

אל: נהראי בן נסים זלל / פוסטאט)
מן: הלאל בן חסן חזנבלה (אלכסנדריה)
תאריך: 1062 (מ'אצ'א)

- (1) כש
(2) קר עלם אללה בלת קדרחה מא עלי קלבי מן
(3) תאכיר כחאבי ען מולאי אלחבר נט רח וכנת
(4) מוגוע אלנפס כחיר מן דל סכב ומא עלמה
(5) לה ככר וקלת אלוקאת רדיה וענרנא
(6) הונא מן יחהמנא אנא לנכאחכ מולאי
(7) אלרייס שז ואמור צעבה אלי אן וצל מנה
(8) כחאבה כאלעזא פי אלפועה אלרי אפתגענא
(9) פיה חלא מנוחתו ככור ונקול מי יאלר
(10) לו לא תלשה כלוך ריין האמל הלי
(11) שזק לזלזנו פאסל כורא עולם אן יצבר
(12) קלובנא כערה וזעפת קלובנא אן עזים
(13) ונתן נסאל רכיבו שז אן לא יכלינא מן אלדעא
(14) וכחאבה אן תכון לה וככרמה אן בכרמה

ראש העמוד:

כהא / פאני לאחשרף / וקר אכר רב עואף / אלמפתאח דפעאח /
ורכר לי אן הונא / עקר קדסה ובא /

עמוד ב':

- (1) ירפעחא לאכו ערוס כער אן כאח לילתין
(2) ומרכב מוסוק ומא עמל שי ולוא אעלמחני
(3) ולא לי וכר פי אלכחאב לכנת אפעל לך
(4) מא אקרר עליה ושלום חכץ הצרחן
(5) עני כאפצל אלסלאם וקר וצל אלערוס מן
(6) אלמהריה ואנכסרת המאמה לכן עאצם ומאר
(7) לאצחאבנא פיהא שי כחיר ווצל פי אלערוס רב
(8) עטא בן ערדמון קראבה בן אלרקי ודכרו ען רחמו
(9) אנה סאר אלי אלשאם ואכי יכצן כאלסלאם
(10) ונתן גמיע נקבל ובה סיידוי אכי סער אחיאה אללה

שוליים:

ומא עלקה הדח אלכטיין אלא ואנא מסחעבל

כתובת:

הצרה מולאי אלחבר רכנא נהראי <
כל נסים זלל
אטאל אללה בקאה ואראם עדה >

same writer to מן תלמידה הלאל
N (not listed) in בן חסן חזנבלה
TC NSJ 327

To: Nahray b. Nissim (Fustāt)

From: Hilāl b. Hasan (Alexandria)

Date: Probably 1062

- 1) In your name.
- 2) God, may His power be exalted, knows my concern
because of
- 3) the delay in the letter to me of my lord, the
haver, may God preserve him. I was
- 4) greatly distressed for this reason. I had no
- 5) news about you, and I said to myself, times
are indeed bad. There are people
- 6) here who reproach me for having been in correspondence
with my lord
- 7) the Head of the Academy, may God preserve him, and
for other unpleasant things, until your letter
- 8) arrived with condolences for the great loss we suffered
- 9) by his death. May his rest be an honorable
one. And I say: "Who will say
- 10) unto Him. What are you doing? Blessed is the
Judge of truth.
- 11) He left ^{to} our Rabbi ~~his~~ life." I ask of the
Creator of the world that he give comfort
- 12) to our hearts for the future, for our hearts were
very greatly saddened.

- 2 -

- 13) We ask that our Rabbi, may God preserve him, not withhold his prayers from us.
- 14) Please let us know if you have any request, or if we can be of service to you in any way.

Margin:

For, I would indeed be honored. Rabbi
^cAwad has taken the key several times (incidentally, he mentioned to me that his marriage took place here), and,

Side IF:

- 1-2) after having been detained for two nights on a loaded boat, he came to hand it over to Abū ^cArūs. He did not accomplish anything. Had you informed me (there was, 3-4) however, no reference to me in your letter), I would have tried, to the extent that I am able, to take care of it for you. Shalom. May your excellency 5-6) accept my most sincere greetings. The ship Al-^cArūs has arrived from al-Mahdiya. The Hamāma belonging to Ibn ^cAṣim was shipwrecked which resulted in severe losses to our 7-8) colleagues. Rabbi ^cAṭā' b. ^cArdamūn, a relative of Ibn al-Raqqī, arrived on the Al-^cArūs and he mentioned that Raḥmū travelled to Syria.

Coreligionists

- 3 -

9-10) My brother sends you his regards, and all of us kiss the countenance of my lord Abū Sa^cd, may God give him long life.

Margin:

This note is so brief only because I am in a great hurry.

Side I

Line 3 ra'khīr kitābī 'an mawlay --

this could be understood either as: "the delay of my letter to my lord," or, "the delay of a letter to me from my lord." From the context, it would seem that the latter translation is preferable.

Line 3 Mawlay al-ḥaver naṭ(rei) raḥ(mānā) --

It should be noted that Nahray is addressed here only with the title al-ḥaver. Presumably, then, the epithet gādōl ha-yeshīva was one that he acquired at some time post-dating this letter which, on other grounds (see below), can be dated to 1061-62.

Line 4 dal sabab -- the abbreviation of dhālika to dal is somewhat rare, although it is attested in other Geniza texts. It is apparently a merger of colloquial dā (דא) with the definite article of the following noun; see, Blau, The Emergence and Linguistic Background of Judaeo-Arabic, Oxford, 1965, pp. 66-67 and references there.

Line 5 al-awqāt radiyya -- This phrase provides indirect support for dating this letter in 1062 when the head of the Jerusalem academy, Daniel b. ^cAzariya;

died. In that year, times were indeed bad and unsettled because of the outbreak of fighting between Sudanese, Turkish and Berber contingents within the Fatimid army. (See, S. Lane-Poole, A History of Egypt in the Middle Ages, p. 145; Ibn al-Athir, al-Kāmil, Maqrizi,

The succeeding head of the Jerusalem academy, Elijah b. Solomon ha-Kohen, died in 1083 -- a time which it would have been inappropriate to describe as radiyya, for this was in the midst of the period of stability and prosperity associated with the vizirate of Badr al-Jamālī

Lines 5-7 The background of the suspicions and reproaches to which the author of this letter was subject can only be surmised. He was in direct correspondence with the ra'īs, i.e., the head of the Jerusalem academy, in this case Daniel b. ^cAzariyah. Usually, such communication was apparently channelled through higher community officials, and some of Hilāl's colleague may have considered it presumption on his part to write to the Gaon of Jerusalem directly. Hilāl may have deemed it appropriate to undertake this unusual procedure because of the difficulty in communications between Alexandria and Fustāt caused by the disturbances in

the Fatimid capital. With the usual channels -- Alexandria to Fustat to Jerusalem -- cut off, Hilāl presumably took it upon himself to write to the Gaon directly. This entire reconstruction, of course, is entirely conjectural; we have no indication what "the other unpleasant things" he was being suspected of were.

Lines 8 ff. The deceased Gaon in reference to whom Nahray wrote a condolence letter was presumably Daniel b. ^cAzarya, whose gaonate lasted from 1051 until his death in 1062; see, Mann, The Jews in Egypt, Vol. I, p. 197). There are a number of clues in this letter which combine to give strong support to this assumption.

1) Nahray is addressed as haver, but not as gadol ha-yeshiva. Presumably, then, he had not yet assumed the latter title, and this letter can be dated in the earlier part of his career in Egypt. Nahray arrived in Egypt ca. 1048 and died sometime before 1098. During this period, three Palestinian Gaonim died: Solomon b. Yehuda, 1051; Daniel b. ^cAzarya, 1062; and Elijah Ha-Kohen, 1083 (see Mann, op. cit., p. 197). In the case of Solomon b. Yehuda (d. 1051), it would have probably been too early for Nahray even to have achieved the

a personal loss
of the writer's
Gaon

you said this
before

45 at latest

status of haver. In the case of Elijah Ha-Kohen (d. 1083), he would probably already have earned the title gadōl hayeshiva. This leaves only Daniel b. Azarya who died in 1062, and at which time this letter is to be dated.

2) The phrase in line 5: "the times are bad," would be more appropriate to the year 1062 than to either 1051 or 1083.

Line 12 amr an ^cadīm (sic). Re: this use of an in Judaeo-Arabic texts, see Blau's treatment of the vestiges of tanwīn in his The Emergence and Linguistic Background of Judaeo-Arabic, pp. 175-76. This applies also to wa-bi-hāja an on line 14.

Side I, Margin R. ^cAwwād was a relative of Nahray's who was apparently partly in charge of Nahray's house in Alexandria.

- (1) בשמך רחמנא
- (2) רבנו נהראי אדאס אללה
- (3) עלאה יחסן אלנטר למל והיב
- (4) פי הרה אלסכת כאן יכאטב
- (5) אלגמאעה כהרהא אללה פי
- (6) כניסה אלעראקיון
- (7) פי החציל שי יעור כה עלי
- (8) חאלה אל הי רזחה ומע רלך
- (9) כונה קליל אלכסרה ולא ידע
- (10) פי רלך זמן אן שא אללה
ישועה

? a good deed

مع
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