

# MEAH BERACHOT

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## AN 18TH CENTURY MINIATURE BOOK OF BLESSINGS AND PRAYERS

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A fine limited edition  
printed on vellum

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# ONE HUNDRED BLESSINGS

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This is the first *Meah Berachot* manuscript ever to be reproduced on real vellum – an exquisite example of how the Jewish heritage can be passed down for the delight and enrichment of future generations. Our *Meah Berachot* miniature prayer book was handwritten and illuminated in Central Europe during the eighteenth century, and is today in the hands of a private collector in New York. The present facsimile edition makes it available, at last, to connoisseurs of Jewish booklore and culture.

Traditionally, pious Jews seek to recite blessings on at least one hundred



occasions daily. This unique manuscript of the *Meab Berachot* (the title means 'one hundred blessings'), is a compendium of such blessings, each allocated to a time of day or to a special event. It gathers together morning prayers, Grace after Meals, prayers on retiring at night, (*Qiryat Sh'ema*), petitions for the safety of travellers and many other texts to be recited at particular moments – on seeing a beautiful tree, on hearing thunder or on wearing a new garment for the first time. Since it also includes three blessings specifically related to womanly duties (*mitzvoth nashim*) – on breadmaking, ritual bathing and kindling the Sabbath lights – the book was probably commissioned as a special gift to a woman. Such a splendid prayer book may well have been presented to a bride and would doubtless have been treasured by generations of her descendants. Indeed it is a miniature handbook of Jewish life intended for Jews of all ages.

Besides the beautifully written text, the manuscript contains an illuminated title-page and twenty-nine miniature panels illustrating some of the activities associated with the blessings included. Each painting is headed by a cartouche containing the relevant blessing, preceded by directions on how to recite it, written in a more cursive Yiddish script. Three additional

miniatures fascinatingly depict a variety of everyday genre scenes – lighting the Sabbath candles, family mealtimes, tending the garden, putting on new clothes, entering the ritual bath, and even the then common medical practice of bloodletting.

The manuscript measures 40 x 36 mm (1.6" x 1.4") and includes seventy vellum pages. It is bound in its original gold-tooled leather case with handmade silver clasps, bosses and corner plates. Despite the minute size of the book, the script is so clear that all the texts can be read with ease.

This little book is a remarkable example of the revival of Hebrew manuscript illumination in the eighteenth century. At that time, long after the invention of printing, it was recognized that a hand-written and finely illustrated book offered a sense of luxury and respect for religious ritual unmatched since the Middle Ages.



The facsimile edition is a faithful copy of the original manuscript. It has been prepared by the same craftsmen who reproduced in facsimile three other important Hebrew manuscripts - *The Kennicott Bible*, *The Rothschild Miscellany* and *The Barcelona Haggadah*. The publishers, Linda and Michael Falter, have supervised each stage of work in this limited edition to ensure that the highest possible standards are attained. Many scholars and collectors agree that Facsimile Editions issue some of the finest manuscript reproductions in the world.

No effort has been spared in their search for excellence. Every aspect of the original has been meticulously recreated. First, vellum skins of ultra fine quality were selected (the hairside is virtually indistinguishable from the skin side) which were then printed in up to nine colours. The craftsman-made binding of morocco leather is tooled in 23-carat gold and adorned with solid silver clasps, corner-plates and bosses made in one of the last silversmith's ateliers in Milan, Italy. The presentation case, also in full leather and holding both the facsimile and the companion volume, is small enough to be carried in a pocket.

This unique facsimile on vellum, is printed in a strictly limited edition of 550 copies (500 numbered 1-500 and 50 copies 'ad personam' numbered I-L). Once completed, the plates will be destroyed (in compliance with Halachic requirements) and no further copies will be issued.

In accordance with the manuscript owner's wishes, royalties from the sale of this facsimile will be donated to Shaare Zedek Medical Centre, Jerusalem.

The companion volume contains a full description of the manuscript and of the Jewish world from which it comes. It has been written by Iris Fishof, Chief Curator of Judaica & Jewish Ethnography at The Israel Museum, Jerusalem, who also describes each miniature and provides a scholarly analysis of the texts that they illustrate. It is edited by Jeremy Schonfield.



The binding shown here is the original manuscript which has been faithfully copied in the facsimile. Please note the binding is shown larger than actual size.

**ווען ער דונדערט זיכטאן די בימה**  
פריה אהרן אלעזר מלך מעולם  
שכחו גבורתו פלא עולם



**ווען ער פליכט אכטן די אהרן**  
פרוה אהרן אלעזר מלך  
סעלעס זוכר מברית זאמט  
צבר יתו (מין פראמט)



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פרוה אהרן אלעזר מלך מעולם  
שכחו גבורתו פלא עולם



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שכחו גבורתו פלא עולם



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**בימוי מרדכי זאמט**  
בימוי מרדכי זאמט  
על יום המנוח תרשיע בקע להשעיד  
לחוריו וזאמט אית פל דחודים יכו  
מנוח ויעד זמן זמר ועשים ביום און  
בשלישה עשר להרשע שנים עשר  
חלא חרש אדר ושלל לב יבית זאמט  
בהמנה חרבים הפרת אית עזרו  
מקלות אית מושבתו נרשבו  
דוגמולו בראשו נתלו איתו זאמט

קנו על  
העץ

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PLEASE NOTE

The facsimile of the Meah Berachot was made in an edition of 550 copies of which 400 were printed on vellum (US\$ 850) and 150 were printed on a specially milled neutral pH Italian vegetable parchment paper (US\$ 650).



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