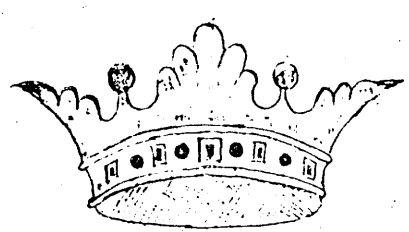




לחודש השבוע יתחברו חברים  
 שישתדלו ל...  
 חברים



אגיד

החבר ל אפרים בהחבר ל משרד  
 אמר לה להדא בחולתא מרת הענא כתחבר שלמה  
 הוילו לאנתו בדת משה וישראל - וזנא תפלא וזוקיר ואין ופערע  
 יתובי לוכי בהלכת גובנין יהודאין דפלאין ומוקרין . זנין ומפרסין  
 לנשיהון כקושטא - ויהובנא לוכי מהר בתולוכי כסף זונין מאתן דחני  
 לוכי מדאורייתא . ומזנכי וכסותוכי וקיסוקוכי ומיעל לותוכי כאות  
 כל ארעא : וכניאת מרת הענא בחולתא דא והוית ליה לאנתו : וזן  
 נדוכא דהנעלת ליה מני נשי בין בכסף בין בזהב בין בתכוסטין במאני  
 דלנשא בשימשי דירה ובשימשי דערסא משה זוקין כסף כרוף . וכני החבר אפרים  
 חתן דין והוסוף לה מן דיניה משה זוקין כסף כרוף אפרים כנגדן . סך הכל מאני  
 זוקין כסף כרוף : וכך אמר החבר אפרים חתן דין אחריות סטר כתובתא  
 דא נדוכית דן ותוספתא דא קבלית עלי ועל ידתי בתרתי להתפרע מכל אפר  
 ארג נכסין וקניטין דאית לי תקות כל שמיא . דקנאי ודעתוד זנא למקנא  
 נכסין דאית להון אחריות ודלית להון אחריות כל הון יהון  
 אחרתין וערבתין לפרוע מנהון סטר כתובתא דא נדוכית  
 דן ותוספתא דא ואפילו מן גלומא דעל כתפתי בחני ובחיותין  
 יומא דין ולעלם : ואוריות אפר כתובתא דא נדוכי  
 דן ותוספתא דא קבל עליו החבר ל אפרים חתן דין בחומר  
 כל שקרי כתובות ותוספתא דנהגין בכנת ישראל  
 העשוין כתיקון חכמינו ז"ל דלא כאסמכתא  
 נדלא כסופסי דסטרי

דקניא מן החבר אפרים בן

החבר ל משה חתן דין למרת הענא בת החבר שלמה בתו לאדא יללבת  
 דבתה ומפרש לעיל במנא דעשר להקנא ביה והכל יון וקין

באום ה'ו' א'ג'ר' ב' י'ו'ט'א' ל'א'ו'ט'ו'ח'ט'ט' ס'ס'  
 וביאום י'ק'ו'ט'א' ל'א'ו'ט'ו'ח'ט'ט' י'ו'ט'א' ל'א'ו'ט'ו'ח'ט'ט' ל'ט'

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September 30, 1974

Dr. R. Grayson  
103 W. Main Street  
St. Charles, Illinois 60174

Dear Dr. Grayson:

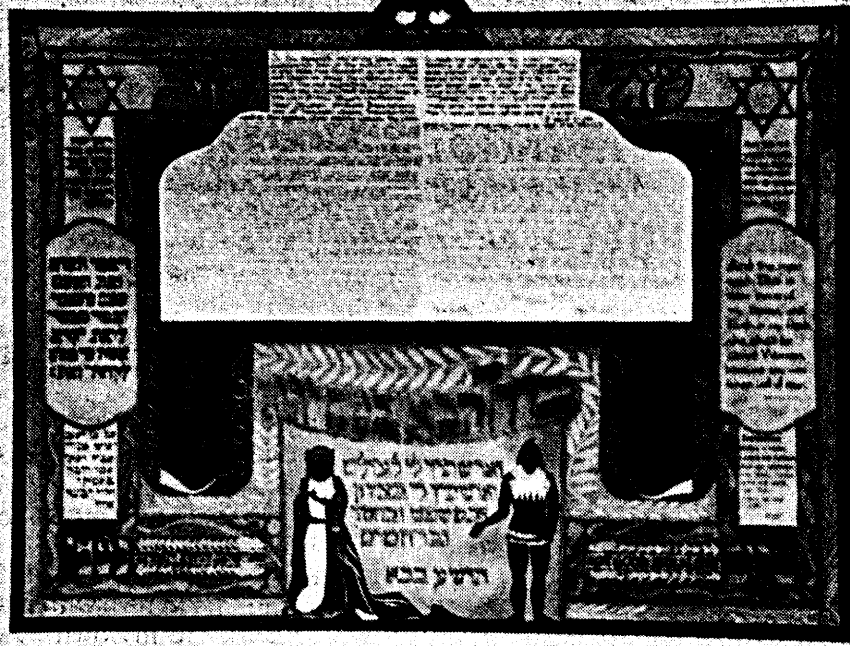
The document that you sent me is most interesting. As you perceived it is a Jewish marriage certificate written in Hebrew and dealing with the marriage of your great grandfather to your great grandmother. They were married in Detroit, Michigan though there is no notation on the certificate to state just where. The dates are dates in the Hebrew calendar. They were married 109 years ago or in 1865. They were married the 16th day of Heshvan. I don't have a calendar that goes back 109 years, so all I can add to this is that it must have been in November or the last days of October. The marriage certificate which in the Hebrew is called Ketubah specifies the Hebrew names of your great grandfather as Ephraim the son of Moshe and your great grandmother as Hanah the daughter of Shlomo. It obligates your great grandfather to support her and treat her according to the laws of Judisum.

It is most interesting in that the Ketubah was obviously specially prepared and written for the couple with their names beautifully printed. Now-a-days the Jewish marriage certificate is "prepackaged" and the names are just written in.

Yours truly,

*Hyman Agress*  
Rabbi Hyman Agress

RHA/ajk



*Ketubah by Steffi Rubin for Stuart and Naomi Dauermann.*

## A Look at Jewish Traditions: The Ketubah

by Zhava Glaser

What is the Ketubah? Literally translated as "writ," or "her writ," the Ketubah has traditionally been a prerequisite for Jewish marriage. It is a marriage contract—a pledge from a Jewish husband to provide for his wife in the event of death or divorce. From the many ancient Ketubot (plural) that have been preserved, we are able to gain valuable information about the society, culture, status, and artistic development of a Jewish community in a specific period or locality.

There is no mention in the Bible of written marriage contracts. Marriage in Biblical times seems to have been by a verbal agreement between the individuals involved. The custom of writing a marriage document may have developed upon the Jews' return from the Babylonian exile. In Babylon, the

scribe had moved into the forefront of Jewish life, as he was able to provide necessary written documents of legal transactions.

The earliest mention of a written marriage contract is found in the apocryphal book of Tobit. Aside from this reference, the oldest extant Ketubah is a fragment of a document found among papyri from Southern Egypt, dating from 440-420 B.C.E. Although not identical to the traditional Ketubah, this fragment is remarkably similar to our modern version in some of its details.

The Talmud devotes an entire tractate to the matter (Masekhet Ketubot). We learn from this source that by 220 C.E., the Ketubah had received an established format. The document begins with the date of the marriage, followed by the location of

the actual wedding ceremony. After these, the names of the bride and groom, as well as those of their parents, are noted. This is followed by various financial stipulations. In Jewish custom, it was the duty of the man to set aside 200 zuz — the amount necessary to sustain an entire family for a year — as a safeguard to his wife against an untimely death, and as a deterrent against a hasty divorce. The dowry was also noted in detail. From this we are able to gain insight into the value systems of the ancient Jewish communities. Signed at the end by two witnesses, the Ketubah became a legally binding document to remain in the woman's possession.

Rich or poor, young or old, it was the duty of the husband to present his wife with a Ketubah. Indeed, such was the importance of the Ketubah that a husband could not dwell with his wife for one hour had he not given this document to her. Thus, Ketubot were carefully guarded, and many ancient ones have been well-preserved to this day.

Although marriage is a serious commitment, it is also an occasion for great rejoicing. Likewise, it became customary for the Ketubah, the marriage document, to be embellished with beautiful artistry, or illumination. In Jewish tradition, the more beauty and effort that was invested in the keeping of a commandment (be it Biblical or Rabbinical), the greater is the honor given to that commandment. Thus, we find many beautifully intricate examples of Jewish art in traditional Ketubot. It is customary to decorate a Ketubah with Biblical or Rabbinical quotations, wishing blessings for the new couple, with appropriate illustrations. One recurrent motif is that of a leopard, an eagle, a hart, and a lion, accompanied by the quotation from Pirkey Avot (Sayings of the Fathers): "Be courageous as a leopard, light as an eagle, fleet as a hart, and strong as a lion, to do the will of thy Father who is in

heaven." (5:23) Often, when the bride or groom had Biblical names, the scenes depicted would be from the life of that Biblical character. Jewish communities throughout the world developed particular styles of Ketubah illumination, and a trained eye is able to distinguish the location, as well as the period, of the Ketubah's origin.

The Ketubah has been a continuing link in Jewish history, a common bond between Jewish people of different times and places. Yet, why is there still a need for a Ketubah today? It is generally no longer recognized as a legally binding document, yet the tradition is continued. There are many modern-day scribes and illuminators who supply the demand of Jewish couples for a personally designed Ketubah. A beautiful work of art, the Ketubah expresses the Jewish people's desire for continuity in the chain of the ages.

Some Jewish Christians also have continued the tradition of the Ketubah, while dismissing its legal implications. By participating in this particular custom of Jewish life, they have retained a historical link to Jewish traditions which enables them to express their commitment to God creatively, as well as to identify with the Jewish community worldwide.



Modern day Ketubah by M. Richman for Jim and Kresha Warnock.