



Responses to the False Myths of the Samaritans

Concerning the worshipping of a dove.

"The leading question in the early investigation of the Samaritans concerning the ancient allegation of the Jews that the Samaritans worshipped a dove on Gerizim. Huntington's inquiry on this point was regarded as an insult by the Samaritans; upon the beginning of the de Sacy correspondence Jewish informants still made the same charge against the sect (*N. et E.* nos. I and ii; see in general de Sacy's introduction to the volume, and Friedrich, *De Christologia Samaritanorum; Appendicula de columba dea Samaritanorum*). The accusation is now generally regarded as a sheer calumny, and the question has become one chiefly of archaeological interest: What could have been the origin of the charge?"

"The Talmudic assertion of the accusation belongs to the IVth Century. In the interpretation given by *Sanhedrin*, 63b, of the deities worshipped by the colonists of 2 *Ki.* 17, no reference to the dove is found, although the deities are all zoologically explained. The Fathers are entirely silent on this score. The only point in Samaritan tradition which is in the least degree pertinent is the legend, *Lib.Jos.* c.1, concerning a brazen bird placed by the Romans on Gerizim, which on the approach of a Samaritan cried *ibri*, i.e. "Hebrew," thus warning the guards. But this is a tradition concerning some mechanical oracle, of a kind witnessed to for antiquity. Reland, in his dissertation *De monte Garizim*, has carefully examined all the evidence concerning the ancient dove-cult. Selden, *De dis Syris, syntag.* ii, c. 3, *sub fin.*, made the happy suggestion that the cult must have been that of the goddess Semiramis; cf. *Diodorus Sic.*, ii, 20; Lucian, *De dea Syria*, c. 14; also Tibullus i, 8: *Alba Palaestina sacra columbia*. Ronzevalle has recently followed up Selden's theory with a very interesting identification. In his article, *Inscription bilingue de Deir el-Qala'a*, in *Revue archeologique*, 1893, p. 29, he has put forth much evidence for the existence of a goddess, Sima or Shima, whom he identifies on the one hand with Semiramis, on the other hand with the Ashima of 2 *Ki.* 17. He suggests therefore that the Jewish accusation against the Samaritans may go back to the actual cult of the Hamathite deity Semiramis, under the form of a dove, practised by the Hamathite colony in Samaria. On the other hand this cult may have been introduced much later, in the

age of Hadrian or subsequent syncretizing emperors. But to sum up, there is nothing to show for the legend that the Samaritan sect itself ever worshipped the dove." The Samaritans, The Earliest Jewish Sect, Their History, Theology and Literature by James Alan Montgomery, 1907, The John C. Winston Co, Philadelphia, pg. 320-1.

"The idea that Samaritans worship a dove is totally preposterous. The Samaritan-Israelite uses the word 'Shema' in place of the Jewish word 'Adonai.' The word Shema means 'the name' and is the Samaritan-Israelite substitution of the name of God. "And he (Ezra) invented the statement that they worshiped the dove, an idol 'Ashina', because the aforesaid nation (Jews) pronounced the name of the Almighty, according to their custom, "YHWH" which the Jews read "Adonai," but the Samaritans indicate by the name "Shimeh." He (Ezra) therefore invented against them the story that they read it "Ashimeh," and that is nothing but untruth." Despite the fact that there are differences between the spelling of the two words, Shema and Shimeh, make the same sound when verbalized." The Samaritan Update 9.6.2001

Concerning the idea that the Samaritans are of mixed ramble and not of Israel.

Not many stop to think about the rivalry that occurred between the two nations of the kingdoms of Israel and Judah. The main difference between the nations was the center of two worship places. As you well may know, the kingdom of Israel as well as the Samaritan-Israelite worships on Har (mount) Gerizim instead of Jerusalem. But there have been other differences besides the worship place that differ between the two sects that should be explained. This enmity between them would end according to the Jews, if the Samaritan-Israelite renounces Gerizim and accepts Jerusalem and the resurrection of the dead. Then the Jews would accept them as proselytes. Of course, the Samaritan-Israelite still worships on mount Gerizim today like their ancestors had from the entry in to the land.

The worship place of mount Gerizim that had been the center of worship of the Israelites for more that three hundred and fifty years from the time of Israel's entrance into the land was a challenging incitement against the tribes of the north by Judea. Issues of having an illegitimate priesthood serving false gods descended on the northern kingdom of Israel. Some of the people of the northern kingdom did accept Jerusalem, taking there their sacrifices, as there were no sacrifices made at Shechem (Gerizim) except the Passover after the nations split into two fractions.

The enmity between the two kingdoms was a major issue that led to warfare between the tribes of Israel. Aggression was developed in order for the kingdom of Judah to keep the contention in relation to the people. John W. Nutt writes, "the name of Kuthim was maliciously fixed upon them by the Jews in order to rob them of their true designation of Israelites." The leading men in Judea tried to counter the worship place and priesthood in the north with many with many false reports. To make matters worse was the interference of the deportation and importation of the people by Shalmaneser, king of Assyria. There was a transfer of only a small

amount of people by the King of Assyria in 722/1, when he conquered the land. According to the Annals of Sargon inscriptions read, there were 27,290 of the people taken into captivity to the east. But at that time there were at least 60,000 people that remained. In the years that came after, the population was over one million. Now because of the imported population into the land of Samaria the Judean kingdom sages claim that all the Samaritans are from foreign nations, calling them, 'Kuthim.'

Further, the honorable Israelite-Samaritan scholar, Israel Tsedaka, spoke on the third day of the fifth congress, of the Samaritan studies, in Helsinki, Finland in August 2000, "According to II Kings read the destruction of Samaria when the people of the kingdom of Israel were sent in to exile and replaced by foreigners, the author of II Chronicles chapter 30 tells us about envoys sent by king Hezekiah, who had witnessed the destruction of Samaria and consequent exile. These envoys go from city to city in the land of Ephraim and Manasseh, in an attempt to convince the Israelites to make the pilgrimage to Jerusalem. The phrase "from city to city" tells us that the majority of the people had remained in Samaria. Furthermore, despite their difficult political position, lacking a king, they rejected Hezekiah's appeal, when he tells them "Now be not stiff-necked as your fathers were". "They laughed them to scorn and mocked them". Here one should note how Rabbi Levi son of Gershon (Ralbag) interprets the reference to the Exile in II Kings 17:34. He writes: 'The remaining are Israel, since not all were exiled, as is seen in the story of Hezekiah's envoys sent to the remnant of Israel.' An additional, principal point in II Chronicles 30 is the humbling of Israelites dwelling in the northern part of the country, and their arrival in Jerusalem. Here we see that those Israelites who humbled themselves and come to Jerusalem are considered proper Jews, whereas those Israelites who rejected king Hezekiah's appeal and remained loyal to the earlier religious center of Israel are called foreigners, Cuthites, natives, etc. And indeed, the Cuthite tractate ends with decision, 'When can one recognize Samaritans as Jews? Once they've rejected Mount Gerizim'."

The Old Testament of the Judean writings of the Bible gives one side of the story. To write that the people of the north did not follow Torah that was given my Moses is unacceptable. Yet Samaritan writings say different. If it were as written in II Kings, the Samaritan-Israelites would not have a Torah to live by today. This idea may have come to light in Judah from the inhabitants that were placed in the land by Shalmaneser that bought their strange gods with them. But to give the entire region this claim would be as saying that all America is of one foreign people say Italian would be an incorrect statement. In the second century R. Simon b. Gamaliel (d. circa 165), the father of Juda ha-Nasi editor of the Mishna said, "Every command the Samaritans keep, they are more scrupulous in observing than Israel." With regards to this statement, Israel meant Judah. The Israelite-Samaritans still today have written records of their ancestors confirming they are of the children of Jacob. The Samaritan Update October 4th, 2001

Concerning the idea that the Samaritans have no Priests of the sons of Aaron.

Today the Samaritans do not claim to have a High Priest of the sons of Eleazar but only Ithamar, both sons of Aaron the High Priest and brother of Moses. See our Priestly web page.
