
FAQ

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Chanukah, Nine-Branched Menorah

J.K. McKee revised 12 August, 2019

Why is there a nine-branched *menorah* used for *Chanukah*, when there was a seven-branched *menorah* used in the Temple?

By and large in Judaism, there is a prohibition on recreating objects used in Tabernacle/Temple worship to be used in the local synagogue. This tradition developed during the time when the Temple was still in operation, and the synagogue was largely a place of assembly for teaching. As *Chanukah* developed as a holiday, the *chanukia* was formulated as an emblem that looked substantially similar to the seven-branched *menorah*, but it was intended to be lit for eight days to memorialize the miracle of the oil, mimicking the *menorah*, but not to be exactly like it. Today, of course, there are many kinds of *chanukias*, which range from traditional ones looking similar to the Temple *menorah*, to others that only allow eight candle spaces for lighting that are anything but traditional.