

## THE SAMARITAN HOUSEHOLDS AT THE PRESENT

By **Benyamim Tsedaka**, 2012

The Israelite-Samaritans are divided today [2012] into four households derived from three tribes: Levi, Menasse and Ephraim. Till 1968 there were among them those of the sons of Benyamim tribe. From the tribe of Levi remains till the present day, only one household. The Priests of the 'Aabtaa [In Arabic: Dar Elhaftawi] descendants of Itamar b. Aaron, the priest the brother of Moses. Families of this household lived in the past also in Damascus. Their duties were to be escorts of the High Priests of the household of Phinehas b. Elazar b. Aaron, that ceased in 1624 for the lack of successors. The sons of Itamar survived, and despite the fact that only one 4 year old child survived in 1787 after his father died, the household recovered and all the present households are successors of this sole child, Shalma b. Tabia. The eldest priest of the household became the high priest in 1624. Since then till the present 20 high priests were in office. The household is divided into 3 branches or families: The largest family is the family of Phinchas b. Isaac that called House of Phinehas [Dar Chader], most of them live on Mount Gerizim and the rest in Holon; The Family of Issak b. 'Amram: House of Issak [Dar Aschak], all of them live on Mount Gerizim and the family of Jacob b. Aaron, House of Jacob [Dar Yaaqub], most of them lives on Mount Gerizim and the rest in Holon, south of Tel Aviv in the State of Israel. The most prominent personalities of this household in literature and ritual: 'Abed Ela b. Shalma, the forefather of the household, lived in Damascus and Shechem in the 14Th century CE, 'Abed Ela b. Barakah and Sadaqa in the 16Th century, Tabia b. Isaac in the 18Th century, Shalma b. Tabia, 'Amram and Isaac b. Shalma, Jacob b. Aaron and Phinchas b. Isaac in the 19Th century; Abisha b. Phinchas, Isaac b. 'Amram, Levi b. Abisha, Beret b. Tabia, Phinchas b. Abraham and Elazar b. Tsedaka all in the 20Th century. From the Tribe of Menasse remained only one household: Tsedaka Hassafari [Dar Elsabachi]. This household was developed of the Sons of Menasse household, one of his branches lived in Damascus. The forefather of the household was Safar b. Jacob, lived in the 14Th century CE. Since then the household never left Shechem till the end of the 19Th century. In the beginning of the 20Th century the family of Abraham b. Marchiv Hassafari moved to Jaffa and there they adopted a new family name: Tsedaka following one of forefathers name of the family, Tsedaka b. Ab-Za'uta lived in the 18Th century. The full name of the household is now Tsedaka Hassafari [Sadaqa Elsabachi]. The household Tsedaka Hassafari divided in the present into two families: The family of Marchiv b. Jacob [Dar Farag] and family of his brother Ubab [Dar Chabib]. The two brothers lived in Shechem in the 19Th century. The household Tsedaka Hassafari has established the Samaritan settlement outside of Shechem. First in the year 1905 Abraham b. Marchiv moved from Shechem to Jaffa. His sons moved to Tel Aviv after his death in 1928 and in the year 1951 they moved to Holon there Yefet b. Abraham established the Samaritan neighborhood [With the help of the second President of the state of Israel, Isaac b. Zvi] and served as the head of the Samaritans outside Shechem till his death in 1982. Most of the household lives in Holon and the rest on Mount Gerizim. Till March 2012 there was a third branch of the household, the family of Ariah b. Shalma [Dar Elnimir]. The last one died in 25.3.2012 with no successor. The most prominent personalities of this household in literature: Abraham b. Marchiv, in the 19Th century, Ratson b. Benyamim and Yisrael b. Gamliel in the 20Th century.

From the Tribe of Ephraim remains two households: Dinfi and Marchiv. The Dinfi household lived in Damascus till the beginning of the 17Th century. One small family has succeeded to escape from Damascus to Shechem in 1625 during a pogrom that destroyed the remnants of the Samaritan community there. This family was adopted by the Samaritans of Shechem and started to increase in the number to be in the present the largest household. During the 18Th century the Dinfi household divided into four branches called after their fathers: first and the oldest is the Sirrawi family [Dar Sirrawi] called after Yishmael b. Ab-Sikuwwa that lived in the 17Th century. He served as a secretary in Shechem administration [in Arabic: Kateb Sirri] which gave him the nickname Sirrawi. In Holon, half of the family changed their family name to Sassoni [a wrong

translation of the name Sirrawi]. Most of the family lives in Holon and the rest on Mount Gerizim. The other branch is Altif family, called after 'Abed Hanuna b. Jacob Hadinfi whose nickname was Iltafe=Handsome. So the name of the family branch became Altif [Dar Iltafe] in the 20Th century. Most of the family lives on Mount Gerizim and the rest in Holon. Other two families of the same household died out in the second half of the 20Th century: The first and the oldest called after their father, Amshallemaa b. Ab-Sikkuwwa [Dar Imsallam], that lived in Shechem in the 17-18Th century and the other branch is called after their father Sadaqa b. Jacob that his nickname was Elshalabi=The good looking [Dar Elshalabi]. The most prominent personalities of this household in literature: Amshallema b. Ab-Sikkuwwa and Ab-Sikkuwwa b. Abraham in the 17-18Th centuries; Abraham b. Jacob that called "El'Ayyeh" = Who pleas, lived in the 18Th century; Epfrem b. Shalma, Ab-Sikkuwwa b. Saed and Ta'or b. Jacob in the 19Th century.

The Second household of the tribe of Ephraim is Marchiv called after the forefather of the family that lived in the 14Th century. This household lived in Damascus, Gaza and Sarafand near Ramleh. The survivors arrived to Shechem in the 16-17Th centuries. In the 18Th century the household divided into two families, the first Marchiv [Dar Mfarreg] after their father's name Marchiv b. Abraham that lived then, and the other family called after Yehoshua [Dar Aosh'a] the brother of Marchiv b. Abraham. Most of the Marchiv family lives in Holon and the rest in Mount Gerizim. All Yehoshua family lives in Holon. The most prominent personalities of Marchiv household: Marchiv b. Jacob b. Yusef in the 17Th century, Yusef b. Yehoshua in the 18Th century and Abraham b. Yashishakar.

Till 1968 there were Samaritans from the tribe of Benyamim. They came from Gaza to Shechem, all of them of the Family of Matar [Dar Elmatari] in the 18Th century. The family ceased in 1968 when the last one, a female, died. The most prominent personality of this household was Tabia b. Ab-Za'uta, a great poet, commentator and served as a governor of Jaffa in the 18Th century. Note: It should be left to the historians of the future to judge who are the most prominent personalities in Samaritan literature among the Israelite Samaritans living in the present.

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

**This reference is not 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**

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