

## Samaritan Polemics against the Jews

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Ever since the Samaritans were “re-discovered” in modern Europe, the interest in them has been maintained not only because of a thirst for knowledge, but also, or, perhaps rather, because of the help they afford to understand better known groups and practices. Almost all studies of the Samaritans have striven to draw parallels or distractions between them and the Jews have long been known. But the first scholar, to my knowledge, who concerned himself with the Samaritans as a link in the history of Jewish oral tradition and utilized their literature in Jewish religious life was Abraham Geiger. Both in his *Urschrift* and in various articles he studied the rise of the Samaritans and the (page 14) growth of their Halakha as stages in the steady evolution of Judaism. Since then a number of studies have been published on the Samaritans and their divergences from the Jews. But polemics in the narrower sense of arguing against dissenters or replying to charges by opponents have been studied by Geiger, Furst, Wreschner and one or two others. Geiger and Furst and a few others utilized the comparatively late commentary ascribed to Ibrahim b. Ya’kub. Wreschner’s work is a digest of the second of a two-volume polemical work by the twelfth-century author Munajja b. Sadaka, called *Masa’il Al-Khilaf*. Then reason for limiting himself to the second part only is that the MS. at his disposal was defective. Yusuf b. Salama’s *Kitab* (page 15) *al-Kafi* has likewise been drawn upon; on the basis of this compendium Naphtali Cohn examined the Samaritan laws bearing on leprosy.

Despite its antiquity as compared with the above mentioned Samaritan works, the *Tabakh* by Abu-l-Hasan Al-Suri has not been utilized hitherto. The material of which use was made in this study forms a small part of the book which ought to attract interest for both its contents and its composition.

The large issue of Samaritan originality or lack of it and its relation to the main body of Jewish lore or to the Jewish sects has not been dwelt on in this paper. Although it has stimulated spirited debates it is essentially irrelevant to the topic under discussion.

### I

Although barely exploited hitherto, the *Kitab al-Tabakh* by Abu-l-Hasan al-Suri cannot be said to have been unknown. Gesenius and after him, Kitchheim speak of it and reproduce its contents on the basis of Nicoll’s description of it in his catalogue. The contents as reproduced by the two former scholars would hardly lead one to recognize from them the work under discussion. Even Steinschneider describes it as a “Streitschrift (page 16) gegen die Juden auch die Karaer beruhrend,” an inadequate and misleading characterization, as it is not primarily polemical. Gaster is the only one who has given it any serious study hitherto. Both in his Zschweich Lectures on the Samaritans and in the Supplement on Samaritan Literature to the Encyclopedia of Islam, he has summarized its contents, discussed its composition and appraised its value.

Regarding the author and his work only the scantiest information is available. In two published Samaritan chronicles an item occurs recording a family in which the names Ab-Hasda and Ab-Hasdiya recur several times; one of its members lived in Acco, while Ab Geluga, the noted liturgist, a scion of the same family, was carried off from Nablus to Damascus. In view of the fact that Ab-Hasda is certainly regarded as the equivalent for Abu-l-Hasan, and that the people bearing that name during the (page 17) eleventh century- the accepted period for Abu-l-Hasan’s life- it seems

reasonable to assume that our author is recorded in the chronicles, although it is surprising indeed that nothing further is related about a personage who must have won renown even during his lifetime. It is equally uncertain whether Abu-l-Hasan- AbHasda is a *kunya* or a name. Ben-Zvi, without further elaboration, names him Yephet. Although the equation Yephet-Hasan is known, stronger evidence is required than this analogy can offer. Perhaps greater weight is to be attracted to Gaster's conjecture that even the name Ab Hasda (i.e. our author) seems to have undergone a change, for a treatise on the Commandments is ascribed to a certain Djafet. It may also be added that Abul-l-Hasan bears the honorific surname *al-Makin*, the strong.

The general translation "the Tyrain" for his *nisba* al-Suri is open to serious doubt. If, as has been suggested above, he is recorded in the Chronicles, it is strange that no mention is made there of a change of residence by any of them to Tyre, particularly if we remember that they inform us of the migrations of Ab-Hasdiya (or Ab-Hasida) to Caesarea and Acre, and of the captivity which was carried off to Damascus. It is possible (page 18) that, owing to the proximity of Acre and Trye, Ab-Hasdiya's further change of home was left unmentioned, or else that his son Ab-Hasda- who is more probably identical with our author- emigrated to Tyre. Gaster is more inclined to identify Sur with a village-perhaps Sortan, Joshua 3, 16- near Shechem, and feels even compelled to prefer this identification since in one Ms. Abu-l-Hasan is called a Cohen, which made it impossible for him to abandon the vicinity of Mt. Gerisim. Steinschneider also offers this conjecture.

There is universal agreement that he lived during the eleventh century, but the degree of our certitude has been mostly fairly appraised by Cowley. Gaster, with his wonted faith in Samaritan tradition, establishes the date of the *Tabakh* around 1030-1040. Perhaps the most useful clue, both to his date and place, lies in the proper identification of Abu-Ya'kub, who was asked to write (page 19) a defense of Jerusalem against the attacks of our authors. The eleventh century as the period when our author lived gains considerably in probability if it is at all possible that Abu-Ya'kub is the Karaite Yusauf b. Nuh. According to Abu-l-Hasan, Abu Ya'kab was prevented by death from writing the defense. Since the latter died probably no later than 1020 we have thus a *terminus a quo* established for at least this part of the work. Finally, Abu-Ya'kub's location in Jerusalem may perhaps confirm us in the view that he resided not in Tyre but in the vicinity of Nablus, but this point must not be pressed to forcibly, as there are various evidences to the contrary. (page 20)

The literary productions of Abu-l-Hasan have not enjoyed a happier fate than their author at the hand of history. To begin with the lesser, or less known works, there exist a Ms. copy of *Kitab al-Ma'ad*, a tract on the hereafter, which Gaster prefers to call *mi'ad*, while he reserves the former title as a Hebrewism for a tract on the festivals; a tract on Penitence; one on the Ten Commandments, etc. These may originally all have formed part of his main book, the *Tabakh*. There are two more literary creations, one more doubtful than the other, connected with his name. The first is the Arabic version of the Samaritan Pentateuch. The entire problem too involved to be discussed extensively at this point. Suffice it to say that scholarly opinion now favors the view that Abu-Sa'id, hitherto regarded as the translator, revised an earlier translation and wrote scholia to it. But it (page 21) cannot be definitely established yet who was the author of the original translation- in itself based on Saadia Gaon's version. On the basis of a remark in a Ms. made by a copyist, Bloch suggests that possibly Abu-l-Hasan al-Suri prepared that version, but he has his doubts. The other, a work whose very existence is suspect, is a *Kitab al-Kafi*, presumably a compendium on (page 22) Samaritan law. As the Ms. has unfortunately never reached this country no more can be said about it. His importance as a liturgist has been noted by Cowley.

It thus appears that his major work is the *Tabakh*. The title is variously rendered "Book of the Cook" or "Book of the Druggist," but the Samaritans translate it "Book of Meat." Perhaps the most exact translation is "Book of Cookery." In any case the name probably results from the first section of the work dealing with meats which may be eaten. The contents of the book are puzzling. They comprise law, theology, polemics, Aggada, exegesis and Responsa, and no attempt was made to organize the work into sections such as these headings would indicate. The haphazard composition leads one to believe (page 23) that it is either a first draft from which a well-knitted

work might have issued or a compilation of stray items. Moreover, there is subject matter listed by Gaster which our copies lack, and vice versa, notably the laws regarding leprosy. It is also possible that the book was edited by some one else. This may (page 24) help to explain the reference to Abu-I-Hasan in the text by name, the word *kala* preceding the answers the author wrote to queries and elsewhere. Gaster relates that in one Ms. seen by him a curious history is given of the book. According to it, 'Amram the High Priest collected stray leaves about 1850 and asked his relative Pinehas and his nephew Jacob to make a copy of these fragments. But the story is justly doubtful. Altogether it is more likely that Abu-I-Hasan intended to write a work- the introduction indicates it; but whether he left it unfinished, or it suffered at the hands of copyists cannot be ascertained. Its language is Arabic, the same indigenous, careless Arabic interspersed with Hebrew which is found in other Samaritan works.

## II

Before presenting the polemics a word is in order about the manner of these discussions. Among other religious groups an abundant literature exists, both aggressive and defensive, which bears testimony to a reciprocal impact and recognition of a challenge. In any case of the Samaritans the situation is different (page 25). It appears that since Talmudic times no criticism was directed against them by the Jews with the exception of a few Karaites. Probably they were so definitely outside the Jewish community- and at the same time so impotent in competition with two larger Jewish groups- that no notice was taken of them except by some of the travelers. Direct debates were therefore out of the question. It is much more likely that, as is characteristic of disregarded groups, they sought to emphasize,- to themselves, perhaps, more to others,- that their position was correct despite their paucity of numbers and their unimportance in the larger world. That this was probably the case is revealed to us in their general attitude to life and in the undoubtedly strong influence exerted upon them by the major religious groups. Even the reference, already noted, to Abu Ya'kub who was asked by the Jews to refute Abu-I-Hasan's arguments in favor of Mt. Gerisim may be a product of the same psychological inferiority; it can hardly be believed that the death of one individual would have left the Jews without a defense of their position.

The various issues have been arranged in this paper in accordance with some general outline. There certainly is no reason for following the lack of order in the work.

1. We commence with refutations of two Jewish charges touching the very foundations of Samaritan existence. One is (page 26) the claims that they are not Israelites. Abu-I-Hasan points out that the verse "Moses commanded us a law, an inheritance of the congregation of Jacob" (Deut. 33.5) proves conclusively that the law of Moses will be inherited and observed only by (page 27) the offspring of Jacob, and no one can deny that the Samaritans are most scrupulous in the observance of the Law, whereas no such care can be claimed for the Jews who transgress it in its entirety. Moreover, their own tradition serves as the fullest refutation of their charge. While contending that the Samaritans are not Israelites, they nevertheless explain that the land whose severe sufferings were foretold in the verse "when they see the plagues of that land and the sickness" (Deut. 29.21) is Nablus because it is the home of the Samaritans and they believe in the (page 28) sanctity of Mt. Gerisim. Granted that their explanation is correct, the following verses demonstrate the falsity of their charge. For in answer to the question: "Wherefore hath the Lord done thus unto this land?" we read: "Because they forsook the covenant of the Lord, the God of their fathers, which He made with them when He brought them forth out of the land of Egypt." (Deut. 29.25-26). It is perfectly clear that the people whom God led forth from Egypt and made the covenant with are the offspring of Jacob. How, therefore, can their accusation be valid? It is a palpable contradiction indicating that no keen mind is required to comprehend that whatever the opponents charge and transmit is equally absurd.

2. The second accusation hurled by the Jews at the Samaritans is that their High Priest is not a descendant of Phinehas, and they further allege that Phinehas left no offspring, but that he is still

alive. In proof of it they cite the verse *יִתְּרֵב תָּא וְלֹא יִנְגַח מוֹלֵד* (Num. 25.12). But their proof is vain, for the word *מוֹלֵד* is (page 30) employed in connection with death as we find regarding Abraham *מוֹלֵד לֹא אֵבֶרֶת הָאָדָם* (Gen. 15.15). Their allegation that he left no offspring is unsupported since the Torah states specifically: "And it shall be unto him and to his seed after him" (Num. 25.13). However, the promise contained in the above verse must imply more than the priestly office; the latter automatically reverted to him through Eleazar by virtue of the promise made to Aaron: "And the holy garments of Aaron shall be for his sons after him, to be anointed in them and to be consecrated in them" (Exod. 29.29). Hence, that promise made to Pinehas includes two additional points. One is that his seed will continue uninterruptedly in the priestly office as long as the Mosaic Law endures, and the other is good tidings to the community that they will never be deprived of one who will be qualified to discharge the duties of the High-Priest. (page 31)

3. The polemic about Mt. Gerisim and the temple erected thereon is undoubtedly the most fundamental in the enduring Judaeo-Samaritan controversy. More than any other act, it marked a challenge to, and competition with the Judaism which had its center in Jerusalem. Hitherto it had been the Jews who haughtily refused the cooperation of the Samaritans in their renewed life. With the building on Mt. Gerisim the latter launched their campaign for recognition as the group which was truly deserving of the name of Israel. Whether this final act in the schism was executed in the days of Alexander the Great (if not later) or at some earlier date, it could not but provoke a bitter and enduring struggle which ended only when contact between the two groups ceased. Little wonder then that it reverberated in the political history, in legal enactments and in literature. The conditions which must be filled by Samaritans before they can be received into the Jewish acceptance of Jerusalem, and belief in resurrection. These are the requirements as (page 32) enunciated in *Kuthim*. But although a change of heart took place among Samaritans regarding the latter, they have remained steadfast in their loyalty to their sanctuary.

History may have provided the Samaritans with ample evidence for the time-honored sanctity of Shechem, nor could the Jews deny it; our Bible records it. But undoubtedly its importance diminished with the political and religious changes of the period of the monarchy and it is unlikely that it regained its importance until the deliberate move made by the Samaritans in connection with the erection of the temple. Perhaps the clearest admission that the entire dogma of Gerisim is an artificial creation is, as Montgomery points out, implied in their recourse to falsification. Whatever may be thought regarding the divergent readings in Deut. 27.4 (and Joshua 8.30), -Ebal in the Massoretic text and Gerisim in the Samaritan- no (page 33) doubts can be entertained in regard to the Samaritan Tenth Commandment.

Abu-I-Hasan commences his demonstration of the correctness of the Samaritan adoration of Gerisim with a discussion of fundamentals. In a section not meant for polemics but for the Samaritan community, the author, after demonstrating the necessity, both from reason and from tradition, of facing in a certain direction during prayer, continues to establish Mt. (page 34) Gerisim as that center (the *Kibla*). In the last verse of the Tenth Commandment we find four requirements set up for the *Kibla*. 1<sup>o</sup>: It is to be on the West side of the Jordan, for we read: *שְׁמֵשָׁה אֹבֶמֶת כְּרִד יִרְחִי* 2 *יִגְעֹנֶכָה קְרָא* ( יגענכה קראב ) : It must be in the land of the Canaanite who dwells in the valley 3 *אֲרוֹמֵ יִנּוּלָא לְצָא* ( ארומ ינולא לצא ) : It must face the Gilgal which adjoins the meadow of elegance 4 *מְכַשׁ לֹמֵ* ( מכש לומ ) . It is known in the land of Canaan as the mountain of blessing to this day.

In his controversial section, the author commences by pointing out that unlike the Samaritan reading *רָחֵב רָשָׁא* whenever referring to the chosen site, the Jews consistently read *רָחֵב רָשָׁא* in the future tense, as if to indicate that the site (Jerusalem) will not be chosen before the days of David and (page 36) Solomon, 230 years after the Israelite conquest of Canaan. This view, however, is altogether untenable. Abu-I-Hasan's crucial argument is that the wise Lord could not have ordained commandments and functions that are contingent on Israel's entry into Palestine and the erection of a place of worship unless those requirements would be fulfilled immediately

and the erection of a place of worship unless those requirements would be fulfilled immediately and not in the distant future. In view of the fact that fundamental laws are bound up with the Chosen Site, it is simply impossible to conceive that the selection may have been postponed for this long stretch of time. There are the tithes, both annual gift to the Levites and the one which is to be brought before the presence of God. Similarly, the firstlings of cattle and sheep must be eaten in the Sanctuary in the presence of the Lord. Without a Temple, it would have been necessary to retain those firstlings which is, of course, contrary to the specific law. Hence it is proved beyond doubt that the place chosen for the Shekhina of God has always existed and been known. It need not be assumed, however, that the Jews actually left themselves open to this criticism. Their history records that prior to the building of the Temple there were several successively chosen places: (page 37) Gilgal, Shiloh, Nob and Gideon. On these Shiloh, which endured some 370 years, enjoyed practically the same privileges as the permanent home at Jerusalem, and is even alluded to in Scriptures, while the others were of minor importance with their rights drastically curtailed.

Having satisfied himself that the Samaritan reading is the correct one, Abu-I-Hasan proceeds to demonstrate that the chosen site is the Mountain of Blessing, called Gerisim, which means the mountain of worship for those dedicated to God. Ten specific references and incidents from the Torah are available in support of the designation and early reputation of Gerisim as the Chosen Site. They are culled from lives of Abraham, Jacob and Moses. Of Abraham we know that he stayed in the land of the Canaanite in the city of Nablus, that he stayed at הרומ ךולא ; that he relocated himself so that Ai was to the east of him, while the elected site was to the west of him; and finally, his words הארי הוהי רהב םויה רמאי רשא הארי הוהי which he (page 38) uttered in connection with the sacrifice of Isaac, indicating that it is distinguished by the presence of God in it as the objective of pilgrims. Abraham's words find their explanation in (page 39) Moses' command ךרוכו ךלש . Jacob revealed his awareness of the Sacredness of the place by the erection of the stone and by his stay at Luza which is Bethel. The references derivable from Moses are those discussed above.

Abu-I-Hasan musters additional arguments to establish the supremacy and uniqueness of Gerisim. Close upon its injunction to demolish all idols and pagan places of worship, the Torah admonishes the Israelites: "Ye shall not do so unto the Lord your God" (Deut. 12.4), that is, the Lord's House must not be deprived of worship and sacrifice. Hence it continues to specify the character of the *Kibla* and the six conditions adherent to it. 1) It must be the place where God's blessing will be pronounced upon the community and His Ineffable Name uttered. 2) It (page 40) is to be the abode for the Shekhina and the angels. 3) People must direct their worship towards it. 4) It is to be the site for sacrifices. 5) It is to be the object of pilgrimages. 6) it must be the place for the tithes and the various other obligatory and voluntary gifts. The word םוקמה in Deut. 12.5, obviously indicates Mt. Gerizim. Further evidence that this mountain is to be the permanent sanctuary can be gleaned from the verse "Ye shall not do after all that we do here this day, everyone whatsoever is right in his own eyes," which forbids us to follow the previous practice of transferring the Tabernacle from one place to another. It was hitherto allowed solely because prior to their entry into Palestine the requisite heritage and ease were not yet attained. But once the enemies in Palestine have been subdued and the era of peace inaugurated the right to transfer the sanctuary from one locale to another is automatically abrogated. Therefore, since both the Samaritans and their adversaries concur that the age of ease and security set in in the eighth year after the crossing of the Jordan, the establishment of the permanent *Kibla* thereupon became immediately obligatory. Consequently the contention of the Samaritans regarding Gerisim is thoroughly vindicated.

4. On the basis of Deut. 16.5-6, the Jews, Rabbinites as well as Karaites, have ruled that the Pascal lamb may be slaughtered only in the sanctuary, although they differ regarding the place (page 41) where it may be eaten. Abu-I-Hasan undertakes to disprove this interpretation of the verses. When the Lord prescribed the ordinance for the Passover sacrifices, He specified the animal for sacrifice and granted them the right to slaughter and bade them perform it at dusk (םיברעה זיב) That this ordinance was to have eternal validity is shown by the verse: "And it shall

... that the ordinance was to have eternal validity is shown by the verse: "And it shall come to pass when you be come to the land which the Lord will give you according as He hath promised, that ye shall keep this service in this month." The Deuteronomic law introduces several new matters. The place of sacrifice is limited, and the new time of the sacrifice is linked up with the place. Even the kind of sacrifice is different; in addition to sheep, oxen may be offered. (page 42) Of course, it is absurd to assume that the law was altered; God cannot contradict Himself. The various new stipulations indicate that the Deuteronomic law deals with another institution than the one in Exodus. It prescribes that in the Chosen Site the High Priest shall offer the choicest sacrifice, the ox, at sunset. This act leads the sacrifices of the other Israelites, wherever they are, who may offer either sheep or goats.

The interest and importance of this approach lie not alone in its divergence from the Jewish ruling. It touches on an equally important inner Samaritan conflict. In his work *Die Passahfeier der Samaritaner*, Joachim Jeremias discusses the problem whether their celebration was a "Hausfeier" or a "Kutlfeier," and comes to the conclusion that until 1163 there was no centralized site for the Paschal lamb, and that then, or perhaps 300 years later, sacrifices were tolerated only on Gerisim. Feeling that the Samaritans underwent a development similar to that of the Jews, he decides that after 621 B.C.E. (the date of the Deuteronomic legislation) the two forms of celebrations- at home and at the Temple- were co-existent. While he is undoubtedly justified in rejecting the view that the Samaritans always pre (page 43) pared the Passover sacrifice only on Gerisim, he is needlessly, and, to my mind, unsoundly extreme in his contention that until 1163, "die Passahschlachtung in den einzelnen Ortschaften stattfand." The argument of the *Tabakh*, outlined above, earlier by a century than Benjamin of Tudela's record on which Jeremias draws, speaks of the sacrifices on Gerisim as the incontrovertibly established one and exerts its effort to defend the validity of other sites. Similarly Munajja, whose evidence Jeremias utilizes, indicates that the burden of the argument is to uphold the right of the other places.

More significant than either of the two above mentioned, because it sheds light on a dissension of Samaritans among themselves, is the spirited argument made by Yusuf b. Salama, a younger contemporary of Abu-I-Hasan, for the central sanctuary as the sole place. Those who are satisfied with a service in their habitations he admonishes that "during a festival no place can substitute the exalted site, nor any ark its ark, nor any priest its priest." "It is not permitted to prepare the Paschal lamb anywhere at all; the Torah requires it only in  $\text{בְּרִקְמָה}$ ." If one were allowed to offer it anywhere, there would be no room for the special dispensation to the Israelite who is on a far journey, since a half-day's traveling will bring him to some settlement. Additional proof that the lamb must be offered in  $\text{בְּרִקְמָה}$  comes from the fact that  $\text{תְּרַחֵם הַמִּפֶּה}$  obligates a pilgrimage to the sacred site, and since no traveling is allowed on the holiday the Samaritan must needs arrive there in time for the Passover. Yusuf makes a certain concession to the environs of Gerisim. The community lamb may be offered within the boundary of the land of Joseph, (page 44) which means Nablus and its fortified cities. What can be gathered from all this is that although Yusuf grants the same dispensation as our author and Munajja, the attitude is altogether different. Unlike their support of the sacrifice away from Gerisim, his consent comes grudgingly. The difference between Abu-I-Hasan and Munajja on the one hand and Yusuf b. Salama on the other may be due to their location. While the latter resided in the vicinity of Nablus, Munajja, and perhaps also Abu-I-Hasan lived far away from the center, and hence their greater tolerance. At the same time we may be justified in reading in Yusuf's polemical tone the opposition to a tendency which was becoming more pronounced among Samaritans, owing perhaps to the exiles and banishments of the tenth and eleventh centuries. At any rate Jeremias' supposition is not likely to be confirmed from the available Samaritan sources.

5. The Samaritans, like the Karaites, brought the sheaf of (page 45) the first fruits on Sunday in the Passover week. Knowing of this agreement, Abu-I-Hasan is perturbed by a divergence between them, so that his argument is directed solely against them. When Massoth-festival begins on Sunday they (page 46) reckon it as the first of the forty-nine days of the 'Omer. Their contention is that the  $\text{בְּרִקְמָה}$  is the phrase  $\text{בְּרִקְמָה הַמִּפֶּה}$  refers to Saturday and no Saturday has greater prerogatives

that the **שבת** in the phrase **שבת זו היא** refers to Saturday and no Saturday has greater prerogatives than any other. True, the Sabbath preceding the 'Omer should possess a special property, and it really does in that it is distinguished by the eating of unleavened bread which commences on that day. Our author, however, points out the fallacies in their stand. While it is true that unleavened bread is eaten on that Sabbath, it nevertheless is not comprised within the festival-week as the Sabbath preceding the 'Omer ought to be. More important still is another refutation. The Sabbath must follow the offering of the Paschal lamb. The history of the law demonstrates this. First came the commandment regarding the sacrifice, while they were still in Egypt, and only in the second month did the Sabbath-law become binding. Moreover, the law of the 'Omer (page 47) which signals the inception of the counting and follows the known Sabbath was handed down after the ruling on the Paschal lamb.

6. Neither the Jews nor the Karaites, require children to fast on the Day of Atonement. Our author condemns their behavior by the following argument. The word **שפן** is employed (page 48) in four usages. It may mean the soul, or the body without the soul, or the rational beings who have been bidden to obey, or the generality of people. When a word is capable of several meanings, none of which has particular weight, it must be interpreted in its most general sense. It is not proper for the one charged to obey to incline towards the alleviation or the curtailment of duty.

7. The controversy between Jews and Samaritans regarding the permissibility of the flesh of an embryo without ritual slaughter of the latter left its effect on the regulations of Jewish-Samaritan relations as recorded in **מיתוך תכסמ**. The latter went even further (page 49) and forbade entirely the slaughter of a gestating animal. The Karaite agreed with them in this. In the polemic of Abu-I-Hasan, as well as in the Karaite writings, the issue revolves about the proper interpretation of the word **גב** in Leviticus 23, 28. Pointing out that the Rabbinites explain **גב** to mean only the offspring disjoined from its mother, our author condemns this explanation as the product of gross ignorance. An examination of the usage of **גב** as it occurs in the Bible will prove beyond doubt that it includes the unborn as well as the born child. In the story of Rebecca we read **הברקב מינבה וצצרתיו**, obviously referring to the unborn. Similarly in the precept concerning the dispatch (page 50) of the bird before taking its young, the vocable **מינב** is employed as the general term for **מיחרפא** and **מיציב**. Therefore, since nothing is **ותא ונב** indicates the need for a novel translation of the word it must imply the joined as well as the disjoined young.

8. Leviticus 22.24 has been taken by the Jews as an injunction against castration of animals of all varieties, whether in Palestine or elsewhere. But no doubts were ever raised about the permissibility of working castrated beasts or of eating their meats. The Samaritans, however, forbid both. To this effect Abu-I-Hasan polemicalises against the Jews. His trenchant argument is that the word **השע** has a more general meaning than "do." It (page 51) also signifies "to possess" or "to benefit." The proper interpretation is, therefore, to include all the meanings under the injunction of **אל מכצראבו**. No one may either with his own hands or by his orders or connivingly perform a castration. Nor can a non-sectarian perform it in the land despite his physical ability. Since no member of the community may cause pain to any beast or employ it unless he owns it, it is clear that we cannot use any sort of castrated animal.

Moreover, Samaritans may not acquire crops from their opponents in view of our knowledge that they employ such beasts in their production, for according to the law an offering is to be brought from all produce prior to use or consumption, and none of this can rightly be offered. (page 52)

9. The polemic against the Jews for their reading **מייב יעיבשה** instead of the Samaritan version **מייב ישה** appears not to have been continued by the other authors. Even Muslim's commentary does not note the variant reading in the Jewish Bible. Abu-I-Hasan informs us that the Jews did not take the verse to mean that God worked on the seventh day, but they drew from their reading a lesson of God's exalted nature. He is so omnipotent and omniscient that He was able to complete every day of the creation without encroaching on the next day, nor, on the other hand,

reducing it in the slightest. Therefore, when the sun set on the sixth day, since the last rays of the sun still belonged to that day, God continued His work, although to the human eye it seemed to be the Sabbath. But our author (page 53) rejects this reasoning because what is capable of re-interpretation can barely serve as valid proof.

He therefore sets out to demonstrate the correctness of the Samaritan readings, and his proof is, as heretofore, mainly philological, even if in a negative sense. The word **מוי** designates seven different time periods: 1) the time of daylight; 2) the period of an evening and a day; 3) a stretch of twenty-four hours, no matter when it begins; 4) a period which is to include a little more than twenty-four hours, such as the Sabbath-day or the Day of Atonement; 5) a day linked up with a particular incident, such as defilement. No matter when it occurs during the day it is reckoned complete; 6) the time of our duty to obey God's law which has no limits for we continue to live as long as we fulfill our charge; 7) the infinite day of the Last Judgment. (page 54)

Having this long array of meanings before us a vague statement like **תבש יעיבשה מוי** conveys to us no particular connotation of the word **מוי**. By means of Leviticus 23.32 the doubts regarding the meaning of **מוי** are dissipated. But the Torah continues to expound the wherefore of the Sabbath and represents our cessation from work as an imitation of God and His doings. Now it is utterly absurd to believe that on the hand God has bidden us commence the observance of the Sabbath from the first **ברע** which is counted part of Friday and that, on the other, He, in spite of His wish that we imitate Him, should act otherwise. Hence, the only logical conclusion is that He completed His work on the sixth day with the first **ברע**.

Owing to limitations of space a controversy with the Jews regarding the calendar, the continued preparation by the Samaritans of the waters of purification, including a discussion of the varieties of defilement, and the proper method of preparing the **הוקג** (immersion pool) have been omitted. They will, I trust, soon be made public. (page 55)

## Appendix

- I. Extracts from the Tabakh and the Kafi dealing with Laws of Leprosy (page 56)
- II. Abu-I-Hasan's Proofs for Samaritan reading (page 57)
- III. Extract from Muslims's Polemic against the Jews regarding Gerisim
- IV. Yusuf's B. Salama's arguments for offering the Pascal Lamb on Gerisim (page 58)