

## THE JEWISH AND SAMARITAN LEGENDS ABOUT THE LOST TRIBES

By Benyamim Tsedaka

There are two legends about the lost tribes, one Jewish and a more modern Samaritan one. Both legends came from the same source: Struggle for existence and hope for a better life.

The Jewish one created in a later period under the Roman and Byzantine occupation of the Land of Israel. In fact, historically there were never any lost tribes of Israel,... since the Assyrian occupation has a very sophisticated system of occupation that left the majority of the occupied peoples on their lands to continue paying taxes to the Assyrian Empire treasure.

Only the elite minority was sent off to prevent any chance of new revolutions against the Assyrians. The same system was copied by the Babylonians.

This minority of heads and organizers that were sent off the occupied country was far the homeland in Babylon. Assyria and Madai, some of them returned to their homeland after 3-7 generations, the majority refused to return back since their professional experience helped them to get high positions in the Assyrian and Babylonian administrations.

When that minority developed and increased some of them continued to move east to new lands in Southeast Asia and in India where they were active till the 14-15th centuries, when Jewish and Islamic passengers started to deliver astonished news about the existence of like Jewish and Samaritan communities.

Most of those communities were converted to Islam and lost their former religious identity, only some ruins in Pakistan, Afghanistan, India, Ukraine and other former Soviet Union Countries still testifying their existence in the far past.

As for the Samaritan edition of the story of the lost tribes, it developed in the 16-19 centuries when the heads of the Samaritan communities in Nablus, Gaza and Cairo really wanted to believe that there were left in England, Germany, France and India, lost Israelite Samaritan communities that believed and kept the Mount Gerizim tradition like them.

Those who let them believe this were mostly European scholars and Hebrew manuscripts collectors that sent them letters pretending that the letters were sent by Samaritan communities in order to get the ancient Samaritan manuscripts from the real Samaritan Communities of the three cities. In this way the naive Samaritans sent 40 Samaritan Pentateuch's to Europe with the belief that they would be of use by those imaginative communities.

All this process happened between the 17th to the 19th centuries, long before the Samaritans started to sell their manuscripts to every visitor that came to Nablus which raised the number of ancient Samaritan manuscripts in the world's libraries to 4,000. In the hands of the Samaritans of Holon and Mount Gerizim today, were left around 1,200 manuscripts in which they stopped the sell them, aware of their great value to their owner and to the pride of the community.

In conclusion there is nothing real in both legends. It was very romantic to believe it was something real in these Jewish and Samaritan legends of what is so called "The Lost Tribes". But now that the majority of the People of Israel are in the State of Israel, it is time to keep ourselves in reality and try with our own hands to make our life much better.

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

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