

Reproduced from the Library of the Editor of  
[www.theSamaritanUpdate.com](http://www.theSamaritanUpdate.com)  
Copyright 2011

**Proceedings of the Society of Biblical Archaeology,**  
Published at the Offices of the Society  
33, Bloomsbury Street, W.C. 1879

(p. 7) The next Meeting of the Society will be held at 9, Conduit Street, Hanover Square, W., on Tuesday, December 2nd, at 8.30 p.m., when the following papers will be read :—

I. "On the Samaritans in Talmudical Writings." By  
the Rev. A. Lowy.

II. "An Account given by a Samaritan, in A.D. 1713,  
on the Ancient Copy of the Pentateuch at Nablus." By the Rev. A. Lowy.

(p. 9) The Society of Biblical Archaeology  
Tenth Session 1879-80  
Second Meeting, 2<sup>nd</sup> December, 1879

(p. 11) The Rev. A Lowy read the following two papers :—

I. On the Samaritans in Talmudical Writings.

After an introductory notice of literary sources on the history and the condition of the Samaritans, Mr. Lowy stated that he wished to treat of that period in the history of the Samaritans to which reference is made in Talmudical writings. By so doing, he would leave untouched those subjects on which information was easily accessible to the general student. His remarks would thus be confined to Jewish works, commencing in the second and third centuries A.D. He pointed out that after the subsidence of all political conflicts between that sect and the Jews, two causes presented themselves which operated in perpetuating the division between the two recipients of the religion of Moses. The first cause was to be found in the formulation of the Tenth Commandment in the Samaritan Codex of the Five Books of Moses, whereby a startling innovation was introduced. After those words in (p. 12) Exodus, chap, xx., which in the respective creeds of the Jews and the Christians are accepted as the actual Ten Commandments and which by the Samaritans are contracted into a series of only *nine*, the Tenth Commandment runs thus:—

"And it shall come to pass when the law of thy God shall bring thee into the land of the Canaanite, whither thou goest to take possession of it, that thou shalt set thee up great stones, and thou shalt wash them with lime [plaster]. And thou shalt write on the stones all the words of this law. And it shall come to pass when you cross the Jordan, ye shall raise these stones which I command you this day in Mount Gerizim." (Cf. Deuteronomy, chap, xxvii., verses 2-8.) The words which follow are in part adapted to Exodus, chap, xx., v. 24 —"And thou shalt build there an altar to the Lord thy God, an altar of stones. Thou shalt not lift up upon them any iron. Of perfect stones thou shalt build the altar of the Lord thy God. And thou shalt offer thereon burnt offerings to the Lord thy God. And thou shalt sacrifice peace offerings, and thou shalt eat there, and thou shalt rejoice before the Lord thy God. That mountain is on the other side of the Jordan, by the way where the sun goeth down, in the land of the Canaanites, who dwell in the plain over against Gilgal, beside the plain (? tree) of Moreh, opposite Shechem."

The Aramaic version (the Samaritan Targum) of the Pentateuch, which was composed at the time when the Samaritans still spoke the Aramaic dialect, retains the word "*Shechem*" which occurs in the concluding part of the foregoing quotation, but in the Arabic versions of the Samaritan Pentateuch *Shechem* is rendered by *Nablus*.

By making *Nablus*, even according to the revelation of Moses, the centre of the community of Israel, the schism became irreconcilable for all future times. Thus the seed was sown for those polemical discussions which afterwards sprang up in great abundance, and only decreased when both sectaries became accustomed to ignore each other.

The second important cause of creating a permanent division between the Samaritans and the Jews was pointed out by Mr. Lowy in the fact that the Samaritans retained the Archaic mode of writing. Mr. Lowy quoted several allusions which are made in the Talmud with reference to this difference. (p. 13)

In that period when the Jewish colleges in Babylonia and in Palestine were reconstructing or reforming the traditional observances of the Jews, notice was taken of the Samaritans, who were settled in various important places of the Holy Land, and came in frequent social and religious contact with their step-brethren in faith. In the Talmudical writings numerous references occur to the Samaritans, who appear under the name of *Cuthim* (that is, the men of *Cutha*), but the most important reference is found in that relic of Rabbinical legislature which is known as *Masecheth Cuthim*— i.e., "Treatise on the Samaritans." Some excerpts were given from that treatise which tended to show that the estrangement between the Jews and the Samaritans was not effected by a single act of authority, but became so gradually. Legislative enactments only helped to make it irremovable.

The imputation that the Samaritans adored the image of a dove is mentioned in the Talmud. The rumours of such idolatrous proceedings might, in Mr. Lowy's opinion, have had their origin in the discovery of some sculptured image buried in one of the haunts of the original inhabitants of Palestine; but the Samaritans were right in protesting against this imputation. Their literature contains not a single trace of Pagan worship. On the other hand, they appear to assign intercessory powers to the Patriarchs, to Moses, and to other Biblical personages. On this subject, as also on the question of life after death, Mr. Lowy promised to treat in a Paper, which he would read at a future time, concerning the Liturgical literature of the Samaritans.

## II. An Account given by a Samaritan, in A.D. 1713, on the Ancient Copy of the Pentateuch at Nablus,

Mr. Lowy stated that when cataloguing, some years ago, the collection of Samaritan MSS. belonging to Lord Crawford and Balcarres, he discovered in that unique MS. to which he gave the title, "Calendarium Magnum Samaritanum," an epigraph which affords the reader an opportunity of examining, personally as it were, that sacred scroll which every visitor of Nablus wishes to see, and concerning which numberless statements occur in books of travel in Palestine. The contents of the epigraph (folio 156a and b) had been written by *Maslam ibn Marjan*.

He observes that the Ancient Code of the Pentateuch was opened (p. 14) by him "on Sabbath the 8th of *dhel-kade* 1125 A.H. (=A.D. 1713) corresponding to the ninth month of the (Samaritan Israelitish) year, the 6152d year after the creation of our father Adam, corresponding also to the year 3352 of the settlement of the children of Israel in the Land of Canaan." This code is declared to be the identical copy which was written by Abishua,

the great grandson of Aaron the High Priest, as is attested by the *tashkil* or intertextual chronogram] Mr. Lowy gave an example of the form of such a *tashkil* or chronogram.

Maslam observes that for more than 100 years no one had examined (? the passage or ? the copy of) this Pentateuch. Solemn and religious preparations had been made by Maslam before he perused this copy, when he attended the Synagogue in presence of several functionaries and some of their children. Immediately after the section commencing, "Hear, O, Israel," (Deut., chap, vi., v. 4-9) he found the inscription consisting of the following words :—

אני אבישוע בן פינחס בן אלעזר בן אהרן להם רצון יהוה  
וכבורו כתבתי ספר הקדש בפתח אהל מועד בהרגריזים שנת  
שלשר עשר לממלכת בני ישראל ארץ כנען לגכולותיה  
סביב אודת את יהוה :

*I, Abishua,—the son of Phinehas, the son of Eleazar, the son of Aaron, unto them be accorded the grace" (רצון means in the Jewish text "favour" but in the Samaritan interpretations it has a more forcible signification) "of Jehovah and His glory—wrote the holy book at the entrance of the tabernacle of the congregation, at Mount Gerizin, in the year thirteen of the possession by the children of Israel, of the Land of Canaan according to its boundaries [all] around; I praise Jehovah."*

This *tashkil* concludes at the sentence שיעריך באחת ("If thou shalt hear say in one of thy cities, Deut., chap, xiii., v. 12.)

Maslam describes his ecstatic joy in making the discovery of this pentateuchal chronogram. He observes that none but the letters ר and ז were missing in the *tashkil* because the last two letters having originally been written in the bottom line of the folio had been worn away. The same reading was afterwards collated by the witnesses who accompanied Maslam ibn Marjan.

It appears that such an examination of the Pentateuch constituted (p. 15) amongst the Samaritans an especially solemn act, and was of rare occurrence, for there is an entry of a similar examination in another Samaritan MS. of Lord Crawford's collection.

Mr. Lowy gave a careful explanation of the chronogram, for although the terms are intelligible enough to any Hebrew scholar, they have in many instances a significance peculiar to the idiosyncrasy of Samaritan writers.

In concluding this section of this paper, Mr. Lowy suggested several important points which should be attended to by travellers, who may have occasion to examine this ancient codex of the Five Books of Moses.

Remarks were added by the Rev. Dr. Currey, H. Rassam, Canon Beechey, and the President.

#### **Comments on this section from the Editor of theSamaritanUpdate.com**

This reference is # 2924 & 2925 located in *A Bibliography of the Samaritans, Third Edition, Revised, Expanded, and Annotated*, by Alan David Crown and Reinhard Pummer, ATLA Bibliography, No. 51, The Scarecrow Press, Inc. Lanham, Maryland, Toronto, Oxford. 2005