



*Torah Case (or Tik)  
Iraq, 1897*

The Torah scroll is the most precious possession of the Jewish people. It contains the core stories, beliefs, and laws of the Jewish faith. It was the tradition of the Jews of Iraq, and throughout the Muslim world, to house the Torah scroll in a special protective case known as a "tik." Iraqi tiks were constructed of wood and then covered in velvet or carefully hammered metal, or sometimes both. This example is covered entirely in silver that has been finely worked to create a floral pattern. It also has green glass beads and small bells that make a soft jingling sound when the Torah is moved.

## Classroom Activities and Discussion Questions

### Design Your Own

One way that we show how much we value the Torah is by covering or dressing it in the most beautiful way possible. If you were to create a tik for a Torah scroll how would you do it? What materials would you choose? What designs, decorations or symbols would you include? Draw, paint or collage your original tik design.

### Community and Diversity

Chicago's Jewish community is comprised of people from many different countries and backgrounds, including Jews from Iraq and other Middle Eastern countries. Have you ever seen a tik used in a synagogue? Or more generally, have you ever participated in a ceremony, synagogue service or home ritual that was new or strange to you? Which elements felt familiar and which elements felt foreign? Were there parts that you especially liked?

### Culture Factory

The design of the tik resembles a minaret, a tall slender tower that is typically part of a mosque. We can see from the example of the Torah tik how Jewish practice has been shaped by surrounding or host cultures. In what ways do you think America has shaped American Jewish culture? Think of music, dress, holiday and lifecycle celebrations, etc.