



ב"ה



*Memento from the Wedding of  
Menachem & Musia Latowicz  
29th Adar Rishon 5782 – 2nd March 2022  
Oxford, England*

תשורה משמחת נישואין של  
מנחם מענדל מסעוד וחי' מושקא שיחי' לאטאוויטש





ב"ה



### *Section 1*

#### *Ketubot Nowadays & Throughout History*

1. *The Modern Ketubah*

2. *700 Years of Ketubah Manuscripts at the Bodleian Library*

### *Section 2 -*

#### *The Rebbe, Maimonides & the Temple Menorah*

1. *Three Studies of the Rebbe on Oxford's Hebrew Manuscripts*

2. *An Oxford Encounter with The Rebbe*

3. *Maimonides' Menorah - An essay by Rabbi Eli Brackman*

### *Section 3 -*

#### *The Rebbe's Letters*

*Letters to the Brackman Family*



ב"ה

*Dear Friend,*

*We are delighted to present this Teshuva/Memento in honour of the wedding of Musia and Menachem at Oxford. The joy of a wedding and seeking knowledge of Torah are intertwined, as it states in (Ruth 3:7), when he was seeking a wife: "Boaz ate and drank, and in a good mood went to lie down beside the grainpile". Similarly, (Proverbs 8:22): "He who has found a wife has found good".*

*The word 'Tov' (good) is synonymous, in both verses, with the study of Torah (Midrash Ruth Rabbah 5:15). In this spirit, we're delighted to connect these two themes – wedding and Torah study – through this interesting memento, while anchoring the themes with the University of Oxford, the place of the chuppah.*

*The content herein includes three themes of interest:*

- 1. a presentation of Ketubot- marriage contracts held at the Bodleian Library, spanning 700 years, including both Sephardic and Ashkenazic, which, while standardised for centuries, contains variants reflecting the different places and versions;*
- 2. folios of Maimonides' manuscripts, held at Oxford, which have been the subject of studies by the Lubavitcher Rebbe in the 1980s, including an unpublished handwritten responsa relating to the shape of the branches of the Temple Menorah;*
- 3. a collection of letters from the Rebbe – both personal and of general interest, including on the theme of the upcoming holiday of Purim.*

*We thank the Bodleian Library for their permission to share the items herein for educational purposes only and are copyrighted by the Bodleian Library. We hope you will enjoy this collection of interesting material, thereby enhancing and enriching the Simcha we are overjoyed to be celebrating together.*

*Warmest regards,*

*Rabbi Eli & Freidy Brackman*

*Rabbi Yakov & Sarah Latowicz*





בעהשיית

## קול ששון וקול שימחה קול חתן וקול בלה

ביום בשבת ימי החודש יום לחדש שם חודש שנת חמשת אלפים ושבע מאות ושמנים ושנה לבריאת עולם למנין שאנו מנין כאן מקום איך הבהור שם החתן בן אבי החתן אמר לה להאד בתולתא שם הכלה בת אבי הכלה הוי לי לאנתו בדת משה וישראל ואנא אפלה ואוקיר ואיזון ואפרנס יתיכי ליכי בהלכות גוברין יהודאין דפלאהין ומוקריין וזניין ומפרנסין לנשיהון בקושטא ויהיבנא ליכי מהר בתולכי כסף זוזי מאתן דחזי ליכי מדאורייתא ומזוניכי וכסותיכי וסיפוקיכי ומיעל לותיכי כאורח כל ארעא וצביאת מרת שם הכלה בתולתא דא והות ליה לאנתו וזן נדוניא דהנעלת ליה מבי אבזה בין בכסף בין בזהב בין בתכשיטין במאני דלבושא בשימושי דירה ובשימושא דערסא הכל קבל עליו שם החתן חתן דנן במאה זקוקים כסף צרוף וצבי שם החתן חתן דנן והוסיף לה מן דיליה עוד מאה זקוקים כסף צרוף אחרים כנגדן סך הכל מאתים זקוקים כסף צרוף וכך אמר שם החתן חתן דנן אחריות שטר כתובתא דא נדוניא דן ותוספתא דא קבלית עלי ועל ירתי בתראי להתפרע מכל שפר ארג נכסין וקנינין דאית לי תחות כל שמיא דקנאי ודעתיד אנא למקני נכסין דאית להון אחריות ודלית להון אחריות כלהון יהון אחראין וערבאין לפרוע מנהון שטר כתובתא דא נדוניא דן ותוספתא דא מנאי ואפילו מן גלימא דער כתפאי בחיי ובתר חיי מן יומא דנן ולעלם ואחריות וחומר שטר כתובתא דא נדוניא דן ותוספתא דא קיבל עליו שם החתן חתן דנן כחומר כל שטרי כתובות ותוספתות דנהגין בבנת ישראל העשוין כתיקון חכמינו ז"ל דלא כאסמכתא ודלא כטופסי דשטרי וכנינא מן שם החתן בן אבי החתן חתן דנן למורת שם הכלה בת אבי הכלה בתולתא דא עקל ככל מה דכתוב ומפורש לעיל במנא דכשר למקנא ביה הכל שריר וקים

נאום: 08 העד

נאום: 08 העד



## 2

# Free Translation of the Standard Ketubah

*For a Ketubah to be valid, it must state the (Hebrew) **date**, **names** of the parties and the **location** of the ceremony.*

*As with all documents of this nature, it is not signed by the parties themselves, but rather by two witnesses who are not related to either of the parties, or to each other.*

On the [...] day of the week, the [...] day of the month of [...] the year [...] after the Creation of the World, according to the manner in which we count dates here in [location], the groom [...] the son of [...] said to this lady [...] the daughter of [...], "Be my wife according to the Law of Moses and of Israel. I shall work, respect, feed and support you in the custom of Jewish men, who work, respect, feed, and support their wives faithfully. I shall give you the settlement of 100 silver Zuzim, which is due you according to Biblical Law, as well as your food, clothing, necessities of life, and conjugal needs, according to universally accepted customs within Judaism".

[...] agreed, and became his wife. This dowry, which she brought from her father's house, whether in silver, gold, jewellery, clothing, home furnishings, or bedding, [...], our groom, accepts as being worth 100 silver pieces. Our groom, [...] agreed and, of his own accord, has added an additional 100 silver pieces paralleling the above. Thus, the total amount is 200 silver pieces.

[...] our groom made the following declaration: "The obligation of this marriage contract, this dowry, and this additional amount, I accept upon myself and upon my heirs after me. It may be paid from the entire best portion of the property and possessions that I own under all the heavens, whether I own this property now, or whether I acquire it in the future. It includes both secured property and unsecured property. Nonetheless, all of it shall be secured and bound as security to pay this marriage contract, this dowry, and this additional amount. It is payable from me, even from the shirt on my back, during my lifetime, and after my lifetime, from this day and forever."

The guarantee for all the obligations of this marriage contract, dowry and the additional sum has been assumed by [...] the groom, with the full obligation prescribed by all documents of Ketubot and additional sums due to every daughter of Israel, implemented in accordance with the legislation of our Sages, of blessed memory. It is not to be regarded as an indecisive contractual obligation nor as a stereotyped form. And we have completed the act of acquisition from [...] the son of [...] our groom, to [...] the daughter of [...], regarding everything that has been written and stated above, with an article that is suitable for such a Kinyan. And everything is valid and confirmed.

[...] son of [...] Witness

[...] son of [...] Witness



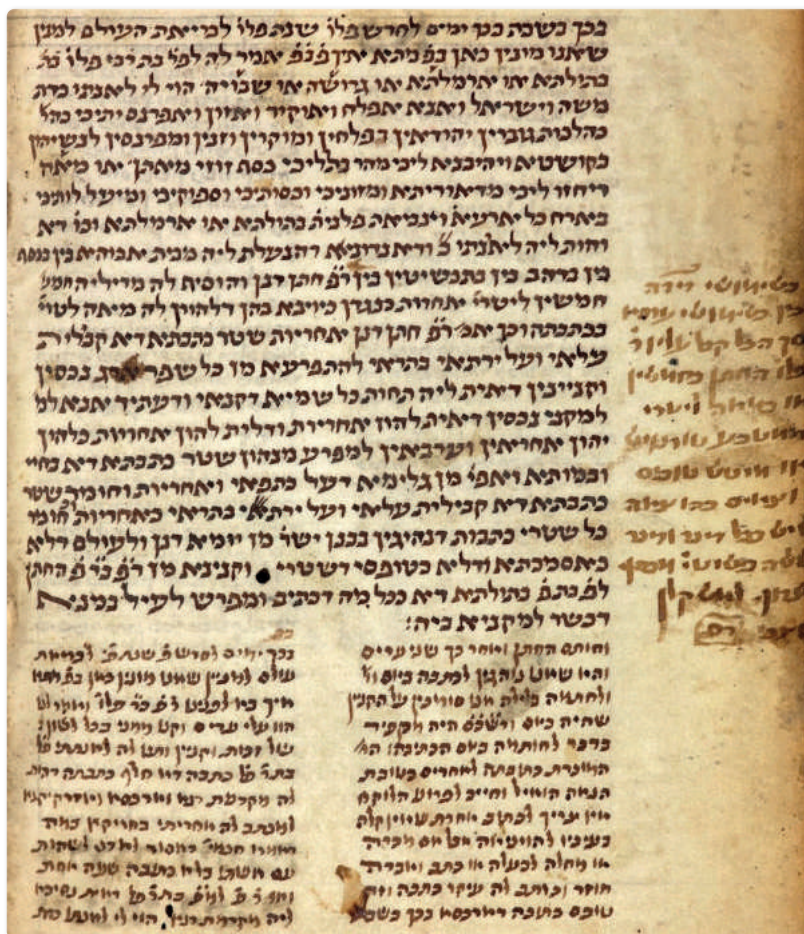
## Oldest Ketubah in Oxford's Cairo Genizah Collection, 1034

OXFORD MS HEB A 3, FOL. 45A – CAIRO GENIZAH

PLACE: FUSTAT, EGYPT. NAMES ARE: CHASAN,  
SON OF YEFET AND REISA, DAUGHTER OF  
MEVASER

Details of interest are: title *chatan*, *bethulah* and *kalta* recorded before father's name; title *chatan* also recorded at beginning of Ketubah; mention of River Nile; *mid'orayta* (Biblical in origin); *mid'orayta* with one *yud*; *l'intu* – with *yud*; numerous signatures; other variants; damaged.





## Formula for a Ketubah in 13th Century England, 1279

MS ETZ CHAIM – LEIPZIG

Details of interest are: title *chatan*, *bethulah* recorded after father's name; title *chatan* not recorded at beginning of Ketubah; *mid'orayta* (Biblical in origin); *mid'orayta* with one *yud*; *k'susiychi*, etc. – with one *yud*; *l'intu* – without *yud*; *b'chaye u'b'mota* (in life and death) before *glima d'al kaspai* (cloak on my shoulder); *d'ne-hi-gin* (with two *yuds*) *b'vnot yis-ra-el* (omits: *ha-asuyot k'tikun cha-chameinu*), omits at the end of Ketubah: *'ha-kol sharir ve'kayam* (and everything is valid and established).



## Rules for Formula Writing of Ketubah, 1341/1365

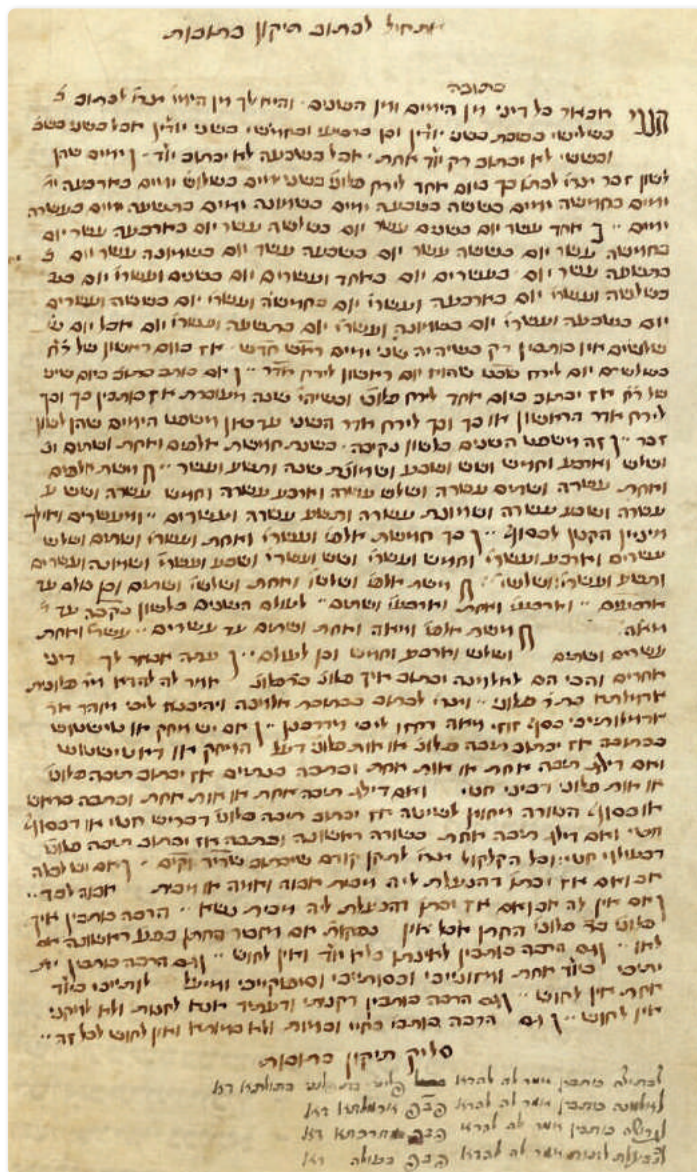
OXFORD MS  
MARSHALL OR. 1

At the end of the Pentateuch are rules for the writing of Ketubah, including how to write the days of the week, months and years in Hebrew.

Rules include what to do in case of mistakes;

title *chatan* is written after the father's name; title *chatan* may be written at the beginning of the Ketubah; spelling of certain Aramaic words with no *yud*, like *l'entu*, and other words with one *yud* or two, like *m'zoniychi* is not of concern; if Hebrew, instead of Aramaic, is used for certain legal terms, this is also of no concern.

The dates 5101 (1341) and 5025 (1365) are mentioned.





## 6

# A Formula for Appointing an Agent for Betrothal, 1312

OXFORD MS OPP. 627 Fol. 126b. Dated 5072 (1312)

The text states:

It was signed before us, that so and so, son of so and so, appointed so and so, son of so and so, an agent to betroth to him so and so, daughter of so and so, and handed to him a wedding ring. This is what he said to him: your hand (*yad*) shall be like my hand, your hand (*ka-pe-chah*) like my hand, your action like my action, and if this betrothal is lost, permission is granted to acquire for me another betrothal, and if you want to appoint an agent in your stead, permission is granted, and anything you may do, shall be done, until the betrothal to me is performed, according to law of Moses and Israel.

And that which is done before us on such and such a day of the week, on such and such a day of the month of Tishrei, the seventy second year of the sixth millennium (5072 / 1312), we have written and signed.

For the signing of two witnesses.

# Ketubah Used as a Book Binder, 1369

OXFORD OPP. ADD. 4TO 47

Pentateuch with Onkelos (on the left margin) and Rashi (on the right margin), Haftarothe (some with Rashi), and five M'gilloth.

End of manuscript is a Ketubah, used as a book binder. The parties are: R' Moshe ben R' Yosef Halevi to Handlin bat R' Moshe ben R' Uri. Place: Vreinshtat (?).

Bought by Abraham ben Moshe ha-Kohen from Mendel'n Katz. Dated 5128 (1368).

Other details of interest:

Title chatan recorded after father's name; *bethulta* before father's name; title *chatan* and *merat* not recorded at beginning of Ketubah; *mid'orayta* (Biblical in origin); *mid'orayta*, *k'susiychi*, etc. – with one *yud*; *ha-asuyot k'tikun cha-chameinu* (omits: *d'ne-hi-gin b'vnot yis-ra-el*, *l'intu* – without *yud*).





# S

## Kethubah Formula, 1393

OXFORD OPP 170, Fol. 251b

*Pirush Hak'tubah  
m'prishas Avi ha-  
Ezri. Fol. 254b.*

Dated:

Monday, 17th of  
Iyyar 5153 (1393);  
the parties are  
R. Avigdor ben  
Yoseph and the  
widow Rosa,  
daughter of R.  
Shim'on.

Details of interest:

Title *chatan* and  
*arme'lata* recorded  
before father's  
name;

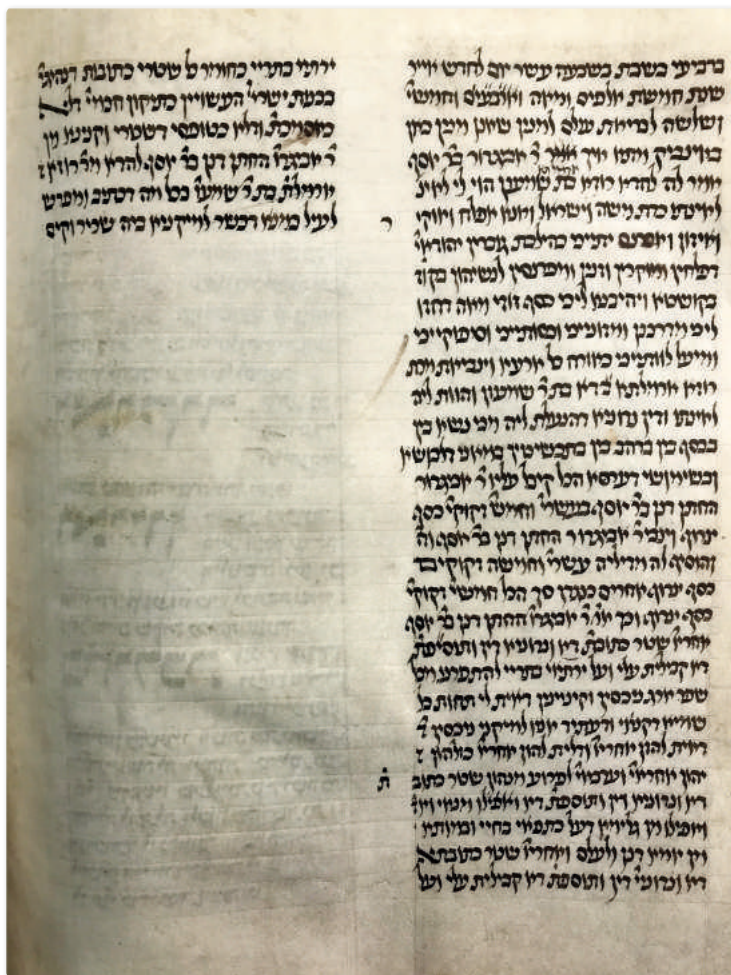
title *chatan* and  
*merat* not recorded  
at beginning of  
Ketubah;

*d'ne-hi-gin* (two  
yuds)

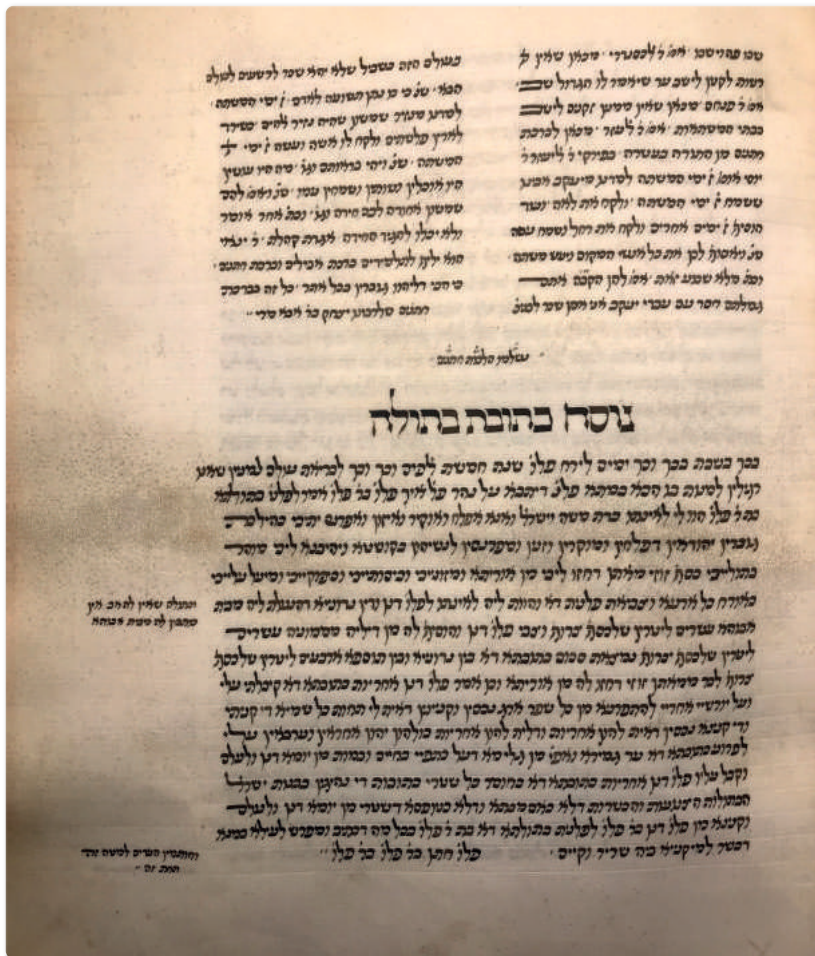
*b'vnot yisrael ha-  
asuyin k'tikun cha-  
chameinu*

*k'susiychi*, etc. –  
with two yuds;

*l'intu* – with yud.





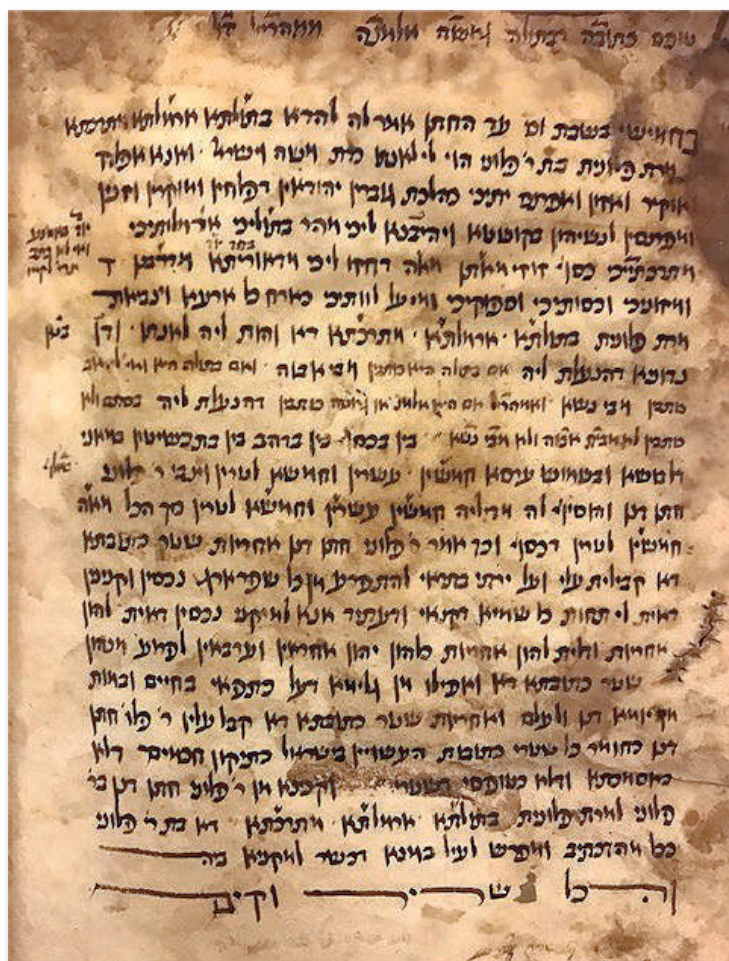


## Formula for a Ketubah, 1426

OXFORD MS OPP. ADD. FOL. 10

Dated before 1426

Notes: title *chatan* and *betulah* recorded before father's name; *mid'orayta* (Biblical in origin) – mentioned twice, also in summary; *mo-har* (bride gift) – with yud; *mid'orayta* – one yud, *k'susiychi*, etc. – two yuds; *l'intu* – with yud; *di ne-hi-gin* (with three yuds) *b'vnot yis-ra-el* (omits: *ha-asuyot k'tikun cha-chameinu*); adds: *k'b'not yisrael hab'tulot hatz'nuot v'hak'sherot*.



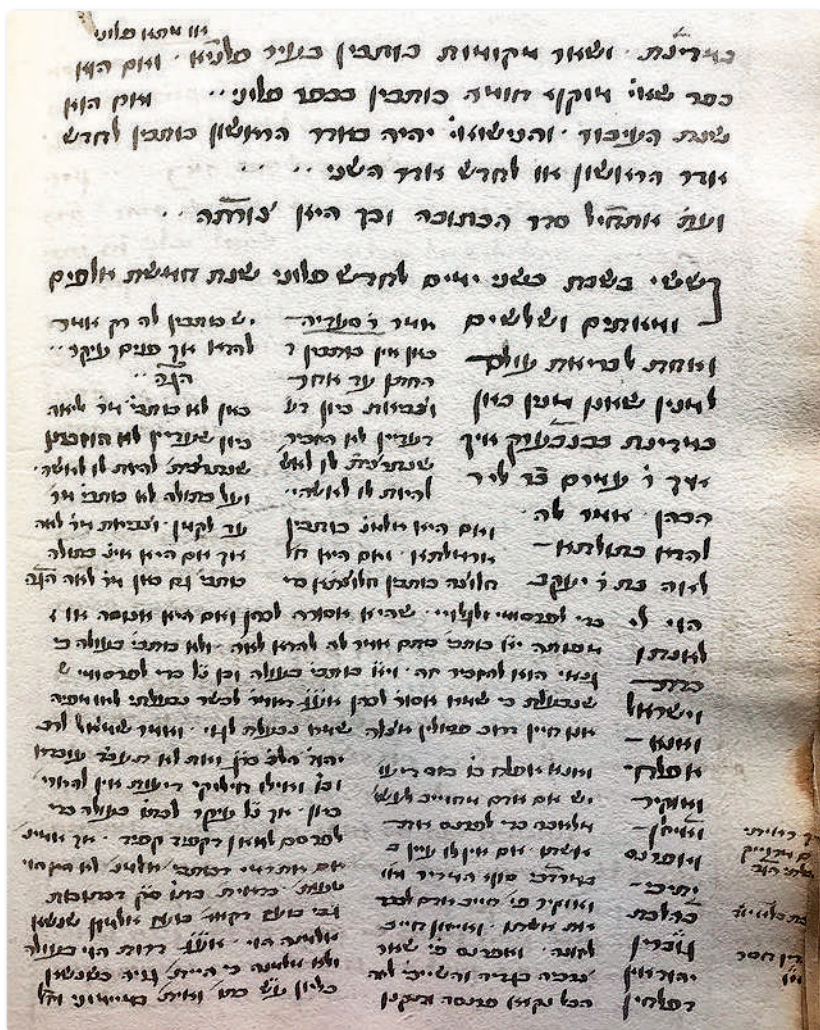
## Formula for a Ketubah by the Maharil, 1451-83

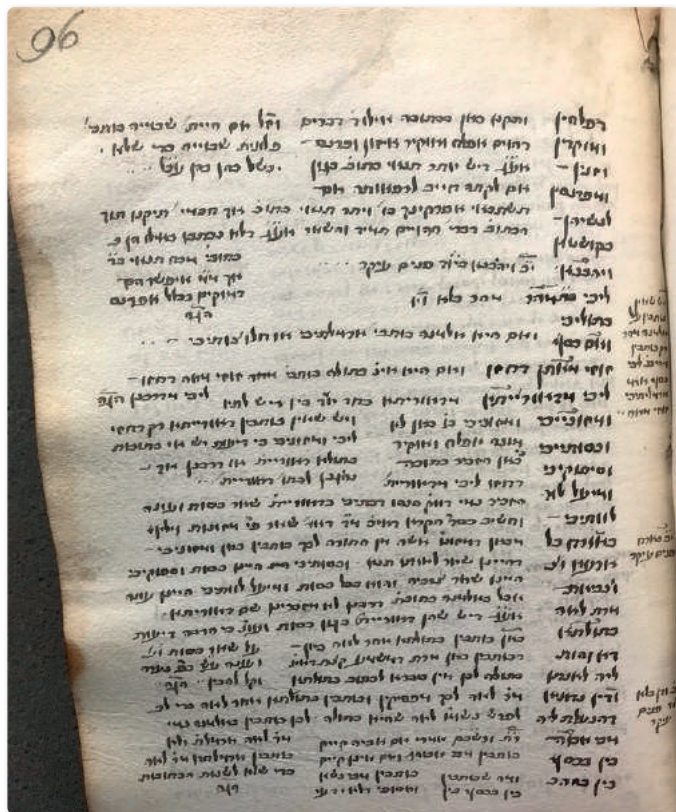
OXFORD MS OPP. 296

*Following the view of the Maharil, Rabbi Yaakov ben Moshe Levi Moelin, (1365-1427)*

Details of interest: title *chatan* and *betulah* recorded before father's name; title *chatan* and *merat* recorded at beginning of Ketubah; *mid'orayta* (Biblical in origin); *mid'orayta* – one yud, *k'susiychi*, etc. – one yud; *l'intu* – without yud; *asu-yin b'yisrael* – omits *b'not*. *ha-asu-yin* (omits *b'not*) *b'yisrael k'tikun cha-chameinu*.

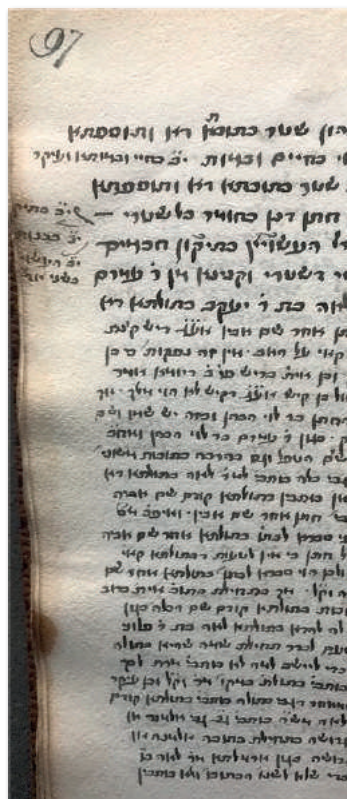






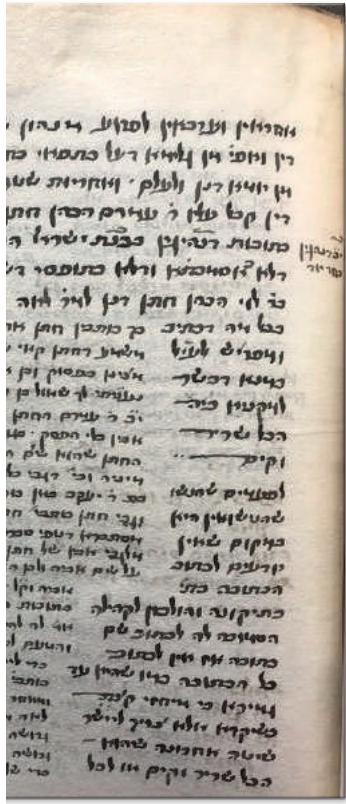
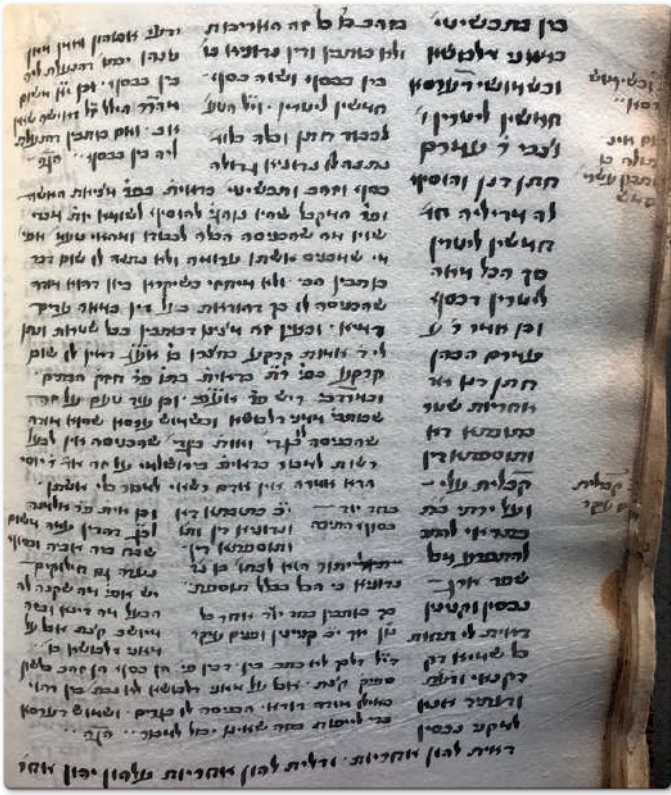
Details of interest:

Title *chatan* and also *betu* father's name; *chatan* and at beginning of *Ketubah* - *mid'orayta* (Biblical in origin) marital obligations explicit the Torah, thus juxtapose obligation - *m'farnes* (sup not listed obligations, as *k'susiychi* - two *yud*; *sipuk* - no *yud*. *d'ne-hi-gin* (two *ha-asuyin k'tikun cha-cha*





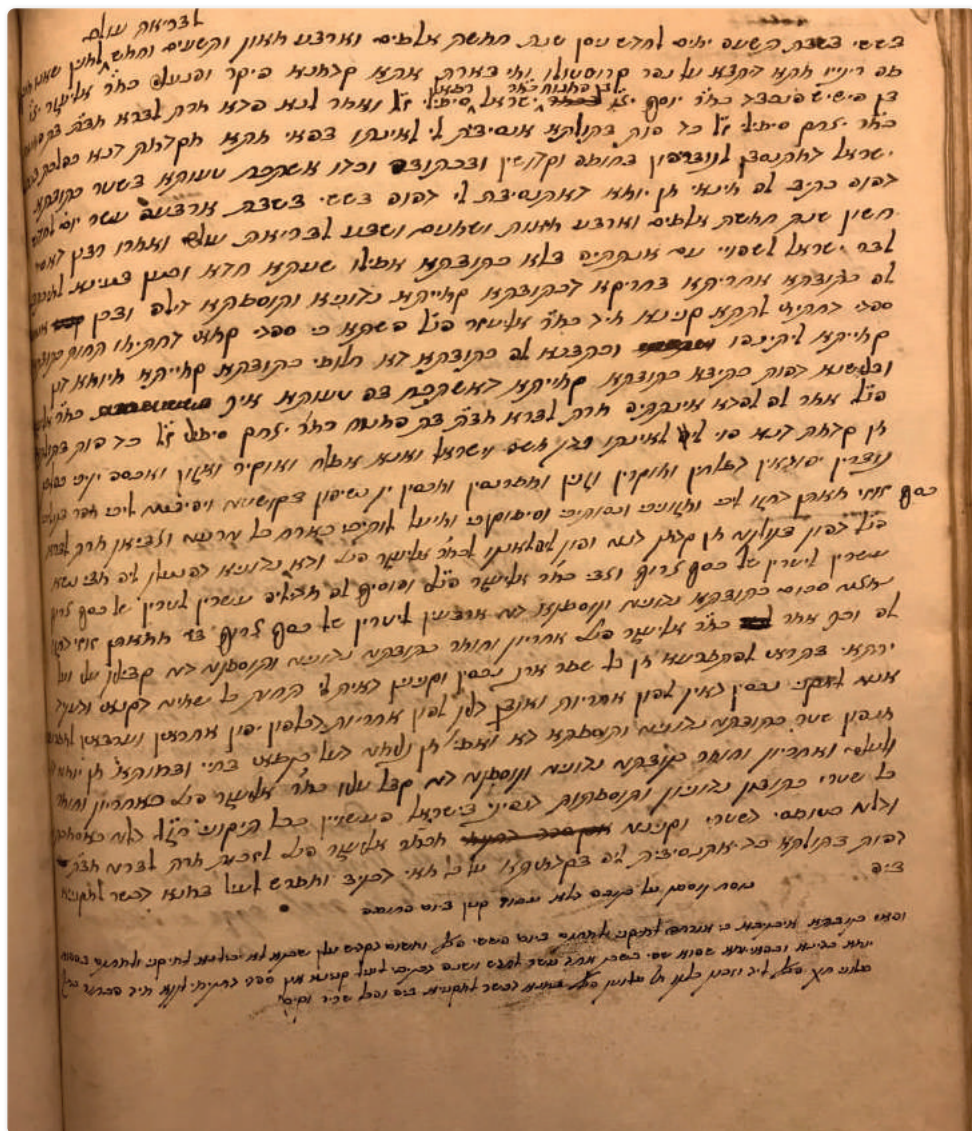
betulah recorded after  
n and merat not recorded  
bah – instead besulta;  
(origin) – relating to the  
explicitly mentioned in  
posed in the Ketubah;  
(support) includes other  
, as healing, release from  
- one yud; m'zoniychi,  
sipukiychi – one yud; l'intu  
(two yuds) b'vnot yisrael  
-chamim.



# Replacement Ketubah Formula, 1735

OXFORD MS MICHAEL 414, Fol. 73b

Formula (Nusach K'thuba) for Ketubah of the Hebrew year 5495, replacing a Ketubah that had a mistake from 8 years earlier, in 1727.







## Ketubah from Greek Island of Corfu, 1752

OXFORD MS HEBREW ROLLS 6 b.1

Illustrated. Dated: Thursday, 3rd of Tammuz, 5512, corresponding to 1684 years since the destruction of the Temple. Abraham de Castro ben Yitzchak de Castro to Salita, daughter of Yehoshua Shmuel. Details of interest: date to destruction of the Temple; nearby sea, wells and springs; appellations; *b'memra d'shmaya*; *chatan* and *merat* not recorded at beginning, until *ut'z viat* (she consents); *k'susiychi*, etc. – two *yuds*. *L'ntu* – without *yud*; *v'riblah ale-ha l'chabdo u'tshamsho b'nekiyus u'taharah*, etc.; decorations: zodiac; verses of blessing from Deuteronomy 28:6 and 8, about the bride from Proverbs 18:22 and 19:14 on the top, and verses about fertility from Isaiah 61:10-11 and 62:2-3 along the side of the pillars, with corresponding images. Lengthy dowry in smaller script.

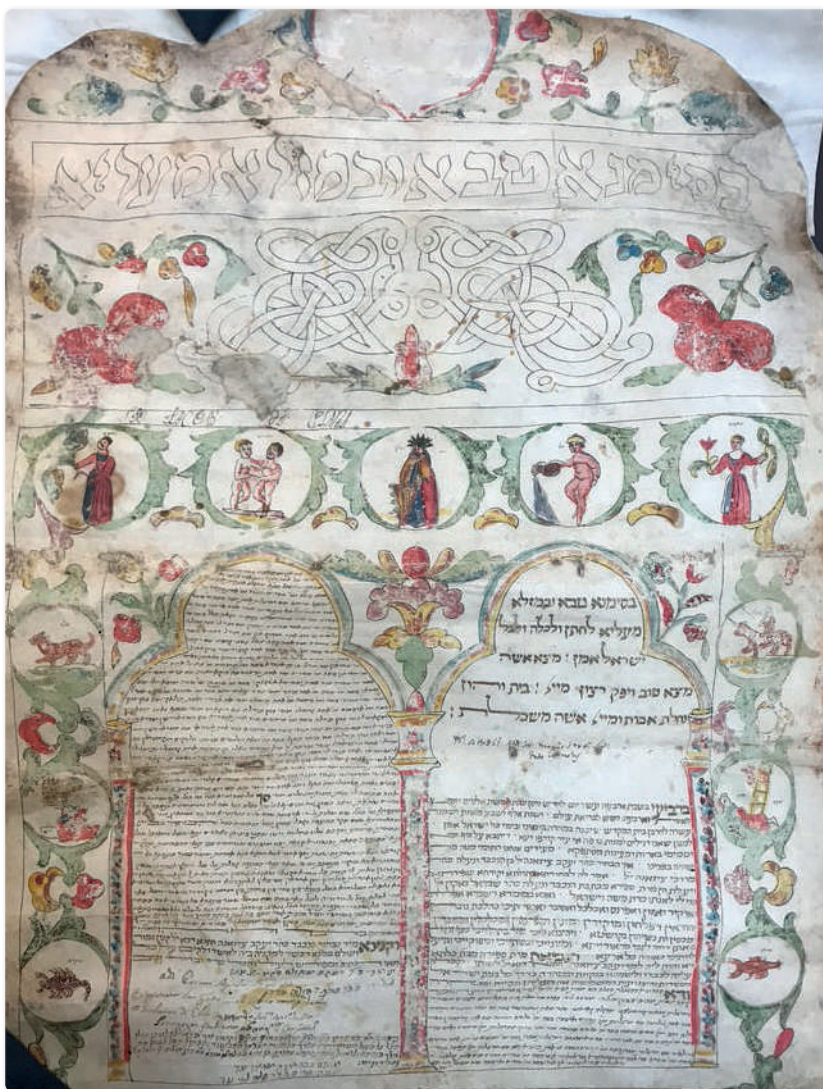
# Ketubah from Greek Island of Corfu, 1769

OXFORD MS HEBREW ROLLS 6 lb

Illuminated. Dated: Friday, 14 Nissan 5529 (1769). Peretz Chaim to Zafrah bat Shmuel Kohen. Details of interest: date to destruction of the Temple; appellations; *b'memra d'shmaya*; *mohar* – with *vav*; *chatan* and *merat* not recorded at beginning, until *utz'viat* (she consents); *mid'orayta* (Biblical in origin); *mid'orayta*, *k'susiychi*, etc. – two *yuds*; *utz'viat* (she consents) and *v'da* (dowry) – enlarged script; *l'intu* – without *yud*; *v'kiblah ale-ha l'chabdo u'lshamsho b'nekiyus u'vtaharah*, etc; decorations: zodiac; verses about marriage from Proverbs 18:22 and 19:14 in preamble, and Isaiah 61:10 and Ruth 4:11-12 round the sides, with corresponding images. Lengthy dowry in smaller script. Damaged.







## Ketubah from Greek Island of Corfu, 1786

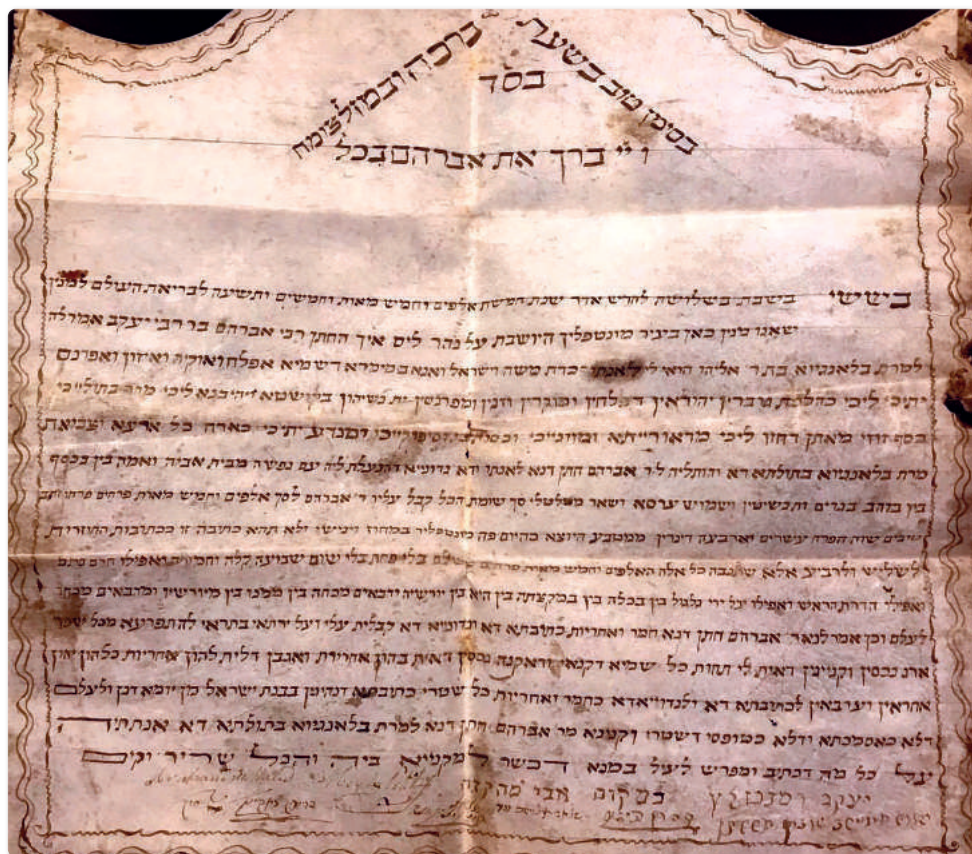
OXFORD MS HEBREW ROLLS 6 a.3

Illuminated. Dated: Wed, 14th Nissan, 5546, corresponding to 1718 years since the destruction of the Temple. Yaakov Cesana ben Mordechai Cesana (Jacob Cesana) to Zefirah bat Shmuel Zakon. Bethulah. Lengthy dowry in smaller script.

# Ketubah from Montpellier, France, 1799

OXFORD MS OPP. ADD. 8o 6

K'thuba, Montpellier, dated: 3rd of Adar 5559 (1799).





## Mishneh Torah (Sefer HaMada. Sefer Ahavah)

**Shelfmark:** Bodleian Library MS. Huntington 80, fol. 165a. **Date:** 1181–1204. **Place of Origin:** Egypt (Fostat?). **Description:** Corrected with the original, as confirmed by Maimonides in an autograph.

*The Rebbe discusses the following topics on the folio of this manuscript.*

### (1) IMPLICATIONS OF MAIMONIDES' SIGNATURE

#### AUTHENTICATING WORK

The autograph of Maimonides confirming the text of the first two books of the Mishneh Torah is limited to the halachic content in the work, but not spelling and gender of words, and other non-halachic aspects of the work, like how many chapters are in each section.

*(Final day of Passover, 1984)*

### (2) DID MAIMONIDES CONFIRM THE ORDER OF THE PRAYERS?

The Huntington 80 MS states: 'completed second book' after laws of circumcision; other versions have it after 'Order of Prayers'.

*(Shabbat Parshat Naso & 2nd day of Shavuot 1984)*

### (3) VARIANTS IN THE LAW OF CIRCUMCISION

Variants – additions and omissions – in the last paragraph of Laws of circumcision between Huntington 80 and the printed version.

*(Shabbat Parshat Naso & 2nd day of Shavuot 1984)*

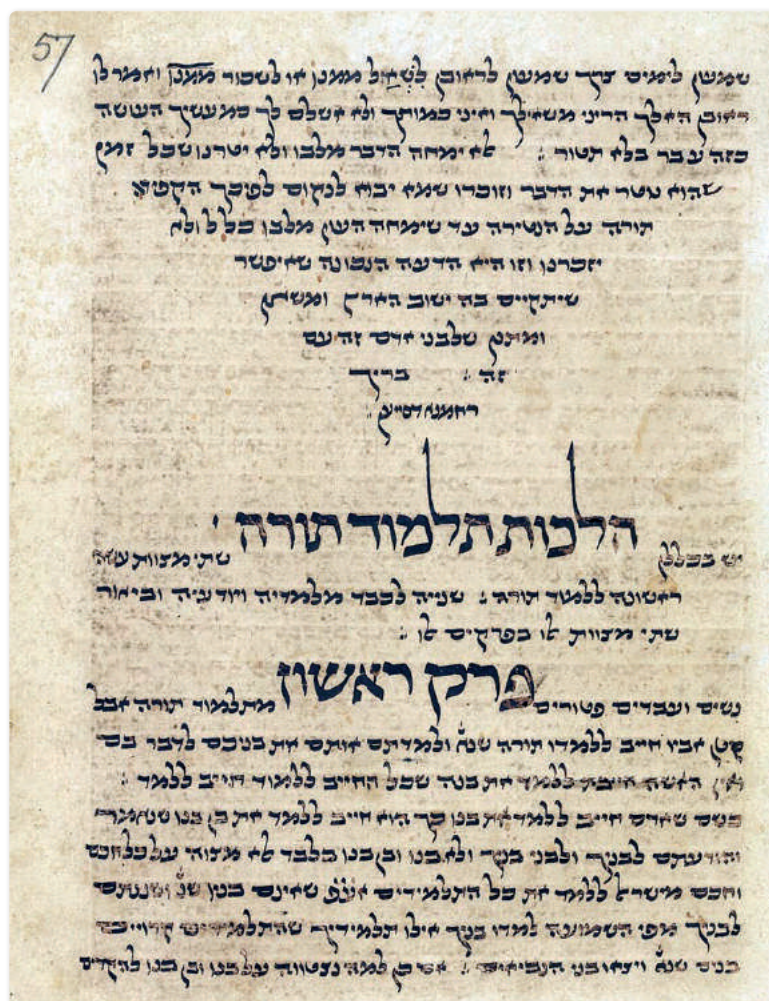


## Discussion on Closing Phrase: "Blessed is the One Who Grants Assistance"

Shelfmark: Bodleian Library MS. Huntington 80, fol. 57a.

Comments: One has to investigate whether the statement 'Blessed is the One who grants assistance' (*b'rich rachmana de-sayon*) that is found in MS Huntington 80 after every halacha (besides laws of Mezuzah) originates from Maimonides or from a scribe.

(Shabbat Shabbat Parshat Bamidbar 1984)





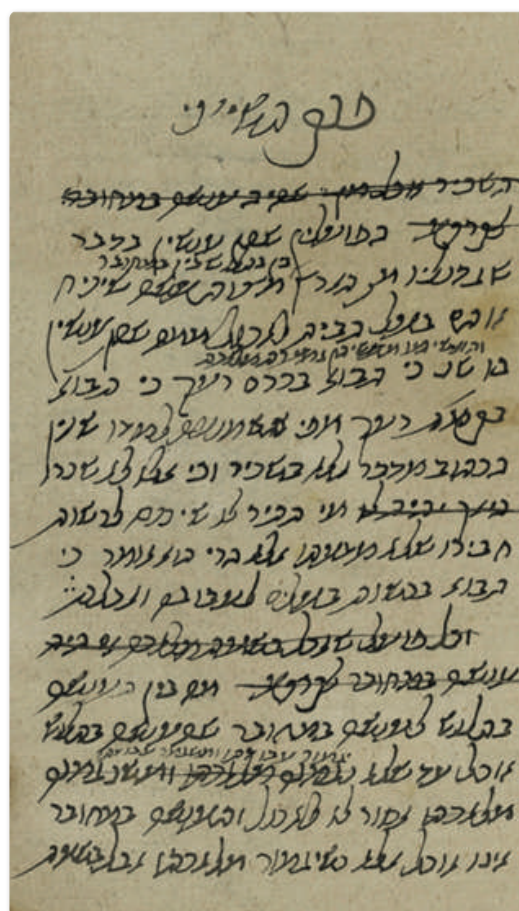
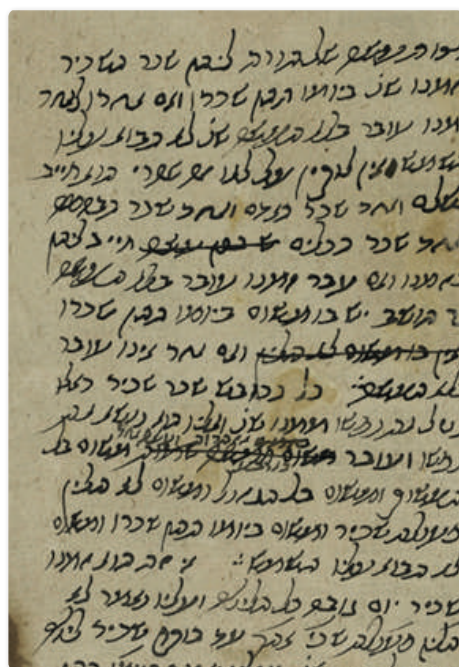
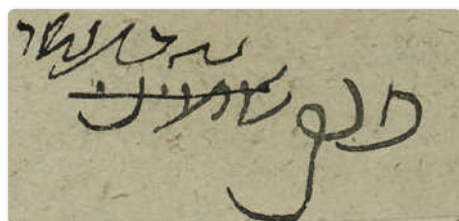
## Implication of Edits on Draft Version of Mishneh Torah

OXFORD MS. HEB. D. 32, FOL. 48b, 49a & 51a (CAIRO GENIZAH)

Maimonides autograph draft of Mishneh Torah *שאלה and שכירות*

Comment: Maimonides did not make every correction that was necessary, leaving to copiers to understand on their own, as can be seen by the fact that in the editing of the Mishneh Torah, he corrected the chapter number from 8 to 11 but left the following chapter as 9.

(Final day of Passover, 1984)



**Shelfmark:** Oxford University's Bodleian Library MS. Pococke 295, fol. 184b. **Date:** 1167–1168. **Place of Origin:** Fostat, Egypt.





## Responsa of the Lubavitcher Rebbe

### The shape of the Menorah in the Oxford manuscript of Maimonides' Commentary on the Mishnah

*With thanks to Rabbi Zalman Chanan,  
director of Vaad L'Hafotzas Sichos.*

Subject: Rabbi Immanuel Chai Riki (1688-1743) writes in his work on the Temple, **Ma'aseh Choshev**, that the branches of the Temple Menorah were round, not diagonal. In this hand written note, the Rebbe responds with the following points:

1. Rashi states they were diagonal.
2. The view is based on that Maimonides does not mention the shape of the branches. This has been refuted with the manuscript of the Commentary on the Mishnah with the branches depicted by Maimonides' own hand as diagonal.
3. The biblical word for the branches '*kaneh*' usually refers to a straight beam.

#### Responsa First Draft

This *handwritten* responsa is a first draft of the Rebbe's comments. (The typed text of the Rebbe's comments appears at the top of the next page.)

Before being published in *Torat Menachem*, 5742, p. 1917, f. 2, further editing between the Rebbe and the editors took place.

The subject in full was published in *Likkutei Sichot*, Vol. 21, p. 168.





## Text of the Lubavitcher Rebbe's Notes

מנוגע לצורת קני המנורה - ודעת בעהמ"ס מ"ח: בעצמו סתר וסודותיו (1) אף שדעת רש"י באלכסון (2) מדלא הזכיר הרמב"ם זה בחיבורו (וכן לא בבריתא דמלהמ"ש [דמלאכת המשכן] ובש"ס) כתב בעל חכמת המשכן (מקובל וכו') שנראה שזהו "כמעט בעיגול" (והכי מסתברא) (שע"י) דומים לגלגלי הרקיע. - לאחר שנמצא בת"ק פה"מ להרמב"ם (3) ובו ציור באלכסון ובפ"י בנו עה"ת שחרמב"ם צייר "ביושר" כו' לא בעיגול כמו שצייר אותה וולתר' בודאי כשבטל היסוד כו'.  
מכלל לא זכיתי לסענ"ד להבין כלל וכלל הראי' במדפוסים נראה שהי' "כמעט בעיגול" - שהרי תיבת "קנה" מובאה בסריס מקומות בתושב"כ ובפ"י מוכרח שהוא כו' ישר ואין אף פ"א שמוכרח שזהו באופן אחר. ודעת הראב"ע (תצוה כו. כא) (ו"מ כן דעת הספרי זוטא) צ"ע מקורו. וראה הרי"ש סוף סוף כב וש"י. ה"י ישנו בספרי ולכן מצוי.

## Responsa Second Draft

(2) בספר מעשה חושב - לבעהמ"ס משנת חסידים - (פ"ז ס"ו) איתא שקני המנורה היו נמשכין בעגול ועולין כנגד גבה של מנורה.  
אבל, כותב (בפירושו שם) וסודותיו - ומקדים שדעת רש"י (תרומה כה. לב) מפורשת להיפך, שקני המנורה יוצאים באלכסון, אבל מדלא הזכיר הרמב"ם זה (שהיו באלכסון) בחיבורו (וכן לא מחבר בבריתא דמלאכת המשכן ובש"ס) - לכן, כתב בעל חכמת המשכן (מקובל וכו') שנראה שזהו "כמעט בעיגול", והכי מסתברא" (שע"י) דומין לגלגלי הרקיע.  
ולכן - לאחר שנמצא בת"ק פה"מ להרמב"ם ובו ציור באלכסון (כנ"ל בפנים), ובפ"י בנו (של הרמב"ם) עה"ת כתב שחרמב"ם צייר "ביושר" כו' לא בעיגול כמו שצייר אותה וולתר' - הרי בטל היסוד כו'.  
לכן נלפענ"ד כיוון שבאם היו רואים ציור הרמב"ם, היו אומרים שאין מחלוקת ביניהם, ולכ"ע היו "ביושר".  
- להעיר ממש"כ אדה"ו בשו"ע שלו (א"ח חתמ"ה סו"ס י"ב (בהלכות מכירת הסוף)) הרכה מספרי הראשונים כו' ולזאת ודאי אין לסמוך כו'.  
מכלל לא זכיתי לפענ"ד להבין כלל וכלל הראי' דמדפוסים ככהנ"ל נראה שהי' "כמעט בעיגול" - שהרי תיבת "קנה" מובאה בסריס מקומות בתושב"כ ובפ"י מוכרח שהוא כו' ישר, ואין אף פעם א' שמוכרח שזהו באופן אחר.  
ודעת הראב"ע (תצוה כו. כא) - צ"ע מקורו. שוב ראיתי ש"א שכן הוא הפירוש בספרי זוטא ר"פ בהעלותו, ואפשר שזהו המקור דרבני ראב"ע.  
שוב ראיתי שהעיר ע"י בתורה שלימה כד' כ"ב בסופו (ס"ע לא ואילך), וש"י.





## Oxford Encounter with The Rebbe

Former Oxford Yiddish scholar Dovid Katz and Kalmen Kovl, known as Carl Cowl (Minnesota, 1900 – NY, 1997), who participated in the Yiddish Summer School at Oxford University.

The two of them visited the Rebbe at 770 Eastern Parkway, Brooklyn, during the Rebbe's weekly distribution of dollars for charity and blessings on a Sunday morning in 1992. They were introduced by NY based printer (Empire Press) of Yiddish and Chassidic works, friend of Dovid Katz, Reb Mottel Chein (1938-2020).



### A transcript of this exchange:

*To Kalmen Kovl:*

Blessing and success.  
Here's a dollar for  
charity for you and  
here is one for all your  
students.

*To Dovid Katz:*

Blessing and success.  
May you have good  
tidings and much  
success. Give this  
dollar to charity in the  
charity box at Oxford  
University. Do they have  
a charity box at Oxford  
University? Bring a  
charity box there and  
leave it there for them.  
May it be in a good  
manner. If they would  
like to set up a cathedra  
(chair) for the study of  
charity, to teach about  
the definition of charity,  
they will be bestowed  
with blessings.





## 26

# Maimonides' Menorah

### Introduction

Oxford's Bodleian library is known for its rare collection of Hebrew manuscripts including some of the most important manuscripts of the great medieval Jewish legalist and philosopher Rabbi Moses ben Maimon, known as Maimonides (1138-1204).

One such manuscript is Maimonides' original handwritten manuscript in Judeo Arabic of his Commentary to the *Mishnah*,<sup>1</sup> known as *Pirush Hamishnayot*, on the 3rd century Jewish legal work of the *Mishnah*. This rare manuscript was brought to Oxford by the collector of Hebrew and Arabic manuscripts in the East, Professor Edward Pococke (1604-1691), who was born and passed away in Oxford. Pococke was appointed to the professorship of Hebrew at Oxford in 1648 and had a collection of 420 oriental manuscripts, which was eventually bought by Oxford University in 1693 for £600. The Bodleian Library acquired some of his printed books in 1822 by bequest from the Rev. C. Francis of Brasenose.

Pococke purchased the manuscript of the Commentary to the *Mishnah* by Maimonides between 1630 and 1635 after he was appointed in 1629 to the chaplaincy to the English Turkey Merchants at Aleppo, where he resided for over five years.

During this time, he became a master of Arabic, which he read and spoke fluently, studied Hebrew, Samaritan, Syriac and Ethiopic, and associated on friendly terms with fellow English Hebraist John Seldon and learned Muslims and Jews, who helped him in collecting manuscripts.

### Commentary to the Mishnah

The Commentary to the *Mishnah* was completed by Maimonides in Judeo Arabic in 1168 and was subsequently translated into Hebrew and other languages. The original title of the commentary was "The Book of the Lamp" or "*Kitab al-Siraj*" in Arabic, occasionally designated as "*Sefer Ha-Ma'or*" in Hebrew. It is aimed at those unfamiliar with the study of the Talmud so they would be able to understand the *Mishnah* without having to navigate the many opinions and conflicting arguments in the Talmud. In general, Maimonides mostly adheres to the explanations given in the Talmud and attaches special weight to the opinion of Rabbi Isaac Alfasi (1013-1103), known as the *Rif*, one of the most respected Spanish Rabbinical codifiers.

The challenge of writing this monumental work and what might be seen as uncertainty to its accuracy can be seen from what Maimonides writes in the appendix to the commentary:

I have now finished this work in accordance with my promise, and I fervently beseech the Al-mighty to save us from error. If there be one who shall discover an inaccuracy in this Commentary or shall have a better explanation to offer, let my attention be directed unto it; and let me be exonerated by the fact that I have worked with far greater application than any one who writes for the sake of pay and profit, and that I have worked under the most trying circumstances. For Heaven had ordained that we be exiled, and we were therefore driven about from place to place; I was thus compelled to work at the Commentary



while travelling by land, or crossing the sea. It might have sufficed to mention that during that time I, in addition, was engaged in other studies, but I preferred to give the above explanation in order to encourage those who wish to criticise or annotate the Commentary, and at the same time to account for the slow progress of this work. I, Moses, the son of Maimon, commenced it when I was twenty-three years old, and finished it in Egypt, at the age of thirty years, in the year 1168.

Despite his young age and admittance to the lack of certainty of the accuracy due to the circumstances of its authorship, this should not be used as a simplified premise to dismiss his views when faced with challenges. The aim of this essay is therefore an attempt to explain Maimonides' unique view of the shape of the Temple Menorah (candelabra) as depicted in his Commentary to the Mishnah, as found in the Oxford Pococke manuscript, despite many depictions to the contrary.<sup>2</sup>

There are two drawings in the Pococke manuscript: the shape of the Menorah and the plan of the Temple.<sup>3</sup> In both cases Maimonides presents a view that is different than the conventional view on the subject. In the case of the Menorah, Maimonides presents (a) straight branches, as opposed to arc shaped branches and (b) the goblets as up side down, as opposed to upright. In the case of the Temple plan, Maimonides depicts the sanctuary as square, as opposed to T shaped. In these depictions Maimonides stands almost alone in his views, against forceful opponents. The aim of this essay is to present a cogent argument in defence of Maimonides that have come

to light since the discovery of the Pococke Maimonides manuscript in the Bodleian Library.

### The shape of the Menorah branches

The Menorah is one of the most familiar symbols in Judaism and is based on the Jerusalem Temple Menorah. This Menorah also serves as the basis for the eight-branched Menorah that is lit annually on the holiday of Chanukah commemorating the rededication of the Temple and the resumption of the lighting of the Temple Menorah after the Hasmonean revolt against Seleucid Greek rule in the second century BCE. The description of a diagonally branched Menorah in the Oxford Pococke manuscript therefore stimulates an important deliberation regarding the authentic shape of the branches of the Temple Menorah: was it semi-circular or diagonal? We will explore this debate in detail and attempt to explain and defend the view of Maimonides on this subject.

### Ambiguous text

The concept of the Biblical Menorah is from the book of Exodus:<sup>4</sup>

And you shall make a menorah of pure gold. The menorah shall be made of hammered work; its base and its stem, its goblets, its knobs, and its flowers shall all be one piece with it. And six branches coming out of its sides: three menorah branches from its one side and three menorah branches from its second side. Three decorated goblets on one branch, a knob and a flower, and three decorated goblets on one branch, a knob and a flower; so for the six branches that come out of the menorah. And on the



stem of the menorah shall be four decorated goblets, its knobs and its flowers. And a knob under the two branches from it, and a knob under the two branches from it, and a knob under the two branches from it; so for the six branches that come out of the menorah. Their knobs and their branches shall all be one piece with it; all of it shall be one hammered mass of pure gold. And you shall make its lamps seven, and he shall kindle its lamps so that they shed light toward its face. And its tongs and its scoops shall be of pure gold. He shall make it of a talent of pure gold, with all these implements. Now see and make according to their pattern, which you are shown on the mountain.

While the text states:<sup>5</sup> "And six branches coming out of its sides: three menorah branches from its one side and three menorah branches from its second side", it does not give an indication to what the shape of the branches should be: rounded or straight. Maimonides, in his legal work *Mishneh Torah*, elaborates on the detailed structure of the Menorah but, similar to the Biblical text, does not give an indication in his writing as to the shape of the branches. Maimonides writes:<sup>6</sup>

The Menorah was eighteen handbreadths high: Its feet, base, and bottommost flower were three handbreadths high, There were two empty handbreadths, The next handbreadth included a goblet, a bulb, and a flower, Two empty handbreadths followed, A handbreadth with a bulb and two branches extending outward from it, one to one side and one to the other, extending outward and ascending until reaching the full

height of the Menorah, An empty handbreadth, A handbreadth with a bulb and two branches extending outward from it, one to one side and one to the other, extending outward and ascending until they reached the full height of the Menorah, An empty handbreadth, A handbreadth with a bulb and two branches extending outward from it, one to one side and one to the other, extending outward and ascending, until they reached the full height of the Menorah, and two empty handbreadths Thus, three handbreadths remained, with three goblets, a bulb, and a flower. A stone with three steps was placed before the Menorah. The priest stood on it and kindled the lamps. Also, he placed the containers of oil, the tongs, and the ash-scoops upon it while kindling it.

Maimonides thus expands on the details of the design of the Menorah and clarifies the important aspect of the Menorah that the branches must all reach the same height at the top of the candelabra, but fails to clarify whether the branches themselves should be straight or rounded.

### Talmud

Another text with this ambiguity of the shape of the Menorah branches is the Talmud,<sup>7</sup> where it describes the structure and design of the Menorah but omits the shape of the branches. It seems that Maimonides' text in the 13th century is following the Talmud by also not clarifying the shape of the branches.

### Rashi – diagonal

The first medieval scholar to comment on the shape of the branches is the great French Biblical commentator Rabbi



Shlomo Yitzchaki, known as Rashi (1040-1105). He quotes in his commentary on Exodus the Biblical verse "six branches coming out of its sides"<sup>8</sup> and comments:<sup>9</sup>

From here and there in each direction diagonally (*b'alachson*), drawn upwards until they reached the height of the Menorah, which is the middle stem. They came out of the middle stem, one higher than the others: the bottom one was longest, the one above it was shorter than it, and the highest one shorter than that, because the height of their ends at their tops was equal to the height of the seventh, middle stem, out of which the six branches extended.

By adding the word 'diagonal' (*b'alachson*), not found in the Bible or the Talmud, Rashi appears to be negating the view that the branches of the Menorah were arc shaped but rather a more simple design consisting of straight branches.<sup>10</sup>

### **Oxford's Rashi manuscript illustration – round**

The interpretation of Rashi regarding the shape of the Menorah branches is however complicated by a rare early 13th century Oxford manuscript of Rashi's commentary on Exodus.<sup>11</sup> The manuscript is a stand-alone work of Rashi's commentary that predates its current format, commonly found alongside the Hebrew Biblical text. In the middle of a folio in the manuscript, surrounded by text that details the shape of the Menorah branches as diagonal (*b'alachson*), there is an illustration of the Menorah where the branches of the Menorah can be seen not in a straight line as Maimonides but somewhat rounded. This would seem to

contradict the text itself that states the branches were diagonal.

One may suggest that as the manuscript is not Rashi's own handwriting but rather an early copy, one cannot vouch for the accuracy of the drawing, particularly, as the drawing did not make its way into any of the later printed editions. It is possible therefore to argue that the drawing is merely to give a general overview of how the Menorah should be structured according to the general comment of Rashi that the branches should line up on the top of the Menorah in a straight line; the artist was not particular about the shape of the branches themselves.

Due to the contradiction between the drawing of an unknown source and the text in this Oxford Rashi manuscript, it would seem more reliable to follow the text itself that states the branches were diagonal (*b'alachson*).

### **Rounded branches – Ibn Ezra**

Medieval Biblical commentator Ibn Ezra (1089-1167) in his commentary to Exodus writes that the branches were in fact long, rounded (*agulim*) and hollow.<sup>12</sup>

### **Rabbi Emmanuel Chai Ricci – round**

Italian Rabbi Emmanuel Ricci (1688-1743), who was born in Ferrara, Italy, and died tragically at the hand of robbers on one of his travels, wrote a commentary on the building of the Tabernacle, *Ma'ase Choshev* (Venice, 1716), in which he argues, like Ibn Ezra, that the branches of the Menorah were round shaped (*b'igul*). Surrounding his text is a supercommentary where he points out that the view of Rashi is clearly different than his own since Rashi writes the



## 30

branches of the Menorah were diagonal (*b'alachson*). He argues, however, in support of his own view, that Maimonides, as well as the simple reading of the Talmud, omitting the word *b'alachson* (diagonal), reflects a concurrence with his own view that the branches were in fact rounded. This view that the Menorah branches were round shaped is supported by another Italian Rabbi Joseph Shalit ben Eliezer Riqueti, who was born in Safed and lived in the second half of the 17th century in Verona, Italy.<sup>13</sup>

### Rationale for rounded branches

Rabbi Ricci rationalises the reason for the rounded branches of the Menorah with the following interesting explanation: The seven branches of the Menorah correspond to the seven planetary spheres,<sup>14</sup> including the sun, moon and the five planets that are visible to the naked eye – Mercury, Venus, Mars, Saturn and Jupiter. As the planetary spheres are spherical in shape (*gilgulei rakia*), so are the branches of the Menorah.<sup>15</sup> Thus, in summary, according to Rabbi Ricci, the view of the Talmud and Maimonides, notwithstanding his own drawing, is that the branches were rounded, whereas Rashi's view is that they were straight. Despite Rashi's view, almost all depictions of the Menorah in carvings, manuscripts and published works follow the view that the Temple Menorah was arc shaped.

### Arch of Titus – round

The oldest depiction of the Temple Menorah that exists is from what seems to be an authentic replication of the Temple Menorah in the Arch of Titus, a 1st-century honorific arch located on the Via Sacra, Rome, just to the southeast

of the Roman Forum. The Roman Emperor Domitian constructed the Arch in c. 82 AD shortly after the death of his older brother Titus to commemorate Titus' conquest of Judea, which ended the Jewish Wars, after the Siege of Jerusalem in 70 AD. The soffit of the axial archway is deeply coffered with a relief of the apotheosis of Titus at the centre. The sculptural art also includes two panel reliefs lining the passageway within the arch – both commemorate the joint triumph celebrated by Titus and his father Vespasian in the summer of 71. On one of the reliefs is the scene depicting the triumphal procession with the booty from the Temple in Jerusalem, including the sacred Menorah, the Table of the Showbread shown at an angle, and the silver trumpets.<sup>16</sup> The site became a symbol of the Jewish exile. Pope Paul IV (d. 1559) made it the place of a yearly oath of submission of the Jews after he created the Roman Jewish Ghetto on 14 July, 1555 with the famous papal bull entitled *Cum Nimis Absurdum* (Since it is absurd). Thus, the Arch provides one of the few depictions of the Temple period artefacts with the seven-branched Menorah clearly depicted. It is evident in the Arch that the Menorah was arc-shaped. Based on this image, countless images of the Menorah over the last two thousand years have been similarly arc-shaped, including the Menorah symbol of modern day Israel.

### Survey of Menorah carvings and manuscripts

Based on the famed depiction in the arch, the following is a survey of early images of the Menorah, almost all showing round branches. One of the world's oldest





synagogues, discovered in 1932, is the 3rd century synagogue at Dura-Europos, which was found with extensive Biblical figurative wall paintings intact and was located on the Euphrates River, some 250 miles north of the great Babylonian Jewish Academy of Nehardea.<sup>17</sup> The synagogue contains a forecourt and house of assembly with painted walls depicting people and animals, and a Torah ark in the western wall facing Jerusalem. The scenes depicted are drawn from the Torah and include many narrative scenes, including the Sacrifice of Isaac, Moses receiving the Tablets, the Exodus, the vision of Ezekiel, and many others. One of these paintings is of the Menorah, which is clearly depicted as arc-shaped.

Other early historic carvings of the Menorah with arc-shaped branches include (a) a 3rd century carved stone depicting a man's head supporting a Menorah at the ancient city of Beth Shearim in the Galilee, founded by the Hasmonean kings sometime after 161 BCE;<sup>18</sup> (b) a carved image of a Menorah found in the ancient Synagogue in Hammat, Tiberius, discovered during excavations in 1921;<sup>19</sup> (c) a 6th century floor Mosaic in the Maon Synagogue in the Negev, dating back to c. 530 CE with the image of the Menorah flanked by lions, a shofar, palm tree and Etrog;<sup>20</sup> (d) a marble sarcophagus with a Menorah, found in Rome, late 3rd century;<sup>21</sup> (e) a plaque with two images of a straight branched Menorah to protect against the evil eye on limestone, dated 5th century;<sup>22</sup> (f) a gold-glass base of a vessel used as a Roman catacomb from 4th century,<sup>23</sup> found in Rome perhaps to identify those entombed there.

In all the above depictions, the Menorah has round shaped branches, besides the plaque with two images of the Menorah to protect against an evil eye, dated 5th century. The image of the left has straight branches while the image of the right has slightly curved branches.<sup>24</sup> An additional depiction of the Menorah is found on a grave marker from the third or fourth century recovered from a Jewish cemetery in Rome, recently on display at the Ashmolean Museum, University of Oxford. It is a round pink marble plaque that marked the burial place in the Vigna Randanini catacomb of Alexander, *bubularus de macello*.<sup>25</sup>

### Manuscripts with drawings of the Menorah

The earliest known manuscript with an illustration of the Menorah is a Hebrew Bible of Solomon Ben Raphael from Perpignan, Aragon, dated 1299. This is apparently the earliest known example of the tradition to illustrate themes of the Bible in manuscripts, which began in Spain.<sup>26</sup> Another manuscript is from Northern France, dated c. 1280, with a picture of Aaron the High Priest pouring oil into one of the lamps of the Menorah. The Menorah in this manuscript has the branches protruding at a right angle before rising to the height of the Menorah.<sup>27</sup> There is also a manuscript of the Pentateuch, known as the Duke of Sussex Pentateuch, from South Germany, dated c. 1300, containing a picture of the Menorah. An overhanging olive tree on each side surrounds the Menorah filling two bowls with olives, that in turn feeds a middle bowl with oil, overflowing to fill the lamps of the Menorah.<sup>28</sup> A further manuscript is from Castile, Spain,<sup>29</sup> dated

early 14th century, with a depiction of the Menorah with goblets and flowers. Finally, there is a late 17th century beautiful illustration of the Temple Menorah with goblets and flowers by Valentin Schuler (1650-1720), from Frankfurt am Main. In all the above the Menorah are round shaped.

In addition to the above Hebrew Manuscripts, Christian scholars also aimed to clarify the shape of the Menorah. Franciscan scholar Nicholas of Lyra (1270-1349) used a series of comparative illustrations to show how Christian and Jewish readings of the Biblical text differed. In his late 14th century commentary to the Book of Exodus he draws comparative diagrams of the Menorah and the Table of Showbread.<sup>30</sup> In these drawings he follows the view that the Temple Menorah was arc-shaped. Other historic artefacts with the illustration of a round-branched Menorah include a *Torah* crown from Venice 1752,<sup>31</sup> and a curtain of the *Torah* Ark from Padua, Italy, 1550.<sup>32</sup> A drawing of the Menorah with straight diagonal branches can however be found in a wedding poem from the Netherlands c. 1670 on parchment gouache belonging to the Gross family collection together with portraits of the bride and groom.<sup>33</sup> The Menorah is made out of the words of the poem, which might explain the desire to simplify the drawing with straight branches. In summary, the overwhelming images of the Menorah over the past 2,000 years has been similar the one found in the Arch of Titus, which is round shaped.

### **Maimonides' drawing with a straight-branched Menorah**

The pervasive view of the depiction of the Menorah as arc shaped is,

however, disputed, as mentioned, by an illustration of the Menorah found in the Oxford manuscript of the Commentary on the *Mishnah* by Maimonides in his own handwriting. As mentioned above, although Maimonides in his legal work *Mishneh Torah*<sup>34</sup> describes at length the structure of the Menorah and its design, he omits to indicate the actual shape of the branches themselves. Based on this textual omission, Rabbi Ricci and Rabbi Riqueti reached their conclusion that the view of Maimonides is that the branches would have been arc-shaped.

In the Oxford manuscript of Commentary to the *Mishnah*<sup>35</sup>, Maimonides clearly however draws alongside his commentary an image of the Menorah in his own handwriting. This drawing depicts the branches as protruding in a straight line from the stem to the full height of the Menorah. This would seem to be the only manuscript, besides Rashi's text, that categorically depicts the Menorah's branches diagonally, as opposed to an arc shape.

The son of Maimonides, Rabbi Abraham, further clarifies his father's views. In his commentary to Exodus,<sup>36</sup> Rabbi Abraham writes that the branches extended from the centre of the Menorah to the top in a straight line (*B'yosher*), adding: "as my father of blessed memory drew, not in an arc shape as others besides him have drawn." This clarification of Maimonides' view by his son leaves no room for the possibility that Maimonides was not deliberate and merely drew it in the easiest way possible for himself. This clarification of Maimonides' view contradicts Rabbi Ricci and Rabbi Riqueti who argues that Maimonides' view is that the branches were rounded.<sup>37</sup>





Clearly, they had not seen the illustration by Maimonides, for otherwise they would have concluded the contrary. Instead of deducing from the omission of the word 'diagonal' in Maimonides commentary that the shape of the branches were rounded, Rabbi Ricci and Riqueti would have argued that the omission of the word 'rounded' implies they were straight, as illustrated by the drawing.

### **Could Rabbi Ricci have seen the Oxford manuscript?**

It is interesting to consider whether Rabbi Ricci could have seen Maimonides' Commentary to the Mishnah manuscript with the illustration of the straight-branched Menorah at Oxford. As mentioned, this manuscript of Maimonides was purchased by Edward Pococke and sold to the University of Oxford in 1693, where it has been held since. Here's a brief outline of Rabbi Ricci's life. He was born in 1688. From 1708 he began his work as a travelling teacher, until he was ordained as a rabbi in Trieste in 1717. He subsequently moved to Israel but was forced to return to Livorno, Italy, due to a famine. It was after 1717 when he travelled to Smyrna, Salonika and Constantinople and also to London, England. He spent two years in Aleppo in 1735 and in 1737 he was in Jerusalem, where he stayed for three years. In 1741 he returned to Livorno to settle business matters connected with his books. While on one of his trips in 1743 he was tragically murdered by robbers. The publication of Rabbi Ricci's work on the Tabernacle *Ma'ase Choshev*, where he states Maimonides' view of the Temple Menorah with round branches, was in 1716 in Venice. As he travelled to London, and perhaps also Oxford,

only after 1717, this would have been after the publication of his work in 1716. Furthermore, Oxford was inhospitable to Jews until 1856, when Jews were allowed to study at Oxford, though perhaps they would have permitted to view the Hebrew manuscripts earlier.<sup>38</sup> Based on this simple timeline of Rabbi Ricci's life, Rabbi Ricci could not have known about the manuscript in Oxford before the publication of his work on the Tabernacle *Ma'ase Choshev*, thus explaining his incorrect view that the Menorah according to Maimonides was round-shaped.

### **Challenge to Maimonides' view**

While we have established Maimonides' view that the branches of the Menorah were straight, the above survey of the shape of the Menorah depicting all the ancient carvings in synagogues, early manuscripts, as well as the Temple Menorah captured by Titus and brought to Rome after the destruction of Jerusalem in 70CE, presents a challenge to the view of Maimonides.

### **Reasons for Maimonides' shape of the Menorah branches**

There are three possible answers to this challenge against Maimonides, enabling us to justify his depiction of the Temple Menorah. Firstly, the Menorah on the Arch of Titus is not precise in all its details and therefore not a reliable source for the accurate shape of the Temple Menorah. This is evident from the shape of the base of the Menorah, which, as recorded in the Talmud,<sup>39</sup> indisputably, should have legs, contrary to the Arch of Titus that has the Menorah with a solid base. Despite the depiction of a solid base on the Arch of Titus, the carvings and manuscripts



## 34

mentioned above do not in fact follow this aspect of the carving of the Menorah on the Arch of Titus and are correctly drawn with legs.

Secondly, in the work of the 1st century historian Jewish Roman Josephus,<sup>40</sup> it records that Solomon made not one but ten Menorahs. This would suggest that it was possible that the Temple Menorah that was used in the Temple could have been shaped according to Maimonides' view, while the shape depicted on the Arch of Titus was one of the other ten that may have had rounded branches. This would have also been a valid shape for the Menorah, as long as all the branches reach the same height in line with the middle branch of the Menorah.

A third possible answer<sup>41</sup> is there is a possibility that the Menorah of Solomon's First Temple was not the same shape as the Menorah that was designed by Moses centuries earlier for the desert tabernacle. Thus, it's plausible that Maimonides may have been describing

the shape of the Menorah that Moses built with straight branches, whereas the Menorah of the Second Temple followed Solomon's First Temple design with rounded branches.

According to all the above answers, however, both depictions of the Menorah, straight, as drawn in the Oxford manuscript of Maimonides' Commentary to the Mishnah, as well as the Menorah as depicted on the Arch of Titus with rounded branches were valid according to Jewish law – as long as the branches arrive in a straight line at the top of the Menorah.

Nevertheless, from the above study, one may conclude that while all the carvings and manuscripts of the Menorah follow the model of the Menorah as depicted on the Arch of Titus, Maimonides draws the Menorah with straight branches, in accordance with the likely original shape that was transmitted<sup>42</sup> according to Jewish tradition by Moses to the Jewish people for posterity.<sup>43</sup>

### Endnotes

- 1 MS. Pococke 295 (Neub. 404), fol. 184b. Illustrating Maimonides comments on Menachot 3:7. Reproduced in Y. Kafih's edition, Jerusalem, 1967, vol 3 p 79. The manuscript of the Commentary on the Mishnah by Maimonides that is the subject of this essay consists of the Mishnaic Order of Nezikin (Damages), beginning with the 8th chapter of tractate Bava Kama, and the Order of Kodashim (Holy Things). The manuscript includes also marginal corrections. In the tractate of Menachot in the Order of Kodashim, folio 295a, one can find the hand drawn illustration of the plan of the Temple.
- 2 Oxford's Bodleian Library has a significant collection of manuscripts and early printed works of Maimonides' Commentary to the Mishnah. This includes seventeen in Judeo Arabic (Neubauer catalogue Numbers 394 - 407:1, 552:2 on Horayot, 2423:8 part of Eruvin, and 2522:5 fragment of Negaim); ten in Hebrew translation (Neub. 409:2 on Zeraim - translation of Harizi, 919 extracts from Demai, 408:2 Kodashim, 409:1 Kodashim, 850:6 Preface of Kodashim, 408:1 Nezikin, 1272:3a Nezikin, 1272:3b Nashim, 408:3 Tohorot, 1319:8); four copies of the Commentary to the Mishnah on Avot in Judeo Arabic (120:2, 380:1, 407:2, 2497 C. Notes); seven in Hebrew translation by Samuel ibn Thabbon (376:3, 408:1, 409:3, 714:2, 1254:2, 2282:3, 670 fragment).
- 3 Another drawing found in the manuscript is a hand drawn depiction of the Temple sanctuary. An essay



- by Rabbi Eli Brackman on the distinct shape of the sanctuary as drawn by Maimonides can be found at: <http://www.oxfordchabad.org/templates/blog/post.asp?AID=708481&postid=44173&p=1>.
- 4 Exodus, 25:32-40.
  - 5 Exodus 25:32.
  - 6 Mishneh Torah, Beit Habechira 3:10.
  - 7 Menachot 28b.
  - 8 Exodus 25:32.
  - 9 Rashi on Exodus, 25:32.
  - 10 This interpretation of Rashi is emphasized by Rabbi Menachem M. Schneersohn (1902-1994) in his work *Likutei Sichot*, vol. 21, p. 168, as supporting the notion that the shape of the branches of the Biblical Menorah were diagonal.
  - 11 Oppenheimer collection, Bodleian library, University of Oxford; [www.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/bodley/whats-on/online/crossing-borders/religious-traditions-shared-by-jews-and-christians-the-menorah](http://www.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/bodley/whats-on/online/crossing-borders/religious-traditions-shared-by-jews-and-christians-the-menorah).
  - 12 Exodus 25:32.
  - 13 Quoted by Rabbi Ricci from Rabbi Shalit's commentary on the Tabernacle *Hokmat ha-Mishkan*, in which he writes the branches were *k'mat b'igul* (a little rounded).
  - 14 Talmud Shabbat 129b, Rashi commentary. *Chezkuni al HaTorah* (Exodus 25:31) gives two reasons for the Menorah having seven branches: corresponding to the seven days of the week and the seven Mazalot that illuminate the world: *chamah, nogah, kochav, levana, shabtai, tzedek, ma'adim*.
  - 15 The idea that the roundedness of an item in the physical world can be a reflection of a concept in the Divine can be found also in the writing of Rabbi Shalom Dovber Schneersohn of Lubavitch (1860-1920) who writes in *B'sha'a Shehikdimu'* (ch. 62) that the all - encompassing light of the Divine (*Ohr Makifim*) that surrounds all the spiritual worlds is reflected in the lower level - the vessels (*Keilim*) - that receive the Divine light (*Ohr*), as opposed to the higher level, the light itself (*ohr pnimi*). He writes that this is indicated in the fact that vessels like cups containing water are mostly round shaped.
  - 16 *Art and Architecture of the Roman Empire*. Bellona Books. 2006.
  - 17 *Jewish Art* by Grace Cohen Grossman (1995), p. 19.
  - 18 *Jewish Art* p. 35.
  - 19 *Jewish Art* p. 29.
  - 20 Israel Museum Jerusalem; *Jewish Art* p. 31.
  - 21 Museo Nazionale Rome; *Jewish Art* p. 23.
  - 22 Institute of Archaeology collection, Hebrew University; *Jewish Art* p. 32.
  - 23 Israel Museum Jerusalem; *Jewish Art* p. 34.
  - 24 Similar to the image of the Menorah branches in the Oxford Rashi manuscript.
  - 25 *Jews in a Graeco-Roman Environment* by Margaret H. Williams, p. 155. The common translation of the script on the plaque is: Alexander, a sausage seller/butcher from/in the market who lived for thirty years. A good soul and the friend of all. May your sleep be among the just/righteous.
  - 26 *Bibliothèque Nationale*, Paris, Ms. Hebrew 7, fols 12v, 13r; *Jewish Art* p. 52.
  - 27 The British Library, Add. Ms. 11639 fol. 114r; *Jewish Art* p. 52.
  - 28 British library MS. 15282 fol. 238v; *Jewish Art* p. 47.
  - 29 Held at the Bodleian Library.
  - 30 Bodleian Library, University of Oxford MS. 251, fol. 49; [www.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/bodley/whats-on/online/crossing-borders/religious-traditions-shared-by-jews-and-christians-the-menorah](http://www.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/bodley/whats-on/online/crossing-borders/religious-traditions-shared-by-jews-and-christians-the-menorah).
  - 31 *Comunita Israelitica* Florence.
  - 32 *Comunita Ebraica*, Padua.
  - 33 *Jewish Art* p. 160.
  - 34 *Beit Habechirah* 3:10.
  - 35 MS. Pococke 295 (Neub. 404), fol. 184b. Dated 1167 - 1168. *Menachot* ch. 3.
  - 36 25:32.
  - 37 *Likkutei Sichot* vol. 21 p. 168.
  - 38 Furthermore, Adolf Neubauer, born in Bittse, Hungary, 1831, was hired by the University of Oxford for the task of cataloguing the Hebrew manuscripts in the Bodleian Library only in 1868. The catalogue appeared in 1886, after eighteen years of preparation. The volume includes more than 2,500 entries, and is accompanied by a portfolio with forty facsimiles. In 1884, a readership in Rabbinic Hebrew was founded at Oxford, and Neubauer was appointed to the post, which he held for sixteen years, until failing eyesight compelled his resignation in May, 1900. It would therefore have been difficult to find access to particular Hebrew manuscripts before they were officially catalogued, over a hundred years after Rabbi Ricci's visit to England.
  - 39 Talmud *Menachot* 28b.
  - 40 Ch. 95.
  - 41 *Likkutei Sichot* *ibid*.
  - 42 Exodus 25:34.
  - 43 In *Likkutei Sichot* (*ibid*), the Rebbe argues that with the revelation of the Maimonides' manuscript depicting the Menorah with straight branches, it is appropriate to follow this view of the Menorah, even though both views are valid. As the principal source of the round shaped branches of the Menorah is from the Arch of Titus, which for centuries served as a symbol of captivity and subjugation of Jews by Rome, it is inconceivable that Jews would follow this design, when Maimonides is of the opinion the branches were straight and was most likely the design of the original Menorah of Moses and Solomon.

## Letters From the Rebbe

RABBI MENACHEM M. SCHNEERSON  
Lubavitch  
770 Eastern Parkway  
Brooklyn, N.Y. 11213  
Hyacinth 9-9210

הרב מנחם מנדל שניאורסאהן  
ליובאוויטש  
770 איסטערן פארקוויי  
ברוקלין, נ.י.

By the Grace of G-d  
4th of Cheshvan, 5733  
Brooklyn, N. Y.

Order Number  
Received  
Receipts  
4-76  
989/125

**Blessing and Greetings:**

I am in receipt of your letter of the 27th of Tishrei. Thank you very much for letting me know the good news about an improvement in the various matters about which you wrote in your letter. This surely strengthens the confidence that also the other matters will be improved and go from good to better.

With regard to the question of being cheerful, etc., surely when you will think deeply on the blessings which G-d had bestowed upon you and your husband, especially to have good children, enjoying good health, and so forth - surely this should arouse true joy in your heart.

In connection with your mentioning your forthcoming birthday, may G-d grant that your Mazel should be renewed in the forthcoming year, in addition to the blessing for a good and pleasant year received on Rosh Hashono.

With blessing, *M. Schneerson*

RABBI MENACHEM M. SCHNEERSON  
Lubavitch  
770 Eastern Parkway  
Brooklyn, N.Y. 11213  
493-9250

מנחם מנדל שניאורסאהן  
ליובאוויטש  
770 איסטערן פארקוויי  
ברוקלין, נ.י.

ב"ה, כא' חמוז תשל"ו  
ברוקלין, נ.י.

מרת שרה תי'

ברכה ושלום!

במענה על ההודעה אשר נולד להם בן למזל טוב והכניסוהו לבריתו של אברהם אבינו ונקרא שמו בישראל אלימלך דובער שי',

הנה יה"ר מהשי"ח שכשם שהכניסוהו לברית כן ירניסוהו לחורו נלהבם ולמעשים טובים, והודלו בבת עם בעלה שי' מתוך הרחבה.

*אלימלך*  
בברכת מזל טוב

בסח משתתף (וישתתף ביהר שאח) בהכנסצעים, וה' יצליחם.  
הפ"נ ששכב יקרא בעת רצון על הציון הק"י.

*surely take part + w  
talce part  
and more effort  
etc.*



RABBI MENACHEM M. SCHNEERSON

Lubavitch  
770 Eastern Parkway  
Brooklyn, N. Y. 11213  
Hyacinth 3-9250

מנחם מענדל שניאורסאהן

ליובאוויטש

770 איסטערן פארקוויי  
ברוקלין, נ. י.

By the Grace of G-d  
4th of Teves, 5741  
Brooklyn, N. Y.

Mr. D. S. Brockman  
12 Fernhurst Gardens  
Edgware  
Mddx., England

Greeting and Blessing:

This is to acknowledge receipt of your letter of Nov. 16th, in which you write about possible developments in 1981 and '82 in regard to your present position, and ask what plans to make.

Inasmuch as there is some time before the situation will require a definite step, and until then there could possibly be changes, it is in general somewhat premature to make a decision at this time. Besides, a decision would depend on a number of details which are not specified in your letter, and it is often altogether difficult to present a situation in all details in a letter.

In light of the above, I would suggest that when it will get closer to the time when an actual decision has to be made, you should discuss the situation with local knowledgeable friends.

In general, it is advisable to keep in mind, in regard to any future plans, that the best prospects for success in the natural order of things would more likely be in an area in which you already have knowledge and experience and contacts, or in a very similar line. From this, it would also follow that as long as you can stay on your job, this would have a preference, unless there would be overriding reasons. However, all this is by way of a general observation.

One very important point, which applies in all cases, is that when a Jew strengthens adherence to the Torah and Mitzvot, this, in addition to being a must for its own sake, widens the channels to receive G-d's blessings, including the blessing to find the proper solution in whatever problem that arises.

I would suggest that you should have your Tefillin and Mezuzot checked to make sure they are Kosher, if this has not been done within the past twelve months.

With blessing,

*M. Schneerson*

RABBI MENACHEM M. SCHNEERSON

Lubavitch  
770 Eastern Parkway  
Brooklyn, N. Y. 11213  
Hyacinth 3-9250

מנחם מענדל שניאורסאהן

ליובאוויטש

770 איסטערן פארקוויי  
ברוקלין, נ. י.

By the Grace of G-d  
10th of Menachem Av,  
5743, Brooklyn, N.Y.

Mr. & Mrs. Samuel &  
Sera Bradman  
12, Fernhurst Gardens  
Edgware, Middx.  
England

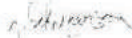
Greeting and Blessing:

I received your letter of Erev Rosh Chodesh Av,  
and may G-d grant the fulfillment of your hearts'  
desires for good in all the matters about which you  
wrote.

Your activities to spread Yiddishkeit, especial-  
ly in the area of Taharas Hamishpocha, about which  
you wrote, and which you will no doubt continue in a  
growing measure, inasmuch as all things of goodness  
and holiness should be on the ascendancy - will sure-  
ly stand you and yours in good stead, as also to the  
other women whom you mention in your letter.

May G-d grant that you should have further good  
news to report in all above, especially as we have  
now entered the auspicious period of the Seven Weeks  
of Consolation.

with blessing,



בראקמן - לונדון

RABBI MENACHEM M. SCHNEERSON

Lubavitch  
770 Eastern Parkway  
Brooklyn, N. Y. 11213  
493-9250

מנחם מענדל שניאורסאהן

ליובאוויטש

770 איסטערן פארקוויי  
ברוקלין, נ. י.

ב"ה, ט' שבט תשמ"ז  
ברוקלין, נ. י.

הו"ח אי"א נ"ב עוסק בצ"צ  
מוה' שמואל שי'

שלום וברכה!

במענה על ההודעה אשר נולד להם בן למזל טוב,

הנה יה"ר מהשי"ת שיכניסוהו לבריחו של אברהם  
אבינו, וכשם שיכניסוהו לברית בן יכניסוהו לחורו  
ולחופה ולמעשים טובים, ויגדלו ביחד עם זוג' חי'  
מתוך הרחבה.



בברכת מזל טוב







תן הן על השתתפותכם בשמחתנו

Thank you for joining our Simcha

*Menachem & Musia  
Latowicz*



DOVE  
PRESS