inspired by Jewish book art in Amsterdam and Mähren.



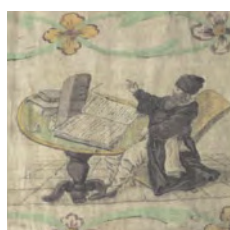
The story of the Exodus from Egypt: the Haggadah. Written and illustrated in Altona in 1739 by Uri Feibush Halevi Segal. The style is inspired by the current fashion prevalent in the period's Jewish book centre in Amsterdam. Facsimile.



The prayer book, Seder Birkat Hamazon, is used for reading the thanksgiving prayer after the meal. This one is written and illustrated in 1784 by Uri Feibush Halevi Segal, who settled in Copenhagen around 1750.



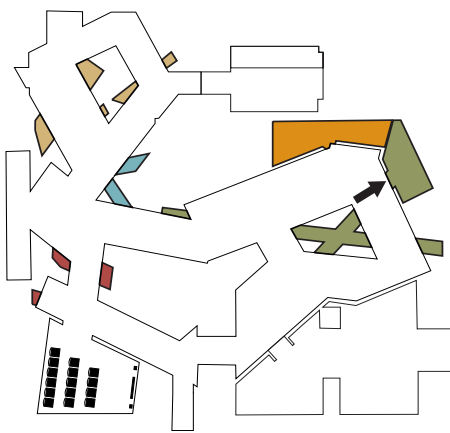
The Book of Esther, Megillat Esther, is handwritten, coloured and illustrated with small copper engravings. Probably of Dutch origin, eighteenth century.



Binder for winding around Torah scroll. Probably crafted in 1770 by the scribe Jehudah Leib Hakohen, who came to Copenhagen in the second half of the eighteenth century.



Binder for winding around Torah scroll. Crafted by the scribe Moshe ben Aron from Lissa in 1794.



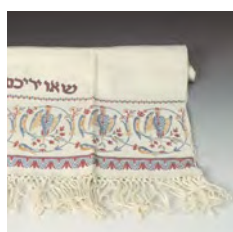
THE FESTIVALS OF THE YEAR AND LIFE

Whether you follow traditional customs or not, traditions are a common Jewish frame of reference. The Jewish calendar starts with the “creation of the world” corresponding to, according to tradition 3760 BCE. The Jewish year has its own festivals. The New Year, Rosh Hashanah, the Day of Atonement, Yom Kippur, and the Feast of Booths, Sukkot, are celebrated in the autumn. The Festival of Lights, Chanukkah, lights up December, and Purim with its carnival atmosphere is celebrated in early spring. Then follows the Feast of Unleavened Bread, Pesach, commemorating the Exodus from Egypt under Moses’ leadership. At the start of summer, the Feast of Weeks, Shavuot, is celebrated, commemorating the revelation on Mount Sinai.

Rituals connecting with the life of the individual include circumcision, Brit Milah, and religious duty, Bar Mitzvah.



It is customary to wash one’s hands before every meal as substantive and ritual cleansing. This bronze hand-washing bowl was placed in a living room. Brought from Latvia to Denmark at the beginning of the twentieth century.

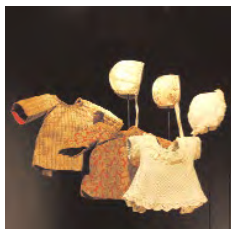
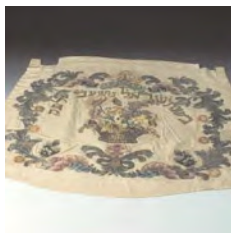


Linen towel with weaved-in table clocks. Twentieth century.

This is my covenant, which ye shall keep, between me and you and thy seed after thee; every man-child among you shall be circumcised. Genesis 17:10

A trained Mohel circumcises boys when they are eight days old.

The Mohel's equipment includes a circumcision knife, a peg, a wine flacon and a Mohel book. During the circumcision, the boy wears a small jacket and a hat. The ceremony also requires a chair for the prophet Elijah, who is symbolically present as a witness.



Circumcision knife with agate handle from Copenhagen, eighteenth century.

Lyre-shaped brass peg and flacon of hollowed bone nut, twentieth century.

Chair upholstery of silk moiré, applied with silk brocade and silver braiding. The inscription on the back says: *This is the chair of Elijah, of blessed memory.*

The inscription on the seat: *In the year 1793, Israel will be saved through me* – the numerical value of the Hebrew sentence is 1793.

This Mohel book from 1880 belonged to Axel Margolinsky and Salomon Schalimtzek, who have both added personal comments to the book during their periods as Mohels in Copenhagen.

The knitted jacket and hat come from Fredericia, nineteenth century. The other jackets and hats are made of broche silk in the eighteenth century.

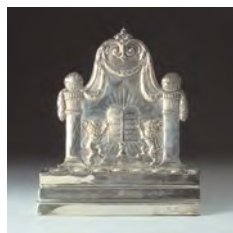
Chanukkah celebrates the re-consecration of the Temple in Jerusalem after the Maccabees' victory over the Seleucids in 164 BCE. The feast lasts for eight days, gifts are exchanged and every evening one more candle is lit until all the candles of an eight-armed candelabra or oil lamp are lit.



Oil lamp with the Lion of Judah as its central motif, placed over a Star of David. Tin, drawn by Mogens Balin and Siegfried Wagner, Copenhagen 1900. The Jewish Community in Denmark.



Oil lamp from Hamburg-Altona. On the back plate, the master light, a ninth candleholder is placed. It is used for lighting the other candles. Silver, Master IGB. Eighteenth century. The Jewish Community in Denmark.



Oil lamp. The inscription at its base reads: *To the honour of God and his deeds. I will eternally praise the mercy of God.* Silver, the Master Søren Engel's Widow, Copenhagen 1865. The Jewish Community in Denmark. Oil lamp, probably nineteenth century.



Jewish men cover their heads with a skull cap, the Kippah, or other headgear, to signal their adherence to Judaism in connection with prayers or other religious acts, for example at meals. These were manufactured for special family occasions. Twenty-first century.



Wedding present for a bride. Devotional book for women with Hebrew and German parallel texts. Velvet with silver furnishing. Prague, 1874.



Rosh Hashanah is the Jewish New Year. It is an occasion to evaluate the year that has passed and wish friends and family happy New Year with New Year's cards decorated with Jewish motifs.



Omer counter. From the second eve of Pesach, 49 days are counted. On the fiftieth day, the Feast of Weeks, Shavuot, begins. The thirty-third day of the Omer count, Lag Beomer, is a minor holiday marking the transition from the period in which weddings are forbidden.



And ye shall keep my statutes, and do them: I am the LORD, which sanctify you. Leviticus 20:8.

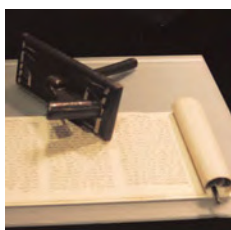
When a boy is thirteen years and one day old, he is Bar Mitzvah, bound by the commandments, and can start using phylacteries, Tefillin, for the first time. The two leather capsules hold the portions of scripture: Exodus 13:1-10, 11-16; Deuteronomy 6:4-9 and 11:13-21.



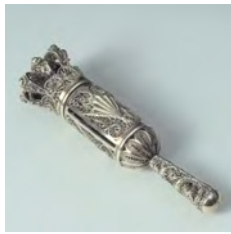
At the Feast of Booths, Sukkot, which commemorated the wandering through the desert, a chest is used to hold a special citrus fruit, Etrog. Sukkot is also a harvest feast, and a bouquet of date palm leaves, myrtle and willow branches are used in the rituals.



Etrog chest, silver and plate ware. Nineteenth century. Etrog chest, silver. The chest has a Hebrew inscription: *The fruit of the citrus tree.* Twentieth century.



Purim is celebrated in a carnival atmosphere and with reading from the Book of Esther, Megillat Esther. It is customary to make a great deal of noise, using rattles and other objects, every time the King's evil adviser, Haman, is mentioned in the story about Queen Esther and the Persian king, Ahasverus (Xerxes 486-465 BCE).



The Book of Esther is often kept in a case such as this one, which comes from the home of Chief Rabbi David Simonsen and is carved in partially gilded silver filigree. Eighteenth century. The Jewish Community in Denmark.

The feast of Pesach is rich in traditions, commemorating the Exodus from Egypt. The feast takes place in a specific order, Seder. Here are examples of objects connected with Pesach:



Seder dish, crafted by J. Irgens, Copenhagen, nineteenth century. Private collection.

The Seder dish is laid with different symbols mentioned in the narrative, Haggadah, which is read during the course of the evening.

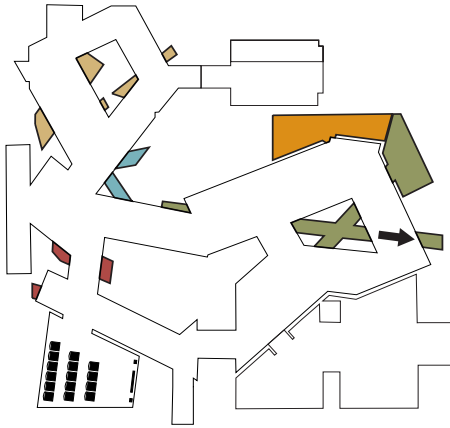


Robe with pockets for three pieces of unleavened bread, Matzot, symbolising the three Jewish groups: Cohen (the priests), Levi and Israel. The robe was brought from Lithuania to Denmark at the beginning of the twentieth century.



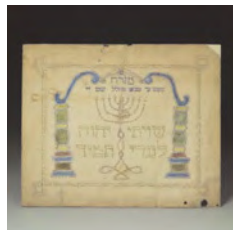
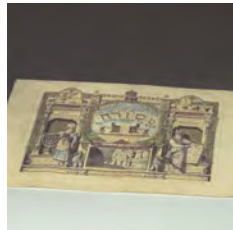
Printed runner for the Pesach table with motifs connected with the feast. The Hebrew text ends with the wish *Next year in Jerusalem*. Nineteenth century.

THE SABBATH AND THE SYMBOLS OF THE HOME



Symbols in Jewish homes are different from Christian symbols. For example, a Mizrach sometimes adorns a wall, pointing in the direction of Jerusalem, and on the doorpost is a little holster, a Mezuzah, containing a scroll with an excerpt from scripture.

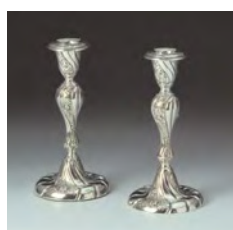
The Sabbath is the weekly holiday, which distinguishes itself from weekdays with special rituals and symbols. The Sabbath begins Friday evening at sunset, at which time the woman lights two candles. The man consecrates the Sabbath with a thanksgiving, the Kiddush, over a cup of wine and two loaves of bread. The Sabbath is a day of rest. It ends on the Saturday with a short ceremony, the Havdalah, when there are three stars in the sky.



In religious homes, a wall is sometimes decorated with a motif showing the direction to Jerusalem, a Mizrach, often combined with a reminder of the divine Shivviti.

Keep the Sabbath day to sanctify it, as the LORD thy God hath commanded thee. Deuteronomy 5:12.

Several everyday activities are not allowed on the Sabbath, and the Sabbath's beginning and end are both marked with a special ceremony at home. Here are examples of ritual objects for the beginning of the Sabbath.



Silver Sabbath candlesticks, twentieth century.

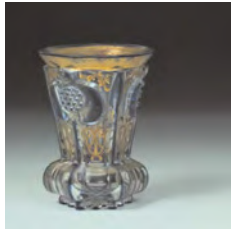
The Jewish Community in Denmark.



Kiddush cup. Silver, nineteenth century.



Velvet cloth for the Sabbath bread, Challah. Nineteenth century.



Kiddush cup made of flashed glass, belonged to Chief Rabbi David Simonsen, nineteenth century.

Private collection.



Especially religious people use symbolic garments. For example, men use a ritual vest such as this Arba kanfot, made of wool with weaved-in stripes and fringes, Zizit. Nineteenth century.

In Jewish homes, a Mezuzah is placed on the right door-post. A Mezuzah contains a parchment with the text from Deuteronomy 6:4-9 and 11:13-21, written in 22 lines.



Mezuzah of Babbitt. Nineteenth century.



Mezuzah made of gilded silver with rubies and diamonds. Eighteenth century. The Jewish Community in Denmark.



Mezuzah made of gold with diamonds and other precious stones. Crafted by Peter Hertz, nineteenth century. The Jewish Community in Denmark.

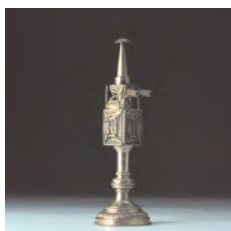
Saturday night at sunset, the Sabbath goes out. A plaited candle is lit in the Havdalah candlestick and herbs are scented from the Besamim container to bring the scent of the holiday into the week.



Silver Havdalah candlestick. Copenhagen, twentieth century.



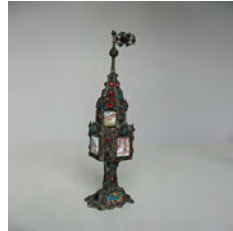
Silver Besamim container. Nineteenth century.



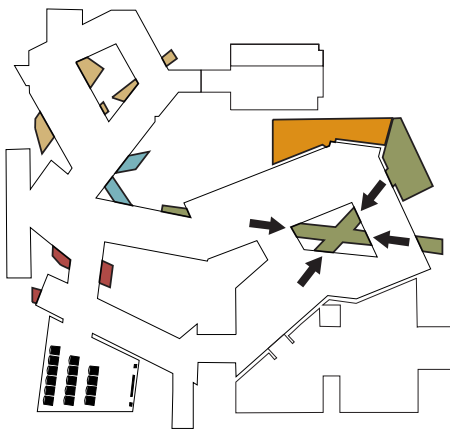
Silver Besamim container. Nineteenth century.



Besamim container of silver filigree. Eighteenth century.
The Jewish Community in Denmark.



Besamim container of silver filigree with enamel
and stones. Eighteenth century. The Jewish Community
in Denmark.



IN THE SYNAGOGUE

Synagogues are seldom quiet. They function first and foremost as a communal meeting place, and everyone can participate actively in the service. Some lead the prayer, others read from the books of the Bible and still others help by taking the Torah rolls out or putting them away. The role of the Rabbi is not very prominent in the synagogue, but he normally preaches in connection with the Sabbath service. Although prayer and reading from the Hebrew bible take centre stage, the audience is often lively, because the synagogue is also an important meeting place where members of the community meet and exchange public and private news and gossip. Both the Greek word Synagogue and the Hebrew word Beit Kneset, mean place of assembly.



Prayer shawl, Tallit, all-silk with bag. During the week,
men wear Tallit and phylacteries, Tefillin, during the
morning prayers. Twentieth century.



Torah shield, partially gilded silver. Master P. Griis,
Copenhagen, 1775.



Torah shield, silver with stones and some painting. Denmark, eighteenth century. The Jewish Community in Denmark.

Torah shield, partially gilded silver. Master Peter Hertz, Copenhagen, 1854. The Jewish Community in Denmark.



Torah bells, silver. Nineteenth century.



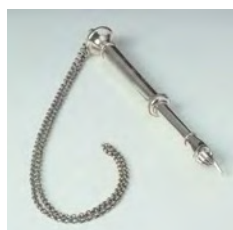
Torah bells, silver. Master Laurits Grün. Twentieth century. The Jewish Community in Denmark.



Torah pointer, silver. Probably nineteenth century. The Jewish Community in Denmark.



Torah pointer, silver filigree. Probably nineteenth century.



Torah pointer, silver. With the insignia of Master Abraham Bæhr and the city of Ålborg, and the inscription: *Moshe Cosman, son of the honourable Mr. Arie Erhausen/Sprinzche, daughter of Feivelman/Mrs. Feilche Sprinche/wife of the honourable Mr. Chaim, son of our teacher Mr. Gershon/Feivelman Erhausen.* Nineteenth century. The Jewish Community in Denmark.



The cantor leads the congregation through the service on the Sabbath and holidays. Cantor hat, velvet. Twentieth century. The Jewish Community in Denmark.



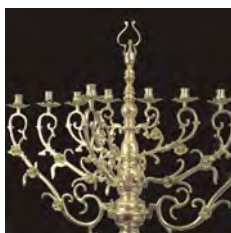
The white cantor hat is used at Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur. Embroidered cotton. Twentieth century. The Jewish Community in Denmark.



Torah cape, velour with gold embroidery. Nineteenth century.



Siddur Den jødiske bønnebog ("The Jewish Prayer Book") from 2002 is a modern Danish translation by former Chief Rabbi Bent Melchior. The Danish prayers and psalms come from Chief Rabbi Abraham Alexander Wolff.



Chanukkah candlestick made of bronze by Peter Grønning for the synagogue in Fredericia, 1779. The Jewish Community in Denmark.



Private prayer book for the whole year with golden monogram. Nineteenth century.



Private version of *Psalmer til Brug ved Gudstjenesten i Synagogen* ("Psalms Used at synagogue Services") collected and published by A. A. Wolff, 1886.

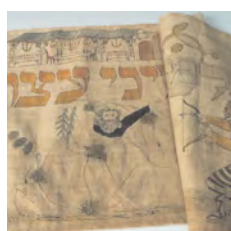


Tephilath Israel. Israelitisk Bønnebog for hele Aaret oversat og ledsaget med Anmærkninger samt en Samling Danske Bønner til Brug i Hjemmet saavel som ved Gudstjenesten, og paa Kirkegaarden ("Tephilath Israel. Israelite Prayer Book for the Whole Year, Translated and Accompanied by Notes With a Collection of Danish Prayers For Use at Home as well as in the Synagogue and Cemetery"), 1872. The Hebrew and Danish texts are set side by side in this book, which was published on the initiative of Chief Rabbi Abraham Alexander Wolff.



Marriage contract, Ketubbah. Tempera on parchment. Eighteenth century. The Jewish Community in Denmark. Before the ceremony, the bridegroom signs the marriage contract, in the presence of witnesses. The contract is written in Aramaic, and safeguards the rights of the woman.

Beneath the cape, the rolled-up Torah is wrapped in a binder. When a boy was born, it was customary to have a Torah binder made, which was later given to the synagogue by the boy's parents. Such Torah binders list the boy's name and birth date, often also the father's name, and the wish that the boy may grow up to study the Torah, get married and do good deeds.



David Philipson, son of Simon Neustädell, 1809.



Jakob, son of the honourable Mr. Jakob Schif, 1816.



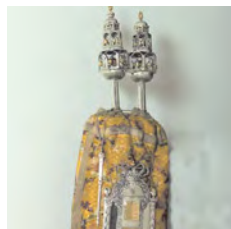
Jechiel, son of the honourable seal maker Mr. Leib Segal, 1767.



Torah scrolls vary in size, but the content is always the same. This scroll is from the Jewish community in Faaborg. The Jewish Community in Denmark.



On Rosh Hashanah, the ram's horn, the Shofar, is blown in the synagogue. The inscription on this Shofar explains: *Blow the horn on the day of the New Year in the moonlight on our feast day, for it is the law in Israel, a commandment from the God of Jacob.* The horn is also dated: *Israel, son of the honourable Mr. Kalmar, of blessed memory. The first day of the week, 19 Elul 554, which corresponds to 1794.*



Torah scroll in all its glory, with a cape, bells, shield and pointer. The Jewish Community in Denmark.

The cape is made of French silver broche with silver braiding. Eighteenth century.

The bells are made of partially gilded silver. Master Martin Westrup, Copenhagen, eighteenth century.

The shield is made of partially gilded silver. Master ICE, Copenhagen 1828.

Torah pointer made of silver, used to show which text should be read. Eighteenth century.



Torah scroll handwritten on parchment. Torah scrolls are written in Hebrew. The text is from the five books of Moses, which begin with the creation of the world and end with the death of Moses. The Jewish Community in Denmark.



Framed reminder of the divine, Shivviti. Psalms 16:8: *I set the Lord before me continually.* From the synagogue in Læderstræde, Copenhagen, nineteenth century. Copenhagen City Museum.



Jewish men cover their heads with a skull cap, the Kippah, or other headgear, as a symbol of respect, in connection with prayer or other rituals. Twenty-first century.

