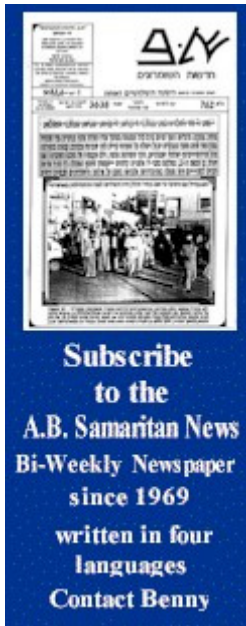


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THE ISRAELITE-SAMARITANS

UPDATE: August 2011

LONG HISTORY

The Israelite-Samaritans are the remnant of an ancient people, descended from the ancient Kingdom of Israel, whose attempts to achieve peace among the people of Israel was rejected by the leaders of the descendants of the Kingdom of Judah, the Israelite Jews. In general, historical research of the People of Israel tends to see the Samaritans as a sect that departed from Judaism in the Second Temple Period [538 BCE - 70 CE], adopting through this period a version of the Pentateuch with characteristic lines and structure differing from the Jewish Massoretic text of the Pentateuch. This widespread view is derived from a patronizing attitude in Biblical research that sees Judaism paternally to the Samaritans.

Moreover, any research of the History of the Israelite-Samaritan People that initially makes a link between them and the foreigners that brought by the emperors of Assyria pretend to be objective but at the same way creates disinformation about the Israelite Samaritans. It is obvious from the Bible in the books of Kings 2 and Chronicles 2 as it was proved by archaeological excavations and survey that canceling this suggested link that offered in the second temple period by Jewish Sages as a result of the great polemic between the Jews and the Samaritans.

In fact the Israelite-Samaritans and those foreigners were two different entities. The Israelite-Samaritans have continued the Northern Israelite lineage and heritage while the foreigners were brought to administrate the Assyrian colonies instead of the elite of the Israelites in the Kingdom of Israel, while the majority of the Northern Israelite remained on their lands in Samaria after the Assyrian conquest.

The discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls in the Desert of Judea, especially many of the scrolls found in Qumran Cave No. 4, revealed Pentateuch scrolls that were scribed by Jews, who had replaced their urban life by independent life in the desert, during the last two centuries BCE and the first century CE. Large textual sections of these scrolls are identical with the text of the Israelite Samaritan version of the Pentateuch and differ from the Jewish Massoretic text. This fact is leading to a conclusion that in the ancient periods there were different versions of the Pentateuch, some of them scribed and delivered from generation to generation in the north of the Land of Israel, the original place of the Israelite Samaritans; and some of them scribed in the south of the Land of Israel forming the Jewish Massoretic Text of the Pentateuch.

Therefore the main difference between Judaism to Samaritanism remains with the matter of the sole sacred place: Temple Mountain in Judaism and Mount Gerizim in Samaritanism. This difference began with the different geographical origin of the two groups that became two different nations. The Temple Mountain is located in the heart of the Judea region - the foundation of the Jewish culture; and after the name of the region of Judea they were called Jews. Mount Gerizim is located in the heart of the region of Samaria, the foundation of the Israelite Samaritan culture, and after the name of the region of Samaria they were called Samaritans. There is no bigger mistake than considering the Israelite Samaritans another sect, which departed from the main Jewish stream in Judaism. In its beginning time during the Second Temple Period there were many sects such as the Pharisees, Sadducee's, Boethusians and more, but none of these sects was similar in structure, nature and Israelite characteristics to the Israelite Samaritans.

The Israelite Samaritans, descendants of the Israelites that lived in the Kingdom of Israel and in the north of the Land of Israel were characterized by their own territory, the Land of Samaria, and they even spread in great number to the plain in the north and the south, had governors and kings, activated armies that rebelled against foreign rulers, and lived in a way of life based solely on the Pentateuch commandments. In the Byzantine period [295-634 C.E.] there were at least nine sects that departed from the main Israelite Samaritan stream and were generally called Dositheans. A part of them even survived until the end of the 10th century CE.

If due to this claim the Israelite Samaritans were part of Judaism, they surely would have consecrated other books and scrolls along with the Pentateuch, as the Jews have done. However, the Moses Pentateuch is the sole sacred book of the Israelite Samaritans. On the contrary, the so-called Normative Judaism, by historical research, is a development of one of the leading sects in Judaism in its beginning - the Pharisees, that was on account of rejecting the other sects. This development left only the two main streams of Judaism: The Jewish Karaites, who accepted the whole Bible and rejected the whole literature written after, and the Jewish Rabbinate, who adopted and consecrated the Bible and the Mishnah and Talmud - The Torah by Heart. The Israelite Samaritan tradition based on the Torah (Pentateuch) is represents the most ancient biblical tradition while the Jewish-Karaite tradition based on the entire Bible and the Jewish Rabbinic tradition based on the entire Bible and the post biblical literature as Mishna and Talmud and other sources, they are both representing post exilic traditions.

Another mistake that is common in the research of the History of the People of Israel and the research of the Biblical times is to make a linkage between the Israelite Samaritans and the foreign tribes that brought by the Assyrians to administrate the Assyrian colonies in Judea, Samaria, Galilee and Edom. Those foreigners were brought

to replace the elite of the destroyed Kingdom of Israel who sent off the country by the rulers of the Assyrian Empire and administrate the colonies to the favor of the Assyrian Empire treasure. All of them were settled in an administrative cities like Samaria, Gezer etc., lived their pagan customs and worshipped their idols. On the other side the majority of the Israelites of the destroyed Kingdom of Israel remained on their lands and continued to pay taxes to the Assyrian rulers that collected and administrated by the new comers.

A massive existence of the Israelites after the Assyrian conquest was proved by many excavations and surveys happened to be after 1967 and their results were published by many articles. Consequently to these facts that in later periods when the ancient Israelites of the north of the country continued by lineage by the Israelite Samaritans the Mount Gerizim excavations of the Ancient Samaritan City of Luza, that lasted from the Persian period to the end of the Hellenistic period have exposed so far over 500 inscriptions on stones and lots of cult tools that never let a doubt that the Ancient Israelites and their successors the Israelite Samaritans have maintained a monotheistic cult through all the period and were not been influenced by pagan symbols nor by pagan worshipers. Creating a linkage between the Israelite Samaritans and paganism and/or pagan tribes has a tendency to doubt the sources of their culture. As very prominent great scholars of the Bible and the ancient history of the people of Israel have stated that the Israelite Samaritans are descendants of the Ancient Israelite People of the Kingdom of Israel.

In the fourth and fifth centuries CE, the Israelite Samaritans were numbered at about 1,500,000 people dwelling in several cities and villages in the Holy Land, from southern Syria to northern Egypt. Cruel religious decrees, forced conversions to Islam and Christianity, slaughter and persecution thinned the Samaritan Community to a scarce 146 people by 1917. In the 1930s the Community reached a turning point and began to increase. Since then the community has been gradually developing in all areas of life. In addition to being the smallest and oldest people in the world, they are also the youngest community, according to average community member age.

THE PENTATEUCH'S VERSION

The Israelite Samaritans consecrated only Five Books of the Pentateuch. The version of the Pentateuch in the hands of the Israelite Samaritans [SP] differs, as said above, from the Jewish Massoretic Text [MT] with approximately 7000 differences, most of them due to different orthography of the written words.

The Hebrew University in Jerusalem Dr. R. Weiss, the brilliant researcher of the relation between the LXX Pentateuch Greek translation and the SP, discovered that in 1900 differences of the LXX from the MT, the text of the LXX is identical with the SP. Since we know that there are between 6000 to 7000 differences between the SP and MT, and approximately 60% of them are orthographic, it remains that the 1900 differences are in the real text and style of the writing. This means that the LXX is closer to the SP much more so than to the MT.

It leads us to the conclusion that the translators of the LXX had before them texts that were closer to the SP texts, such as those found in Qumran cave 4, written in the same Ancient Hebrew script by Jewish writers, called "Proto Samaritan" texts. These texts of Qumran and earlier texts that were in the hands of the LXX translators are the earliest texts of the Pentateuch known today. Thus, the SP presents before the reader the earliest known text of the Pentateuch. Hence, the MT portrays texts that crystallized in later periods in the first part of the Second Temple Period.

The principle differences are in regard to the question of the chosen place of the Almighty to dwell His Name there. In twenty-two verses in the Book of Deuteronomy it is written in the Israelite Samaritan Version: "In the place that the Almighty HAS CHOSEN" whereas, in the Jewish Masoretic Version the parallel verse is written as: "In the place that the Almighty WILL CHOOSE".

In July 2008, the Princeton University researcher, Prof. J. Charlesworth, exposed on the Internet an unknown fragment said to be taken from cave 4 in Qumran for Deut. 27:4-6, giving the commandment of building an altar to the Almighty "In Mount Gerizim" in one word= **גִּיזְרִימָה** spelling the name of the mount in seven letters: **גִּיזְרִימָה**. This is an incredible discovery that should be examined carefully. It is suggested not to see this special writing of the name of the Gerizim Mountain in one word and building an altar to the Almighty on it no longer Samaritan or Jewish but as an ancient Israelite text before the split between Jews and Samaritans after the time of Alexander the Great [Fourth century BCE].

The Israelite Samaritans claim that the chosen place had already been chosen at the time of the Pentateuch, and therefore the form written in past tense - HAS CHOSEN, and this is Gerizim Mountain, the only mountain in the Land of Israel that is consecrated in the Pentateuch to offer the Blessings on it [Duet. 11:29], and there Abraham and Jacob had built altars. Opposed to them the Jews claim that the chosen place was announced and chosen in the period of the Davidic and Solomonic Kingdom [1000-930 B.C.E.] and therefore, the form written in future tense, WILL CHOOSE, refers to the "Temple Mountain" in Jerusalem.

There are several passages throughout the Pentateuch's two versions [SP and MT] in which text is written in one version and missing in the other version.

In the Ten Commandments [Ex. 20:1-14, Duet. 5:18], the Tenth Commandment of the Pentateuch in the hands of the Israelite Samaritans commands a building of an Altar on Mount Gerizim; this commandment is missing in the Jewish Massoretic text. However, in order to complete the number of the Commandments to ten the Jews made the opening words "I am Yhvh your God" as the first Commandment although there is no command in these words but rather presentation words. The second Commandment in the Jewish Massoretic Text is the first Commandment in the Israelite Samaritan Pentateuch, "You shall not have other gods..."

Moreover in the following chapters of Deuteronomy 11 and 12, the commandment of offering the Blessing on Mount Gerizim is given at the end of chapter 11 with its location and right after this written in chapter 12 the commandment to destroy all other worship places and worship only in the chosen place. Since the reader of the chapter know with no doubt that sanctifying the Temple Mountain in Jerusalem happened in a later period by the kings David and his son Solomon, This is not giving any doubt that the intention of these chapters in Deuteronomy 11 and 12 is that the chosen place is Mount Gerizim.

At the end of 2009, after six years of work, the first English translation of the Pentateuch in the hands of the Israelite Samaritans has been completed. This edition is giving in parallel columns the Samaritan translation text opposite the Jewish translation text, with emphasis on the differences between the two versions in Capital bold letters. In a third column, on the left, are notes that clarify the views of the Samaritan Sages on the most prominent differences between the two versions. The editor, translator and author of this edition is Benyamim Tsedaka, co-head of A.B. - Institute of Samaritan Studies, Holon, Israel/ Ms. Sharon Sullivan is the co-Editor. The edition is due to be published at the end of the year 2011.

UNIQUENESS

Nonetheless, throughout all history, the Samaritans never lost their unique status and image as a people. They have their own writing, the ancient Hebrew script; they speak their own language, the ancient Hebrew dialect spoken by Jews until the beginning of the first millennium CE; and they are brought up in accordance with a unique, millennia old historical tradition, dating back to the return of the People of Israel, under Joshua son of Nun, to its homeland.

FOUR PRINCIPLES OF FAITH

The Samaritans are guided by four principles of faith:

1. One God, who is the God of Israel;
2. One prophet, Moses son of 'Amram;
3. One holy book, the Pentateuch - the Torah handed down by Moses;
4. One holy place, Mount Gerizim .

To these is added the belief in the Taheb son of Joseph, "prophet like Moses" who will appear on the Day of Vengeance and Recompense in the latter days.

CALCULATION OF THE CALENDAR

The Jewish and Samaritan calculations of the calendar are very similar. The differences between the two systems were created from the opening year of each calculation. The Jewish calculation starts from the first year of creation, but the Samaritan calendar starts from the first year of entering Israel with Joshua Bin-Nun to the Holy Land. Hence, the leap years in both calendars are not parallel. Therefore, sometimes the Samaritan Festivals take place 30 days after the same Jewish ones. Generally, both festivals take place at the same days, but very often the Samaritans celebrate one or two days before the Jews, because in certain years when the festival falls close to the Sabbath the Jews add one day to their Kislev month.

HOLIDAYS

The Samaritans celebrate only those holidays mentioned in the Torah. These are seven in all: Pessach, the Feast of Unleavened Bread, the Feast of Weeks [Shavuot], the First Day of the Seventh Month, the Day of Atonement [Yom Kippur], the Feast of Tabernacles [Sukkot] and the Eighth Day of Assembly and Rejoicing in the Torah [Shemini Atzeret-Simhat Torah].

Unlike the Jews, their brethren within the People of Israel, the Samaritan Israelites, do not celebrate Hanukah and Purim. Their New Year is celebrated fourteen days before Paschal, and the eve of their Paschal is marked by a sacrifice of lambs and male-goats on Mount Gerizim.

THE PASCHAL SACRIFICE

The day of the sacrifice has arrived. It is twilight on the fourteenth day of the first month. The whole community of Israel gathers in the magnificent square. The High

Priest and his entourage of distinguished members of the community arrive at the ceremonial place, accompanied by eminent guests. The members of the congregation of Israel attend them there. Some of them, primarily the adults, are dressed in their prayer attire; while the majority, mostly young people, is dressed in the manner of those who left Egypt, wearing belted white pants and shirts, and shoes on their feet.

The High Priest opens with the sacrifice prayer and announces the ritual slaughter. The sheep are brought to the altar and are slaughtered by experienced slaughterers. Members of each family check the kashruth of the slaughter for each other. Matzoth with bitter herbs are distributed to all members of the community of Israel. The sheep are then cleaned both inside and out and they are bound, each sheep on a spit and koshered by being sprinkled with salt. About two and a half hours before midnight, the sheep on their spits are put into ovens, which have been well heated. The opening of the oven is completely sealed with an iron net to stabilize the skewers and with burlap, which is immediately covered with a damp mixture of earth and bushes. The fire is stifling and the immense heat, which wafts from the deep ovens, roasts the sheep until they are well done. In the middle of the night, at the time when the Angel of Destruction went out to slay the Egyptian firstborns, the sheep are removed from the ovens, taken off the skewers, transferred onto large platters, and accompanied by singing, which has not ceased since the start of the sacrifice, and the platters are brought home. There, the meat of the sacrifice will be eaten in haste with matzoth and bitter herbs.

Any remains left over are brought to be burned before dawn. When the day of the sacrifice falls on a Friday, the ceremony begins at midday and the sheep are brought out to be eaten before evening falls to prevent any desecration of the Sabbath. All the remains are then hidden until the end of the Sabbath. Then, they are brought to the altar to be burned. In the early morning, the Paschal Festival prayer begins.

THE HARVEST FESTIVAL [SUCCOTH]

There are no better days for the Samaritans of Israel than the days of the Harvest Festival. Following the fast of the Day of Atonement, the tradition of their sages dictates the sense of having been born again. Therefore, each member of the congregation reveals renewed strength and vigor for the building of the Succah [booth]. These remind us in their contents and complexity of the exquisite appearance of the Garden of Eden, and the facade of the Tabernacle of Moses, both of which are hidden from the eye. Therefore, freedom is given to every designer in the congregation to set up his Succah as he sees fit. Everyone tries to build the most beautiful Succah as possible.

Before the members of the congregation make the pilgrimage to Mt. Gerizim, as they are commanded to do on each of the three annual pilgrimage festivals, they must complete the construction of their succahs, which they began in the evening, at the end of the Day of Atonement. At times, the interval is very short, when the Jewish holidays fall in the same week following the Samaritan holidays. At other times, there is a longer preparation period within the four days, which separate the Day of Atonement from the Feast of Booths.

However, the wonder of it is that whatever time is allotted, the Samaritans manage to set up their magnificent Succahs. The combination of the four species, which it is commanded to use in setting up the Succah, creates a splendid spectacle. Sometimes the four species are attached to the ceiling of the large room in each home, while some place

it on four strong poles. The average weight of the fruit used is about 350 kg , each elegant, wonderful, seasonal citrus fruit is hung in the succah; dozens of kilograms of each species. Above them are open palm branches, alternately spread out right side up and upside down; and above them, dense boughs of thick-leaved trees are placed close together to form a thatched roof. Alongside are placed willows of the brook, brought from the banks of Israeli streams and rivers. All the species are joined together.

The different colored lights suspended among the assorted paper decorations are dimmed and the congregation sets off on its pilgrimage. This is the third pilgrimage of the year to the holy sites on Mount Gerizim. The prayers are devoted to the Harvest Festival.

Following the pilgrimage, the congregation descends to their succahs. Joy reaches its peak. The clear ale, produced only yesterday at home, is diluted in the waters of the mountain springs until they turn white as milk and are decanted into throats filled with the cheerful songs of Succoth. Indeed, the Harvest Festival is a day of gladness and rejoicing. A large variety of salads, peeled almonds, which have been soaked in water, oven-baked broad beans, assorted baked goods, cakes and cookies only add to the joy.

Among the festival days, there is also a festive Sabbath of the Harvest Festival, Which is called the Garden of Eden Sabbath. This Sabbath comes to teach us that he whose sins have been forgiven on the Day of Atonement is worthy of entering the gates of the Garden of Eden. The Succah expresses this beautifully. On Succoth, the samaritans host thousands of guests, who come to visit from all over the country and from abroad.

FOUR HOUSEHOLDS

At the head of the Samaritan Israelites is the High Priest, who is also the head of the Ha'Abta'ee priestly clan, descendants of Aaron, brother of Moses, through his son, Itamar. The three other Samaritan clans date back to the sons of Joseph: the Tsedaka Hatsafari from the Tribe of Manasseh, and the Danfi [Altif + Hassetari (Sassoni)] and the Marchivi [Marchiv + Yehoshua] from the Tribe of Ephraim.

SAMARITAN CENTERS

A progressive indicator of Samaritan life is their concentration in two centers. Almost half the community lives in the Kiriat Luza neighborhood on Mt. Gerizim throughout the year. The other half of the community resides mostly in the Samaritan neighborhood in Holon, which was established in 1954-55. The community is grateful for the efforts of its late leader, Yefet b. Avraham Tsedaka Hatsafari, of blessed memory, and the great assistance of the second President of the State of Israel, the late Yitzhaq ben Zvi, of blessed memory, as well as the mayors of Holon, the late Hayeem Kugel, and the late Pinhas Eilon, of blessed memory, who allotted the land for the neighborhood and helped to obtain the requisite financial assistance.

POLITICS

Due to the peace process between the government of Israel and the Palestinians, the community has been split, in terms of the areas under their control, since the end of 1995. Public affairs, particularly the concern to improve the quality of life in both centers, are

conducted by committees in Holon for predetermined periods and in Kiryat Luza in accordance with instructions of the High Priest. The blessed growth of the community in the last generation requires the expansion of the residential and living areas of the two centers and possibly, the planning of a third center.

At Kiriya Luza, accelerated construction to expand the neighborhood is being implemented to respond to the needs of the younger generation.

The Israelite Samaritans have established an International Peace Center on Mount Gerizim as a place for peace seekers from all over the world to meet groups in political or social or religious dispute, especially in the region between Palestinians and Israelis. Senior officials of both sides are very positive to the idea.

In general the Israelite Samaritans are not officially involved in the politics of region, by emphasizing their most ancient heritage and their uniqueness as one of the most ancient entity in civilized world they wish to be a bridge of peace between entities in conflict in the Middle East by offering their modest contribution for making peace. Their neutral attitude and their friendship with all entities of the Middle East helped them to be the only entity in the Middle East that fully respected by all sides of the politics of the region.

CULTURE AND EDUCATION

An active educational and cultural life abounds in the Samaritan community on a number of levels: there are cultural activities, summer day camps, exhibitions, community centers which operate primarily in the spring and summer, and offer courses and enrichment classes. There are also schools, which teach the Samaritan tradition, operating Sundays through Thursdays, in the afternoons.

In 1969, the brothers Benyamim and Yefet b. Ratson Tsedaka established A.B. - The Samaritan News, the first Samaritan newspaper, generally published on a bi-weekly basis in four languages, all appearing in the same edition: ancient Hebrew, modern Hebrew, Arabic and English. In 1981, the editors of A.B. established the A.B. Institute of Samaritan Studies, named after Yefet ben Avraham Tsedaka, the former head of the Samaritan community in Israel. The institute serves as a focal point for scholars and university students. They receive instruction and guidance at the institute for the research they conduct in Samaritan studies. In Kiriya Luza there are additional three charities who help in giving information about the Samaritans to guests and the Arab neighbors.

In the winter months, there is extensive activity in the community, which copies and prepares Torahs and prayer books for publication, some of which are published in limited editions. On Mount Gerizim there is an interesting museum run by its owner, Priest Yefet b. Asher, displaying items of the Samaritan heritage and ancient findings from the Mountain, coins, lamps and inscriptions. It is planned for the International Peace Center on Mount Gerizim to have a big museum with all main artifacts of the Israelite heritage, run by the committee.

SAMARITAN STUDIES

The Samaritan studies are a science developing at a very rapid pace since the establishment of the Society of Samaritan Studies in Paris in 1985. Since then the society helped to organize 6 International conferences of Samaritan Studies held in Tel Aviv, Israel [1998], Yarinton, England [1990], Paris, France [1992], Milan, Italy [1996],

Helsinki, Finland [2000], Haifa, Israel [2004], and Papa, Hungary [2008] and the next one will be in Germany in 2012. These conferences are joined with proceedings that contain the full text of all lectures in various subjects which open a wide window to all aspects of Samaritan Studies. Between congresses there are conferences of the Society of Biblical Literature [SBL] and the European Association of Biblical Studies [EABS] that dedicate sessions to Samaritan Studies. Recently the University of Zurich, Switzerland is dedicating conferences and studies about the Samaritans and Samaritan Studies.

THE ISRAELITE SAMARITAN MUSIC

Samaritan music is a vocal music, unaccompanied by instruments, handed down over the one hundred and thirty generations of the ancient Israelite-Samaritan people in the land of Israel. It has been passed on in two ways:

1. Through formal study, with every Samaritan boy or girl - studying for about an hour a day with Samaritan teachers at the Community Center when they come home from their regular school. They learn reading, liturgy and poetry in ancient Hebrew and in the Aramaic dialect still used today by the Samaritans;
2. By participation in prayer services at the Samaritan synagogue every Sabbath and festival. Thus the musical tradition is preserved, with its thousands of different songs and melodies, some of which are sung in prayer services and secular ceremonies, on Sabbath and festivals and on joyous as well as sorrowful occasions. Some of the songs are handed down directly, a clear echo of ancient Israelite song; some were written by Samaritan composers in the latter half of the first millennium and some in the first half of the second millennium of the modern era. There is an active choir of the Israelite Samaritan Music, performing regularly on world stages in New York, Paris, Berlin, London and Tokyo. The choir is run by A.B. - Institute of Samaritan Studies.

THE YOUNG PEOPLE

Serious efforts have been made to encourage the younger generation to become involved in the internal affairs of the community. Holon operates one basketball team within the league of the Israel Basketball Association. Nablus reestablished a youth club in 1982, with about 100 members, who organize sports activities and a basketball team, hiking trips and courses in the fall and winter months for the study of their heritage.

THE FIRST SAMARITAN MEDAL OF PEACE

The first Israelite Samaritan Medal is made of pure silver. On one side an American artist engraved the picture of the summit of Mount Gerizim, and around it the verse written in Ancient Hebrew: "Shehmaa will bless you and will keep you"[Numbers 6:24]. On the other side there is an engraved illustration of the "Good Samaritan" [Luke, Ch. 10] - An icon figure helping every person at no cost, and around it, written in Ancient Hebrew, is a verse from the Samaritan hymns: "Peace will dwell in me in every place."

So far several hundreds of medals were produced, with intention to be awarded to prominent very known personalities, males and females, in the common activity of

making peace and/or having humanitarian and academic achievements in helping persons in need.

The medal was produced in Washington D.C., but is awarded on behalf of the Israelite Samaritan People, expressing in this way honor to these males and females; and contributing to the circulation of the issues of the Israelite Samaritans and their culture throughout the world.

The members of the Medal's committee are: Benyamim Tseadaka - Chairman and the other four Board directors are Ralph Benko - Director [Washington D.C.], Jim Jabara - General Secretary [Michigan], 'Abd Eillah Elattireh - Director [Nablus] and Sharon Sullivan - Director [Holon]. The other members members of the Medal's Foundation are Dr. David Gilner [Cincinnati], Dr. Jim Ridolfo [Lexington, Kentucky], Yefet b. Ratson Tsedaka [Holon, Israel], Priest Phinhas b. Tzadiq [Kiriath Luza, Mount Gerizim], 'Abed Cohen, Yitzhaq Altif and Asher Cohen - all of them from Kiriath Luza, Mount Gerizim, in a position of advisers to the Board.

Every one who sees the medal is praising it. The Medal's Committee has opened a special Web Site. Its address is: <http://www.samaritanmedal.org>

FOUR DISTINCTIONS

To be an Israelite of the Samaritan people means adhering to the four symbols of identification:

1. To live forever in the Holy Land.
2. Compulsory participation in the Sacrifice on Mount Gerizim at Pesach.
3. Celebration of the Sabbath as written in the Torah.
4. Adherence to the laws of purity and impurity as prescribed in the Torah.

DEVELOPED COMMUNITY

In 1948, the Samaritan Community numbered 250 persons: 192 in Nablus and 58 in Tel Aviv-Yafo. In 1969, it totaled 414 persons: 227 males and 187 females.

On January 1, 2011, the Community numbered 745 persons [350 in Kiryat Luza-Mount Gerizim, Samaria; 395 in the State of Israel: 393 males [189:204] and 352 females [168:184]. These included 336 married persons [150:186], 218 unmarried males [107:111], 154 unmarried females [73:81]; 7 widowed men [4:3]; 26 widowed women [15:11]; 3 Divorced Men [0:3]; 1 Divorced Woman [0:1].

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