

Vatican Library to Loan Rare Maimonides Manuscripts to Israel Museum

Pave The Way Foundation Announces Loan Following Largest Audience of Jewish Leaders to Ever Meet With Sitting Pope

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ROME, Jan. 18 /PRNewswire/ -- Pave the Way founder and President Gary Krupp announced today that the Vatican Library has agreed to lend the rare Moses Maimonides Manuscripts, to the Israel Museum in Jerusalem in September to coincide with the Museum's 40th anniversary.

Mr. Krupp made the announcement at the end of a special private audience with Pope John Paul II, which was attended by some 160 Jewish leaders, rabbis and cantors from the United States and Israel. The special audience -- attended by the largest group of Jewish leaders to ever meet with a sitting pope -- was held to recognize the Pope's efforts during his 26-year pontificate in bringing down the walls of hate, and his contribution towards religious reconciliation with the Jewish people and the State of Israel.

The group attending the audience included Oded Ben-Hur, Israeli Ambassador to the Holy See; Rabbi Adam Mintz, president of the New York Board of Rabbis; Rabbi Shmuel Rene Sirot, Past Chief Rabbi of Europe and France; Rabbi David Lincoln, Chief Rabbi of the Park Avenue Synagogue, New York; Rabbi Shlomo Riskin, Chief Rabbi of Efrat, Rabbi Joseph Arbib of the Great Synagogue in Rome and Gadi Golan, former Director of Religious Affairs for the Israeli Foreign Ministry.

The group also included 12 Cantors, who last night presented a concert at the Great Synagogue in Rome for the delegation and representatives of the Vatican and the Roman Jewish Community.

Pave the Way, whose mission is to bring together men of good will, no matter what religious background, has devoted much time and effort towards working with the officials of the Israeli Government and the representatives of the Holy See in Israel to move for the finalization of fundamental agreements for establishing full diplomatic relations between Israel and the Vatican.

"Our mission calls for many projects of inter-religious action and this mission led to approval for the manuscript loan from the Vatican to Israel. The Vatican has the largest repository of ancient Hebrew manuscripts in the world," said Mr. Krupp, one of three living Jews to be knighted by a Pope to the Order of St Gregory the Great. Mr. Krupp contacted the Israel Museum to solicit their interest in applying to the Vatican Library to initiate a loan of the four rare Hebrew manuscripts, including an illuminated manuscript of Rabbi Moses Ben Maimon Maimonides.

"Through the good offices of the Nuncio, Archbishop Pietro Sambi and the Franciscan custody in Israel and specifically Fr. David Jaeger's advice and help, the Holy See approved the loan for these manuscripts." Farther Jaeger, a spokesman, legal advisor to the Franciscan Custody in Israel and canon law professor said, "The parties are committed to cultural cooperation."

"The work by Maimonides, a 12th century doctor and sage in Egypt, was written by a scribe in the 1400s, 200 years after his death, and is cherished as a one-of-a-kind record that covers the rules of life, such as marriage and other codes of behavior," Mr. Krupp explained.

Pave the Way Foundation

Watykan udostępnia spuściznę wielkiego, żydowskiego myśliciela

Autor: [Anna Węgrzecka](#)

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Prace Mojżesza Maimonidesa, jednego z najbardziej cenionych mędrców i rabinów żydowskich, zostały w tym roku udostępnione przez Watykan uczonym żydowskim. Według rabina Benjamina Blecha, profesora Uniwersytetu Yeschiva w Nowym Jorku, jest to gest, który mocniej zacieśni więzy między Żydami a chrześcijanami.

Przedstawiciele środowisk żydowskich są zachwyceni, że będą mieli możliwość studiowania pism Maimonidesa oraz trzech średniowiecznych manuskryptów. Delegacja około 160 rabinów i kantorów z całego świata, a także amerykańskich osób świeckich, spotka się w tym miesiącu z papieżem Janem Pawłem II aby mu podziękować za lata starań na rzecz zbliżenia pomiędzy chrześcijanami i żydami oraz za to, że dzięki niemu doszło, po raz pierwszy w historii, do wystawienia w Izraelu bezcennych skarbów kultury żydowskiej. Średniowieczne manuskrypty wypożyczono między innymi, dzięki staraniom [Gary Krupp'a](#), który jest jednym z trzech żyjących wyznawców judaizmu uhonorowanych Pontyfikalnym Orderem św. Grzegorza Wielkiego. Według niego Watykan "posiada największy zbiór starożytnych i średniowiecznych żydowskich manuskryptów na całym świecie."

Prace Maimonidesa zostały spisane przez kopistę około roku 1400, w 200 lat po śmierci autora. Są jedynym w swoim rodzaju piśmiennym zbiorem reguł, dotyczących zarówno małżeństwa jak i innych wzorów zachowania. Obecnie Maimonides jest uznawany za jednego z najbardziej wpływowych myślicieli żydowskich, jednakże w minionych wiekach, niektórzy uważali go za heretyka i część z jego oryginalnych tekstów została przez nich spalona.

Wypożyczony manuskrypt zawiera przede wszystkim jego prace nad prawem żydowskim, które stanowiły późniejsze źródło dla prac mających na celu usystematyzowanie całości ustnych i pisanych praw zawartych w Torze i Talmudzie. Do tej pory niewiadomo w jaki sposób pisma te znalazły się w posiadaniu Watykanu. Krupp powiedział, iż manuskrypty są w doskonałym stanie. Zgodnie z zawartym porozumieniem, dwa z wypożyczonych dzieł, włączając kopię Maimonides'a, muszą zostać zwrócone do Biblioteki Watykańskiej po czterech miesiącach, natomiast pozostałe dwa - po upływie pół roku. Według Krupp'a książka Maimonidesa do Muzeum Izraelu w Jerozolimie trafi prawdopodobnie w okolicach września, ponieważ wcześniej będzie wystawiana w innych państwach, między innymi w Niemczech.

W styczniu 2004 roku w "The Jerusalem Post" zostało opisane spotkanie papieża Jana Pawła II z delegacją rabinów żydowskich. Zamierzali oni poprosić Watykan o sprawdzenie, czy nie ma w swoich zbiorach dużej, złotej menory, która stała w Świątyni w Jerozolimie dwa tysiące lat temu. Jednak w związku z tym, iż pokazano im prace Mojżesza Maimonidesa, zmienili decyzję i postanowili nie wspominać o świączniku, ale poprosić o wypożyczenie pism ich średniowiecznego nauczyciela. Udostępnienie manuskryptów odbierane jest również jako wyciągnięcie ręki i sposób na rozwiązanie innych politycznych i społecznych nieporozumień z Izraelem. Wśród nich wymieniać można wykorzystywanie od 1948 roku przez Uniwersytet Hebrajski części klasztoru, którego zwrotu domaga się Watykan czy też problem zwolnień instytucji religijnych od podatku od nieruchomości. Niektórzy członkowie delegacji mają nadzieję, że również inne skarby judajskie, ukryte w Watykanie, z czasem zostaną udostępnione.



10-January-2005 -- EWTNews Brief



VATICAN SHARES ARTIFACTS WITH ISRAEL IN HOPES OF FURTHERING UNITY

VATICAN CITY, Vatican, January 10 (CNA) - Soon, the Vatican will present the works of Moses Maimonides, one of the most influential figures in modern Jewish thought to Israel for scholarly study. With this gesture, the Vatican hopes to continue to bridge the divide between Jews and Christians worldwide.

Later this month, Pope John Paul II will receive a delegation of about 160 rabbis, cantors and American lay Jews who wish to thank the Pope for his years of good will and hard work toward bridging cultural and religious divides between the two faiths. There, they will discuss the display of the priceless artifacts for the first time in Israel.

The Vatican's gesture is being viewed as a major step toward improved relations. According to the South Florida Sun-Sentinel, "The loaning of the manuscripts is also viewed as an offering to resolve other political and social disagreements in Israel, including Hebrew University's partial use of a convent since 1948 that the Vatican wants back, and property tax exemptions for religious institutions."

Gary Krupp, who helped to make the loan happen, reported to the Sun-Sentinel that the benefit of this loan and future gestures like it "would be astronomical."

Maimonides was a 12th century sage from Egypt known for, among other things, the first codification of Jewish law. His writings have greatly influenced both Jewish and Christian thought for centuries.

The one of a kind document, recorded by a scribe in the 1400's is one of the few remaining records of Maimonides after Jewish opponents who considered him a heretic burned much of his original work. During the Middle Ages, the Catholic Church safeguarded many of the major works of western thought, and retains many original documents within its archives.

The Maimonides manuscript is among at least three other medieval manuscripts, which could be on display at the Israel Museum as early as this May.

Krupp was happy to report to the Sun-Sentinel that the Vatican had maintained the documents perfectly.

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Vatican to share holy medieval texts with Israel

By Lisa J. Huriash
Staff Writer
Posted January 7 2005

The Vatican will loan the work of Moses Maimonides, one of Judaism's most celebrated rabbis and sages, to Israel this year in a gesture meant to improve relations between Catholics and Jews.

Jewish community leaders said they are ecstatic to have the opportunity to study the Maimonides document, and at least three other medieval manuscripts.

Rabbi Benjamin Blech, a professor at Yeshiva University in New York, said the gesture by the Vatican "strengthens the bonds between Jews and Christians."

"We are asking a favor, they are showing us a kindness, to borrow these items," he said.

A delegation of about 160 rabbis and cantors worldwide, including Blech, and American laypeople will meet with Pope John Paul II this month to thank him for years of goodwill, including working out an agreement to display the priceless Jewish artifacts for the first time in Israel. Delegation members announced the plan to the South Florida Sun-Sentinel this week.

The work by Maimonides was written by a scribe in the 1400s, 200 years after his death, and is cherished as a one-of-a-kind record that covers the rules of life, such as marriage and other codes of behavior. Opponents who considered Maimonides a heretic burned many of the original works.

Two years ago, a similar delegation requested the Vatican loan out the four manuscripts, each containing hundreds of pages. Three of the books, including one written in 1435, are medieval Hebrew texts written by other authors not immediately identified.

The most excitement, however, surrounds the work of Maimonides, also known as Rambam, the 12th-century doctor and sage in Egypt whose works include the first codification of Jewish law. He is considered one of the most influential of all Jewish thinkers.

The Maimonides manuscript to be loaned includes his "major work on Jewish law, the Mishneh Torah, the source for all subsequent works on the codification of the entire oral and written laws of the Torah and Talmud," Blech said.

There is no known recorded history showing exactly how or when the Vatican acquired the

writings, Blech said.

Gary Krupp, a Jewish man from Long Island who was knighted by the Pope in 2000, made the loan happen, Blech said.

Krupp, honored for his charity work for a hospital in Italy, worked with both religious groups.

"[The Vatican] has the largest repository of ancient Hebrew and medieval Hebrew manuscripts in the world," said Krupp, one of three living Jews to be knighted by a pope.

In gratitude for the Pope's reaching out to Jews by such things as recognizing Israel in 1992, the delegation will meet with the pontiff at the Vatican on Jan. 18 to thank him, Krupp and Blech said. The elderly pontiff grew up in a heavily Jewish town in Poland and has visited a synagogue in Rome.

The Maimonides book has been on display previously, in Germany and elsewhere.

Blech said the works could be turned over to the Israel Museum in Jerusalem as early as May, although Krupp said it may not be until September, to celebrate the museum's 40th anniversary.

Krupp said the manuscripts are written in Hebrew and the Vatican has maintained them perfectly.

The agreement says that two of the manuscripts -- including the copy of Maimonides' -- must be returned to the Vatican Library after being on display for four months; the other two will be on display for six months, according to Krupp.

"The parties are committed to cultural cooperation," Father David Jaeger, a Vatican spokesman, legal advisor to the Church and professor, said in a telephone interview from Rome on Thursday.

An initial Jewish delegation, including Blech, first got to see the manuscripts in 2002 with the aid of Krupp. In January 2004, The Jerusalem Post reported that Pope John Paul II met with Israel's chief rabbis in Vatican City and that the rabbis considered asking to search Vatican storerooms for artifacts such as the huge golden menorah that stood in the Temple in Jerusalem 2,000 years ago. But the rabbis decided not to mention the menorah, which the Vatican has maintained is not there. Instead, they were shown the work of Moses Maimonides and they asked for the documents to be lent to Israel. Rabbis at this upcoming January delegation, as well as Krupp, said it would be counterproductive at this time to discuss other items of Jewish interest being held in the Vatican's vault.

"Things in the future are very promising," Krupp added, however.

The loaning of the manuscripts is also viewed as an offering to resolve other political and social disagreements in Israel, including Hebrew University's partial use of a convent since 1948 that the Vatican wants back, and property tax exemptions for religious institutions.

If the university accedes to the Vatican's wishes and leaves, it could open the door to more treasures being released, Krupp said.

"The benefits will be astronomical," he said.

Jaeger of the Vatican also said he hopes the loan of the work by Maimonides will lead to improved relations.

"The idea is any kind of a positive event might help to create a positive atmosphere," he

said.

Some members of the delegation say the items belong to the Jewish people and are hoping Israel obtains other Judaic treasures hidden in the Vatican.

Krupp observed, however, that the writings are the basis of both Judaism and Catholicism.

"It's just as much a part of their religion as it is of ours."

Staff Researcher Bill Lucey contributed to this report.

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Moses Maimonides
[See larger image](#)

Jan 7, 2005



Krupp with Pope
[See larger image](#)
(Handout photo)



In goodwill gesture, Vatican allowing Jews to view priceless Maimonides manuscripts

By Lisa J. Huriash

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Move seen as gesture to improve relations between Catholics and Jews

<http://www.JewishWorldReview.com> | (KRT) The Vatican will loan the work of Moses Maimonides, one of Judaism's most celebrated rabbis and sages, to Israel this year in a gesture meant to improve relations between Catholics and Jews.

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Maimoides



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