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## Without Bounds

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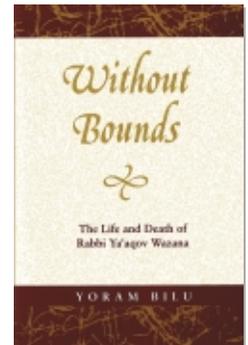
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## Preface

Looking back, I think my fascination with Wazana was born in the graveyard in Kinus, where I first heard some of the legends about him. When it emerged that I had stumbled across a mass of highly unusual and unique cultural material, I became intent on organizing the stories and committing them to writing. The task was hardly a straightforward one. Portraying such a remarkable figure as Rabbi Ya'aqov Wazana requires an integration of the inherent drama, color, and excitement of oral transmission, with a critical interpretation consistent with the principles of academic reporting. Having said that, it is the integration of these factors that endows this book with its present form. It is my belief that the investigation and analysis of Wazana's life story can provide a source of interest, not only to scholars and researchers engaged in anthropology, psychology, folklore, North African and Judaic studies, but to the lay reader as well.

Before proceeding, I think it would be useful to offer a general outline of the following chapters and to point to the differences between them. Chapters 1 and 2 make up the introduction, which discusses the challenges of portraying a figure from the past, whose sole reality rests on a collection of stories and personal recollections. These chapters also describe the technique used for assembling the data. Chapter 2 ("They Remember Wazana") is the most "literary" in the book: here, my goal was to capture the ambiance and impressions of the interviews I held with Wazana's former acquaintances. The middle thirteen chapters, which make up the body of the book, recall significant events in the healer's life in chronological sequence. Although the presentation is mostly descriptive, it uses what Clifford Geertz (1973) terms "thick description"; namely, it constructs a meaningful narrative configuration from composite primary

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interview material, while locating the related events in their cultural context. Although, by definition, “thick description” incorporates an amount of exegesis, the significant body of interpretation has deliberately been confined to the three summarizing chapters. This final section embarks on an analysis of Wazana’s character from various theoretical perspectives anchored in psychology and anthropology. But here, too, I have made every effort to minimize the use of professional terminology. My book on Wazana appeared first in Hebrew in 1993. I added to the English version an epilogue that depicts Wazana’s amazing “resurrection” following the publication of my book in Hebrew, and the role I inadvertently played in his afterlife.

If not for the candor of Wazana’s former acquaintances and their willingness to share their memories with me, this book would never have been written. It is therefore with sincere gratitude and appreciation that I now thank David Edri, Zion Eliyahu, Eliyahu and Tamar Elmaliakh, Moshe Elmaliakh, Mima Almakias, Simi Almakias, Rabbi Ya’aqov Buskila, Masoud and Beha Ben-David, Ya’aqov Biton, Yosef Dadon, Yaish and Aisha Dadon, Rabbi Masoud Dadon, Eliyahu Wazana, Hayim Wazana, Ya’aqov Wazana, Shaul Wazana, Avraham Vaknin, Rachel Vaknin, Avraham Suissa, Shlomo and Ito Suissa, Eliyahu Peretz, Yehoshua Peretz, Rabbi Yitzhak Peretz, and Shlomo Revivo. I would also like to express my great appreciation to my friends David Azoulai and Rabbi Azar Elmaliakh, to whom I am indebted for much of the knowledge I gained regarding the Moroccan Jewish community in general, and Rabbi Ya’aqov Wazana in particular.

As is customary with anthropological reporting, the identities of all interviewees have been disguised—with the exception of a number of members of the Wazana family. I hope that those who would have preferred to see their real identities in print will appreciate my reasons for not divulging them. My approach has been to select from the material gathered in order to create a particular narrative and interpretative framework. While this has always been carried out with complete fidelity to my informants’ reminiscences, I chose not to expose their identities in association with this framework, since it is usually far removed from their accounts. As far as the localities are concerned, the names of the small, cooperative villages (*moshavim*) have been changed, but not those of the towns and settlements where population size makes identification of individuals improbable.

I would also like to thank Moshe Idel, Eyal Ben-Ari, Harvey Goldberg, Zali Gurevitch, André Levy, Amia Lieblich, and Emanuel Marx for reading early drafts of the book, and for sharing their constructive comments with me. Final responsibility for the end product is entirely mine.

Finally, I thank the Eshkol Institute at the Faculty of Social Sciences of the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, as well as Edgar Siskin and the

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