

Object Summary



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Etched-Glass Hanging Lamp with Quranic Inscriptions

19th century

Syria

Ottoman

Glass, black compound, gilding

Overall: 10 1/4 x 8 1/4 in. (26 x 21cm)

The religion of Islam was founded in the seventh century when the Prophet Muhammad received revelations from Allah (God). The recording of these revelations in Arabic became the Qur'an, the sacred text for Muslims. With its flowing shapes, the Arabic alphabet lends itself superbly to artistic design. Letters may be shaped in ways to create dynamic compositions that stir the eye, regardless of the viewer's ability to read the text. Lamps such as this were often placed in mosques, palaces, or shrines as donations from the faithful. The iconic shape remained unchanged for centuries, and the lamp on display echoes earlier artworks and represents the centrality of Islamic faith across the cultures represented in the collection.