

PRAYERS FROM THE GENIZA FOR FATIMID CALIPHS,
THE HEAD OF THE JERUSALEM YESHIVA,
THE JEWISH COMMUNITY AND THE LOCAL
CONGREGATION

S. D. GOITEIN

Public prayers for the welfare of the rulers under whose protection Jews lived are as old as the establishment of the Second Commonwealth. The very edict of the Persian king Cyrus which ordered the restoration of the Temple of Jerusalem contains these words: "So that they may offer sacrifices of sweet savor to the God of Heaven and pray for the life of the King and his sons" (Ezra 6:10). This implies that the prayer for the king expressed the acknowledgment on the part of the Jews that they regarded themselves as his subjects. The Aramaic papyri related to the Jewish military colony of Elephantine betray the same expressions of allegiance to the Persian government.¹ This practice clearly continued within the empires succeeding the ancient Iranian kingdom and also survived the difficulties caused by Roman emperor-worship.²

In Talmudic and early Islamic times we hear little, if anything, about this custom, although its existence is presupposed in the Mishna.³ As far as the Geniza period is concerned, I discussed the matter in my book *A Mediterranean Society, the Jewish Communities of the Arab World*, with a reference to Jacob Katz, *Exclusiveness and Tolerance*.⁴ The students of Jewish

1 A. H. Sayce and A. E. Cowley, *Aramaic Papyri discovered at Assuan*, London 1906, nos. 30, 32, 38. See S. W. Baron, *A Social and Religious History of the Jews*, New York 1952, I, p. 353, n. 37.

2 For this matter cf. Baron, *op. cit.* pp. 244/5, 404.

3 "Pray for the welfare of the government because were it not for the fear it inspires every man would swallow his neighbor alive" (M. Avot 3, 2).

4 S. D. Goitein, *A Mediterranean Society*, II, Berkeley 1971, p. 351; J. Katz, *Bēn Yehudim le-Goyim*, Jerusalem 1960, p. 60, n. 15. See also Seligman Baer's commentary on the Prayer book, *Avodat Yisrael*, 1937 (reprint), p. 231.

liturgy are particularly disturbed by the fact that the text of the prayer, the *hanōtēn teshū'ā*, seems to be absent from the classical sources of Jewish law and ritual. The reason for this absence will become evident through the facts provided in the following: since the public prayer for the authorities, whether gentile or Jewish, possessed a practical aspect, namely, demonstration of the community's allegiance, it had to be adapted to the circumstances and formulated accordingly.

In view of this situation, it is fortunate that the Cairo Geniza has provided us with two examples of such public prayers, the first being very detailed and comprising invocations for a caliph, a head of the Jerusalem yeshiva (then also the head of the Jewish community in the Fatimid period) and the Jewish community at large, as well as the local congregation. The second piece contains only the prayer for the caliph. The first text was discovered and put at my disposal by my eminent friend, Professor Shalom Spiegel of the Jewish Theological Seminary of America, New York, in July 1959.⁵ I copied and translated the text immediately, but hesitated to publish it, because the very form of the document, namely the numerous abbreviations found in it, induced me to assume that other such prayers might be found in the Geniza. However, it was only in summer 1971, when I was working on the identification of the documentary material preserved in the Mosseri Collection of Geniza fragments, that the second piece turned up. Experience has taught me that once you have two examples of the same type, a third may be found soon. Fortunately, quite a number of competent scholars are now at work in Geniza research; therefore I believe it is advisable not to tarry any longer with the publication of what is in hand; hopefully, the texts edited below will be helpful to colleagues in the identification of similar material. I take the jubilee of Dr. Leon Nemoy, that indefatigable veteran of Judaeo-Arabic studies, who has earned the gratitude of all students of Judaism, as an auspicious opportunity for this publication. May he be blessed with all the good wishes expressed in these prayers.

Since the Friday public service in the mosques contained a kind of sermon declaring the congregation's allegiance to the incumbent ruler and his family, it might appear natural that a corresponding demand was made from the members of the minority religions. A charter, issued by the Abbasid caliph al-Muktafi of Baghdad in the year 1138, at the installation of the *catholicos* or

5 When we both worked in the Anderson Room for manuscripts and rare books of the University Library, Cambridge, England. That room has been meanwhile replaced by a number of other structures. But the largeness of that beautiful place was conducive to scholarly cooperation.

head of the Nestorian Church, concludes with these words: "Set up prayers and invocations for the Commander of the Faithful as a token of your gratitude and a sign of your allegiance." It has been rightly concluded that the same "sign of allegiance" was expected or demanded from the Jewish Exilarch, the *Rosh ha-Golq*.⁶

Yet, one wonders whether the *date* of the *catholicos* patent has not something to do with its content. The 1120's—1130's were the time of the largest expansion of the Crusaders' conquests. Edessa, a fortified city situated in the heart of Mesopotamia and as near to Baghdad as to Jerusalem, was then in their hands. Under such circumstances it might be expected that the Muslim rulers, whether in Baghdad or in Cairo, became a bit more watchful as to the reliability of their non-Muslim subjects. In other words, the ancient institution of the prayer for the government, which had perhaps fallen somewhat into desuetude among Christians and Jews under Islam, was now strictly enforced. This impression seems to be confirmed by the dates of the Geniza finds discussed in this paper.⁷

The first document is dedicated to the Fatimid caliph *al-Āmir bi-ahkām Allāh* ("He who orders the fulfillment of God's commandments"), who ruled Egypt and its region during the years 1101—1131, and to the Gaon Maṣliāḥ b. Solomon ha-Kohen, head of the Jerusalem yeshiva, or Jewish high council, which then had its seat in Cairo.⁸ Maṣliāḥ was recognized as head of the Jewish community of the Fatimid state in 1127. Thus our document must have been

6 See Baron, *op. cit.* (n. 1 above), V, pp. 6 and 293, n. 2.

7 The Christians and Jews did not represent a military threat. Therefore the Muslim government could permit itself, in normal times, not to care what they did in their churches and synagogues. The Muslims, however, often revolted against their rulers (already the third caliph, Othman, was openly attacked while speaking from the pulpit in the mosque of Medina and was soon afterwards assassinated). Therefore the Muslim "sermon of allegiance" during the solemn Friday service soon became an obligatory element of the religious ritual. The Christians were dangerous only as a potential fifth column, and it was common in Islam to impose on all non-Muslims, including the Jews, the same obligations and restrictions.

8 S. Lane-Poole, *A History of Egypt in the Middle Ages*, London 1914, p. 162 (I do not agree with Lane-Poole's translation of the Caliph's title).

About Maṣliāḥ see, for the time being, J. Mann, *The Jews in Egypt and Palestine under the Fatimid Caliphs*, New York 1970 (reprint), especially I, pp. 220—221 (on both pages, 1027—1038 is a misprint for 1127—1138); II, 274—277. The Geniza is very rich in material on this period. I am happy to learn that Dr. Mark R. Cohen, who has so successfully treated the preceding period of Egyptian and Palestinian Jewish history, that of the Nagid Mevōrākh and his family, is taking up a study of the stewardship of Maṣliāḥ. For the meaning of the term *yeshiva* in those days and the position of the Palestinian Gaon, see *A Mediterranean Society*, II, pp. 5—17.

written between 1127 and 1131.⁹ The second piece, as stated before, contains solely the prayer for the caliph, namely, al-Āmir's successor, *al-Ḥāfiẓ li-dīn Allāh* ("the Guardian of the Religion of God"), who ruled during the years 1131–1149.¹⁰ Thus, the two documents are almost contemporary with the installation of the leader of the Nestorian Church of Baghdad in 1138 and, as long as no evidence to the contrary is found, the surmise that this coincidence was not fortuitous, and that it is to be explained by the encroachment of the Crusaders, might be upheld.

Moreover, a definite progress in government supervision is to be observed from the first to the second Geniza document. The prayer over al-Āmir is in Hebrew and styled in rather general terms. The second is in Arabic and composed of Muslim religious phrases which — *prima facie* — no Jewish dignitary would have introduced into a synagogue service. This, too, seems to indicate that our documents reflect a newly aroused interest of the Muslim governments in the declarations of allegiance of their non-Muslim subjects.

My statement that the first prayer is written in Hebrew needs a slight qualification: the two first words are in Aramaic: *umeṣalliyīn anan*, "And we pray." This, I assume, was in the Sassanid and early Islamic periods the beginning of the prayer for the government. Similarly, the prayer for the Gaon starts with four Aramaic words, "To the good memory of those whose souls are at rest," an indication that the prayer for the leader of the community was introduced by a memorial service for his forefathers not only in Geniza times, but centuries before.¹¹

When was the prayer for the caliph recited? Perhaps every Saturday morning, but this is doubtful. On the free space and on the reverse side of the first document liturgical compositions destined to be chanted on the Day of Atonement are written. Therefore, I assume that the elaborate prayer contained in that document was recited on the most festive occasion of the year, the eve of the Day of Atonement, as is still common practice in the Oriental and Sefaradi (but not the Ashkenazi) congregations.

I shall now provide the text and translation of the prayers, followed by a few considerations which they evoke. The prayer for Maṣliḥ's ancestors and

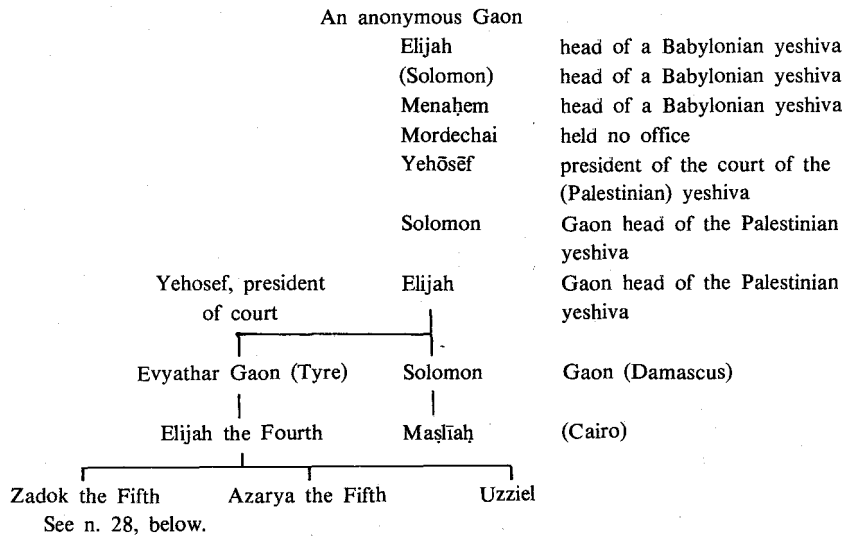
⁹ See the data in Mann, *op. cit.*, II, p. 274. There are more.

¹⁰ Lane-Poole, *op. cit.* (n. 8 above), p. 166.

¹¹ The institution of the memorial services in Geniza times is treated in the third volume of my *A Mediterranean Society*, subtitled "The Family," 1978, pp. 4–6. For bibliographical hints to memorial lists, see *A Mediterranean Society*, II, p. 554, nn. 28–31.

relatives included in the first document needs some preliminary discussion. J. Mann, *Jews in Palestine and Egypt, etc.*, II, pp. 62–63, edited three such lists concerning Maṣṣīāḥ’s family, and there is no doubt that those lists, too, were used for memorial services. Mann’s list A is practically identical with the genealogy provided in our document, except that there, between the seventh and eighth forefathers of Maṣṣīāḥ mentioned in our prayer, a Gaon named Solomon is inserted.¹² The first ancestor known by name was an Elijah Gaon, but another head of a yeshiva seems to have preceded him, whose name had not been preserved. Thus three (or four) ancestors of Maṣṣīāḥ had been heads of a yeshiva in Iraq-Babylonia (*yeshiva shel gola*); after them one, Mordechai, obviously had not obtained any office. With him we are already on solid historical ground. The family had meanwhile emigrated to Palestine; Yehōsēf (for Joseph), Mordechai’s son, had become president of the court of the Jerusalem yeshiva, and his son Solomon, followed (after an interval of about

12 For easier orientation, Maṣṣīāḥ’s genealogy according to TS NS 110, f. 26, the first document edited here, and British Museum Or 5549 (J. Mann, *op. cit.* [n. 8 above], II, pp. 62–63) are reproduced:



forty years) by his son Elijah and, later, his grandson Evyathar, was the first of three Gaons presiding over the Palestinian yeshiva in Jerusalem, and, as of 1072 approximately, in Tyre on the Lebanese coast. Evyathar's brother Solomon headed a yeshiva in Damascus and the latter's son, the Gaon Maṣṣīah, obtained in 1127 the *reshūt* as generally recognized head of the Jews of Egypt and its region.

Evyathar and his nephew Maṣṣīah had bad luck with their sons. Elijah, Evyathar's son, died after having attained only the rank of "fourth" in the Palestinian yeshiva. He is listed as such in Mann, *Jews etc.*, II, p. 63, A, and in our document in a postscript. There was a good reason for this addition. Maṣṣīah had two sons, but both must have died before our prayer was written, for it is entirely out of question that his sons should have been omitted from the good wishes for life and welfare, had they been alive at that time.¹³ The only possible successors of Maṣṣīah in his family were the sons of his first cousin, Elijah the Fourth, wherefore they are enumerated in the postscript. I have not seen their names in another source.

The first document edited below is preserved in one of the boxes of the New Series of the Taylor-Schechter Collection of the University Library, Cambridge.¹⁴

תפילה ציבורית על הח'ליף אלֶאֱמֶר בְּאַחֲכָאֵם אֵלֵלָהּ, עַל אַבּוֹתָיו שֶׁל
הַגָּאוֹן מַצְלִיחַ בֶּן שְׁלֹמֹה הַכֹּהֵן, עַל מַצְלִיחַ עַצְמוֹ, וְעַל כָּל קְהַל יִשְׂרָאֵל
TS NS 110, f.26

- 1 בש(מך) רח(מנא)
נשיא בני קדר מולאנא وسيدنا الامام
- 2 ומצליין אנן לחיי אדוננו המ(לך) הג(דול) אלמאם
- 3 אלאמר באח(כאם) אללה אמיר אלמו(מנין) ובניו זרע המ(לוכה)
- 4 וכל בני המל(וכה) העוזרים למל(ך) מאהבה והעוש(ים)
- 5 מלח(מה) לפ(ניו) מא(ויביו) המ(קום) ב(רוך) ה(וא) יעזרם ויעזרנו יכניע
- 6 קמיהם וקמינו יתן בלבותם לעשות טובה עמ(נו)
- 7 ועם כל עמו בית יש(ראל) ואמ(רו) אמן
- 8 דוכרן טב לניחי נפש(הון) לזכר גאוני ישראל וראשני
- 9 ישיבותי/הם ואבות בחי דיניהם וחכמיהם

13 On Maṣṣīah's two sons of tender age, see Mann, *op. cit.* (n. 8 above), I, p. 221; II, p. 274, section 1.

14 Parentheses show the parts of a word or sentence which are not written out in the original but alluded to by a dot over the last letter written before the omitted parts. Brackets include words or parts of words destroyed in the original. Slanted strokes indicate that a letter is written above a line. Pairs of slanted strokes refer to words written above the line.

- 10 אדיריהם אשר נהגו שררה בעם יי צבאות
 11 כהוגן וכשורה //עד// (כבוד) ג(דולת) ק(דושת) מ(רנו) ור(בנו) אדו(ננו) גאו(ננו)
 12 וכגן מור אדו(נו) אליהו הכהן ראש הישיבה שלגולה ז"ל
 13 וכגן מור אדו [מנחם] הכהן [ראש ישיבה] שלגולה ז"ל
 14 וכגן מור אדו מרדכי כהנא רבא ז"ל
 15 וכגן מור יהוסף הכהן הצדיק בית דין צדק ז"ל
 16 וכגן מור אדו שלמה ראש ישיבת גאון יעקב ז"ל
 17 ושני חמודיו יהוסף הכהן הצדיק אב בית דין של יש(ראל) ז"ל
 18 וכגן מור אדו אליהו ראש ישיבת גאון יעקב ז"ל
 19 וכגן מור אדו אביתר הכהן ראש יש [גאון יעקב ז"ל
 20 זכ(ר) חס(יד) זכ(ר) ישר זכר ענו זכר שפל רוח
 21 כגן מור]
 22 שלמה ה[כהן
 23 [ביעקב הקדוש והט(הור) מטה]
 24 [נחמד במ(לון) * נחשק במשכנות מבט(חים)
 25 חהא] מנו(חתו) שאנ[נות] תהי עמידתו בקרוב ילוה עליו
 26 הש(לום) ועל מש(כבו) יהי שלום והחיים והש(לום) והכבוד
 27 ו[ארלי(כות) הימ(ים) ומלאוי כל משאל ומזל גבוה וכללי
 28 הברכות הערו(כות) והגנ[אמ(ות) על יד כל נביא וחווה כולם
 29 יחולו על ראש כגן מור אדו גאו מצליח הכהן
 30 הגדול מאחיו ראש ישיבת גאון יע(קב) המכובד והמיו(קר)
 31 האלהים יברכהו ירוממ(הו) יגדלהו ינסיכהו יעזרהו
 32 יאמצהו ויאריך ימ[יו] בטוב ושנותיו בנעימים
 33 יתמיד ממשלתו ע[ד] ביאת הממשלה הראשו(נה)
 34 ממ] [בימיו תושע יהודה
 35 יש(ראל) ישכון לבטח וג[ם] יכתירהו בכתר עוז מלפ(גיו)
 36 ויתן חנו בעיני המלכות ובעיני השרים
 37 ובעיני כל רואיו גם יברך אלהינו את כל [ראשי ישראל]
 38 ישראל //וראשיהם// וחכמיהם ודייניהם וחביריהם ונקובי
 39 השם שבהם אשר במקום הזה ובכל

עמודה ב'

- 1 מקומות מושבותם אשר נדו שמה
 2 בגלותם וגלו ממקום חמדתם ושכנו
 3 בארץ לא להם במזרח ובמערב בצפון
 4 ובים ישרוק לקבצינו יקצר צרתינו
 5 יקיים נואם אשרקה להם ואקבצם כי פדי(חים)

- 6 יראה בענינו יזכר לנו ברית אבותינו להועילינו(!)
 7 לקיים וזכרתי להם ברית ראשו(נים) אש(ר) הוצ(אתי) או(תם) מא(רץ)
 8 מצ(רים) לעיני הגו(ים) אני י' אלהיהם יושיענו תשועת
 9 עול(ם) לקיים נואם יש(ראל) נושע בי' וג' ויברך
 10 אלהינו בכל הברכות הנאמות מפי כל נבניא
 11 וחווה את כלל הקהל הק(דוש) הזה מגדולם ועד
 12 קטנם האלהים יברכם ישמ(רם) יעז(רם) יענם טר]ם
 13 יקראוהו יקיים עליהם קרא דכתיב והיה
 14 טרם יקראו ואני אע(נם) חברים לכל יש(ראל) ואמ(רו) אמ]ן
 (הפיסקה הבאה, שורות 15—19, מקומה בשורה 26 של העמוד הקודם אחרי המלים "יהי שלום" ולפני
 "והחיים והשלום", אך עיי' בהסבר להלן.)
 15 חמדתו כגק מרנו ורבנו אדו אליהו הרביעי בחבו(רה)
 16 זכר צדיק (לברכה) ושלשת חמדיו צדוק
 17 הכהן החמישי וכגק מר ורבנו עזריה
 18 הכהן החמישי ואחיו עזיאל הכהן
 19 סגן הכהנים והחיים והשלום

TS NS Box 110, f. 26

In (Your name, o) Me(rciful).

And we pray for the life of our lord, the g(reat) k(ing), // the prince of the sons of Kedar,¹⁵ our master and lord, the Imām¹⁶ // al-Āmir bī'ah(kām) Allāh, the Commander of the F(aithful) and for his sons, the r(oyal family), and all persons of his e(ntourage), who serve the k(ing) out of love and wa(ge) w(ar) f(or him) against his e(nemies). May G(od) — m(ay He be) p(raised) — help them and help us; may He subdue their foes and ours; and may He fill their hearts with kindness t(owards us) and towards all His people, the house of Is(rael), and let us s(ay) Amen.

Blessed be the memory of those whose souls rest in peace, namely, the Gaons of Israel, the heads of their yeshivas, their chief judges, their scholars and public leaders, who have ruled over the people of the Lord of Hosts in fairness and integrity prior to our present lord and Gaon, namely...¹⁷

15 Name of a bedouin tribe mentioned in the Bible (e.g., Ps. 120:5, Cant. 1:5), designating Arabs or Muslims in medieval Hebrew.

16 Literally, leader (in prayer), one of the official titles of the caliph. The two last words are written in Arabic letters for the simple reason that these take less room than the Hebrew ones. The writer had forgotten these words and could not otherwise squeeze them in. Not unusual.

17 Here follow the names of Maṣliḥ's forefathers and other members of his family, discussed before. While the names of the more remote ancestors are followed merely by the words "of

And may life, p(ease) and honor, longevity and fulfillment of all wishes, an auspicious star¹⁸ and all of the blessings pr(onounced) by the prophets be granted to his h(onor), g(reatness), and h(oliness), (our) m(aster and) t(eacher), our lord and Gaon Mašlīḥ, the High Priest, the head of the yeshiva “Geon Ya‘āqov,” the honored and revered. May God bless him and make him great¹⁹ ...may He prolong his rule until the coming of the f(irst) kingdom.²⁰ In his time Judah will be saved and Israel dwell securely.²¹ May God crown him with a crown of might. May He grant that he find favor in the eyes of the king and of the great and of all that see him.

May our God bless also all Israel, // its heads,²² // scholars, judges, learned men and notables,²³ here and in all the settlements to which they have fled in their exile, when they were forced to leave the land of their love and dwell in countries not theirs, in East and West, North and South.²⁴ May He call out to gather us in and shorten our sufferings, to fulfill that which is written...²⁵

May our God bless everyone in this h(oly) congregation, old and young, with all the blessings pronounced by the prophets; may He bless, k(eep) and h(elp) them, and may He answer them, before they call, as it is written, “Before they call, I shall answer them,”²⁶ together with all Is(rael),²⁷ and let us s(ay) Amen.

Here follows the postscript concerning Mašlīḥ’s cousin Elijah the Fourth and his three sons which, the writer indicates, should be inserted immediately before

blessed memory,” Solomon, Mašlīḥ’s father, receives a special prayer asking for God’s grace, and the granting of peace and quick resurrection.

- 18 Astrology and astronomy were accepted as scientific truth. But God, of course, arranged the stars at his wish (Ps. 8:4).
- 19 Another five similar wishes, especially for a long and pleasant life, as before.
- 20 Namely that of King David, which is identical with that of the Messiah. This is a quotation from Mic. 4:8.
- 21 Jer. 23:5.
- 22 A reference to persons from the house of the Babylonian Exilarchs, who styled themselves Rosh Gola. See the Comments.
- 23 Literally, those that bear a title. Actually any Jewish person of consequence bore one or several honorific by-names, *laqab* in Arabic, *shēm* in Hebrew, conferred on him by a Gaon or any other Jewish authority. Those connected with the court (as officials, physicians, conveyors) also received Arabic titles.
- 24 “South” is rendered by *yām* as in Ps. 107:3. See my *Bible Studies*, Tel-Aviv 1963 (in Heb.), p. 160.
- 25 Quoting Zech. 10:8, Lev. 26:45, and Jer. 45:17.
- 26 Isa. 65:24.
- 27 This translates *havērīm le-khol yisrā’ēl*, which is probably the original and correct form of the phrase *havērīm kol yisrael* in the prayer on the Sabbath preceding a New Moon.

the blessings for Maṣliāḥ. To be sure, Elijah was the son of Evyathar, who is mentioned seven lines before, not of Solomon, Maṣliāḥ's father. But such misleading references are the rule in memorial lists rather than the exception. These lists were not written for us, or indeed for any reader, but the cantor who would recite them jotted them down in order to support his memory. He was, of course, familiar with the relatives of his Gaon.²⁸

Comments

The prayer for the caliph surprises one by the simplicity of its wording, as compared with the profuse blessings showered on the head of the yeshiva. There is an additional twist in that section of the prayer: "May He help them *and us*, may He subdue their foes *and ours*, etc." The caliph deserves to be included in a Jewish public prayer in his role as protector of the community.

To be sure, the prayer for the head of the yeshiva had a long history behind it. The prayer for the Gaon Joshia (ca. 1015), also found in the Geniza, is clearly an adaptation of an earlier, Aramaic, version.²⁹

Secondly, the prayer for the Jewish people at large and, in particular, its leaders, is remarkable for its anonymity. No mention is made of a Rosh Gola. Perhaps no one was in office, i.e., was officially recognized by the government, at that time. I assume this, because in the rather detailed report on messianic troubles in Baghdad in 1121 (published by myself) no mention is made of one, while other Jewish notables represented the community at the court.³⁰ On the other hand, in or around 1134 a Persian Jew, claiming to be a cousin of the Rosh Gola and of royal blood, visited the Jewish communities of Yemen and was recognized by them as their religious leader, while the prayer for Maṣliāḥ, which had been in vogue there before, was discontinued.³¹ Thus the prayer for

28 The two first sons both bear the title "Fifth." This can be explained only by the assumption that the firstborn had died and the second received his title. In this case, however, a blessing over the dead would have been obligatory. I guess the scribe erred and the second son was "Sixth" or "Seventh."

29 Mosseri L-199, ed. J. Mann, *op. cit.* (n. 8 above), p. 439 = *HUCA*, 3 (1926), 265. The phrase *mehawwēr lewushēnū*, "he who makes our clothing white," *ibid.*, l. 7, is a patent Aramaism.

30 "A Report on Messianic Troubles in Baghdad in 1120-21," *JQR*, 43 (1952), 57-76.

31 See my paper "Yemenite Jewry between the Egyptian Gaonate and the Rosh ha-Gola of Babylonia," *Sinai*, 33 (1953), 225-237 (in Heb.). New material on this affair has been found meanwhile, and a number of statements made in that article must now be revised. See my book, *Ha-Tēmānīm*, Jerusalem 1982, ch. 3.

Kelal Israel was phrased in the most general terms so that no one should be offended.

Finally, an intense messianic spirit pervades the entire document. Each of the sections (for the Gaon, the community at large and the local congregation) concludes with Bible quotations proclaiming the good tidings of the ingathering of the people and the re-establishment of the ancient kingdom.³²

Under these circumstances it is not surprising that the government wished to streamline the communal prayers of the non-Muslim in line with Islamic concepts. The text, of course in Arabic, provided by it, was short. It was to be followed by a prayer in Hebrew comparable to one read above.

תפילה על הח'ליף אל-חאפץ לדין אללה

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- 1 צלואת אללה וברכאתה
 - 2 ונ/ו/אמי זכו/א/תה ואפצל
 - 3 תחיתתה וסלאמה עלי
 - 4 מולאנא וסידנא אלאמאם
 - 5 אלחאפץ לדין אללה
- (שוליים) אמיר אלמומנין

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(May) the prayer of God and His blessings,³³ His ever-growing benefactions, His greetings and call of Peace (be) upon our lord and master, the Imām al-Hāfiz li-dīn Allāh, the Commander of the Faithful.

The text is in Hebrew characters, but was probably dictated to a Jewish cantor by a Muslim official.

32 It is remarkable that none of the three sections expresses the expectation of the erection of the Temple, which is normally connected with messianic expectations.

33 The Bible reader is reminded of Ps. 72:15: "May He always pray for him [the King] and all day long bless him." The standing Islamic blessing for the Prophet Muhammad is: "May God pray for him and greet him with Peace." The Fatimid caliphs, who pretended to be Muhammad's descendants, claimed the same blessing for themselves.