

# Communal

Public Prayer for the Fatimid Caliph al-Amir, for the Predecessors  
of the Contemporary Head of the Jewish Community, for Him and  
the Community Itself

T.-S. N.-S. 110, No. 28

(CA 1130)

(The caliph al-Amir bi-ahkam Allah died in 1131, while the Gaon Magliah, the head of the Jewish community in the Fatimid empire, mentioned here, appears in dated documents as from 1127. Thus the prayer translated below must have been written down between 1127 and 1131.)

This is the only copy of a Jewish prayer for a Muslim ruler found thus far in the Cairo Geniza. However, as most of its text is given in abbreviations (which are sometimes hard to complete), such prayers must have been a regular feature of the synagogue service.

The leaf on which the prayer is written also contains a number of religious poems to be recited on the Day of Atonement. Thus it is possible that the prayer translated below was also destined for that day. It is still customary, but only in Sephardi and Oriental congregations, to recite a prayer for the Government at the beginning of the evening service (Kol Nidre) of the Day of Atonement.

The most remarkable feature of this document is the conspicuous absence of a prayer for the official head of world Jewry at that time, the "Head of the Diaspora," who had his seat in Bagdad. This was not due to the enmity between the Fatimid and Abbasid caliphs (see p. ) but to inter-Jewish rivalries. The Gaon Magliah was a scion of the