



SALAMEH B. GHAZAL, THE HIGH PRIEST AND HUSSEIN' ABD U-HADI, THE GOVERNOR OF NABLUS

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In this article I deal with the second and last story about the Samaritan high priest Salama b. Imram b. Ghazal b. Ishaq b. Sadaqa (1784-1855) as found in the hand-written book, *Kitab al-Samiriyyin*, by the Samaritan high priest Yaqub b. Shafiq ('Uzzi) b. Yaqub b. Harun b. Salama b. Ghazal (1899-1987)¹.

In a previous article an attempt was made to discuss all the available data with regard to these two Samaritan high priests and their historical settings. In addition to that the first story about the high priest Salama and the Arab tailors of Nablus in the nineteenth century was published, annotated and translated into English².

It is worth pointing out that two additional stories or legends about the high priest Salama are available in Hebrew and were published by the late Ratson Tsedaka (1922-1990) in 1965³. The one entitled "The naivety of the Priest Shalma ben Tabia" is in fact a slightly different version of the story published here⁴. Yet these two also deserve to be rendered into an international language such as English in order to be accessible to most scholars of Samaritan studies.

Mention should be made that some profound knowledge of three main source languages of Samaritanology, Hebrew, Aramaic and Arabic (with their subdivisions) is presupposed for carrying out independent and accurate research. In other words reading texts in these languages, let alone an active knowledge of Hebrew and Arabic, on the part of such scholars is not a matter without obvious difficulties. The doyen of Samaritanology in modern times Ze'ev ben hayyim (1907-) used to say on several occasions that he conducted his research in Hebrew, the language

¹ *Kitab al-Samiriyyin*, tarihuhim wa-adatuhum wa-tuqusuhum wa-hwaluhum wa-halalatuhum al-igtimaiyya wa-al-taqafiyya, umniyatuhum wa-amanihum al-maktuba wa-al-gayr maktuba ma bad asatirihim alh...katabahu al-Kahin Yaqub al-Samiri. Nablus 1960, pp. 187-196.

² The Samaritan High Priest Salama b. Ghazal b. Ibrahim b. Sadaqa and the Arab Tailors of Nablus in the Nineteenth century. In A.B. Samaritan News, 785-788, 6.4.2001, pp. 185-175. In addition to these unwritten stories there are seven older ones included in the book mentioned in the first note, pp. 127-182 under the title "al-qissa wa-al-ustura al-samiriyya (Samaritan Stories and Legends).

³ Ratson Tsedaka, Samaritan Legends. Twelve Legends from the Oral Tradition, Edited, Annotated and Accompanied by an Appendix: Samaritan Folf-Traditions: Selective Bibliography by Dr. Dov Noy, Haifa 1965, pp. 49-56 (Hebrew).

⁴ Among the main differences are the following points: The Arab governor was Mahmud 'Abd al-Hadi in Acre; he comes to the priest and hears his dream according to which Mahmud replaces the previous governor Musa Bey Tuqan; no mention of Ismail al-Saurawi but five soldiers at the day of Atonement ask the priest to visit the governor in Acre; the trip of the priest along with his son Imran takes place on the following day, the motive of 24 stairs at the palace; no mention of Al-Gazzar and the pipe belonged to Mahmud; after a stay of two days the priest asks the governor to return to Nablus for the Feast of tabernacles; the governor gives gifts to all the Samaritans; the priest comes back to Nablus on the most noble horse of the governor given to him as a gift.

he knows best and considers his mother tongue, as well as being the language he likes and respects as a national language for Jews. His opinion was and still is that those who need to read his works and especially LOT⁵ should learn and have a good common of Hebrew (שילמדו עברית). Nevertheless, after twenty-two years LOT V was published in an English translation in order to be at the disposal of Semitists and scholars of Biblical Hebrew⁶. Despite the strong trend of globalization many nations will do every thing possible in order to keep their identities and civilizations alive in their languages.

It seems to us that an active knowledge of living languages such as Arabic and Hebrew is essential for a deeper and more comprehensive understanding of their literature and culture, particularly of the modern period. Unfortunately, this central issue in human thought as well as in academia has not received an adequate and sound discussion. To put it in more sharply, what is the connection between theory and practice in the field of teaching living languages? This hard question reminds me of a paragraph that I came across not long ago in the Internet. That paragraph runs "Theory is when you understand everything but know nothing works. Practice is when everything works, but you do not understand why. In this research station, we combine theory with practice: nothing works, and we do not understand why."

Is the situation really so pessimistic or is it possible to combine both components in a productive manner? Is there any theory in linguistics which is not based on empirical data? Modern academic policy and systems in many countries have several amazing and unjustified policy and systems in many countries have several amazing and unjustified phenomena that should be analyzed and criticized in detail. Two of them are as follows. Firstly, there is no specific rule which says that professors should have an active knowledge of the living language they teach. Thus we have the strange situation of professors who are unable to speak or write in languages which are spoken by hundreds of millions of people. Translators and researchers would appear to be one category and professors of a living language an entirely different one. The second issue is an attempt of excluding Samaritans, for instance, from the membership in a scientific society for Samaritan studies. The excuse in this case can be that the Samaritan does not hold an advanced academic degree such as those held by the preceding professors! The natural question raised is: Are not thirty years of intensive writing and lecturing on Samaritan subjects, and a book on the history of the Samaritans and being a living dictionary of several aspects of Samaritanology sufficient for membership?

In the following is the text of the story as given by Ya'qub b. Shafiq. The only modification that I made without a remark at the marginal notes was the addition of the two dots on the ta' marbuta which were missing in many words. The stroke / means the end of a page and the beginning of another. Few literal translations were placed between brackets. For the benefit of linguists in general and Arabists in particular, I offer the following classification of linguistic phenomena:

- 1) Phonetic and morphological cases lower underlined, 19 cases.
- 2) Syntactical cases dotted underlined, 50 cases.
- 3) Semantic and lexicographical cases word underlined, 40 cases.

Some of the linguistic cases referred to in these three categories which do not follow the rules of al-'Arabiyya are a result of hypercorrection, which is common in Middle Arabic. It should be noted that with regard to stylistics in general and idiomatic usages in particular the language of Abu Ya'qub is literary Arabic.

(In the original article is the written Arabic article but which we will not display here)

English Translation:

⁵ Ze'ev ben-Hayyim, *The Literary and Oral Tradition of Hebrew and Aramaic Amongst the Samaritans I-V*. Jerusalem, 1957-1977.

⁶ Ze'ev ben-Hayyim, *A Grammar of the Samaritan Hebrew Based on the Recitation of the Law in Comparison with the Tiberian and Other Jewish Traditions*. A Revised Edition in English. The Hebrew University Magnes Press, Jerusalem, Eisenbrauns, Winona Lake, Indiana, 2000.

The Story of Salama the Priest with Husain ‘Abd al-Hadi

This is another story about Salama the Priest which again bears witness to his repeated miracles and connections. We hand it down faithfully as we heard it without addition or omission⁷¹. It is known that Salama the Priest was a neighbour and a close friend of the commander Husain ‘Abd al-Hadi. Only a wall separated their two houses, which would become one house if a door were to be built in that wall. Al-Husain intended to do just that. When the bonds of friendship consolidated between them and their mutual visits increased, Al-Husain decided to build a door. When he consulted his friend Salama about this matter Salama answered him with his known simplicity and good intention, and said: “Oh Husain, do you need to ask or consult? There is no difference between me and you at all. Do what seems good for you.” But al-Husain wanted the approval of the priest’s son ‘Imran because he feared that ‘Imran might not agree or might have a conflict with his father because of that. Therefore, he invited the son in order to hear his opinion. The son, who was at that time young and clever, came. Al-Husain presented the matter to him and said: “We both, I and your father have become old and we can hardly bear to be separated. We agreed to open a door between us to shorten the distance of going around the whole house, for this troubles both of us particularly during the night visits. What is your opinion, my son?”

The smart boy gave him a wise and reasonable answer that struck him speechless and pleased him. He said: “My lord I agree to everything you two decide and I have no objection. Yet, would the two lords, who love each other so much and do not wish to be separated, give me guarantee that they will live forever. Would not this be better?” Al-Husain realized what the young son (priest, because the elder son becomes High Priest after the death of his father) was driving at, and he was delighted by his matter-of-fact and his remark. Al-Husain immediately ordered the masons to stop the work to build the door. He turned to his friend the priest and said to him: “The boy ‘Imran is right and he is smarter and more farseeing than both of us. Who after our death will ensure us that our friendship will be transferred to our children? It is likely that such a door would be a source of evil and unrest in the future, I have abandoned entirely the (idea) of the opening a door and upon my life ‘Imran is right.”

After a while al-Husain was appointed secretary and counselor to the governor of Gaza in the time of al-Gazzar (Ahmad Basha, ca. 1725-1804) and the whole country was under his rule and the district of Samaria belonged to Gaza. So he traveled to Gaza and addressed his work in his important job, which was envied by many people. Yet he himself was not satisfied with the job because of the unjustness of his overlord which his noble spirit rejected, and because he was accustomed to giving orders and not receiving them.

One day al-Husain came to Nablus and on one such occasions he stayed as a guest with the Zayd al-Husain family accordingly to the customs of the people of the country at that time. The people and among them his friend the priest Salama thronged to greet him. Salama entered the divan (reception hall) which was full of sheiks and notables. Al-Husain received the priest with honours, he stood up, embraced him, took him by the hand and seated him beside him in the foremost part of the room. The sheiks were annoyed by this and were also obliged to stand up, pretending that they were paying their respects to al-Husain. Al-Husain noticed (felt) their resentment and wished to push them to extremes by annoying them. He turned to Salama and asked him: “Do you like me, O priest?” Salama replied by saying: “Very much.” Al-Husain asked, “To what extent?” The priest answered: “To such an extent that I wish you to be a Samaritan.” The present people most of whom were fanatical sheiks raised a hue and cry and shouted towards the priest and said: “Keep quite, O cursed infidel! Do you really wish for our Sir (Efendi) to be an infidel like you? Did harshness and courage lead you to such an extent?” Some of those who were present swore that out of the veneration for al-Husain they would have known how to punish the priest and teach him the rules of behaviour (conversation, talk) in such gatherings in which infidels like the priest are not allowed to appear (attend). The poor priest trembled since he did not know that he had committed a sin. Al-Husain became angry but he suppressed his anger. He first turned to the priest, conciliated him and whispered to him, reassuring him that nobody would do him any harm and the priest regained his composure.

⁷¹ In the original text the second *alif* is lacking.

The al-Husain turned his face to the group of people and said: "O men calm down and proceed without hurry! By God's name I do not know why you became agitated and what did the humble priest say or do so that you maltreated him, despised him and vilified him. Just because of me you did not murder him. At the same time you claim that you respect me, what could you do to him that you have not done? Now then, in God's name the priest did wish for me exactly what I would wish for him. Does a believer have anything more desirable and deeper than his religion to wish for the dearest to him? You committed a serious injustice against this good hearted and pure spirited man. He was very sincere in what he said and wished and I am pleased and thankful to him."

The al-Husain looked at Salama and said: "What is your opinion my friend, will you examine my horoscope?" Salama answered, "With the greatest pleasure, my brother. Yet, this matter requires an overnight stay, I also need a bath⁷², but my lord (Efendi) my pocket is empty and I have no money for the bath!" Al-Husain grabbed a handful of money and put it in the pocket of the priest and said: "Here is the money for the bath, so you may embark on mission. You may go now on condition that we meet again tomorrow at this time and in this place." The priest said 'as you order.' The priest left the hall while all the sheiks were staring at him with sparks of evil in their eyes wishing that they could have tear him apart piece by piece. The priest went straight to the bath⁷³, took a bath and returned home with pockets full of money (Dirhems). He then dyed his pot red⁷⁴ paid from the money given him by al-Husain, ate, drank, prayed, isolated himself, went to bed and fell asleep while thinking about al-Husain. The priest saw in his dream something that he would carry with him on the following day al-Husain. The priest arrived at the fixed time, al-Husain was setting on a divan with the many notables and sheiks who had come to bid him farewell before his return to Gaza. Salama stepped onto the divan with confidence, for he was quick witted and had an eloquent tongue. Immediately upon his arrival al-Husain welcomed him with respect and asked what he had done with regard to predicting the future. Al-Husain said to Salama, "Let us see what you have, O faithful friend. Pour out your cartridge-box, do not hide anything of what predestination is concealing. I trust you and believe everything you say." The priest responded, "Yes O Husain."

"I went to sleep after I had washed my body, prayed and recited the greatest name (Shema, the name of God⁷⁵). I imagined you in front of my eyes and asked God to show me what he plans for you and then I fell asleep. I saw myself in a gorgeous and spacious garden with a large orchard in which there each fruit came in two colours. In this orchard I saw a wide yard with a lofty palace reached by long stairs at the top of which there was a large gate. You yourself stood at its door holding in your hand a staff and pointing with it to a stout man wearing long trousers and standing at the bottom of the stairs in front of the yard. There were many different persons. You were giving your orders to him and he delivered them to specific persons who were moving quickly hither and thither. They were in continuous movement, going in and going out. I did not understand what they were doing. I did not try to talk to you or go up to you. Then I woke up. This is all what I saw for your sake in my dream, O Husain."

Al-Husain as well as all who were present were astonished and began staring at each other. Then, bewildered, al-Husain turned to the priest and asked him: O priest, have you been to Gaza and have you visited the government building?" The priest replied, "No my lord (Efendi). I have never left Nablus in my life, except to go to al-Tur⁷⁶ (Mount Gerizim) or to the graves of the prophets in the village of 'Awertas.' "Listen, O priest," said al-Husain. "If your vision comes true it

⁷² Such a bath or being clean with regard to body and clothes as well as being in isolation (al-hilwa) after a fast of three days are mentioned in Firkovich MS Sam VII 26, p. 4a.

⁷³ The city of Nablus had several baths in its history such as al-qadi, al-shifa, al-tamimi, al-khalil and one for the Samaritans (hmmam al-sumara).

⁷⁴ It is not clear to me what function the dyeing of pots has in the process of telling people's fortunes. This old profession established in the Samaritan community and particularly the priesthood requires a separate study. Many luxurious buildings in Kiryat Luza in Nablus are the fruits of this profession.

⁷⁵ See a forthcoming article on Shema by the present writer which will be published in the A.B. The Samaritan News.

⁷⁶ Still the common name for Mount Gerizim used by the Samaritans of Nablus.

means that I shall be the governor of Gaza in place of the present governor. I shall become his overlord who will give him orders rather than receive commands from him. Should this be the case, you make your wish and I will realize it even it were half of what I own, and God is my witness.”

Al-Husain bid the priest farewell and left immediately to Gaza. It was not long before al-Gazzar issue a decree appointing al-Husain governor of the whole Gaza strip and this area of Samaria too (country), since it belonged to it. The previous governor’s rank was reduced to secretary, replacing al-Husain. The priest’s prophecy came entirely true.

When al-Husain’s situation had settled in his new position and put all his affairs in order as the administrative in charge he contacted the registrar in Nablus, the Samaritan Isma’il al-Surawi and ordered him to go to his friend Salama the priest, convey his greetings and the good news that the dream came true. He should ask him to come to Gaza and visit him in order to fulfill his promise, since the new governor was unable to come to Nablus because of his job and duties and that is why he insisted that the registrar should bring the priest with him to Gaza. Isma’il al-Surawi obeyed the command of his lord and master and went to the house of the priest Salama and conveyed the message of al-Husain. The priest was asked to get ready in order to travel with any ones he liked from his family. The registrar also took it upon himself to satisfy all the needs of the family during the absence of the priest. The priest Salama laughed, nodded⁷⁷, and said, “It seems that our friend al-Husain has become crazy. O my son, I am not crazy like him to make such a trip.” The registrar was baffled and his attempt to convince the priest was in vain. When he gave up all hope it came to his mind to seek help from ‘Imran, the son of the preist. Isma’il went to ‘Imran and disclose the message of al-Husain. ‘Iman said to the registrar: “Write to al-Husain that you are coming to him accompanied by his friend, my father, and now go get ready. ‘Imran immediately went to his father and persuaded him that such an opportunity ought not to be missed. Salama accepted the opinion of his son and agreed to travel provided that he would not be kept by al-Husain for a long period. Next day the priest Salama started on his trip accompanied by a cook, butcher, two notables from his community and the registrar, Isma’il al-Samiri, who supplied the family of the priest with all that was needed during the absence of the priest Salama. This caravan was secured by a group of soldiers. When the priest caravan arrived in Gaza it was welcomed by al-Husain, who placed his distinguished guest and his company in a special wing of the palace, which overlooked a garden and was freely at his disposal as if he were at home and among his family. Al-Husain added, “You must consider yourself at home since there is no difference between my house and your house.” The priest shook his head and said to him: “O Husain, you have inconvenienced me. Do you think that I can endure separation from my family even if I were in paradise? Had you let me stay in my place it would have been more economical for you and more comfortable for me.” Al-Husain said, “I wish to be blessed by your presence and I long to see you. God has blessed me and raised my rank because of you.” Salama stayed uncomfortably for three days and then went to al-Husain and said: “The three days of hospitality have ended. Would you let me return to my family? Al-Husain put his hand in the hand of the priest and led him to one of the windows which over looked the garden. He showed the priest a barn with approximately thirty lambs, and said: “Look at those lambs that were placed there for you and your company. When you finish eating all of them I shall permit you to leave.” The priest looked at him in a surprised way and said: “This means I shall remain imprisoned with you for ever. Are you serious in what you say?” “I certainly am.” The priest said, “O sheikh, let me go and give the meat of these lambs to others who have greater need.” Al-Husain did not take that into consideration and called the butcher and said to him: “Look I am going to have lunch with you every day, together with some of my guests. You should always (he meant the cook) prepare the appropriate dishes.” The butcher obeyed and the priest kept quite.

Then the news of the guest of Al-Husain and his generousities spread and reached the commander of al-Gazzar’s army, who was camping outside the walls of the city of Gaza⁷⁸. The commander rebuked al-Husain in a friendly way for not introducing him to the priest so that he could be blessed by him too. The governor fulfilled his promise and they were welcomed by the

⁷⁷ This time right and left as a sign of objection.

⁷⁸ There should be an error here because Gaza had no walls and therefore the other version of the story talking about Acre rather than Gaza is more reasonable.

commander, and the priest was seated next to the commander in the pavilion. "Do you smoke?" The commander asked the priest, who nodded" (answering in the affirmative). The commander handed him a silver pipe with a big piece of amber on its head. The priest admired the pipe and wished to own it. He leaned down to his friend al-Husain who sat on his left and whispered into his ear, "Is the pipe a loan or is it my own?" His friend asked him to be quiet and promised to give him a better one. The Pasha (commander) noticed and asked al-Husain, "what did the priest want?" "Nothing. He wanted to ask permission to go out," he replied. The Pasha was not convinced and said, "Tell me, by the life of the head of the Sultan, what is the matter?" Al-Husain laughed and said: "He admired your pipe, my lord." The Pasha was pleased and turned to the priest and said: "It is yours. O priest, pray for me." The priest was pleased and turned as if the commander had granted him a city.

Salama became bored with the staying in the palace and its food with all its varieties. He longed to be with his family and children. He lost his joy and gaiety. Al-Husain noticed and felt pity for him. He came to the priest and said: "I have caused you much inconvenience and kept you here longer than you wanted. By God's name I would like you to stay with me forever because I cannot endure your departure and I trust you. Yet, it is very clear that you are not at ease and have no comfort here. However, if your departure is inevitable I would like to fulfill my promise to you and God is my witness. You may wish for whatever you like and I shall realize it as far as I can. Beware of being embarrassed by me and don't feel pity for me." Salama said, "Yes Husain, I want it so!" And he raised his hand and pointed with his five fingers. Al-Husain did not understand what the priest meant and what the five fingers signified. Were they five villages, five mills or something else? The governor asked the priest, "Please tell me what you mean by these five fingers!" The priest said, "A sack of five hundred" (that is to say 5000 fils of these days or five dinars). Al-Husain laughed in aloud voice. He leaned toward him and said: "Do you despise me, O priest, or do you feel pity for me? I was afraid and thought that you would ask something that I cannot give, but you are humble." Then al-Husain turned towards the priest's companions and said: "If you are accustomed to kiss the hands of the priest, from now on I advise you to kiss his feet. I believe that God has saved you, it is thanks to the goodwill of this man and those like him among his venerable forefathers." Al-Husain than asked Isma'il al-Samiri, the registrar, who was also present: "How many are in the Salama family?" "There are eleven," said the registrar. Al-Husain ordered him to give each member of the family a sack of five hundred and to the priest five sacks and to every one of the Samaritans who accompanied him one sack. Moreover, the registrar was asked to visit the priest continuously and supply him with what he needed at the expense of the governor. Finally the governor said farewell to the priest outside Gaza and sent with him sufficient guards to accompany him all the way to Nablus, and apologized for his own shortcomings. END

During the period of feudalism, leaders and governors used to own several villages and vast pieces of land each. The inhabitants of such villages cultivated the land as serfs, for a share of the crop decided by the leaders according to tradition, and the serfs had no right of opposition. In addition each of the leaders and governors used to own a number of mills run by waterpower.

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(Article in Hebrew followed the English translation but will not be displayed here at this time)

(Provided by A.B. News Services)