The renewed _Jack, Joseph, and Morton Mandel Wing for Jewish Art and Life_ at the Israel Museum opens with a circular motif symbolizing three stages of life. The permanent exhibition, set inside a round, enclosed glass cabin, is titled _The Rhythm of Life: Birth, Marriage, Death_. The objects on display relate to these life stages: baby clothing, a circumcision knife, ritual wedding jewelry, and a glass for a burial society’s annual banquet. In order to see the whole exhibition, the visitor must enter the glass cabin, which provides a quick glance into these three aspects of life, common not only to Jews, but to all human cultures. While observing an object from one stage of life, the visitor may simultaneously see, on the other side, objects from another stage of life. In this way, the transparent enclosed space acts as a mirror of the intersecting stages of human life.

In the exhibition _Illuminating the Script: Hebrew Manuscripts_, an explanatory video chronicles the history of the production of illuminated manuscripts. The manuscripts are displayed in an oval presentation, portraying various genres of manuscripts from Persia, Ashkenaz, Spain, and Italy. The text accompanying each manuscript is concise and to the point, but explanations about the portrayed openings of the manuscripts’ page are lacking. Such explanations would be important not only in terms of their didactic value, but also as a mean of providing viewers with a sense of the thought invested in each of the illuminated manuscripts.

In the old exhibition, all the manuscripts were gathered together in a single space; the novelty of the renewed wing lies mainly in dividing the manuscripts according to themes. Thus, walking along a wall displaying an open Torah scroll, the visitor arrives at the main Judaica exhibition hall where he observes several showcases containing manuscripts. The space is divided into three sections displaying three exhibits: _Sabbath and Pilgrimage Festivals, Holidays and Days of Remembrance_, and _Feasts and Miracles_. Here there is a wide variety of liturgical objects along with objects from everyday life from a broad range of countries and time periods. Displaying the manuscripts next to the liturgical objects provides a greater understanding of the entire Jewish heritage, as it portrays all aspects of life, and does not exclude the books as merely an artifact.

The exhibition _Holidays and Days of Remembrance_ displays two short videos, screened back to back, one relating to Memorial Day and the second to Independence Day. Since the eve of Independence Day is celebrated just minutes after Memorial Day is over, the videos’ display is very symbolic. They are physically and visually connected, as are these days in the Israeli consciousness. Visible to the visitor, without the need to enter a specific room in order to view the film, Yael Bartana’s movie is projected, entitled “Trembling Time” dedicated to Memorial Days. On the other side of the wall, the movie “Sacrifice”, made by Doron Solomons in 2010, portrays clips of Independence Day films from the past six decades. It provides the visitor a quick glance at this day’s customs, mainly since it is located in a prominent location and thus one must pass it when observing the exhibition. Though I am not sure a non-Israeli would relate to the images portrayed, it is a good decision to include videos along with historical objects as it provides a more modern view of Jewish life and a sense of continuity.

The exhibition called _The Synagogue Route: Holiness and Beauty_ is located next to the previously discussed exhibition, displaying Torah mantles, Torah finials, Torah crowns, Torah shields, and Torah ark curtains from many countries dating from the sixteenth to the twentieth centuries. It is too bad that the explanation of the part of this exhibition called “Central Asia” is misplaced. It appears on the side wall displaying the video related to “Memorial Days” and not next to the objects.

The _Jack, Joseph, and Morton Mandel Wing for Jewish Art and Life_ contains four synagogue interiors, positioned one after the other as three of them already were part of the former exhibition and the fourth, and larger synagogue, from Suriname, is a new addition. The Vittorio Veneto synagogue from northern Italy (near Venice) was built around 1700 and brought to the Israel Museum in 1965. Upon entering its interior, one hears a _chazzan_ (cantor) chanting in the Italian style. It is a Baroque synagogue and the _bimah_ (reader’s platform) is placed at the western side, next to the entrance, while on the

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The upper floor is located opposite the Torah ark, known by Spanish Jews as heikhal. A variety of liturgical objects are also displayed in the synagogue. The light in the interior is the first thing that strikes the visitor. The curators went out of their way to inspire the feeling of the tropical country where the synagogue was originally situated. They succeeded not only by making a visual impression of warm, sunny weather, but also by bringing in white sand that originally covered the entire floor and symbolizes the exile in the Diaspora (visitors walk on a wooden platform).

All four synagogues present to the visitor the richness of Jewish culture around the world, and they portray the complexity of sacred spaces. The purchase of the last synagogue adds another aspect of conserving Jewish heritage, as the Israel Museum displays Diaspora synagogues which might otherwise have been lost forever due to lack of interest in their original location. Because the entire synagogue’s interior is displayed, the visitor does not merely observe museum artifacts, but rather feels as if she were traveling through time and space.

The Feasts and Miracles exhibition is perhaps the most impressive change made in the renewed Wing for Jewish Art and Life. Most of the objects portrayed are Chanukah lamps and, as appropriate to the theme, are shown in an extremely well-lit hall. The lamps are all displayed on two walls in separate showcases containing up to three lamps each, according to their countries of origin. This display is a vast improvement on the former one, and the objects now receive the respect they deserve.

In the section Costume and Jewelry: A Matter of Identity, the visitor may observe and browse the showcases that display different articles of clothing from Jewish communities around the world. Along the walls is a collection of jewelry from all over the world, and the last showcase of the exhibition displays jewelry made in the early twentieth century in Jerusalem at Bezalel Academy of Arts and Design. This is an ideal choice, and makes for a smooth transition to the next exhibition hall of artifacts from Bezalel, displayed in an open hall as a crossroad between the Israeli art wing and nineteenth-century European art. Thus, the display’s location reflects and highlights these artifacts as representative of a mixture of Israeli and European art styles. This display could be understood as a tribute made by the Israel Museum to Bezalel Academy of Arts and Design.