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A Network of Communities: Jews, Communal Boundaries, and Movement in Seventeenth-Century Istanbul

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Non-Muslim communities in the Ottoman Empire, such as Jews and Christians, are each often viewed as comprising a singular entity. This is especially prominent when discussing Jews in the Ottoman Empire and the autonomous nature of the Jewish community vis-à-vis the Ottoman administration. A conceptualization of the Ottoman Jewish population as a homogeneous unit is misleading and carries the risk of marginalizing significant relationships and conflicts within the Jewish population. The Ottoman Jewish population should be considered as a network of smaller communities with shared interests, practices, and confession. These communities involved Jews of varied histories and with different religious practices, and each one was a cog in a wheel that operated with other Jewish populations at the local level, both within the same city and across the empire. While each enclave could stand alone as a cohesive unit of Jewish life, it was mutually influenced by its counterparts and changed as a result of intercommunal interactions. Despite each community's individual cohesiveness, sustained contact and cultural exchange were common between several Jewish communities in the empire. These interactions occurred between the normative expectations of the community and the volatility of everyday life and personal relationships.

This article explores the tension produced when such exchanges occurred at the local community level by examining individual conflicts in the responsa (sing. responsum; an authorized rabbinic decision resolving an incidental conflict) of seventeenth-century Istanbul. The responsa are an especially useful genre for understanding relationships between average,

non-scholarly individuals. These documents were written in Hebrew, a language that was only present in religious rites and intellectual works by the seventeenth century. The questions and answers in the rabbinic responsa capture the occasional but powerful moments that occurred when Jewish communities collided and negotiated through cultural exchange. Exploring individual scenarios in the responsa is necessary for understanding Ottoman Jewish communities as groups of individuals in frequently shifting contact with both external and internal groups. By examining instances in the responsa, I argue that the Jewish population of Istanbul operated as a network of communities, with individuals crossing boundaries and influencing each other in Istanbul and in other cities across the empire.

<u>Movement Between Congregations</u>

Intercommunal interaction could involve voluntary movement of individuals between Jewish communities, as we see in a responsum by Rabbi Yehiel Basan (1550-1625).[1] The responsum presents an example of a community deliberately crossing local boundaries in order to solve a conflict with their original congregation. While the responsum leaves open a range of interpretation as to the outcome of the conflict, it involves an argument that results in the movement of members from one congregation to another, and the source material can be viewed as one instance of a larger trend toward the blurring of communal lines in the seventeenth century. Voluntary movement between nearby congregations lends itself to a study of both the safeguarding and exchanges of varying customs and ritual practices within the Ottoman Jewish world. This particular case also shows the material implications of movement between different congregations.

The responsum discusses a society (Heb. *hevrah*) within a certain congregation dedicated to acts of charity, known in Hebrew as a *hevrat gemilut hasadim* (lit. a "society that bestows

kindness" or "good deeds"). The local congregation (Heb. *kahal*) was the focal point of each Jewish community in early modern Istanbul, with its own prayer spaces and specific religious practices.[2] The society in the question mentioned above, presumably well known by the congregation as it had been long established, made items of silver for the congregation. Although the responsum does not specify the function of such items or how they were connected to acts of charity, it is likely that the objects were of a ritual nature to be used by the congregation.[3] A conflict arose when the charity (*hesed*) society was usurped: "...and behold, now most of the members of that society went to their rest as one, and other members rose after them who possessed that society by force...."[4] A quarrel ensued between the original members and the new members, although the writing here does not make clear why there was another group who wanted control over this society. The original members of the charity society decided to leave their congregation in which the quarrel broke out, "and went to pray in another congregation (*kahal*), and took with them the items of silver in their possession."[5] The question and Basan's answer revolve around the items of silver that the disgruntled members transferred from one community to the other. After the move, the congregants pleaded with the society members to return the items of silver if the members would not come back themselves.

A map of the Ottoman Empire showing territories acquired up to 1683.[6] Among the major centers of Jewish life in the Empire were Istanbul, Izmir, and Salonika.

Here, the act of crossing from one community to the other is performed as a statement in the throes of an argument. Rather than merely viewing intercommunal movement as an isolated process, it should be understood as occurring within a broader context of communal transformations. The responsum leaves out the details and outcome of the communal disruption. The reader is not told whether the new congregation readily accepts the members, or whether the population shift resulted in frustration and confusion in the midst of differing practices and power struggles. While the intricacies of this particular scenario are unknown, we may be able to reach an understanding of such a communal collision by examining Jewish communal dynamics as a whole. Early modern Istanbul Jewish communities were locally organized by congregation (Heb. *kahal*). Each congregation consisted of members with a shared origin.[7] For this reason, there existed in Istanbul alone a plethora of small, distinct Jewish congregations that each had listed members

who frequented their own shared prayer space. For instance, according to Ottoman tax records, the congregation whose members' ancestors arrived from Portugal was distinct from the congregation whose members hailed from Catalonia, and likewise between the Catalan congregation and the "Alaman" (Germany) congregation.[8] Given that the two congregations in the responsum are presumably in proximity of each other, they were probably congregations with separate histories and ancestral origins.

Most of the congregations that had formed in Istanbul by choice (known in Ottoman Turkish as the *kendi gelen*), rather than by forced relocation from another Ottoman city (*sürgün congregations*), were comprised of a majority membership of families that had lived in Istanbul since the fifteenth century.[9] Nevertheless, their members still remembered the homes of their ancestors by means of language and shared customs that had become associated with Jewish practice over time. In terms of language, Jews regularly spoke a Judeo-Spanish language (alternatively called *Judezmo*, or more frequently *Ladino*) within their internal communities. Judeo-Spanish was primarily a Spanish dialect written with Hebrew characters, and it survived in the Ottoman Empire because of the Iberian Jewish population's (*Sephardim*, from the Hebrew name for Spain) becoming the dominant Jewish population in Istanbul and other major Ottoman cities. Other longstanding communities such as eastern European Jews (*Ashkenazim*, from the Hebrew name for the Germanic region) and Macedonian Jews (*Romaniots*) eventually assimilated into Sephardic congregations and often merged their prayer spaces. The fact that the prominent Jewish communities throughout the Ottoman Empire kept Judeo-Spanish rather than adopting a new "Judeo-Ottoman" language speaks to the strong ties of a shared cultural history.

The prayer spaces in particular saw the need for separate congregations with distinct customs due to a long history of diasporic legal rulings. In addition to Jewish law that had

largely been codified in the era of the Talmud (a large codex of Jewish law and narrative to which many rabbis over several generations contributed) and was considered legally binding by all rabbinic Jews, separate customs (Heb. *minhag*) arose throughout the diaspora in the medieval era.[10] These customs applied to a range of Jewish activities, including private practices and the arrangement of texts in the daily prayer book (Heb. *siddur*). In the early modern era, such customs were newly codified into texts such as Joseph Karo's *Shulhan Arukh* (*The Set Table*, 1565) and Moses Isserles's (d. 1572) commentary on the same work.[11] Due to such codification that made accessible reference to customs that had developed gradually and organically by local populations, the customs became more centralized and harder to change. Codification likely also made customs more binding, elevating them to a status almost akin to that of codified law (Heb. *halakha*). Consequently, Jews who had left their homelands in the fifteenth century, either by will or by forced relocation, did not arrive in the Ottoman Empire with the expectation of merging with Jews from other lands and creating a new "Ottoman" community. Rather, each diasporic community bonded together by means of a common tradition of customs, thanks to the innovation of the printing press and a centralization of legally binding customs that intellectual Jews were able to reference through codified manuscripts. For these reasons, large and voluntary transfers of populations between congregations were not common before the seventeenth century, but rather produced difficulties that arose from the molding of different communities, inevitably giving way to the compromising of individual customs. Small and often incidental movements between congregations such as the occurrence in Basan's responsum likely made a significant contribution to the growing acceptance of movement between congregations in the seventeenth century.

The most prominent example of congregational blending of customs in the seventeenth century is the effective

assimilation of the Romaniot Jews into Sephardic communities.[12] The Romaniot Jews in Istanbul were Macedonian by heritage, and preceded the arrival of the Ottomans in Byzantium. Whereas Ottoman Sephardic Jews preferred to speak Judeo-Spanish and eastern European Jews preferred to speak Judeo-German (Yiddish), the Romaniots spoke Greek, the language prior to the Ottoman conquest of Constantinople in 1453.[13] It has been suggested by Minna Rozen that the use of spoken Greek was a possible contributor to the "disappearance" of Romaniot Jewish society because Greek became the language of the conquered subsequent to the Ottoman conquest in 1453. While Christians remaining in the city continued to speak Greek, Rozen notes that Greek is not present among Jewish source material following the late seventeenth century. This suggests a dwindling of Romaniot prominence during the seventeenth century, at the end of which Greek was either not spoken at all or only privately in Ottoman Jewish communities.

The beginning of the seventeenth century gave rise to an increase in movement of congregants between congregations, correlated with a decline in the significance attributed to following one's own custom as opposed to the custom of the surrounding community.[14] Although the society members of Basan's responsum appear to have transferred congregations following a momentary disruption, movement across congregations with differing customs became more common during the seventeenth century.[15] Although Basan's responsum does not explicitly mention the differences that the disgruntled community members may have encountered at a neighboring congregation, it can be inferred from a broader social framework that no two congregations were exactly the same. Rather, each congregation had separate traditions that informed each other by intercommunal movements such as the one viewed in the responsum.

Language as Network

Spoken language, as a primary means of daily communication, is crucial to understanding how communities function with respect to its individual members. While written history of the early modern period leaves this area with sparse information, a responsum by Rabbi Isaac Alfandari (d. ca. 1690) illustrates the use of spoken language between Jews as a specific network of its own, used in this case to conduct business. In this responsum, published in his father's *Maggid MeReshit ([He] Tells from the Beginning)*, a conflict arose from a misunderstanding in a letter between two Jewish businessmen, the sender of the letter living in Izmir and the recipient operating in Bursa.[16] That letter was written in Judeo-Spanish and an excerpt from it is copied in Alfandari's responsum. Its inclusion in the question received by Rabbi Alfandari highlights the concept of language as a method of maintaining a communal network. Responsa were written almost exclusively in Hebrew and were intended to have legal ramifications. Hebrew was generally not used by Jews outside of an intellectual or religious context.[17] Instead, Judeo-Spanish was used for personal letters, accessible documents of a religious nature, and as the spoken language among Jews.

The conflict is described as follows: Reuben, in Izmir, sent to Simeon in "Brusa" (Bursa) a number of articles of clothing, instructing Simeon "not to sell them for less than a *gerush* and a half per cubit" (Heb. *amah*, a biblical measure of length amounting to the approximate length of a forearm) and to send the money to Istanbul (Heb. Kushta) through Levi.[18] Reuben related these instructions to Simeon in a letter that partially contained Judeo-Spanish text, which is quoted in the responsum.[19] At the end of the Judeo-Spanish section of the original letter, Reuben added in Hebrew: "Finally, do according to your wisdom (*hokhmatekha*), for you are a wise (*hakham*) man."[20] Unfortunately, Simeon did not follow Reuben's instructions. Instead of sending it to Istanbul, which he was told to do

because it is closer to Bursa than Izmir and the path to Izmir was more dangerous, Simeon sent the money, along with some goods that he had not sold, to Izmir. The money and goods were stolen along the way, and Reuben lost everything. When Reuben attempted to sue Simeon, Rabbi Alfandari pointed to the sentence at the end of the letter ("do according to your wisdom") to rule in Simeon's favor. This letter is an illuminating instance of a collision between Judeo-Spanish, a spoken language, and Hebrew, a language reserved for formalities.

Since Reuben's letter to Simeon was partly written in Judeo-Spanish, an understanding of that language, its use, and its purpose for speakers of the language are necessary to comprehend ongoing communication between Jews of separate communities in different cities. Judeo-Spanish first arose in medieval Iberia, and consists of Spanish-related grammar and vocabulary written in Hebrew script and incorporating many Hebrew and Aramaic loan words, in addition to a Turkish influence during its later history in the Ottoman Empire. The degree to which Judeo-Spanish can be considered a separate language, rather than merely a dialect or variety of Spanish, has been a question of considerable debate.[21] Nevertheless, Judeo-Spanish was distinct from Spanish as it developed as a uniquely "Jewish language." In the medieval diasporic world, such Jewish languages that incorporated the vernacular of the surrounding non-Jewish world were a common phenomenon that included the likes of Judeo-German (Yiddish), Judeo-French, and Judeo-Arabic as well as Judeo-Spanish. However, as the Jewish populations of Spain and Portugal were expelled from their respective lands in the late fifteenth century (1492 and 1496, respectively), their relocations to Italy, North Africa, and the Ottoman Empire gave way to a sprawling network of Judeo-Spanish speakers across Europe as well as the Islamic world. A connection through language across multiple continents, in addition to the *converso* population who underwent forced conversion from Judaism to Christianity in Iberia, facilitated an extensive trade network

among Jewish merchants (such as Reuben and Simeon in the responsum discussed above).

Why was Judeo-Spanish, a Spanish dialect, spoken in the Ottoman Empire centuries after the Spanish expulsion? Why did Sephardic Jews not adapt a form of Judeo-Ottoman Turkish for their community, especially as Sephardic merchants needed familiarization with Ottoman Turkish to conduct trade in the Muslim world anyway? Scholars of Judeo-Spanish have conjectured a number of possible reasons as to why Judeo-Spanish remained in the Ottoman Empire. Among such reasons are the laissez-faire approach of the Ottoman administration to non-Muslim communities, insular Sephardic living quarters, and the increase of Judeo-Spanish publications by Jewish printing presses.[22] A looming, broader theory relates to the heightened conservatism of post-Expulsion Jews in the face of mass movement across the world.

Analyzing a resistance to change, not despite, but as a *result* of sudden movement, is a core method of understanding the prominence of Ladino in the Ottoman Empire. In contrast to the Romaniot (Macedonian) community, who may have had little psychological pressure or immediate need to preserve spoken Greek, the Jews of Iberia managed to preserve Judeo-Spanish in a foreign land through music, literature, and occasional elements of religious services (including the *meldado*, a commemoration for the dead).[23] The remarkable preservation of the Judeo-Spanish language in the Ottoman Empire and its permeation through every aspect of Sephardic Jewish society is perhaps demonstrated best in the responsum examined above. Although typically written in Hebrew for an intellectual class, we see an abrupt language change from Hebrew to Ladino in order to cite the particular language of the letter sent from Reuben to Simeon. At the same time, the responsum shows that the same letter also incorporated Hebrew, illustrating a limited permeation of Hebrew into daily Ottoman life as well.

Crossing the Temporal and Spiritual Borders to the Holy Land

> Reuben wanted to go that year to the Land of Israel,
> and there were those among the people of his
> house who pleaded with him at length not to go,
> until Reuben uttered these words: "If I do not go this
> year to the Land of Israel, and I remain here until the
> start of the next year (rosh hashana), then I will be
> a Nazirite [an ascetic] from the start of the next year
> and onward, until I go to the Land of Israel." Until
> here were his words….[24]

The remainder of this question focuses on Reuben's Nazirite oath and whether it is binding for only a year or for life, and whether he can now exit the life of a Nazirite. Since the responsum mentions a factor of subsiding the pleas of Reuben's family, Reuben probably did not travel to the Land of Israel in the following year. In his response, Rabbi Yeḥiel Basan declares Reuben freed of his vow to be a Nazirite as long as it is clear that Reuben had subsequently regretted his oath.

It is on the beginning of the question, and Reuben's strong desire to travel that lead to his commitment of asceticism, that I choose to focus. It is unlikely that Reuben had previously ever set foot in Ottoman Palestine, as the road was long and dangerous. Reuben could only imagine the land through the descriptions available in the Hebrew Bible and the Talmud, from the abundance of burial sites traditionally attributed to the Patriarchs to the exact proportions of the inner courtyard of the Temple long destroyed. Nevertheless, many Jews, as well as Christians and Muslims, were willing to make pilgrimage to the Land of Israel throughout history, often late in the traveler's life.[25]

The Ottoman Empire conquered the region of Palestine (historically included in Great Syria) in 1516 under the rule of Sultan Selim I (r. 1512-1520), after which the region became

a major center of both Jewish and Muslim intellectual thought. In particular, the city of Safed in the sixteenth century was home to groups of both Jewish (*kabbalah*) and Muslim (*sufi*) mystics. Jewish teachers such as Moses Cordovero (d. 1570) and Isaac Luria (d. 1572) were instrumental in developing a radical cosmogony that reinterpreted the divine to affect both abstract theology and daily religious practice.[26] Additionally, Luria published an accessible compendium of Jewish laws known as the *Shulhan Arukh (The Set Table)* that was disseminated across the Ottoman Empire and Europe. Following the phenomenon of Luria's success and the mid-sixteenth century growth of kabbalistic discourse in Safed, the city thereafter became known among some Jewish circles as a "holy place."

The title page of Joseph Karo's *Shulhan Arukh (The Set Table)*. This manuscript edition printed in Venice, 1564.[27]

In the seventeenth century, the Jewish community in biblical Israel suffered economic challenges and a weak central government, particularly in Safed. In contrast to rapid growth in the sixteenth and the first quarter of the seventeenth centuries, major cities in the Land of Israel witnessed a dwindling and aging population as well as higher unemployment rates by the end of the seventeenth century.[28] These problems did not only affect Jews, but also Muslims and Christians living in the region, and can be seen as symptoms of broader economic setbacks throughout the Ottoman Empire.[29] Despite this, Jewish communities in Istanbul continued to lend support to the Land of Israel in various ways. Failed by their local governments, the heads of the Jewish congregations in the Land of Israel depended on the rabbis of Istanbul for political assistance in lobbying the viziers or the Sultan himself for their welfare. This lobbying operated through a Jewish network in Istanbul, whereby the most respected rabbis would contact those Jews who worked in the royal court and may have been close to the Sultan's inner circle.[30] Another type of assistance existed in the form of direct funds from Istanbul Jews to Jews in Palestine, consisting of both individual voluntary donations and collected funds raised by whole congregations.[31] Needless to say, concerns of Istanbul Jews for the welfare of Jews residing in the Holy Land necessitated an active and conscious connection. Examining the responsum belonging to Basan, it is likely that Reuben was connected to the system of welfare for the Land of Israel that was popular in Istanbul at this time, either through political activism or regular donations to struggling congregations in that region.

Individual movement from the Jewish community in Istanbul to the Jewish community in Palestine was not solely geographical; it was also universally considered a spiritual movement toward holiness. This spiritual journey was not exclusive to early modern Jews. In an article that describes two seventeenth-century expeditions to Palestine, that of an Arab and

an Englishman, it becomes clear that such individual sojourns were done primarily, if not exclusively, for religious meaning.[32] The written account of Salim Abdallah al-Ayyashi (d. 1679), a Moroccan jurist who decided to travel to Ottoman Palestine following a pilgrimage to Mecca and Medina, refers to his destination as "the holy and blessed land," and describes his dismay at the state of disrepair in which he finds several holy shrines. Al-Ayyashi was notably willing to make the trip despite his poor financial means.[33] Meanwhile, the Englishman, known only as "T.B.," traveled in 1669 with the anti-Catholic agenda of giving a uniquely Protestant description of Palestine. T.B., among a group of fellow Englishmen, focused on traditional holy locations regarding Jesus, such as Mount Cavalry, where Jesus was crucified, and the Sepulchre of Christ.[34]

While both of these travelers returned home, many Jews remained in Palestine once setting foot there. Indeed, many elderly respected rabbis (*talmidei hakhamim*) would travel to Palestine with the intention of dying and being buried in holy land.[35] In this way, men and women, such as Reuben in the responsum above, wished to cross both a spiritual and locational boundary between Istanbul, a temporal center of civilization, and the Land of Israel, a spiritual center that found itself in temporal decline.

Conclusions

Entering a discourse that includes each enclave of the larger Jewish community as a distinct entity that constantly engaged with other enclaves and the surrounding world is necessary in order to accurately understand the role of non-Muslim communities in the Ottoman Empire. This study discusses the complex and changing relationships across identity groups and perceived boundaries. It is apparent from an outside view that the Jewish community, in a singular sense, was subject to the same *dhimmi* law constituting protection of minority religions

throughout the empire. However, the Jewish communities across the Ottoman Empire were many. Each had their own history and, in all probability, nuanced practices from congregation to congregation. On the other hand, while individual communities in Istanbul were typically insular and distinguished by idiosyncratic customs, they shared a network with communities across the Ottoman Empire, from Egypt to Palestine and Syria.

There are many other possibilities of movement and change that warrant serious examination from historians. Widespread documentation within the responsa literature shows Istanbul communities interacting with the Jewish communities in Egypt, who were renowned for their religious scholarship at the time. Another field that warrants further exploration is the role of women in Jewish society. The responsa primarily include men, while women are typically mentioned when a husband or male sibling is affected. While it is true that men had more access to communication across community borders, the role of women should be considered when discussing intercommunal interactions in other senses. Further exploration into the responsa literature, as well as a widening of the range of authors and source material, will undoubtedly shed light on such relationships.

The anonymous individuals highlighted in the responsa were not exceptions to the rule, as made clear when the responsa are read alongside outlines of the broader streams of change in Jewish communities and cultures during the seventeenth century. Although one congregation apparently transformed its membership as the result of a unique conflict between members, many other congregations underwent membership change for a slew of different reasons. In the same manner that Judeo-Spanish was used by two people to conduct a sale, so was it used throughout the Sephardic Jewish world to conduct trade on a large scale. Lastly, just as one man wanted to go to the Land of Israel and was not able, so were many Ottoman Jews yearning to travel to their biblical homeland with increased rates

of success. Indeed, as demonstrated by the examples studied above, the Ottoman Jewish past is a past of local and individual exchanges, boundaries, and adaptations. It is a past of everyday conflicts and personal relations as much as it is the story of a large transnational and multicultural network of communities.

Notes

[1] Aryeh Shmuelevitz, *The Jews of the Ottoman Empire in the Late Fifteenth and the Sixteenth Centuries: Administrative, Economic, Legal and Social Relations as Reflected in the Responsa* (Leiden, the Netherlands: E.J. Brill, 1984), 190.

[2] See "Chapter 9: Cultural Attributes of Ottoman Jewry" in Ben-Naeh, *Jews in the Realm of the Sultans*, 412-442.

[3] "Chapter 2" in Yeiel Basan, She'elot u'Tshuvot (Constantinople: Isaac Basan, 1736), 1b-2b.

[4] Originally in Hebrew, translated by author of this article.

[5] Originally in Hebrew, translated by author of this article.

[6] William R. Shepherd, *Carte de l'Empire Ottoman (Ne Différencie Pas l'Empire Lui-Même Des États Vassaux), 1923*, 1923, in The Historical Atlas by William R. Shepherd, 1923, https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Ottoman.jpg.

[7] Minna Rozen, "Public Space and Private Space Among the Jews of Istanbul in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries," 337-8.

[8] Yaron Ben-Naeh, *Jews in the Realm of the Sultans: Ottoman Jewish Society in the Seventeenth Century* (Tübingen, Germany: Mohr Siebeck, 2008), 83; Yaron Ben-Naeh, *Yehudim BeMamlekhet HaSultanim: HaHevrah HaYehudit BaImperyah HaOt'manit BaMeah HaSheva' Esreh [Jews in the Realm of the Sultans: Ottoman Jewish Society in the Seventeenth Century* (Jerusalem: Magnes Press, 2006).

[9] Minna Rozen, *Public Space and Private Space*, 333.

[10] The Babylonian Talmud was codified in roughly the sixth to seventh centuries AD, after several centuries of writing and editing.

[11] See Adam Shear, "Jews and Judaism in Early Modern Europe" in *The Cambridge Guide to Jewish History, Religion and Culture*, ed. Judith R. Baskin and Kenneth Seeskin (Cambridge University Press, 2010), 140-168.

[12] Minna Rozen, *Studies in the History of Istanbul Jewry, 1453-1923* (Turnhout, Belgium: Brepols Publishers n.v., 2015), 36-50.

[13] Ibid., 39.

[14] Ben-Naeh, *Jews in the Realm of the Sultans*, 381-2.

[15] Ibid., 56.

[16] "Chapter 6" in Hayyim Alfandari and Isaac Alfandari, *Maggid MeReshit* (Constantinople: Naftali ben Azriel and Jonah ben Jacob, 1710), 24b-27b.

[17] See "Cultural Attributes of Ottoman Jewry" in Ben-Naeh, *Jews in the Realm*

of the Sultans, 412-442.

18 The responsa literature generally anonymizes the names of its characters, replacing them with the names of biblical Israelite tribes. See Robert Brody, The Geonim of Babylonia and the Shaping of Medieval Jewish Culture (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998), 189. I have chosen to keep the anonymized names as a matter of convenience for the reader. The *gerush* currency mentioned in the responsum is the Ottoman *kuruṣ*. For more on the history of this currency, see Sevket Pamuk, A Monetary History of the Ottoman Empire (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000). Hebrew translated by the author of this article.

19 The full Judeo-Spanish text can be found in Isaac Alfandari, *Maggid MeReshit*, 24b.

20 Hebrew translated by the author of this article.

21 See Bryan Kirschen, "Judeo-Spanish as a Jewish Language: Linguistic Realities and Ideologies," in *Judeo-Spanish and the Making of a Community*, ed. Bryan Kirschen (Newcastle upon Tyne, United Kingdom: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2015), 2-49.

22 See Tracy K. Harris, "The Survival of Judeo-Spanish for Four-and-a-Half Centuries in the Ottoman Empire" in *Death of a Language: The History of Judeo-Spanish* (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 1994), 121-137.

23 Ibid., 125.

24 "Chapter 10" in Rabbi Yehiel Basan, *She'elot u'Teshuvot [Questions and Answers]* (Constantinople: Isaac Basan, 1736), 5a-5b. The quoted text belongs to the anonymously authored "question" component of the responsum. Hebrew translated by the author of this article.

25 Yaron Ben-Naeh, "Siyuah Shel Kehilat Istanbul LeYehudei Eretz Yisrael BeMeah HaSheva'-Esreh U-Keshirah Imam" ["The Jewish Community of Istanbul and Eretz Israel Jewry in the Seventeenth Century"], *Cathedra for the History of Eretz Israel and Its Yishuv* 99 (1999), 87.

26 See Lawrence Fine, *Physician of the Soul, Healer of the Cosmos: Isaac Luria and His Kabbalistic Fellowship* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2003) for a broad outline of Luria's kabbalistic teachings.

27 Joseph Karo, *Shulchan Aruch* (Venice, 1564), https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Brockhaus_and_Efron_Jewish_Encyclopedia_e9_327-0.jpg. Title page.

[28] Yaron Ben-Naeh, "The Jewish Community of Istanbul and Eretz Israel Jewry in the Seventeenth-Century," *Cathedra for the History of Eretz Israel and Its Yishuv* 99 (Hebrew, 1999), 67.

[29] Ibid., 74.

[30] Ibid., 76.

[31] Ibid., 74-77.

[32] Nabil Matar, "Two Journeys to Seventeenth-Century Palestine," *Journal of Palestine Studies* 29, no. 4 (2000), 37-50.

[33] Ibid., 38.

[34] Ibid., 46.

[35] Ben-Naeh, "The Jewish Community of Istanbul and Eretz Israel Jewry in the Seventeenth-Century," 87.

For the Hebrew text noted as translated in footnotes 4, 5, 18, 20, and 24 see: tinyurl.com/networkofcommunities