

THE KARAITE CREED  
and  
DISCOURSE ON SLAUGHTER



Israel ha-Dayyan ha-Ma<sup>ʿ</sup>aravi (al-Maghribī)

Judaeo-Arabic text edited by Raphael Dascalu  
Translated by Raphael Dascalu with James Walker

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### ABOUT THE EDITOR

Raphael Dascalu is a native of Sydney, Australia. He completed his BA in Classical Hebrew, Philosophy, and Religious Studies at the University of Sydney (2004); his MA in Comparative Religion at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem (2011); and his PhD in History of Judaism at the University of Chicago (2016). His research is focused primarily on medieval Jewish philosophy in the Islamic world. He currently lives in Melbourne, Australia, and is an Adjunct Research Associate at Monash University.

## Editor's Acknowledgments

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## Editor's Introduction

### ABOUT ISRAEL B. SAMUEL AL-MAGHRIBĪ

The works of Israel b. Samuel ha-Dayyan al-Maghribī (Hebrew: ha-Maʿaravi) presented in this publication had a significant impact on Karaite Jewish life from the medieval period into the twentieth century. Despite this, little is known about his own life.<sup>1</sup> We do know that he resided in Cairo, where he served as a *dayyan* (judge) for the local Karaite community.<sup>2</sup> He is an important source for how Karaite Jews living near the land of Israel endeavored to set the date of the New Year by sending emissaries from their communities to Israel to inspect the state of the barley.<sup>3</sup> Al-Maghribī also wrote a Hebrew poem for the Sabbath, in which he defended the traditional medieval Karaite interpretation that all fire is forbidden on the Sabbath, even if kindled prior to the Sabbath: “If you see me sitting in the dark on the eve of the Sabbath, do not think I am in distress, for God is my light in the darkness.”<sup>4</sup> He appears to have had important and

<sup>1</sup> The name al-Maghribī (Hebrew: ha-Maʿaravi) indicates North African origins.

<sup>2</sup> For al-Maghribī in general, see S. Pinsker, *Lickute Kadmoniot: Zur Geschichte des Karäismus und der karäischen Literatur* (Vienna: 1860), 174, 176–178; Leon Nemoy, “Israel (ben Samuel?) ha-Dayyan ha-Maʿaravi,” in *Encyclopedia Judaica* (2007), 10:750.

<sup>3</sup> Mordekhai b. Nisan, *Royal Attire: On Karaite and Rabbanite Beliefs*, trans. Gabriel Wasserman (The Karaite Press: 2016), 167–168.

<sup>4</sup> See Leon J. Weinberger, “Israel Dayyan’s *Zemer* for the Sabbath,” in *Jewish Quarterly Review* 81:1–2 (1990), 119–125. This line of poetry is a reference to Micah 7:8: *Do not rejoice against me, O my enemy, though I have fallen, I shall stand up; though I sit in darkness, the LORD is my light.*

influential disciples, such as Yefet b. Ṣaghīr/Tsa'ir, who authored a *Book of Precepts*.<sup>5</sup> Al-Maghribī died sometime before 1354.

#### ABOUT THE PRESENT VOLUME

This publication presents the first complete critical edition of both al-Maghribī's theological creed and his short monograph of the laws of ritual slaughter, respectively entitled *Al-ʿAqā'id al-Sitta* (The Six Principles) and *Shurūṭ al-Dhibāḥa/Dhabīḥa*<sup>6</sup> (The Regulations of Slaughter).<sup>7</sup> They are presented in their original Judaeo-Arabic, much as they were transmitted in the Karaite community for centuries. The influence that these works had on Karaite life over that

<sup>5</sup> Pinsker, *Lickute Kadmoniot*, 176; Fred Astren, *Karaite Judaism and Historical Understanding* (University of South Carolina Press: 2004), 185 n. 2, 189.

<sup>6</sup> The Judaeo-Arabic texts have *dhibāḥa*, while the Arabic version has *dhabīḥa*. For these forms and their usage, see Joshua Blau, *A Dictionary of Mediaeval Judaeo-Arabic Texts* (The Academy of the Hebrew Language/The Israel Academy of Sciences and Humanities: 2006), 226.

<sup>7</sup> Previous editions and translations of al-Maghribī's works include the following, in chronological order: (a) Hebrew version of laws of slaughter: *Hilkhot sheḥiṭah shel ribbi yisra'el ha-ma'aravi zatsa'el*, in *Sefer dod mordekhai*, ed. Mordecai b. Nissan (Vienna: 1830); (b) Arabic version of creed: *Iqqare dat ha-yisre'elim ha-qara'im / al-ʿaqā'id al-dīniyya li-l-yahūd al-qarā'im*, ed. Mattathias Moses Raṣon (Khedivial Press, Cairo: no publication date; originally published between 1903 and 1906); (c) Arabic version of laws of slaughter: *Al-Dhabīḥa ʿinda al-yahūd al-qarā'im*, ed. Ibrāhīm Shabbetai Elijah Manjūbī [Mangūbī] (Cairo: 1930); (d) Judaeo-Arabic creed, with introduction: Ernest Mainz, "The Credo of a Fourteenth Century Karaite," in *Proceedings of the American Academy for Jewish Research*, 22 (1953), 55–63; (e) translation of Mainz's edition of the Judaeo-Arabic creed: A. S. Halkin; "A Karaite Creed," in *Studies in Judaica Karaitica and Islamica: Presented to Dr. Leon Nemoy* (Bar-Ilan University Press: 1982), 145–153; (f) facsimile edition of Arabic creed, with introduction: Leon Nemoy, "Israel al-Maghribī's Karaite Creed," in *Henoah* 10:3 (1988), 335–354; (g) translation of Arabic laws of slaughtering, with introduction: Leon Nemoy, "Israel al-Maghribī's Tract on Ritual Slaughtering," *Henoah* 13 (1991), 195–208. The Hebrew version of the laws of slaughter was republished by the Karaite community of Israel.

long period is attested in the extent of their distribution. There are several extant manuscripts of the Judaeo-Arabic creed and laws of ritual slaughter, pointing to their continuous use in Karaite study and practice. In the modern period, versions of both the theological creed and the laws of ritual slaughter were published in an Arabic-script version for the benefit of the Egyptian Karaite community.<sup>8</sup> Despite being largely overshadowed by an alternative tradition of ten articles of faith (formalized by Judah Hadassi, twelfth century), al-Maghribī's creed formed the basis for the theological section of a modern Karaite manual.<sup>9</sup> In addition, the Hebrew version of the laws of ritual slaughter survives in a great many manuscripts and has been published at least twice in the modern period.<sup>10</sup>

In order to present a more complete picture of al-Maghribī's impact on Karaite Jewish life, we have included as appendices the version of al-Maghribī's aforementioned works as they were published in Arabic script in Egypt in the early twentieth century,<sup>11</sup> and the Hebrew version of the laws

<sup>8</sup> See n. 7 above. Another significant factor in the publication of this material was the fostering of public awareness of Jewish beliefs among the Muslim majority in Egypt. See Mattathias Moses Raṣon's introduction to the tenets, in the Appendices (Arabic).

<sup>9</sup> The manual was compiled by the *hakham* Joseph b. Abraham Yomṭob and the *gabbay* David b. Isaac Elisha (Līsha<sup>6</sup>); see Leon Nemoy, "A Modern Egyptian Manual of the Karaite Faith," in *The Jewish Quarterly Review* 62:1 (1971), 3 (and n. 1), 10. For Judah Hadassi's earlier formulation of ten articles of faith, see Lasker, *From Judah Hadassi to Elijah Bashyatchi*, 42–43; for Elijah Bashyatchi's adoption of the ten-point scheme, see Nemoy, "A Modern Egyptian Manual," 10; Leon Nemoy, *Karaite Anthology: Excerpts from the Early Literature* (Yale University Press: 1980), 250; Leon Nemoy, "Isaac ben Solomon on the Karaite Creed," in *The Jewish Quarterly Review* 80:1 (1989).

<sup>10</sup> See n. 7 above.

<sup>11</sup> For the benefit of the modern reader, we have standardized the orthography in the Arabic-script edition of al-Maghribī's creed and laws of slaughter. The Karaite Press extends its gratitude to Kinda Alsamara and Elhanan Miller for standardizing the orthography and to James Walker for his insights on this aspect of the project. As noted by Leon Nemoy, in the version of al-Maghribī's creed published in Arabic script, the work is attributed to "Samuel al-Maghribī," which is the name of both Israel's father

of slaughter, which differs significantly from the (Judaeo-) Arabic versions. The latter circulated widely, as attested by the many manuscripts in which it survives. A detailed comparison of the various versions of al-Maghribī's works is beyond the scope of the present volume, as is the production of a critical edition of the Hebrew laws of slaughter. These remain a desideratum.

#### A NOTE ON THE LINGUISTIC AND CULTURAL CONTEXT OF THESE WORKS

Our author lived and produced his writings in the Islamic world, in an Arabic-speaking milieu. Unlike the Jews of the Latin West in this period, educated Jews in the Islamic world tended to be deeply and openly engaged in the dominant intellectual cultures of their society. Both Karaite and Rabbanite Jews adopted Arabic literary models, as well as theological, philosophical, and scientific terminology. These became thoroughly integrated into Jewish literature. Like many Karaite and Rabbanite writers before him, al-Maghribī wrote in Judaeo-Arabic, which is to say, Arabic written in Hebrew script and selectively employing Hebrew or Aramaic terms and phrases (code-switching). Like other writers in this cultural context, he regularly employs Arabic names for God (e.g., *Allāh*) and pious formulas (e.g., *tabāraka wa-taʿālā*, “may He be blessed and exalted!”). He also assumes familiarity with the common Arabic terminology of Jewish and Muslim texts in the Islamic world. It should thus not be surprising to see that he employs such terms as *qibla* (the direction of prayer) or the Qurʾanic formulation *al-ḥamd li-ʾllāh*

and a later Karaite sage. This is clearly an error, possibly the result of a damaged manuscript being used as the basis of that edition (Nemoy, “Israel al-Maghribī's Karaite Creed,” 338). We have retained the original text and inserted the name of the correct author in square brackets in its appropriate place.

*rabb al-‘alamīn* (“praise to God, Master of Worlds”). Such expressions had long been assimilated into Jewish literature within the Islamic world.



Editor's Introduction to the *Six Principles of Faith:*  
*al-Maghribī's Theological Creed*

What makes al-Maghribī's creed unique is its popular character. Composed in Judaeo-Arabic,<sup>1</sup> it is simple, elegant, and brief—and most likely intended as an educational tool for instruction in Karaite Judaism, a catechism of sorts.<sup>2</sup> Al-Maghribī's creed is notably free of any overt commitment to a theological or philosophical school of thought, preferring instead to articulate the fundamental tenets of faith in their broadest terms. The themes explored by al-Maghribī in his creed are as follows: (i) belief in God<sup>3</sup> (including some treat-

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Halkin, "A Karaite Creed," 146. In his introduction to the Arabic edition, Mattathias Moses Raṣon stated that "these six tenets have been rendered into Arabic from the Hebrew language" (*qad 'urribat hādhihi al-'aqā'id al-sitta min al-luḡha al-'ibrāniyya*). There is no evidence for this; indeed, the Hebrew script of the medieval Judaeo-Arabic manuscripts demonstrates that the work was intended for Jewish consumption in that language. In addition, there is no evidence that the work was translated from Hebrew—or even that a Hebrew version existed (as was suggested by Nemoy, "Israel Al-Maghribī's Tract," 195 n. 2). There are three possible explanations for Raṣon's assertion: (a) He meant that it was *transcribed from Hebrew script into Arabic script* (cf. the introduction to the Arabic-script version of the *Regulations of Slaughter* in the Appendix); (b) he was mistaken and assumed the existence of a Hebrew original; (c) it was a rhetorical device, intended to convey to Muslim readers the sense of being disclosed otherwise inaccessible material. For Raṣon's explicit consciousness of Muslim readers, and for his intention to shed light on Jewish beliefs, see note 8 to the general introduction in the present volume.

<sup>2</sup> For some broader context for religious creeds in the Islamic world, see A. J. Wensinck, *The Muslim Creed: Its Genesis and Historical Development* (Routledge: 2008).

<sup>3</sup> Note that al-Maghribī's formulation (*i'tiqād al-rubūbiyya*) is identical to that of Moses Maimonides' in his treatment of the first of the Torah's commandments as listed in his *Sefer ha-Mitsvot* (Book of Commandments). See *Sefer ha-mitsvot*, ed. Joseph Qafiḥ (Mossad Harav Kook: 1971), 51.

ment of attributes), (ii) belief in the messengership of Moses, (iii) belief in the prophets in general, (iv) belief in the Torah, (v) affirmation of the holy site (*qibla*, lit. “direction” [i.e., of prayer]), and (vi) belief in the Day of Judgment. Although there is some overlap with the structure of the Islamic creed, al-Maghribī does not appear to have constrained himself to earlier literary models.<sup>4</sup>

In the third tenet, the miracles (*muʿjizāt*) of the prophets are emphasized, a theme that features prominently in Islamic prophethood.<sup>5</sup> His assertion of the reliability of prophetic accounts, and his defense of the continuity of prophetic traditions, appears to be motivated by polemical concerns—namely, as a retort to the Muslim accusation of *tahrīf* (corruption of Scripture).<sup>6</sup> The same concern likely motivates the forceful assertion of the accuracy and perfection of the Torah, appearing in the fourth tenet. Al-Maghribī’s emphasis on Moses’ role as the revealer of the Law, with other prophets merely modeling and affirming the Torah of Moses while innovating nothing, likely reflects his post-Maimonidean context.<sup>7</sup>

In Islamic tradition, Jerusalem is called “the first of the two *qiblas*” (*ūlā al-qiblatayn*), occupying its status before being replaced by Mecca.<sup>8</sup> Al-Maghribī’s argument in the fifth tenet for the centrality of Jerusalem as the eternal *qibla*, the locus

<sup>4</sup> Also notable is the lack of any explicit mention of the advent of the Messiah. Cf. Halkin, “A Karaite Creed,” 146.

<sup>5</sup> See H. Lammens, *Islam: Beliefs and Institutions*, trans. Sir E. Denison Ross (Routledge: 2013), 125.

<sup>6</sup> For *tahrīf* in the context of Muslim anti-Jewish polemics, particularly as applied to the problematic portrayal of Biblical prophets, see Jacques Waardenburg, “The Medieval Period: 650–1500,” in *Muslim Perceptions of Other Religions: A Historical Survey* (Oxford University Press: 1999), 52–53.

<sup>7</sup> Daniel J. Lasker, *From Judah Hadassi to Elijah Bashyatchi: Studies in Late Medieval Karaite Philosophy* (Brill: 2008), 180.

<sup>8</sup> See Angelika Neuwirth, “From the Sacred Mosque to the Remote Temple: Sūrat al-Isrāʾ between Text and Commentary,” in *With Reverence for the Word: Medieval Scriptural Exegesis in Judaism, Christianity, and Islam*, eds. Jane Dammen McAuliffe, Barry D. Walfish, and Joseph W. Goering (Oxford University Press: 2010), 376–407.

toward which prayer and other ritual acts should be directed, may thus be understood as a response to Muslim practice. The author further emphasizes that all the nations of the earth will ultimately turn to Jerusalem in worship.

In the sixth and final tenet of al-Maghribī's creed, a striking element is the author's insistence on the eternal punishment of the wicked. Although this is not the dominant attitude in rabbinic sources, it does reflect a widespread consensus among Karaite thinkers. It is also, of course, consistent with both Christian and Muslim attitudes.<sup>9</sup>

Al-Maghribī's creed provides us with a window not only into the worldview of a Karaite Jewish scholar of the fourteenth century, but into the intellectual and spiritual life of the community as a whole over an extended period. This may be said on account of the continuous copying and publication of the creed over the centuries, and in particular due to its catechismal quality. In the absence of direct evidence, one can only imagine generations of Karaite children and laypersons being taught this creed as their introduction to the theological principles of their ancestral faith—and while this certainly remains a matter of conjecture, it is also an eminently plausible interpretation of the work and its purpose.

<sup>9</sup> Lasker, *From Judah Hadassi to Elijah Bashyatchi*, 249ff.



Editor's Introduction to *al-Maghribī's*  
*Treatise on Ritual Slaughter*

Al-Maghribī's explicit and otherwise surprising mention of ritual slaughter in the fourth tenet of his creed (regarding the belief in the Torah) suggests that the two works were originally written in close succession and intended to be studied or at least distributed together. The same theme (viz., gratitude to God for permitting the slaughter and consumption of animals) is raised explicitly in the ninth chapter of the laws of slaughter, in connection with reciting the benediction.

This work consists of ten chapters on the laws of slaughter, followed by three addenda that appear in the extant manuscripts. Among the particularly notable positions taken in this work by the author are that the slaughterer must believe in the theory of compensation, a view rejected by later Karaite authorities (Chapter I);<sup>1</sup> that the animal may not be pregnant, a law followed by Karaites to this day (Chapter II);<sup>2</sup> that the slaughterer should face Jerusalem during the slaughter (Chapter VIII); and that the blessing recited over the act of slaughter reflects the Karaite theological conception, repeated in this work and the creed, that God *permitted* human beings to slaughter animals for consumption (Chapter IX).

<sup>1</sup> The theory of compensation for the animal is treated below, in our discussion of the second addendum to al-Maghribī's treatise.

<sup>2</sup> Shemuel Ha-kohen, *Ritual Slaughter: A Modern Guide to Karaite Jewish Practice* (The Karaite Jews of America: 2017 [Hebrew republished from 1958 edition, with translation]), 13. This is in contradistinction with rabbinic halakhah—see Mishnah Ḥullin 4:5. For more on the Karaite prohibition on slaughtering a pregnant animal, see Ḥakham Mordecai ben Nisan, *Levush malkhut / Royal Attire: On Karaite and Rabbanite Beliefs*, ed. and trans. Gabriel Wasserman, with additional notes by Tomer Mangoubi (The Karaite Press: 2016), 77.

The three addenda concern (i) the factors that invalidate slaughter, (ii) the belief in compensation for the slaughtered animal, and (iii) the parts of the animal to be removed after slaughter.

The first of these addenda, on the factors that invalidate slaughter, is particularly striking in the way that it attempts to balance an openness to Rabbanite practice with an assertion of Karaite independence. Jacob al-Qirqisānī, a highly influential Karaite scholar of the tenth century, explicitly criticized the Rabbanites for their adherence to a list of five factors<sup>3</sup> that invalidate slaughter:

[The Rabbanites forbid] what God Himself has not forbid-  
den, and of which no mention is to be found, such as ...  
the conditions for slaughtering which they list in the rules  
of slaughtering, viz. delay, pressure, digging, slipping, and  
tearing. They contradict completely: ‘Thou shalt not add  
[thereto], nor diminish from it’.<sup>4</sup>

Al-Maghribī, on the other hand, accepts the *terms* of the rabbinic sources but insists on the primacy of independent analysis (*naẓar*) in defining them.<sup>5</sup> He therefore cites proof texts for their usage. This adds a scripturalist hue to an otherwise very rabbinic-sounding passage. It may be that Karaite communities had already adopted such a position.<sup>6</sup> Alternatively, al-Maghribī may simply be acknowledging that in the absence of further detail, extra-Biblical tradition is helpful, and in this case does not contradict the Biblical text.

<sup>3</sup> See Babylonian Talmud, Tractate Ḥullin 9a; Moses Maimonides (d. 1204), *Mishneh Torah*, Laws of Slaughter, chap. 3.

<sup>4</sup> *Yaʿqūb al-Qirqisānī on Jewish Sects and Christianity*, trans. Bruno Chiesa and Wilfrid Lockwood (Verlag Peter Lang: 1984), 113, para. 23.

<sup>5</sup> As he writes: “These five things have been transmitted among all Israelites as a continuous, undisputed tradition, attaining a consensus on these five aforementioned terms. As for the interpretation of each term, the soundest method in [establishing their meaning] is that which conforms to analysis (*al-naẓar*), as discussed by the Sages (peace be upon them).”

<sup>6</sup> In light of this possibility, al-Qirqisānī’s critique of this position in *Kitāb al-anwār wa-ʾl-marāqib* may be interpreted as also discretely polemical against the Karaite adoption of rabbinic practice.

It should be noted that contemporary Karaite communities of Egyptian descent accept neither al-Maghribī's list of five factors nor al-Qirqisānī's rejection of them. Instead, they identify *ten* disqualifying factors, integrating and expanding the earlier enumeration.<sup>7</sup>

In his second addendum, the *Chapter on the Principles of Judgment [After Death]*, al-Maghribī raises the theme of divine justice, which is directly opposed to injustice. Futility or waste (*ʿabath*) is considered to be a variety of evil or repugnance (*qubḥ/al-qabīḥ*) and must therefore not be attributed to God. But if this is the case, how is it that the Divine permitted human beings to harm animals? Here, al-Maghribī discusses four possible factors that may justify harm in general and determines that only one of them can conceivably justify the slaughter of animals: namely, that God will provide the animal with recompense in the Hereafter (it is not necessary for us to know precisely what kind of recompense). This concern with divine justice or theodicy, and more specifically the terminology used in this case, are typical of the Muʿtazilite school of Islamic systematic theology (*kalām*), which had contributed considerably to Karaite and Rabbanite thought over the preceding centuries.<sup>8</sup>

<sup>7</sup> For an explanation of these ten invalidators, see Ha-kohen, *Ritual Slaughter*, 26–28. The ten invalidators of slaughter also appear in earlier European Karaite works, such as Ḥakham Solomon ben Aaron's *Sefer Appiryon ʿAsa Lo*. The short version of this work was recently published by The Karaite Press, under the name *The Palanquin: On Karaite Practical Halakha* (Daly City: 2017). There, the ten terms are listed without any further elaboration (see 134–135).

<sup>8</sup> For Saadia Gaon's engagement with *kalām*, see Sarah Stroumsa, "Saadya and Jewish *kalam*," in *The Cambridge Companion to Medieval Jewish Philosophy*, eds. Daniel H. Frank and Oliver Leaman (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press: 2003), 71–90. For two devoted Karaite disciples of the Muʿtazilite school, Joseph al-Baṣīr and Yeshuʿah b. Judah, see Isaac Husik, *A History of Mediaeval Jewish Philosophy* (The Macmillan Company: 1916), 48–58. See also Harry Austryn Wolfson, *Repercussions of the Kalam in Jewish Philosophy* (Harvard University Press: 1979). Saadia Gaon articulates a very similar position on the recompense of animals for pain endured during slaughter; see *The Book of Beliefs and Opinions*, trans. Samuel Rosenblatt (Yale University Press: 1967), Rosenblatt, 3:10

The final addendum discusses the parts of the animal that must be removed following slaughter.<sup>9</sup> It is interesting to note that many Karaites today continue to remove the sciatic nerve (*gid ha-nasheh*) in birds, a practice that matches the Judaeo-Arabic version of al-Maghribī's monograph but is left undetermined in the widely circulated Hebrew version.<sup>10</sup> The removal of the *gid ha-nasheh* from birds is already attested to in the writings of al-Qirqisānī, who preceded al-Maghribī by some four centuries.<sup>11</sup> The continuation of this practice into the present demonstrates the continued influence of works such as al-Maghribī's (even if not his precise work). This is supported by the fact that the Hebrew manual on ritual slaughter used by the Egyptian Karaite community of the twentieth and early twenty-first centuries specifically states that the prohibition does not apply to birds.<sup>12</sup> We thus return to our point that Karaite communal and religious life has been

(175). For a broad study of this issue in medieval Jewish thought, see Daniel J. Lasker, "The Theory of Compensation ('Iwad) in Rabbanite and Karaite Thought: Animal Sacrifices, Ritual Slaughter and Circumcision," in *Jewish Studies Quarterly* 11:1/2 (2004), 59–72. For further background, and for the importance of this doctrinal point in the dispute between Eastern and Western Karaites in the seventeenth century, see Daniel Frank, "A Karaite *Sheḥiṭah* Controversy in the Seventeenth Century," in *Be'erot Yitzhak: Studies in Memory of Isadore Twersky*, ed. Jay M. Harris (Harvard University Press: 2005), 69–97.

<sup>9</sup> We note that Nemoy omitted the section on the parts of the animal to be removed after slaughter from his translation, which also appears as an addendum to the twentieth-century Arabic-script edition of the work. Not only did he consider this section to be a later addition to the text, but he found its terminology difficult to decipher. See Nemoy, "Israel Al-Maghribī's Tract," 196. Against Nemoy's appraisal, and despite the fact that it does not carry any explicit attribution to al-Maghribī, we have included the addendum to the laws of slaughter in our text and translation, for we felt a duty to represent the manuscript tradition as accurately as possible. Inevitably, due to the difficulty of the vocabulary, our translations of the anatomical terminology are tentative.

<sup>10</sup> I thank Shawn Lichaa of The Karaite Press for informing me concerning contemporary Karaite practice.

<sup>11</sup> See *Kitāb al-Anwār wal-marāqib: Code of Karaite Law*, ed. Leon Nemoy, Vol. V, XII.18.1–2 (p. 1216).

<sup>12</sup> See Ha-kohen, *Ritual Slaughter*, 33.

shaped by a variety of literature, among which al-Maghribī's works have occupied a prominent place.

ABOUT THE JUDAEO-ARABIC EDITION  
AND ENGLISH TRANSLATION

The Judaeo-Arabic text is based on four manuscripts:

1. JTS MS 3434/Adler 202 (JTSa):<sup>13</sup> Written in a semi-cursive Oriental hand, of uncertain date. This MS contains most of the text of al-Maghribī's creed. It is missing at least two leaves, including a significant portion of the first of al-Maghribī's theological principles (Arabic: *ʿaqāʾid*, sing. *ʿaqīda*), and part of the concluding principle. It differs from the other two manuscripts in many of its readings and represents a distinct manuscript tradition.
2. JTS MS 3436/Adler 249 (JTSb):<sup>14</sup> Written in a semi-cursive Oriental hand, of uncertain date.<sup>15</sup> This MS contains the creed and laws of slaughter (including the handling of animals, laws pertaining to the relevant blessings, etc.). The first two leaves are badly damaged and furnish a very limited part of the text that they originally contained.
3. British Library Oriental Manuscript 2528 (BL<sup>16</sup>): This is the first of two manuscripts catalogued together. According to the colophon, it was completed by Joseph b. Abraham Levi on Monday, 23rd of Kislev, 5592 AM (28th of November, 1831 CE). It is written in a clear semi-cursive Oriental script. This manuscript bears a very close affinity with the much older JTS 3436 (JTSb), but seems not to have been copied from it.<sup>17</sup>

<sup>13</sup> Referred to by Mainz as **Ⲩ**<sup>1</sup>.

<sup>14</sup> Referred to by Mainz as **Ⲩ**<sup>2</sup>.

<sup>15</sup> The imprint date given for the microfilm is 1306, but this seems to be based on the year of composition of the laws of ritual slaughter based on certain MSS of the Hebrew manuscript tradition. There is no colophon recording the date of completion of this MS. The hand shares elements with many of the medieval semi-cursive scripts in *Specimens of Mediaeval Hebrew Scripts*, vol. I: Oriental and Yemenite Scripts, ed. Malachi Beit-Aryé, with Edna Engel and Ada Yardeni (The Israel Academy of Sciences and Humanities: 1987); cf. in particular the later script of 1111 (Cairo: 1510).

<sup>16</sup> Referred to by Mainz as **Ⲩ**.

<sup>17</sup> It occasionally shares significant variants with the other MSS that are unattested in JTSb and in one case does not reflect a marginal addition in

4. British Library Oriental Manuscript 2528 (BLb): The second of the two manuscripts catalogued together is missing the opening leaf of the creed, while the first extant leaf is somewhat damaged. It is of uncertain dating and bears some affinity with JTS 3434 (JTSa). Like the other manuscripts, it is in a semi-cursive Oriental script. It should be noted that despite otherwise not resembling BL, it shares one ornamental feature with that manuscript—namely, a broken “roof” (similar to the Rabbanite *ḥaṭoṭeret*) on some letters, particularly when lengthened for aesthetic reasons. Some of the Hebrew verses and blessings are vocalized, and the irregularities of the vocalization (e.g., confusion of *qamets* and *pataḥ*) point to the copyist’s Palestinian (“Sephardic”) pronunciation.<sup>18</sup>

JTSb that appears to be in the original copyist’s scribal hand (in the ninth chapter of the laws of ritual slaughter; the addition is also not reflected in the Arabic version of the work).

<sup>18</sup> The vocalization that is today widely recognized as “Sephardic”—in which *qamets* and *pataḥ* are generally not distinguished from one another, and neither are *tsere* and *segol*—is ultimately derived from the Palestinian (non-Tiberian) pronunciation. In the medieval period, it was dominant in Byzantium, Italy, and the Franco-German (Ashkenazic) communities. An alternative system of vocalization was the Babylonian, used in Mesopotamia and Persian communities and remaining quite widespread throughout the Middle East—alongside the Palestinian tradition—until the Spanish Expulsion. Today, the only Jewish communities that retain a derivative of the Babylonian pronunciation are those originating in the Yemen. In the Iberian Peninsula, it seems that the Babylonian pronunciation was either originally dominant or existed alongside other traditions; however, by the mid-tenth century, it was displaced by the Palestinian pronunciation. (See Shlomo Morag, *Qehillot sefarad ve-ha-masoret ha-ḥayyah shel ha-lashon ha-ivrit*, in *Moresheet Sepharad: The Sephardic Legacy*, ed. Haim Beinart [The Magnes Press: 1992], 84–87.) While it is clear that Karaites both participated in the Masoretic movement and adopted the Tiberian system of vocalization in its written form, it also seems that they generally adopted the dominant pronunciations in whichever region they settled. (Interestingly, Eastern European Karaites preserve the old Byzantine pronunciation, long since forgotten by Rabbanites, distinguished by its realization of the *tsadi* as an affricative “ch”/[tʃ].) It is thus clear that calling this system of vocalization “Sephardic” is more than a little complicated, particularly when referring to its use by medieval or early modern Karaites. An argument could be made that Middle Eastern Rabbanite Jews who generally do not have an Iberian heritage (e.g., Iraqi or Persian Jews) might still be helpfully considered “Sephardic,” since they share a legal and liturgical tradition with Sephardim more narrowly defined. However, this logic cannot be ap-

This is of some interest, as the Babylonian pronunciation is widely attested in manuscripts from Egypt and the Levant into the late medieval period. Catalogued together with the two manuscripts of al-Maghribī's creed and laws of ritual slaughter are several fragments of a much longer work dealing with legal and theological aspects of ritual slaughter, which may or may not be authored by al-Maghribī (although there are certainly common concerns and terminology between the works). This work is in a different hand, in a beautiful semi-cursive Oriental script. Due to its fragmentary nature and uncertain provenance, the work has not been included in the present volume.

Due to the condition of the manuscripts, the edition presented here is neither purely diplomatic (i.e., based on a single manuscript with variants noted) nor eclectic (i.e., an attempt at reconstructing an original text from the various manuscripts, where the final version may differ significantly from any single extant manuscript). Rather, due to the very close affinity between JTSb and BL and their relative completeness, we have decided to base the body of the text on that manuscript tradition. In the absence of other considerations, we have preferred JTSb when the two manuscripts differ. Where *any* manuscript provides an orthography that is closer to standard literary Arabic, that orthography has been selected for the body of the text.<sup>19</sup> Where all versions of the

plied to Karaites in any real sense. It would thus seem to this writer to be very much preferable to retain the technical nomenclature of "Palestinian" vocalization over the more familiar "Sephardic" when describing features of Karaite Hebrew.

<sup>19</sup> Despite our ideal of consistency, there were some cases in which a careful judgment had to be made. One exception to our principle was the form **וּלְתוֹם** in the second section of the *Laws of Ritual Slaughter*. Here, the underlying form appears to be the perfect form **וּאֵלְתוֹם**. The copyist of BLb or an earlier MS in its chain of transmission has apparently corrected this to the imperfect form **וּלְתוֹם**. Since this does not reflect the underlying form, we have preferred the nonstandard **וּלְתוֹם**. In the two cases in which the colloquial form *gabad* appears in JTSb and BL instead of the literary *jadhaba*, the literary form has been preferred for the edition, with the colloquial (and likely original) form in the variants; we made the same choice in selecting the standard *ashkhāṣ* over the colloquial *aṣkhāṣ*. However, in al-Maghribī's essay on the five factors that invalidate slaughter, the plural suffix (with non-literary orthography) form was retained over the singular

Judaeo-Arabic differ significantly from standard literary Arabic, even in cases where this might be more straightforwardly construed as an error, we have retained the form in the MSS. All variants are noted. Abbreviations in the manuscripts are presented in full in the body of the edition, but are retained in the variants.

Regarding diacritics, the Judaeo-Arabic orthography has been standardized to follow near-universal practice in published Judaeo-Arabic works; however, the original orthography of the manuscripts has been retained in the variants. To aid in identifying Biblical citations, verses are rendered in a different typeset that includes cantillation marks, followed by the Biblical reference in superscript. Square brackets [abc] in the Judaeo-Arabic text indicate a questionable reading (e.g., in cases of limited legibility); rounded parentheses (abc) indicate alternative readings, explained in the critical apparatus; arrowhead brackets <abc> indicate passages that appear in some versions of the text, while being omitted from others.

In general, the English translation reflects the body of the Judaeo-Arabic text as presented in the present edition. In the few cases in which we have relied on the reading or interpretation reflected in the Arabic edition, or on a suggested emendation, this is noted. Since the introduction covers the most significant themes that arise in the text and explores the work's broader context, the notes to the text generally focus on narrowly textual concerns and problems of translation. Glosses or interpolations for the sake of clarity in English appear in square brackets. Biblical citations are largely based on the JPS Tanakh (2003), with emendations based on their use in context and medieval interpretive traditions.

feminine, despite the fact that the latter is more literary, because the loss of such classical features is so standard in Judaeo-Arabic, and this case went beyond matters of orthography.

The Principles of Faith of Karaite Jews

אלעקאיד אלדינייה לליהוד אלקראיין



*In the name of the Lord, let us act and prevail.*

Here begins the order of the six principles of faith, by our master and teacher, our diadem, our crowning garland, our glorious adorning headdress, our magnificence, the distinguished sage, revealer of secrets and profundities, the honorable R. Israel the Judge (*ha-dayyan*), son of the honorable, great and saintly one who appointed Wisdom and Discernment as his nurse, noble and honored in Israel, our master and teacher Samuel the Judge (*ha-dayyan*) ha-Ma'aravi, may his soul be *bound up in the bond of life* (1 Samuel 25:29). Amen, Neṣaḥ, Selah; and peace upon all Israel.

## אלעקידה אלאולה אעתקאד<sup>1</sup> ארבויה

יגב עלי כל בַּר יִשְׂרָאֵל אֵן יַעֲתַקְדִּי<sup>2</sup> אֵן לֵה אַלְעֵאֵלִם בַּאֲסֵרָה<sup>3</sup> וְהוּ  
אַלְסֵמָא וּמָא פִּיֵּהָ וְאַלְאַרְעֵי וּמָא עֲלִיֵּהָ וְאַלְבַּחְחָר וּמָא יְאוּיֵהָ  
וְאַלְגִּבְאֵל וְאוּאֲדִיֵּהָ כְּאַלְק וְאַחַד גִּלְגֵּלָאֵלָה לֵא אֹוֹל לֵה וְלֵא אֲכֹר  
לֵא גֵאֵלֵב לֵה וְלֵא קֵאֵהֵר לֵא פֹוק לֵה פִּיכְפְּצָה וְלֵא תַחַת לֵה פִּירֵפְעָה  
וְלֵא גֵוָאֵנֵב לֵה פִּתְשֵׁדָה וְלֵא גֵהָאֵת לֵה פִּתְחַדָּה<sup>4</sup> אַרְאֵד אֵן יִכּוּן מָא  
שָׂא פִּכְאֵן וְאַחַדְתָּה פִּי לֵא זִמָּאֵן וְלֵא מִכְאֵן וְאוּוֹדֵד אַלְמוּגֹודָת מֵן  
אַלְעֵדִם וְאַתְפֵּרֵד מֵן דֹּוּנֵהִם<sup>5</sup> בַּאֲלֵקְדִם וְאַנָּה<sup>6</sup> חֵי לֵא יְמוֹת בַּאֲקֵי  
לֵא יִפְנֹא גֵיָא לֵא יִפְתַּקֵּר גֵּוָאֵד לֵא יִבְכֹּל חֲכִים לֵא יִגְהֵל אַחַאֲט  
עֵלְמָה בְּכֹל אַלְמַעְלוּמָאֵת אַלְמַאֲצִי<sup>7</sup> וְאַלְחַאֲצֵר<sup>8</sup> וּמָא הוּ אֵת כֹּל  
אַלְמוּגֹודָת מִפְתַּקְרָה אֵלִיָּה וְאַעֲתַמַּאדָּהָּ פִּי כִפְאִיתָהָ עֲלִיָּה לֵא  
יִתְכַתֵּר בְּתַכְתִּיר צִפְאֵתָהּ וְלֵא יִזָּאֵד וְלֵא יִנְקֵץ פִּי דָאֵתָהּ לֵא יִדְרֵךְ  
בַּאֲלַחְוָאֵס אַלְכְּמֵס וְתַעֲלִי<sup>9</sup> עֵן אַלְדֹּוק וְאַלְלֵמֵס<sup>10</sup> לֵא יִקְאַל עֵנָה  
אַנָּה עֲרֵץ<sup>11</sup> וְלֵא גֵוָהֵר וְלֵא<sup>12</sup> יִכְפֹּא לְלַחֵס וְיִטְהֵר וְלֵא אַנָּה יִנָּאֵם  
וְיִסְהֵר וְלֵא אַנָּה יִגְלֵב<sup>13</sup> וְיִוְקֵהֵר וְלֵא הוּ גֵסֵם וְלֵא קוּהָּ פִּי גֵסֵם

<sup>1</sup> BL: אעתקד <sup>2</sup> BL: יעתקאד <sup>3</sup> BL: אלעלם באסרה <sup>4</sup> BL: פתחדה  
<sup>5</sup> BL: דונהום <sup>6</sup> JTSa: ואנא <sup>7</sup> BL: אלמצי <sup>8</sup> The section  
is missing from JTSa due to a missing  
leaf. <sup>9</sup> BLb: ותעאלא <sup>10</sup> BL: ואלמס <sup>11</sup> BLb: עראץ <sup>12</sup> BLb: ולא  
אנה <sup>13</sup> BLb: יוגלב.

## The First Tenet

### *Belief in Divinity*

Every Israelite must believe that God possesses complete knowledge<sup>1</sup> of the heavens and all that is in them, of the earth and all that is upon it, of the seas and their inhabitants, of the mountains and their valleys. Sole Creator, exceedingly majestic, with neither beginning nor end. He can neither be overpowered, nor conquered; He has no upper limit that might set Him below, nor a lower limit that might set Him above; He has no flanks that might contain Him, nor sides that might delimit Him. Whatever He wills to be, comes to be; His Oneness is timeless and placeless; He brought all that exists into being from nothing, timelessly remaining separate from them. He lives and does not die, endures and does not perish; He is self-sufficient and not in need, generous and not miserly, wise and not ignorant. His knowledge encompasses all things past, present, and future. All creatures depend upon Him, and place their trust in His sufficiency. He does not become many with the multiplication of His attributes; He neither grows nor shrinks in His essence; He is imperceptible to the five senses, transcending both taste and touch. Let it not be said that He is an accident or a substance, that He disappears or that He appears to the senses, that He slumbers or that He wakes, that He may be overpowered or conquered, or that He is a body or a power in a body. His name is “God” (*allāh*);

<sup>1</sup> The Judaeo-Arabic text appears to be corrupt here. The original may have read: . . . *an yaʿtaqida anna -llāha l-ʿālim bi-asrihi*. The Arabic version may reflect an emendation of the corrupt text. Our translation reflects the tentative emendation. Cf. Halkin, “A Karaite Creed,” 148: “that He possesses the total universe, the heavens and what is in them. . .”

אסמה<sup>14</sup> אללה מא אעזה מן אסם לא תנפעה אלטאעה ולא תצרה אלמעציה סמיע אלדעואת קאבל אלתובאת<sup>15</sup> מקל אלערתאת מפרג אלכרבאת מגני מן אלאפאת גפר<sup>16</sup> אלזלאת צאדק אלועד חאפט<sup>17</sup> אלעהד חנאן מנאן צולטאן דיאן<sup>18</sup> ארחם אלראחמין<sup>19</sup> אכד חק אלמטלומין מן אלטאלמין מעוויץ אלצאברין ואלמאלומין אחכאמה<sup>20</sup> לא גור פיהא ואואמרה<sup>21</sup> ונואהיה לא פסאד יערתיהא והו<sup>22</sup> אלממית אלמחיי אלמרץ אלמשפי אלמפקר אלמגני לא אלאה<sup>23</sup> סואה אלדי תסגד לגלאל גמאל גלאה ולכמאל עטמתה אלגבאה ותנטק<sup>24</sup> בתסביחה ותנויהה<sup>25</sup> אלאפואה לא נעמה גיר נעמאה<sup>26</sup> תבארך<sup>27</sup> ותקדס ותסבח ותמגד ותרפע ותנוה ותבהג עז וגל ותעאלי<sup>28</sup> אסמה אלעטם לאבד אלאבדין ונסאלה סבחאנה ותעאלי אן יעצמנא מן אלכטא ואלזלל פי אלדניא ואלדין ולא יגעלנא מן אלמלחדין אמין אמין<sup>29</sup> ואלחמד ללה רב אלעאלמין:<sup>30</sup>

<sup>14</sup> BLb: ואסמה <sup>15</sup> In place of אלאפאת [...], BLb reads: מגני מאפרי <sup>16</sup> BLb: מן אלאפאת מפרג אלכרבאת מקאל מן אלערתאת רחים רחמאן ארחם אלראחמין <sup>17</sup> BLb: חאפט <sup>18</sup> BLb: דייאן <sup>19</sup> BLb: ארחם אלראחמין <sup>20</sup> BLb: אכד חק אלמטלומין <sup>21</sup> BL: ואומרה <sup>22</sup> BL: והוא; BLb: הו <sup>23</sup> JTSb: אללה <sup>24</sup> BL: תברך <sup>25</sup> BLb: נעמה <sup>26</sup> BLb: נעמאה <sup>27</sup> BL, BLb: תבארך <sup>28</sup> BLb: ותעאלי <sup>29</sup> Thus JTSb and BL; JTSa is missing the second אמין אמין. <sup>30</sup> BL: אלעלמין; BLb adds: תם קול אלעקידה.

no name is mightier than His. Obedience does not benefit Him, and sin does not harm Him. He hears all prayer, accepts repentance, supports those who stumble, dispels grief, delivers from ruin, forgives sin, is faithful to promises, keeps His covenant; Bestower, Compassionate One, Ruler, Judge, Most Merciful of All; who takes up the claim of the oppressed against the oppressors; who requites the steadfast and those who suffer. There is not a trace of injustice in His judgments; His commandments and prohibitions are untainted by corruption. He puts to death and gives life, brings illness and heals, allots poverty and wealth. There is no god other than Him, His Sublime Highness and Perfect Majesty, to whom all foreheads bow, of whom all mouths speak in praise and exaltation. There is no favor but His favor.

May His most great name be blessed, sanctified, praised, glorified, esteemed, extolled above all else, delighted in, declared mighty and sublime, and exalted forever and ever! We ask Him (may He be praised and exalted) to safeguard us from offense and error in this world, and in [matters of] religion; and let Him not consider us among the unbelievers.

*Amen, Amen, and praise be to God, the Lord of Worlds.*