SECTION VI
RELIGION AND SPIRITUAL LIVES
In the Name of Almighty God
May We Endeavor and Succeed

In the Name of God I will now begin to write my family history:

I confess before you O Lord, My God and the God of our forefathers, that I have much sinned, transgressed and committed crimes before you. Indeed, from the very day that I was born the evil inclination came upon me instantly and seduced me, and, ever since that day until this very day, it does not let go of me. And therefore, this being the case, I have come now to narrate all that passed upon me, that is all the afflictions and the sufferings, for afflictions purify one’s sins.3

1 Born (on 25 Elul 5625) in Shiraz, Rabbi Rahamim Melammed ha-Cohen emigrated to Ottoman Palestine in 1906. He and his family settled down in Jerusalem, where he was soon recognized as one of the main religious and spiritual leaders of the expanding community of Persian-speaking Jews in Palestine.

In addition to a variety of religious, educational and public activities in Jerusalem until his death (on 4 Shevat 5692), he wrote a large number of books, tracts, and homiletic commentaries in Hebrew and Judeo-Persian. His elder son, the late Professor Ezra Sion Melammed of the Hebrew University in Jerusalem (1903–1994), a distinguished scholar of biblical and rabbinic literature, edited and published some of the works authored by his late father. The following memoir, too, written in Hebrew by Rabbi Rahamim Melammed towards the end of his life, was edited and published, together with brief notes, by Prof. E.S. Melammed, in Giora Fuzailov’s Hebrew book, Hakhmeyhem shel Yehudey Pars ve-Afghanistan (The Sages of the Jews of Persia and Afghanistan), Jerusalem 1996, pp. 73–86. The present passages from the memoir provide some first-hand information with regard to various aspects of religious, communal and family lives amongst the Jews of Shiraz during the last quarter of the nineteenth century. For biographical and other information on Rabbi Rahamim Melammed ha-Cohen, and his son E.S. Melammed, see G. Fuzailov’s above-mentioned book, pp. 87–102, and A. Netzer, “Yadi az Mashahir-i Yahud-i Iran,” in Pādyāwand, ed. A. Netzer, vol. II, Los Angeles 1997, pp. 345–364.

2 Heb. yeser ha-ra`, i.e. “evil impulse” and “evil inclination.”

3 The latter phrase is a quotation from Talmud, Berakhot 5a. Compare Mekhīltā de-Rabbī Yishmael, ed. I.H. Weiss, Wien 1865, p. 77.