

**Volume**

**1**

**THE SAMARITAN-ISRAELITES  
AND THEIR RELIGION**

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# Educational Guide

# The Samaritan- Israelites and Their Religion

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"If you obey His commandments, He will hear your voice; if you put His words into efforts, He will put the blessings into effect. If you fear Him, all the peoples of the land will fear you. If you magnify His commandments, you will be exalted. If you open His Scripture and read therein, He will open for you the treasures of good." (Memar Markah IV.10)



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## Who are the Samaritan-Israelites?

**T**he Samaritan-Israelites call themselves ‘Shomerim,’ a Hebrew word for Observers; “We observe the Holy Law and are called Observers.” The term ‘Samaritans’ used by most people today denotes the inhabitants of Samaria, a term derived from the Assyrian word ‘Samerina.’ This corresponds to the Hebrew word ‘Shomeron,’ which is also known as Shomron, an area in Israel.

The Samaritan-Israelites are the descendants of the ancient northern Kingdom of Israel, making them the oldest and smallest religious sect in the world. The majority of the Samaritans are the descendants of the two tribes of Joseph, Ephraim and Manasseh. Two houses, Danfi and Marchiv represent the tribe of Ephraim among the Samaritans. Of Menashe (Manasseh), there is only one family or tribe called Marchiv. A small family, ancestors of the Levites from the tribe of Ithamar, son of Aaron the High Priest, brother of Moses, also remains among the Samaritans. The Samaritans can be recognized by their red fez or tarboosh. The colored gold and white wrapping around the fez signifies the head of a family or elders. The priests wear white or red turbans for the head of the family. The young priests may wear a dark colored Berea.

The Samaritans today are the remaining remnants of the Ten Lost Tribes of Israel that still bear the flag of the ancient sanctuaries of Israel. Recently, Tests have proven that the Samaritan-Israelites’ DNA are related to Jewish DNA. Written family accounts of Samaritan ancestry, dates back to beyond the entry into the land of Canaan. Deuteronomy 26:62 illustrates the size of Israel, “Ye shall be few in number.”

### Two Communities

The Samaritans live in two locations in Israel today, one in Kiryat Luza, a community on Mount Gerizim, located near the town of Nablus (ancient Shechem) in the West Bank in Israel and Neveh Marqeh, in Holon near Tel Aviv, Israel. The Samaritans lived one hundred years ago mostly in a quarter of Nablus, called by the Samaritans, ‘Shakeem’ an Arabic word meaning shoulder, i.e. the shoulder of Holy Mount Gerizim. As the Arab

population strengthened, it became increasingly difficult for the younger Samaritans to purchase property. The late King Hussein of Jordan purchased and presented the land on Mount Gerizim for a new Samaritan neighborhood. Kiryat Luza consists of many homes, a community center, a general Store and a synagogue; with further plans to expand the neighborhood.

Neveh Marqeh, near Tel Aviv was established in 1954 with the assistance of the second President of Israel, the late Yitzhaq ben Zvi. Today the suburbs of Tel Aviv are absorbing this Samaritan neighborhood. Two synagogues hosted by a Levite presence are positioned in the center of the community in the same manner as Kiryat Luza. Most families of Neveh Marqeh also have a second home in Kiryat Luza.

**NUMBER OF  
SAMARITANS**

**Number of the Samaritan-Israelites**

<p>□ 2003- 655 Souls</p> <hr style="width: 100%;"/> <p>□ 1948- 250 Souls</p> <hr style="width: 100%;"/> <p>□ 1917- 146 Souls</p> <hr style="width: 100%;"/> <p>□ 4<sup>th</sup>/5<sup>th</sup> C.E. Centuries- 1,200,000 Souls</p> <hr style="width: 100%;"/>	<p>The Samaritans totaled 655 persons living in Israel as of January 1, 2003. 309 souls live in Kiryat Luza on Mount Gerizim near Nablus and 346 live in Neve Marqeh, Holon near Tel Aviv. The Samaritan community has grown from a small number in 1917 when the population numbered only 146 souls. In the 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> Centuries C.E. the Samaritans numbered 1,200,000 souls living in many locations in Israel, and from southern Syria to Northern Egypt. Slaughter and persecutions from invading forces over the last two thousand years forced a great decline in the population of the Samaritan-Israelites to their small number today.</p>
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The Samaritans community today has eight Patriarchal Houses, with four one large Parent House, the Danafis, originally from Damascus, and two more Patriarchal houses belonging to the Marchiv House whose origins are in Gaza and Sarafend [Tzrifin] on the Tel-Aviv- Ramleh road. The largest among these is the Priestly House, numbering 186. Next is the Tsedaka Hatsafari House of 139 souls. Then the Altif Hadanfi House numbers 133 souls. The Marchiv Marchivi House is the fourth largest house with 77 persons. The Sassoni-Sirrawi Danfi House is fifth with 77 persons. Yehoshua Marchivi House is sixth with 40 people. Meshallema Danfi House consists of only one person. Shalabi Danfi House is also of one soul. The Danfi Houses joined together number 212. Next is the Priestly House, numbering 186 souls. The Tsedaka Hatsafari House has 139. The two Marchiv Houses total 117 souls.

## A Brief History of the Israelites

The Samaritan Israelites have also a record of their history that differs in some respects to that of the Jews. These chronicles record a history of enjoyable and unpleasant periods of the lives of the people of Mount Gerizim.

After Moses had lead the Israelites out of the hands of their oppressors, and after forty years of living in the wilderness, Moses summoned Joshua the son of Nun. He instructed Joshua on the hundred and nineteenth year, on the first day of the eleventh month, of the profound secrets, revealing to him his dream, the science of knowledge, instructing him of the fulfilling of things to come. And Moses-peace be upon him- died in the 2,794<sup>th</sup> year from the creation of the world and Joshua lead the people into the land of Canaan as Shema had promised.

When Joshua and the Israelites crossed the dry Jordan on the tenth day of the first month, Joshua began to sing the song of the Sea that was Moses had song. And Joshua instructed twelve men, one from each of the twelve tribes and they each laid a stone in the place for the feet of the priests carrying the Holy Ark. After they took twelve stones and carried them to the plain of beauty at Gilgal. For the Lord was with Joshua and they made war against the inhabitants of Canaan and drove them out of the land. And Joshua built an altar of stones on Mount Gerizim and offered sacrifices as instructed. And six tribes, Reuben, Gad, Asher, Zebulun, Dan and Naphtali stood on mount Ebal and six tribes, Simeon, Levi, Judah, Issachar, Joseph and Benjamin stood on Mount Gerizim and they made a covenant consisting of Blessings and Cursings. And the Levites that were on Mount Gerizim offered sacrifices there upon the altar of stones. And the cut into the peak of Mount Gerizim and set up the sanctuary with the Hole of Holies placing the Ark of the Covenant inside. This is called the Eternal Hill. And Joshua built then built a Temple on the top of the mount and placed the Tent of Meeting, the Altars, the Ark of the Testimony and the utensils inside. Then Joshua gave the tribes their assigned lands and Israel. And Joshua was old and he chose twelve men from the twelve tribes and cast lots to choose a king after him. And Nethanel, son of Caleb's brother, of Judah became King after Joshua had died. Joshua died at one hundred and ten years of age. And they buried him in Gibeah, opposite Mount Gerizim. May he have peace!

## Israel with One King and One High Priest

Four years later the High Priest Eleazar died. Eleazar served on Mount Gerizim for fifty years. May he have peace! And he was buried at Gibeah opposite Mount Gerizim, the Holy mount. And his son Phinehas began High Priest. And Phinhas had a son, Abisha, who was born in the year the Israelites had entered the land of Canaan. And he wrote a scroll of the Holy Law on Mount Gerizim. These words are still in the hands of the Samaritan-Israelites.

Nethanel reigned as king for nine years and he died. Yehud became king and ruled for eighteen years. And after his death Gomer, son of Anath was made king. And King

Gomer ruled twenty years and died. After him, Parak, son of Abinoam became king. He ruled for thirty years and died. In the eighteen year of King Parak's reign, Phinhas, son of Eleazar, son of Aaron, brother of Moses, died. Then his son, Abisha became High Priest of the Israelites. And after King Parak died, Gideon of the tribe of Manasseh took the kingship. Then after his death, Abimelech, the son of Gideon king ruled over Israel for thirteen years. Then after King Gideon came King Tola, son of Puah, of the tribe of Issachar. In the eighteenth year of King Tola's reign Abisha died after serving as High Priest for forty years. Abisha was buried beside his father in Kiriath-amarta. And this burial cave is where also the seventy elders were also buried. And Abisha's son, Shishai was given the High Priesthood. Then King Tola died and Jair, son of Gilead, of the tribe of Manasseh was made king. He judged for twenty-two years and died. Then Jephthah of the tribe of Judah judged for six years. Then Abhoda of Judah was made king and ruled ten years. During his rule the High Priest Shishai died and his son Bahqi was made high priest. After King Abhoda's rule came King Ebhen Lel, of the tribe of Zebulub judging for twenty-eight years. Then came King Antitel of Judah, who reigned for forty years. Then judged as king was an army commander named Samson, son of Manohah of the tribe of Dan. High Priest Bahqi died and left the position to his son, Uzzi.

**Rehuta: Period of Grace and Shekhina.**

*For thou hast found grace in my sight*

These were the Kings and High Priests of the period of Devine Grace. The kings were chosen by the lots from the twelve tribes under the direction of the High Priest. The High Priesthood was a succession from father to son from Phinhas, son of Eleazar, son of Aaron, brother of Moses. These were the instructions of the Holy Book of the Law. And Israel followed the instructions and lived for 260 years in the Rehuta.

## Separation of the Tribes of Israel

Two kingdoms were formed from the separation of the twelve tribes of Israel, the northern kingdom of Israel and the southern kingdom of Judea. Great conflicts between the two kingdoms can be seen in the books of the Bible. But the true account of the separation of the tribes has never been uncovered to reveal the real truth.

The deterioration of the unity of Israel was initiated during the establishment of the kingship and judgeship of King Samson who became corrupted after the death of King Antael. Samson had taken up some of the heathen customs and many Israelites followed him. At this point Israel was vulnerable from outside and inside attacks.

Unfortunately, the main attack came from within Israel's priesthood, the Levites themselves. The eldest son of the High Priest Bacha (Bahqi) succeeded him after his death. The young twenty-three year old Uzzi (Aza), now High Priest had a difficult time from his beginning by a Levite named Eli, the son of Sephna (Jephunneh). Uzzi was the true descendant and heir of the house of Phinhas upon which the High Priesthood belonged (Numbers, chapter 25). Eli, a descendant of Ithamar, an older man of the age of

sixty directed the taxes and the sacrifices upon the stone altar (not to be confused with the brazen altar that was in the Temple). Eli became rich through the surplus of the revenues that were under his trust and being of a greater age, began to appropriate the high priesthood from Uzzi, the true High Priest of Israel. Eli offered a meal sacrifice without salt and the young High Priest Uzzi rebuked him and Eli's anger was kindled.

Eli therefore abandoned Uzzi moving south to dwell at Shiloh with a group of his supporters from the tribes of Judah and Benjamin. Some of the Israelites living in the land of Israel had no knowledge of the state of affairs that had taken place. This again disunited the tribes of Israel and they stood no more as one man, as Shema had commanded them. Eli tried to gain more followers by sending out messages of his great works that he was doing in Shilo. Now there were now three divisions in Israel, the followers of the pagan ways, the followers of Eli and the followers of the true High Priest Aza.

## The Removal of the Tabernacle

On Mount Gerizim, the young true High Priest Uzzi remained with seventy thousand faithful followers. Uzzi realized that the presence of Shema's pleasure no longer dwelt in the tabernacle and darkness filled the room. When Uzzi went to the inner part of the Tabernacle, he found that Glory of Shema had left. When Uzzi went outside to inform the people he found an open cave that he had never seen before and he knew what must be done. Uzzi gathered all the holy garments, all the vessels of gold and silver, the Tabernacle and the Ark of the Testimonies, placing them in the cave. Upon leaving the cave it immediately closed by the might power of Shema. The next day when Uzzi returned to the location of the cave, it could not be found. This took place in the year 3055 of the creation of the world and 260 years after the Israelites entered the land. And it is written in the Book of Deuteronomy, chapter thirty-one, verse eighteen: "I shall surely cause to hide my presence from them on that day on account of the wickedness which they have done, because they erred in following strange gods."

Eli heard the account of the Tabernacle and it's contains and had Abaiachoh fashion a duplicate tabernacle at Shilo. Israelites traveling to Mount Gerizim to give tithes and sacrifices from the south were stopped on the road and brought to Shilo by Eli's friends. Soon with no sacrifices taking place without the real Tabernacle on Gerizim, Shilo became popular since there people found a priest that would sacrifice. Only the Passover Sacrifice continued on Mount Gerizim, as it is still to this day.



## Results of the Rulers

**Fanuta: turn away, Period of Disfavor.**

Then my anger shall be kindled against them in that day, and I will forsake them, and I will hide my face from them; and they shall be devoured, and many evils and troubles shall befall them; so that they will say in that day, Are not these evils come upon us, because our God is not among us.

In the beginning when Joshua established the Tabernacle, it was the one location of all Israel for their sacrifices that was performed by the priesthood of the sons of Phinhas. In Joshua 22:16 there is written a story concerning the tribes of Reuben, Gad and the half tribe of Manasseh when they built an altar on the river Jordan. All Israel was infuriated even though there were no sacrifices made on this altar (Joshua 22:16). This verifies that there should be only one site of worship along with the mention of one location, twenty-four times in Deuteronomy. For 260 years from entering the land of Canaan, the capital and worshipping location of the tribes of Israel was in the area of today's modern Nablus, ancient Shechem. The High Priesthood and the kings such as Joshua lived and ruled from here.

All Israel during this time enjoyed the 'Rehuta', the favor of Shema. When Israel violated Shema's Law, 'Fanuta' (disfavor) took place and his grace was hidden from Israel. From this period on marks the beginning to the conflict between the people that worshipped on Mount Gerizim and those who left to worship at Shilo. The division of Israel can be seen as violating the covenant that Shema had established with them. For all of Israel no longer stood as one. They did not put away the evil from among them.

In a similar fashion this division can be compared with the story of Moses returning from the mount with the two stones of the covenant to find that some of the Israelites had corrupted themselves (Ex. 32:7-28, Deut. 9:7-29) with a golden image. The tablets that Moses carried down from the mount, he broke because Israel had become corrupted. Israel was divided, some remained faithful and some became polluted. The

**One Location to bring their**

**Sacrifices.** Take heed to thyself that thou offer not thy burnt offerings in every place that thou seest. But in the place!

violators were killed and Israel was once again whole, pleasing Shema. The song of Moses (Deut. 32) reflects the division of Israel. In Moses' Song, Shema states that he will judge his people and bring vengeance, just as he had with the story of the Tablets and the golden image as it say, 'their rock is not our rock.'

Since the transgression of Eli the priest, and Samson, Israel became corrupted and divided to this very day. Never again has all Israel worshipped as a whole. No animal sacrifices have been accepted. The kings of the Devine disfavor were corrupted and the curses were upon them and Israel to this very day.

'And it come to pass, when he hearth the words of this curse, that he bless himself in his heart, saying, I shall have peace, though I walk in the imagination of mine heart, to add drunkenness to thirst: The Lord will not spare him, but then the anger of the Lord and his jealousy shall smoke against that man, and all the curses that are written in this book shall lie upon him, and the Lord shall blot out his name from under heaven.' (Deuteronomy 29: 19-20)

And it is written in books that these corrupted kings did not follow the word of the Lord and yet still today some people still give them respect and honor. How can one respect a person a one of these kings that did not respect the words of the Lord.

And this is said, 'When thou art come unto the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee, and shalt possess it, and shalt dwell therein and shalt say, I will set a king over me, like as all the nations that are about me; 15. Thou shalt in any wise set him king over thee, whom the Lord thy God choose, one from among thy brethren shalt thou set king over thy thee: thou mayest not set a stranger over thee, which is not they brother. 16. But he shall not multiply horses to himself, nor cause the people to return to Egypt, to the end that he should multiply horses: forasmuch as the Lord hath said unto you, Ye shall henceforth return no more that way, 17. Neither shall he multiply wives to himself, that his heart turn not away: neither shall he greatly multiply to himself silver and gold. (Deuteronomy 17: 14-17) And to this did Solomon break the word of the Lord. Had he wrote a copy of the law as instructed (Deut. 17:18-19) he may have feared the Lord! If he had wrote and read the words all the days of his life, then he willfully despised the word.

## Foreign Kings

Now one of the most controversial topics in Samaritan-Israelite history is the period of Shalmaneser, king of Assyria in 722 B.C., reflecting 2 Kings 17. In Samaritan-Israelite chronicles only a small portion of people were deported to a foreign land. According to the Annals of Sargon, only 27,290 people were taken. There remained in the land over sixty thousand and this is verified by II Chronicles chapter 30, where it is said that King Hezekiah sent people 'city by city' to Ephraim and Manasseh trying to persuade them to make a pilgrimage to Jerusalem. Of course they refused. The Assyrians placed people from a foreign land into Israel and thus from time to time the Samaritan-Israelites were and are accused of being a Kuthim. A Kuthim was one of the foreigners. But, the fact is that Samaritan-Israelites did in fact remain in the land.

Wars with many nations infected the peacefulness of the Samaritan-Israelites. Armies came waging wars and on occasions were defeated. But many suffered the hordes of oppression. Samaritan-Israelites were killed or sent to other countries not to be heard of again. From Romans, many responses were made against them and their persecutions but to little avail. The Muslim period added to desolation of forced conversions or death. The Crusaders were merciless also. But through it all from the one million-two hundred thousand that lived in Israel in the 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> century, only a small number have survived.

The history and future of Israel are attested by the written words in the book of Deuteronomy (chapters 29 and 32). But yet their future is not over as of yet!

## Future Hope of the Samaritans

Today the Samaritan-Israelites are slowly increasing in number. Normally, the people only marry within the community but because of the number of the men are considerable more than the women; the males are taking Jewish brides. This is only because these ladies are from the ancestry of Israel. These ladies after a period of trial convert to the faith of the community. The Samaritans use the lineage of the fathers (Patrilineal) while the Jews use the parentage of the mother (Matrilineal). The patrilineal lineage is attested to by the use of the Pentateuch, son of Abraham, son of Isaac, etc.

The future of the Samaritan-Israelites has hope. Living today between the State of Israel and the Palestinian State, the Samaritans remain neutral. Yet their great hope for tomorrow is peace. A petition has been made to both states, the United States, Great Britain and the United Nations for establishing Mount Gerizim as a neutral zone of peace. Contacts with both Israel and the Palestinian authority have been a necessary element for the communities' need of the Samaritan Israelites survival. Assaults from both Jews and Muslims have not discouraged their objective of a peaceful land for the growing Samaritan-Israelite body.

## The Samaritan-Israelite Religion

The Samaritan-Israelites religion is unique among the religions of the world. It has survived time, tribulations and it all rests on a small number of people that observe it today. Not really a religion but a life-style, a way of living a belief in something ancient and greater than themselves. The Samaritan-Israelite life reflects their life code of their Creed and observance of their Holy Book. Scrupulous observances of all the laws of the Holy Book are required. Anyone who does not observe cannot continue to live within the framework of the Samaritan-Israelite Community.

### Creed

The Samaritan-Israelite creed consists of four basic elements.

- One God, the God of Israel
- One prophet, Moses the son of Amram
- The Holy Book known as a Pentateuch than was given by Moses
- One Holy Place which is Mount Gerizim

### One God

The first principle of the Samaritan declaration is, "One Lord, who is the Lord of Israel." The Lord of Israel is the sole object of Samaritan Worship. A term is used for the God of Israel by the Samaritans, "Shema," or "Sema" pronounced "Shemma," meaning simply "the Name." The name, Shema, is used to avoid uttering the true name

of "YHWH.." All the names of Shema are attributive except the name 'YHWH,' which does not consist of any attribute"

Markah, one of the most respected theologians of the Samaritans from the third and fourth century, C.E. refers other identifying names, 'Shema (may He bless us with understanding) is Creator, King, King of kings, King of the worlds, God of gods, and Lord of lords. He is Might, the Mighty One, Great, Strong, Able, Enduring, Victor, Redeemer, the Living One, the Wise, the Great Power and the Rock and the Stone of Israel. Samaritan tradition has 76 names and titles of God from the Torah (Pentateuch). Deut. 6:4 forms the basis of the belief in the Oneness of God but this does not correspond to the unity of God in any embodied fashion. The Samaritans therefore worship NO images of any deities or anything of the kind!' (Memar Markah II.9).

## **One Prophet**

The Samaritan-Israelites believe in one true prophet, who is Moses, the son of Amram, who brought the Israelites out of the land of Egypt. (May he have peace) Moses is greatly respected among the people. He is not worshiped but praised for his deeds. Moses, the man of Shema, is highly regarded in Samaritan writings. Appropriately, it is suitable to say that there is none like the prophet Moses to this day. The Samaritan-Israelites still await for the One like Moses that is yet to come. (See below).

## **One Holy Place**

Today the Israelite-Samaritans being of the remaining remnant of the northern kingdom of Israel, still worship Shema on Mount Gerizim as their forefathers had. In the Ten Commandments of the Samaritan Torah, the tenth commandment reads as follows:

"And it shall be that when God shall bring thee into the land of Canaanite, which thou shalt enter to inherit it; there shalt thou set up large stones, and thou shalt plaster them with plaster, and thou shalt write upon the stones all the words of this law. And when ye shall cross the Jordan, ye shall set up these stones, as I am commanding you, in Mount Gerizim. And ye shall build there an altar for the Lord your God, and thou shalt offer thereupon offerings for the Lord your God."

And this is the location that God chose (Samaritan Pentateuch Ex. xv.17) and where Israel as a whole nation worshiped Shema for 260 years, till Israel sinned against the Almighty. Because of this, the Creator removed his presence from the Tabernacle that stood on mount Gerizim. The Tabernacle and everything in it, including the Ark was hidden till the time comes when all will be restored as it once was.

### Names of Mount Gerizim

Mount of the East Gen. 10:30  
Bethel (Gen. 12:8)  
House of God Gen. 28:17  
Gate of Heaven (Gen. 28:17)  
Luzah (Gen. 28:19)  
A Sanctuary (Exod. 15:17)  
Mount Gerizim (Deut. 11:29)  
House of the Lord (Exod. 23:19, 34:26)  
The Goodly Mount (Deut. 3:25)  
The Chosen Place (Deut. 12:11)  
The Everlasting Hill (Deut. 33:15)  
One of the Mountains (Gen. 22:2)  
The Lord will Provide (Gen. 22:14)

Samaritan-Israelite tradition relates that the altar of Adam and Seth, the altar of Noah and the altar of Isaac are located on the Mount. The eternal hill, a large rock where the tabernacle once stood is there also. Located on the mount are the twelve stones that Joshua had brought from the Jordan when the Israelites entered the land of Canaan. Twice a year the Samaritan-Israelites make a pilgrimage to Mount Gerizim as commanded, “you shall appear before me twice a year,” Also, on the summit of the mount is the location where the Passover Sacrifice is still being preformed to this day in the same manner as their forefathers.

Mount Gerizim has been under excavation for some time by Dr. Yitzhak Magan, an archaeologist in Israel. He announced in 2003, that he had discovered an unprecedented four hundred and eighty marble inscriptions with thirteen thousand coins on Mount Gerizim. The inscriptions were written in Aramaic, Greek and ancient Hebrew. They were records of offerings and tithes ranching from the Persian period to the sixth century BCE. This discovery will most likely change many views of Mount Gerizim being a Holy center in Israel.

### One Holy Book

There is only one holy book among the Samaritan-Israelites, the Torah, simply meaning, ‘instruction’. It consists of Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy. These are called the first books of Moses.

There are over 6000 details differing between the Jewish Masoretic Pentateuch and the Samaritan-Israelite Pentateuch. Most are small variants but in some cases there are great divisions between the two writes. The most important case is the word ‘chosen’ that appears, where the Jews have ‘will chose,’ concerning the sacred place. The Samaritan Pentateuch also contains an additional tenth commandment, where as the Jewish ten being reckoned nine. This refers to Mount Gerizim as the Holy Mount. Samaritan religious life emerges from the whole code of law of the words from the Pentateuch. Nothing can be added or taken away from the written word of the Torah. Therefore the Samaritans are the true keepers of the Law, the “Shamerim.”

During the period of Hadrian many of the Samaritan scrolls were either burnt or stolen, leaving few sources at their deposal. In 1352, the High Priest Pinhas gave the task of composing a book of Samaritan history to Abul-Fath. It was completed in 1355. During the research through all that was left of the Samaritan scrolls, they found at Nablus, the now famous, the Abisha Scroll. It was hidden for the future. It is written

in the scroll between the columns of Dt.5, 6ff: “I Abisha, the son of Pinhas, the son of Eleazer, son of Aaron, The Kohen, to whom be the favor of the Lord and his glory. I have written this the Holy Scroll at the gate of the Tent of the Assembly on Mount Garizim, Beth El, in the 13<sup>th</sup> year of the settlement of the Children of Israel in the land of Canaan. I thank the Lord.” This Pentateuch of Abisha was written in a form of the palaeo-Hebrew on sewn lambskin or goatskin from a peace offering.

The Samaritans have many times displayed to visitors their most sacred Scroll over the years. It is not allowed for any one Samaritan to show the Scroll alone. In the early 1900’s, the Samaritans allowed each page of the scroll to be photographed. The Scroll bearing traces of its antiquity where parts have become illegible and some letters have been rewritten.



Figure 1 The famous Abisha scroll

It has been a controversy to many western scholars through the years of its authenticity. Many have studied it and wrote much about it. Early references of the Samaritan Pentateuch can be found in the writings of Origen, Eusebius of Caesarea, Epiphanius, Cyril of Jerusalem and Jerome, who used it in translating the Vulgate. Some scholars have wanted pieces of the famous scroll to perform tests of its legitimacy. But this would not be permissible. John Usgate in 1734 and others through the years have tried to purchase the Abisha scroll but to no avail. Many scrolls of the Samaritan Pentateuch have been collected. Pietro Della purchased scrolls in 1616 that made way to Italy and Paris. Manuscripts can be found in

Rylands Library at the University of Manchester, the British Museum, the Bibliotheque Nationale, Michigan State University and few private collections<sup>1</sup>.

There is no current reading of the Samaritan translation of the Torah in English but one Samaritan is working to remedy this situation and hopefully, will be published in the near future. Copies of the Samaritan Torah can be obtained today mainly from the Samaritans in Holon or Mount Gerizim or from [www.the-samaritans.com](http://www.the-samaritans.com). A book comparing both the Samaritan and Jewish Torahs was written by Avraham & Ratson

<sup>1</sup> A list of Samaritan-Israelite manuscripts in various places around the world can be found at [www.the-samaritans.com](http://www.the-samaritans.com)

Sadaqa<sup>2</sup>. There is a book that does give the pronunciations of the Samaritan dialect written by Z. Ben-Hayyim<sup>3</sup>.

## The Added Belief in the Taheb

The word Taheb means restore or return. There are two meanings to this word deriving to an end meaning. First, the 'Taheb' is the return of the tribes back to Israel, to the true word of the Torah. Second, there will come a restorer, a prophet like Moses according to Deuteronomy xviii, 15 and 18. This restorer will carry the rod of Moses working signs in proof of his mission. He will not be a priest but a prophet. His name is not known but he may be of the tribe of Joseph, which is Ephraim. He will join Ephraim (Israel) and Judah to the initial place of worship on Mount Gerizim. He will restore all that was lost through the years from the Torah. He will discover and erect the Tabernacle with its vessels that were buried in a cave beneath the mount (buried 261 years after Moses' death) along with the Omer of Mana. He will place the Ark of the Testimony in its proper place. The Priests will again serve in the Tabernacle where the offerings will continue to be made. The High Priest will make atonement for himself and the congregation.

The Taheb's reign is compared to that of Joseph in Egypt where comes no suffering or toil. This servant of our Creator will bring final and irrevocable salvation to Israel for all time. The people will repent and renew their part of the covenant to its proper status. The promise given to the ancient Hebrews will finally be kept forever. In accomplishing his designed task, he will die and be buried among the 'Pure-Ones' at the foot of Mount Gerizim.

It must also be noted that the word 'taheb' when not used as a proper name means, 'repentant.' This word "Taheb" in the proper name signifies the glory of "The return to God." May we be prepared in the days to come! Further information is found in the Samaritan book, Marqah, Memar 4.7, 12.

'A Restorer [Taheb] will come in peace; he will rule the places of the perfect and reveal the Truth. Heed and hear! Stand in Truth! Clear your arguments! "For YHWH will judge his people" (Deut 32:36a): The "people" of YHWH is Jacob, the branches and the chief root, and the branches from fathers to sons; from Noah, the root, even to the Restorer, the branch... The word of Truth will penetrate and illumine the world, in which he will come to dwell. How great is the hour when one comes to hear the voice of God walking throughout the world; and all creatures shall be in order and bow their heads; their hearts will shiver and their eyes droop and their limbs shake from fear on

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<sup>2</sup> *Jewish & Samaritan Pentateuch*, Avraham & Ratson Sadaqa, Israel, 1966

<sup>3</sup> *The Literary and Oral Tradition of Hebrew and Aramaic Amongst the Samaritans*, Z. Ben-Hayyim, Vol. IV The Words of the Pentateuch, The Academy of the Hebrew Language, Jerusalem, 1977



## THE SAMARITAN-ISRAELITES AND THEIR RELIGION

the Day of Judgment. And the mouth of Deity will speak: "Now see that I, I am he [ani ani hu]!" (Deut 32:39a) Those who rest and know this will then be saved. "See, I have taught you rules and judgments" (Deut 4:5). "Only be on your guard" (Deut 4:9)! I, I (am) he who stands above creation and above Mount Sinai! I, I (am) he who is and there is none beside me! I, I (am) he who is without time and without place! I, I (am) he who is the life of the world [chayyei 'olam]! I, I (am) he who suspended and split by my power! I, I (am) he who planted the Garden and uprooted Sodom! I, I (am) he who uprooted and stripped away! I, I (am) he to whom all belongs and to whom (all) return! I, I (am) he who puts all the living to death and makes all the dead live! I, I (am) he who encircles my foes with vengeance! And now it is good for us to rely on the Truth and to tremble because of his might! Perhaps we will find the way of prosperity!

## The Religion: Calendar/Holydays

**T**he Samaritan-Israelites religion is unequal in its origin and calculation of their calendar. The calendar is ancient, handed down from Adam though to Shem, Eber, Noah, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob and finally to Moses who instructed it to Phinehas, Aaron's grandson. It is said that Noah kept safe the *Book of Stars*, in his Ark during the deluge. The evidence that Noah kept a calendar is in the verse (Genesis 8:13), "In the six hundred and first year on the first month, on the first day of the month."

Today, among the Samaritan-Israelites, the priests of the community calculate the yearly calendar calculations of the calendar are determined by the lunar months adjusted by the solar equinox. "God said, 'Let there be light in the expanse of the sky to separate day from night; and they shall serve as signs for the set times- the days and the years'" (Genesis 1: 14). The day is calculated as from evening (sunset) till the next evening (sunset). "And there was evening and there was morning, a first day." (Genesis 1:5).

According to the Samaritan tradition, this calculation, which is called in Aramaic "Ishban Kashta" (The truth calculation), was taught to Adam, our forefather by God, and passed from one generation to the next, till Pinhas the High Priest based it on the horizon of Mt. Gerizim. For the co-ordination of the lunar year with the solar year Samaritans (and Jews) use two cycles: the nineteen-year lunar cycle and the twenty-eight-year solar cycle: The Samaritan calculation system, works on cycles of 19 years, 7 of the years are leap years, each one consisting of 13 months. However, the different starting points of the two calendars makes the leap years fall out of phase with each other. As a consequence the Samaritans celebrate the festivals a month later than the Jewish celebrations in those years. For the remaining twelve years of the nineteen year cycle, the Jews and Samaritans sometimes celebrate the festivals on the same days, sometimes two days apart. This is due to the fact that the Jews modified the rules governing their calendar for the sake of convenience. For example the

first day of the seventh month that the Jews call the first day of the year will never fall on Sunday, Wednesday or Friday because the date is dependent upon three festivals of the seventh month - the Day of Atonement, Tabernacles (Succoth) and the Eighth Day of Succoth. On years in which each of these festivals would fall directly on the day after Sabbath, the Jews add one day to the 9th month - Kislev - in their calendar to move the festivals one day ahead. The Sabbath restrictions preventing the proper preparation for the festivals are thus circumvented by allowing an extra day before the festival. The Samaritans, however, have always kept the principle of celebrating the festivals on the days that they fall in the calendar, regardless of whether they directly follow the Sabbath or not.

The beginning of the year has two accounts that are used by the Samaritans. The first counting is from the day of creation. This counting is the normal base of the calendar in which the feast days are counted. The beginning of the month (head of the month) which is the Day of the New Moon is marked by special prayers in the evening and morning at the synagogue.

The second counting begins from the day when the Israelites crossed the Jordan into the land of Canaan in the sixth month of the year 2794 of the creation calendar. This counting from entering Canaan concerns the Jubilee years, "When you enter the land that I have given you, the land shall observe a Sabbath of the Lord, Six years you may sow your field and six years you may prune your vineyard and gather in the yield. But on the seventh year the land shall have a Sabbath of complete rest, a Sabbath of the Lord" (Leviticus 25:2-4). "You shall count off seven weeks of years-seven times seven years- so that the period of seven weeks of years gives you a total of forty-nine years. (Lev. 25:8) That the fiftieth year shall be a jubilee" *ibid* 25:11 and this is the year of release. In the Samaritan book of Joshua can be seen the beginning of this counting, "And the cloud lifted up, on the first day of the first month, of the first year of the first period of seven years of the Jubilee even from the beginning of the entering in of the children of Israel within the boundaries of the assigned lands."

Another difference between the two calendars is the way of counting the years. The Samaritan calendar counts the years to the entrance of the people of Israel to the holy land. According to the Samaritan tradition the people of Israel entered in to the holy land on the first month, and six months later they started the counting of the years to the entrance, which means that on the six month of the year we go one year forward. However the first month of the year is still the first month, as the torah says: "*This month shall be unto you the beginning of months, it shall be the first month of the year to you*" (Exodus 12:2). It is also the first month of the creation, which means that on this month is the beginning of the counting of the years from creation.

## The Sabbath

The Samaritan-Israelite religiously keeps the seventh day of the week, the Sabbath day. The Sabbath is the most holy day of all days. No work is allowed. Services begin in the synagogue on Friday evening before sunset. The next morning and at the end of the Sabbath day services are made also in the synagogue. Prayers and songs with prostrating are means of worship. Mostly men and some of their young children attend the services. The ladies seldom attend while the men are expected.

Food and drinks are prepared prior to the Sabbath day. Relaxing, visiting friends, family and reading Torah are the main events of the day apart from the synagogue services. While some Samaritans feel that only the Torah is acceptable, others may read other works of papers or books. Writing is also not allowed since it would be creating on the Sabbath. Sex is not allowed for one would become unclean on the Sabbath day. All electric is turned off prior to the Sabbath except for a light so that no one should stumble. If for some reason a refrigerator had not been unplugged it would not be allowed to open it. Asking a non-Samaritan to unplug the refrigerator appears to be accepted by only a few in the community. If someone should be hurt or have a medical emergence, one or two persons would take them to get emergency care at the nearest hospital. For it is said that life comes before all. Walking outside of the community is not allowed on this day. Nor is smoking allowed. Many people around the world would find this day boring but in reality it is very relaxing and peaceful.

## Special Named Sabbaths

- **Rosh Chodesh**: The new moon which is the beginning of each month.
- **Wonders**: Every Sabbath, starting on the first Sabbath of the Eleven Month (except cases of leap years), dedicated to one of the wonders of Moses and Aaron on Egypt. This is the period before the Exodus of the People of Israel from Egypt. Read about it on the Enlightenments book on our Knowledge Center)
- **Tsimmot of Passover** - The Sabbath that occurs fifty days before the Passover, dedicated to the conjunction between the sun and the moon, and the meeting between Moses and Aaron after 60 years of departure. On this week the semi-annual calendar is handed to the community by the High Priest.
- **Rosh Hashana**: The New Moon of the first month of the year.
- **Mishmeret**: The fourteen days between the first day of the first month till the day of the sacrifice, each day is mentioned by a special prayer, in the morning, and in the evening of the same day. These days are the

days of the preparation to the Passover. On the tenth day of the month, the Samaritans buy the sheep for the sacrifice. (Exodus 12:3-12:4)

- **The Seven days of the Feast of Matsot**- The seven days which starts on the day after the day of the sacrifice (the fifteenth day of the first month) and ends twenty-first day of the same month.
- **Pessach Sheni- Second Passover**- For every one who didn't have the opportunity to fulfill the first Sacrifice. Today only a special prayer mentions this day.
- **Sabbath of the feast of Matsot**- The Sabbath that occurs on the seven days of the feast of Matsot.
- **Counting of the omer**- The fifty days between Passover and Pentecost, that starts on the day after the Sabbath of Matsot and ends on the second pilgrimage of the year- on Pentecost (Shavuth). (Lev. 23:15). Every Sabbath of these fifty days is mentioned by a station of the people of Israel on their way from Egypt to Mt. Sinai.
- **Yom Khalla -** In ancient times the Samaritans used to visit, on this day, the tombs of the just- the high priests on Eburta ( a place near Mt Gerizim) and the tomb of Joseph in Nablus.
- **Yom Ma'mad Har Sinai**- The forty-six days of the fifty days is dedicated to the revelation of Sinai. This day is mentioned by a special and long prayer that starts at midnight of the day before and ends on the evening of that day.
- **Sabbath Devarim**- The Sabbath that is dedicated to the week, in which the Torah (The Ten Commandments-"Devarim") was given to the people of Israel.
- **Tsimmot of Sukoth**-A Special Sabbath that occurs about two month before Sukoth, dedicated to the conjunction between the sun and the moon, and the meeting of Aaron Moses and Elazar on the mount called Har' Haar.
- **Selihot- Days of pardons**- The ten days between the first day of the seventh month to the day of Atonement (Kippur). Every day, is mentioned by special prayers, morning and evening.
- **Sabbath of Selihot**-The sabbath which occurs on the ten days of Selihot
- **Seven days of Suckuth**- The seven Days between the first day of sucuuth to the seventh day.

- **Sabbath of the feast of Succot**- The Sabbath that occurs on the seven days of the feast of Succot.

## The Samaritan Calendar of Feasts

The Samaritan-Israelites celebrate mainly the appointed times specified in the Torah. While today, other days like birthdays and national celebrations are becoming popular, they will never be recognized with any great significance. The appointed times have and will always be recognized as the most important features of the year.

- The Passover, a Memorial
- Feast of Unleavened Bread
- Feast of Weeks: Shavuot
- The First Day of the Seventh Month
- The Day of Atonement
- Sukkot (Tabernacle)
- Rejoicing in Torah (Shemini Azeret)
- Pilgrimages: Three Times a Year

## The Passover

The Samaritan-Israelite Passover is the first feast celebrated in the Biblical year (calendar from creation). It consists as the memorial of the Israelites in the land of Mirz (Egypt). This day attests only to a memorial of the event of the Israelite Exodus. It is celebrated on the fourteenth day of the first month of the year. When the Passover sacrifice falls that it should be on a Friday evening, then it would be moved back earlier in the day around noon. If the Passover sacrifice should fall on the Sabbath day the sacrifice occurs that night (Saturday night). In 2004 the date of the Passover sacrifice was May 4<sup>th</sup>.

The families from Holon usually come to the Mount Gerizim community for ten days of celebrations. On the day 12<sup>th</sup> day of the Samaritan Biblical year all leaven would be cleaned from the houses. On the 13<sup>th</sup>, the day prior to the Passover 'matzos'

(unleavened bread) is baked. The matzos may not be eaten between midnight till after the Passover Sacrifice that is the first Day of Unleavened Bread.

During the Passover Sacrifice like other religious day the Samaritans dress in white clothes, 'so that no one stands out over the next person.' Only the High Priests and Elders are allowed to wear colored traditional garments.

The Elders of the Community congregate at the current High Priest's house to begin the ancient ceremony on the afternoon of the 14<sup>th</sup> day. The oldest man in the community (being the custom) invites the High Priest to the Passover Sacrifice. Upon accepting the offer they all move with an assembly of people to the Passover Sacrificial Center. With everyone present, chanting of prayers and songs of the Passover begin. As the time grows closer, the men place the gentle lambs between their legs. The guarded lambs were inspected by the Levites and have been watched for a total of 14 days. There now are a total of about forty-five lambs for all the families of the Samaritans.

The audiences standing and sitting in bleachers observe the momentous occasion. Israeli troops are present for protection and they always seem to enjoy being there to view the ancient history of the exceptional event. The actual act of slaughtering sheep has been documented by the BBC and numerous other television and journalist from around the world for more than a hundred years. Many articles and photographs of this special day can be found on the Internet website of [www.the-Samaritans.com](http://www.the-Samaritans.com).

## **The Feast of Unleavened Bread**

The Feast of Unleavened Bread begins on the eve of the Passover Sacrifice being the 15<sup>th</sup> and extends for seven days. The prior Sabbath to the feast is called 'the Sabbath of the Seven Days of the Feast of Matzoth.' Early in the morning in the synagogue special prayers are made. During this service the Abisha Scroll is brought out into view of the people. The Priests blesses the congregation and the service ends around ten in the morning.

No leaven is permitted on these days. Also no prepared foods are eaten, only nature whole foods such as vegetables, fruits, etc. can be eaten. The local store is closed, no sodas, candy bars or the like are sold. Sugar drops are made at home for sweets. During this time also meat is slaughtered and divided among participating families. The priests always get their share or no one may partake of the meat.

On the seventh and last day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread early in the morning just after midnight, prayers begin in the synagogue and last for a few hours till all gather to make the first of the three Pilgrimages to the peak of Mount Gerizim. The pilgrimage will be explained below. At the end of the day the congregation assembles in the synagogue once again for prayers, thanks and worship till the day has ended. Then

everyone gathers in homes and lead by a priest or Elder read a couple verses from Exodus completing the week. One of the ladies will have some sweets waiting for each person as a parting note. Then most of the members of the Holon community gather their things and back their way back to the normal lives, while the Kiryat Luza community remains.

## Feast of Weeks: Shavuot

The Feast of Weeks is called Shavuot or also known as Pentecost. The counting of the 'omer starts on the first Sunday (the day after the Sabbath) after the Passover Sacrifice. As stated in Leviticus 23:15 of the Samaritan Torah, "And ye shall count unto you from the marrow after the Sabbath, from the day that ye brought the sheaf of the wave offering; seven Sabbaths shall be complete." From the first day of the 'omer, seven weeks are counted and the festival of Shavuot will be celebrated on Sunday (day after the Sabbath) of the eighth week. Each week is designated in remembrance and given as the following;

1. "Week of the crossing of the (Red) Sea" (Exodus 14:26-15:21)
2. "Week of the changing of the water of *marah*" (Exodus 15:22-26)
3. "Week of *elim*, where they found twelve water springs and seventy palm trees" (Exodus 15:27-16.3)
4. "Week of the *manna*, which fell down upon them from heavens in the desert" (Exodus 16.4-36)
5. "Week of the welling out of water from the rock" (Exodus 17.1-7)
6. "Week of the battles against 'Amaleq" (Exodus 17.8-17)
7. "Week of standing at Mt. Sinai" (Exodus 19.1 ff.)

On the Wednesday before Shavuot, the giving of the Law is honored. This day is called *ywm mqrth* meaning the 'Day of Scripture' or *ywm m'md hr Syny*, the 'Day of Standing on Mount Sinai.' The service in the synagogue lasts for eighteen hours. On the day of Shavuot the second pilgrimage is made to the peak of Mount Gerizim.

## The First Day of the Seventh Month

The first day of the seventh month is not considered to be a New Year Day. This day is called "sabbat asarat yumi asseliyyot." The day is specified in Torah from Leviticus 23:24: "Speak unto the children of Israel, saying: in the seventh month, in the first day of the month, shall ye have a Sabbath, a memorial of the blowing of trumpets, a holy convocation." Today the trumpet or shofar is not used since there is no Tabernacle standing, but this time is a memorial, a remembrance and must be observed.



The prayers will be made in the synagogues in Holon and Kiryat Luza on Mount Gerizim. The Feast will begin with the men making ablutions at home before going to the synagogue close to the setting of the sun. Shoes will be removed in the foyer of the synagogue before entry into the main room. Many of the men have their own section in the synagogue next to family or friends on the rugged floor. Prayers lead by the Kantor (Hazzan) will begin with the Samaritan men repeating the words in a prostrated, sitting or standing position. This will continue for some time. During the service the men may hold their hands in a book reading fashion and or stroke their face with their right hand when the names of God, Moses or the Patriarchs are mentioned in veneration. There is no required number (minyan) for prayers for the Samaritan Israelite. Jews require ten persons for their prayers. Then the service will end and the synagogue will empty, as they return home or to visit friends for a wonderful meal. In the morning, prayer will begin again in the same fashion.

It is the first day of the ten days of pence or days of forgiveness. On each of the ten days, prayers are made in the morning and at evening until the Day of Atonement. During the ten days the Samaritan-Israelites will reflect on any sins that they may have made and corresponding to the Day of Atonement.

The festival of the Seventh month is not consisted to be the beginning of the first month of a new year. Passover is in the first month of the year. This is shown in the Torah that the Passover sacrifice shall take place in the first month of the year. The counting in the Torah is the counting from creation from the first day of the first month of the first year.

The festival of the Seventh month marks the counting of the entrance of the Israelites into the land of Canaan. This will continue the counting of 3643 (corresponding to 2004 C.E.) years from the entrance of the land by Israel. The counting started six months when the children of Israel came to the land of Israel, according to the Samaritan chronicles they passed the Jordan River on the first month. Actually the counting started on the sixth month. According to the Samaritan manuscript, Tulida, the Israelites entered on the first month of the year (Nissan).

The Festival of the Seventh Month is the start of the Fallow Year. The cycle of the seventh fallow year begins on the first day of the seventh month. Likewise, the Jubilee Year, the fiftieth year, begins and ends on the first day of the seventh month, after which the next cycle of the seventh fallow year is calculated.

On the seventh day of the seventh month, at the seventh hour, Moses, the son of Amram, was born, the master of Prophets, whose equal has not been seen either before or after his lifetime.

## The Day of Atonement: Yom Kippur

Then you shall sound the horn loud; in the seventh month, on the tenth of the month, the Day of Atonement. This is the tenth day of the seventh month, a Sabbath as spoken of in Lev. 16:34 and 23:27-32. In actually the fast is twenty five hours total. This would include preparations prior to and after the synagogue services. This day in the synagogue, women also come to pray and fast. Fasting, afflicting the soul is the focus of the day, this means also no food or drink. This is a main day for praying and suffering for any sins that one might have committed in the past year. This is an everlasting statute as the Lord instructed. It is a day of no work, were everyone regardless of age must fast, but the babies. This issue is hard on the mothers since they have to fast also and there might not be much milk for the baby. But scripture must be kept, as it has for centuries! Prayers and the reading of the entire Pentateuch will take place. For whatever person shall not be afflicted on that same day, he shall be cut off from his people [Lev. 23:29]. Not many outside the community have witnessed the day of fasting or even partook of it!

### Sins Forgiven

"Greatness belongs to Shema, Who forgives sins and rolls away in his mercy, so that men can repent. (Samaritan book of Memar Markah IV. 2)

"If the prophet Moses were to pray for us when we were in evil, his prayer would not be accepted, for the prayer of the righteous on behalf of the sinner while he is yet in his sin is not efficacious." (Memar Markah III.9)

## The Feast of Tabernacles: Sukkot

Sukkot, also known as Tabernacles or Booths begins on the fifteenth day of the seventh month at the setting of the sun. Sukkot or Tabernacles is the remembrance of the when the Israelites left Egypt and is an everlasting commandment to the Israelite descendants. No work is permitted on this day.

The Samaritan-Israelite sukkahs are built inside the homes; this is the result many years of past persecutions of their Arab neighbors. Usually in the main room of each home you will find permanent anchors in the ceiling designed for use to support their sukkah. A steel frame with an internal framework is supported on these anchors, usually in the four corners. Fresh fruit of the season

is used in an array of sequences. Each fruit is carefully hand wired by its stem to the metal frame. The contents of the sukkah are the four spices of Leviticus 23:40: citrus fruit, palm branches, branches of dense trees and a special plant that grows along river beds (or red peppers). There are no walls, just a ceiling, a covering. The President of Israel, Moshe Katzav's hosted a Succoth Festival

open house at presidential residence featuring the Samaritan sukkahs. ]



FIGURE 2. A Samaritan-Israelite sukkah

In the early morning on the first day of Sukkot is the third pilgrimage of the year to the peak of Mount Gerizim. This is also instructed, 'Three times a year, you shall appear before me.' This takes place early in

the morning and the people gather at the Kiryat Luza synagogue after early prayers are made. No work is permitted on this day.

## Shemini Azeret (Simhat Torah)

Shemini Azeret also known as Simhat Torah meaning 'Rejoicing of the Torah' is always 22 days from the beginning of the seventh month. It is the number of the words in the ancient Torah that describes the month, "*sbton zkron truah mkra kds.*" This is the eight and last day of Sukkot. Shortly after midnight, prayers are made in the synagogue for more than ten hours. No work is permitted on this day. At the end of the holiday, the succahs are dismantled. Their poles and nets will be stored until the next Harvest Festival. The fruits will be squeezed into sweetened juice and some will be eaten by the children.

## The Pilgrimage

The first pilgrimage of the year as commanded in Ex. 23:17, 'Three times in the year shall all your males appear before the Ark of Yahweh.' The Samaritans climb to the sacred places on the last day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread fulfilling the cited verse of the commandment. Despite the darkness, the Samaritans sang a very old prayer. The prayer is so old that the author's name has long been misplaced.

The second pilgrimage of the year is on Pentecost (Shavuot) with the third pilgrimage being on the fifteenth day of the seventh month which is the first day of the feast of Sukkot.

When the Samaritans visit the holy mount on their pilgrimage they visit their traditional sacred sites. The Samaritans assemble at seven stations, first the twelve Stones of Joshua, the Altar of Adam and his son Seth, the Eternal Hill, God will Provide, the altar of Isaac's sacrifice, Altar of Noah and then return to the Eternal Hill.

The first stop, the twelve stones of Joshua bring the twelve stones that Moses had instructed the Israelites to erect on Mount Gerizim (SP. Deut 27:4). The Stones are located on the west side of the mount.

The Altar of Adam and Seth resides on Gerizim. Adam was made of the dust of Gerizim and lived here. And located on the summit is the seven steps of stone used by Adam in coming out of Paradise. It is also the location where Jacob saw the ladder in his dream, with the angels descending and ascending on it. When he awoke from his dream he called it 'the gate of Heaven.'

In the Samaritan Text of Exodus 23:17 it is written "Aron", i.e. the Ark of the Covenant, while the Masoretic Text (MT) has written, "before the Lord." The sacrifice was to be performed before the Lord (SP. Deuteronomy xii. 26: "But thy offerings and thy vows, which thou vowest and consecratest to God, carry and bring over to the place which God chose.").

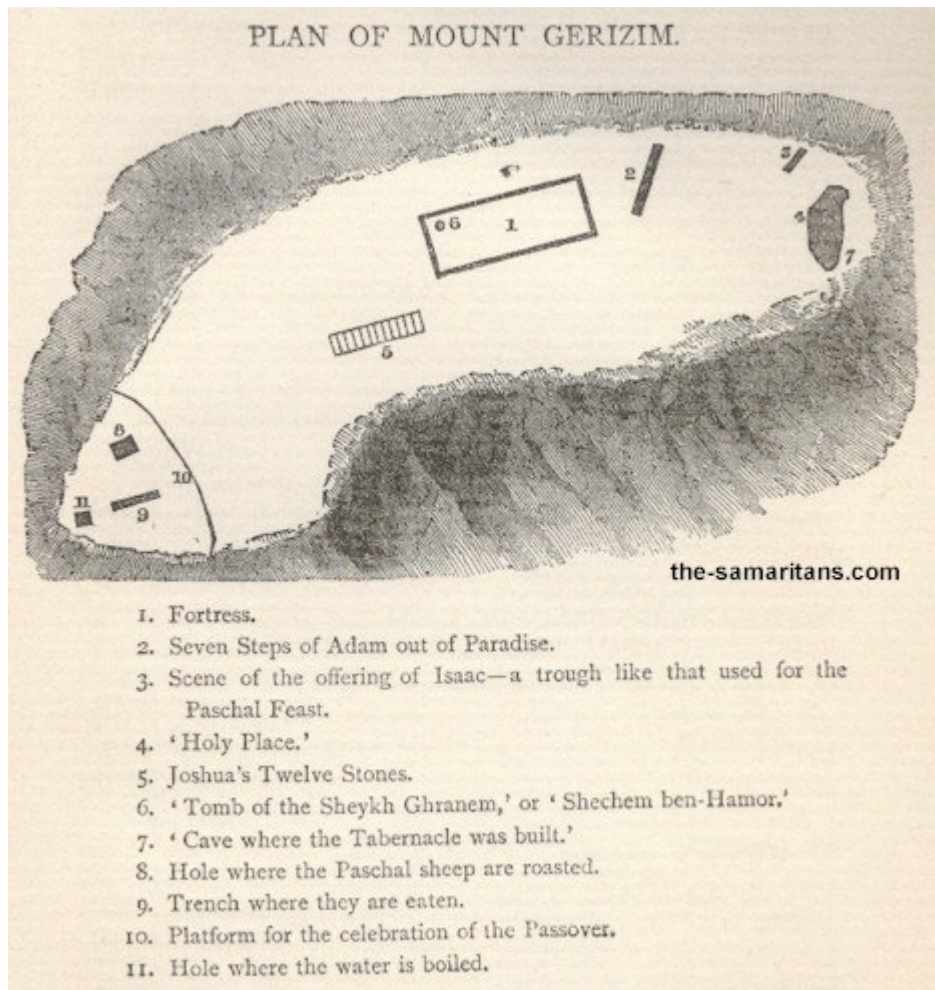
The Eternal Hill is a large flat rock that is approximately 48' x 36'. This is the holiest of all the sites on the mount and is called the 'Sakhra,' meaning the 'Holy of Holies'. This is the location that of where the Tabernacle once stood and will again. Blessings are recited at this local. This is the original rock and has it's revile in Jerusalem! Scripture denoted a revile stone in the song of Moses, "For their rock is not as our Rock" (Deut 32:1-43).

The Altar called 'El-elohe-Yisra'el (Genesis 33:20) was named and built by Jacob.

The Altar of Isaac was established also from a pilgrimage of Isaac and Abraham (Genesis xxii.). "And Abraham called the name of that place YHWH-Jireh," that is, "GOD-IS-SEEN."

Noah built his first altar here after the flood. It was the one pure and sacred spot which, having raised above the waters of the flood, no corpse had defiled.

FIGURE 3. This commonly known plan has been used for reference in many books concerning the Samaritans and their location of Holy sites, used on their pilgrimages. The site map has found it's place in Moses Gaster's book, *The Samaritans, Their History, Doctrines and Literature, Appendix VI* on page 199. This scanned photo is from Arthur Penrhyn Stanley's work, *Lectures on the History of the Jewish Church*, volume I, section of Appendix III, page 167. Today the Samaritan Passover is in a different location (toward the bottom of the map which would be north). The map is a little rough in the positioning but still informative.



"Come with us! Let us wholeheartedly make petition. Let us worship sincerely before him like Adam when he was afraid, like Enoch when he was obedient, like Noah when he submitted himself, like Abraham when he tested, like Isaac when he was bound, like Jacob when he was in affliction, like Joseph when he fled, like Moses when he hid, like Aaron when he was silent, like Eleazar when he was faithful, like Phinehas when he was zealous for God- perchance we may repent, bringing to light the divine will and hiding away the divine disfavor, submitting in righteousness, obedient to what God has commanded." (Memar Markah III.2)

## The Religion: The Samaritan-Israelites Priesthood

**T**he Samaritan-Israelites are supervised by the sons of Aaron. Their duty is to keep the Samaritans-Israelites on the path that follows the first five books of Moses, the Torah.

The remaining house of the sons of Phinhas, sons of Aaron, that the High Priesthood was allotted to, died out amongst the Israelite-Samaritans in 1623/4. The last High Priest of this order was Shelemiah ben Pinhas (1613-24), who died leaving no children to carry on the succession. He was murdered at a young age while traveling. A list of High Priests from Aaron the brother of Moses can be found in appendix II.

Since that time the High Priest has been the oldest priest from among the Levites. If you notice the lengths of the duration of the reign of each of the priests are much longer than the reign of recent priests. This may demonstrate that there may have been fewer Levites amongst the Samaritan-Israelites from 1624. As the number of the Samaritan Israelites increased from the 1900, also the shorter the reign of the High Priests. This may also be an indication not just that life expectancy has become much higher but that their number has become greater. Evidence from manuscripts confirmed that the Samaritans were indeed small in number for some time. The number of Samaritans were estimated to be about 140 in seventeenth century. In 1908, the Samaritans numbers 155 souls. In 2003, the number increased to 654 souls, of which 186 are from the Priestly house.

Below is a list indicating the reign of the High Priesthood amongst the Samaritan-Israelites.

1624-1650 Tsedaka b. Tabia Ha'abta'ai

1650-1694 Yitzhaq b. Tsedaka

1694-1732 Abraham b. Yitzhaq

1732-1752 Tabia b. Yiszhaq Ben Avraham

1752-1787 Levi b. Avraham  
1787-1855 Shalma b. Tabia  
1855-1874 Amram b. Shalma  
1874-1916 Yaacov b. Aaharon b. Shalma  
1916-1932 Yitzhaq b. Amram b. Shalma b. Tabia  
1933-1943 Matzliach b. Phinhas b. Yitzhaq b. Shalma  
1943-1961 Abrisha b. Phinhas b. Yittzhaq b. Shalma  
1961-1980 Amram b. Yitzhaq b. Amram b. Shalma  
1980-1982 Asher b. Matzliach b. Phinhas  
1982-1984 Phinhas b. Matzliach b. Phinhas  
1984-1987 Yaacov b. Ezzi b. Yaacov b. Aaharon  
1987-1998 Yosseph b. Ab-Hisda b. Yaacov. Aaharon  
1998- 2001 Levi b. Abisha b. Phinhas b. Yitzhaq  
2001- 2004 Shalom b. Amram b. Yitzhaq also known as Saum Is'haq al-Samiri  
2004- And today reigns Elazar b. Tsedaka (current High Priest)

## Rabbi Status

The Status of Samaritan-Israelite priests Assaf Cohen and Abraham Cohen, both cantors in the Samaritan Synagogue in Holon, have the status of the Jewish Rabbis, according to the decision of the High Court of Justice in Jerusalem, Israel. The appeal to the panel of three judges in the High Court, to compare the status of the Samaritan Priests to the status of the neighboring Jewish Rabbis in Israel, was made by the High Priest of the Samaritans of blessed memory Levi Ben Aviah, Yefet son of Ab Hisda an elder priest of Holon, and representatives from the Institute of A. B. Samaritan Studies. After a two year struggle by Professor Michael Corinaldi, the solicitor and representative of the priests, the High Court decided that the two cantors of the two synagogues in Holon will receive a salary of part-time job of a usual Jewish Rabbi that belongs to the Ministry of Religion. It was indicated in petition #3686/99 by Mr Corinaldi, that the Samaritans numbers were 630 souls, about half of them in Holon and the other part on Mount Gerizim. "The Samaritan Community is not a separated community, but it manages their own religious issues separately. The priests of the community use the official marriage and divorce document notebooks of the Ministry of Religion, and sign those documents for the Census registration office in Israel."

## Differences Between Samaritans and Jews

**T**he Samaritan-Israelites are the descendents of the northern kingdom of Israel and are not Jewish. The Jews are the descendents of the southern kingdom of Judea. Both are of Israelite ancestry.

The Samaritan-Israelites have much in common with the Jewish people yet many beliefs have their differences. An example; a Samaritan-Israelite must follow the Torah, or be expelled from the community while the Jewish people have many divisions of religious zeal.

### Differences Between Samaritans and Jews of the Religious Beliefs

#### ***Samaritan-Israelites***

1. Remnant of the **northern** kingdom of Israel
2. Small in **number** (under 700 souls)
3. One level of **religious** belief
4. Only **live** in the land of Israel
5. Patrilineal **lineage** (child of father)
6. **Mount Gerizim** is the center of worship
7. **Prayers** made facing Mount Gerizim
8. **Torah** is the only Holy

#### ***The Jewish-Israelites***

1. Followers of the **southern** kingdom of Judah
2. Millions in **number**
3. Many levels of **religious** beliefs
4. **Live** around the world
5. Matrilineal **lineage** (child of mother)
6. **Jerusalem** is the center of worship
7. **Prayers** made facing Jerusalem
8. **Torah** and Old Testament is Holy



- |   |   |
|---|---|
| Scripture   | Scripture   |
| 9. The Samaritans have their own <b>Torah</b>                           | 9. The Jewish people have their own <b>Torah</b>                    |
| 10. <b>Torah</b> is mostly in the Ancient Hebrew script                 | 10. <b>Torah</b> - uses Babylonian square Hebrew script             |
| 11. <b>Authority</b> of Torah is the Levite Priests                     | 11. <b>Authority</b> of Torah is the Rabbis                         |
| 12. Complete list of <b>High Priesthood</b> of Pinhas                   | 12. Incomplete list of <b>High Priesthood</b> of Pinhas             |
| 13. Torah not <b>supplemented</b>                                       | 13. Torah is <b>supplemented</b>                                    |
| 14. Ten <b>Commandments</b>   | 14. Nine <b>Commandments</b>  |
| 15. Scripture has <b>altar</b> built on Mount Gerizim                   | 15. Scripture has <b>altar</b> built on Mount Ebal                  |
| 16. Scripture has, 'mount I have chosen'                                | 16. Scripture has, 'mount I will choose'                            |
| 17. <b>Messiah</b> , called 'Taheb, from sons of Joseph or Levi         | 17. The <b>Messiah</b> , will come from the tribe of Judah          |
| 18. <b>Calendar</b> reckoning using lunar and solar                     | 18. <b>Calendar</b> reckoning using lunar only                      |
| 19. Bakes their own <b>matzos</b> (unleavened Bread)                    | 19. Buys factory <b>matzos</b> (unleavened Bread)                   |
| 20. Actually has a <b>Passover Sacrifice</b>                            | 20. Does not have a <b>Passover Sacrifice</b>                       |
| 21. Do not <b>celebrate</b> Purim or Hanukkah                           | 21. Do <b>celebrate</b> Purim or Hanukkah                           |
| 22. Counting of <b>Omer</b> starts day after the Sabbath after Passover | 22. Counting of <b>Omer</b> starts the day after Passover           |
| 23. Do not eat or drink when <b>fasting</b>                             | 23. Do not eat when <b>fasting</b>                                  |
| 24. Do not light <b>candles</b> on the Sabbath                          | 24. Jews will have <b>sex</b> on the Sabbath                        |
| 25. Samaritans do not have <b>sex</b> on the Sabbath                    | 25. Do light <b>candles</b> on the Sabbath                          |
| 26. Does not wears <b>head cover</b> all the time                       | 26. <b>Head cover</b> worn most of the time (orthodox)              |
| 27. Do not wear <b>Tefillin</b> as the Jews interpret it                | 27. Wear <b>Tefillin</b> (Orthodox)                                 |
| 28. No required number for prayer                                       | 28. <b>Required number</b> (minyan)of ten persons for their prayers |

# Appendix I

## Table of Weekly Parshiyot

Parashat	Torah	The additional Verse
Bereshit	Genesis 1-3	Shemor- Exodus 20:8-20:12
Ve'Hadam Yada	Genesis 4:4-24	Shemor- Exodus 20:8-20:12
Ve'Yeda Adam	Genesis 4:25-6:16	Shemor- Exodus 20:8-20:12
Ve'Ani Hineni	Genesis 6:17-8:20	Shemor- Exodus 20:8-20:12
El Libo	Genesis 8:21-11	Shemor- Exodus 20:8-20:12
Lech Lecha	Genesis 12-16	Shemor- Exodus 20:8-20:12
Va'Yehi Abram	Genesis 17-20	Shemor- Exodus 20:8-20:12
Ve' Hashem Pakad	Genesis 21-23	Shemor- Exodus 20:8-20:12
Ve'Abraham Zaken	Genesis 24-25:18	Shemor- Exodus 20:8-20:12
Ve'Elle Toldat Yitschak	Genesis 25:19-28	Shemor- Exodus 20:8-20:12
Va'Yissa Yaacov	Genesis 29-31:16	Shemor- Exodus 20:8-20:12
Va'Yakam Yaacov	Genesis 31:17-33	Shemor- Exodus 20:8-20:12
Va'Tetse Dinna	Genesis 34-36	Shemor- Exodus 20:8-20:12
Va'Yeshev Yaacov	Genesis 37-38	Shemor- Exodus 20:8-20:12
Ve'Yusef Hurad	Genesis 39-41:49	Shemor- Exodus 20:8-20:12
Ve'Le Yosef Yelidu	Genesis 41:50-43:25	Shemor- Exodus 20:8-20:12
Ve'Yavo Yosef	Genesis 43:26-46:7	Shemor- Exodus 20:8-20:12
Ve'Ele Shmot	Genesis 46:8-48:2	Shemor- Exodus 20:8-20:12
El Shaday	Genesis 48:3-49:21	Shemor- Exodus 20:8-20:12
Ben Porat	Genesis 49:22-50	Torha Tsiva Lanu Moseh...+Shemor
Ve'Elle Shmot	Exodus 1-7:7	Shemor- Exodus 20:8-20:12
Ki Yedaber	Exodus 7:8-11	Shemor- Exodus 20:8-20:12
Ha Hodesh Haze	Exodus 12-15:21	Ki Tissa Numbers 30:11-30:16
Ve'Yas'sa Moshe	Exodus 15:22-18	Shemor- Exodus 20:8-20:12

THE SAMARITAN-ISRAELITES AND THEIR RELIGION

Ba'Hodesh Hashlishi	Exodus 19-24	Ve'Ata Daber- Exodus 31:12-31:17
Va'Yikchu Li Truma	Exodus 25-28	Ve'Ata Daber -Exodus 31:12-31:17
Ve'Ze Hadavar	Exodus 29-31:17	Ve'Shamru -Exodus 31:16-31:17
Va'Yiten El Moshe	Exodus 31:18-36:19	Kadoshim -Leviticus 19:1-19:8
Va'Yaas et Hekerashem	Exodus 36:20-40	Torha Tsiva Lanu Moseh...
Va'Yikra El Moshe	Leviticus 1-5	Moadey -Leviticus 23:1-23:8
Tsave Et Aaron	Leviticus 6-9:21	Moadey-Leviticus 23:1-23:8
Va' Yissa Aaron	Leviticus 9:22-13:28	Ve'Safartem-Leviticus 23:15-23:22
Ve'Eish O' Elsha	Leviticus 13:29-15	Ve'Safartem-Leviticus 23:15-23:22
Acharei Mot	Leviticus 16-19:8	Ve'Safartem-Leviticus 23:15-23:22
Ve'Bekatsirchem	Leviticus 19:9-22	Ve'Safartem-Leviticus 23:15-23:22
Moadey	Leviticus 23-26:2	Shiva'a Shavuot-Deuteronomy 16:9-16:12
Im Bechuqotai	Leviticus 26:3-27	Torha Tsiva Lanu Moseh...
Bemidbar Sinai	Numbers 1-3	Daber El Aaron- Numbers-6:22-6:27
Nasa et Rosh	Numbers 4-6:21	Daber El Aaron-Numbers-6:22-6:27
Daber el Aaron	Numbers 6:22-12	Tsave-Numbers 28:1-28:10
Shlach Lecha	Numbers 13-15	Tsave-Numbers 28:1-28:10
Va' Yikach Korach	Numbers 16-20:13	Tsave-Numbers 28:1-28:10
Va' Yishlach Moshe	Numbers 20:14-25:9	Tsave-Numbers 28:1-28:10
Pinhas	Numbers 25:10-31:31	Shemor-Deutonomy 5:12-5:15
Va'Yehi Ha MalKoach	Numbers 31:32-36	Torha Tsiva...+ Shemor
Ele Hadevarim	Deutonomy 1-4:4	Shemor-Deutonomy 5:12-5:15
Reu Limadety	Deutonomy 4:5-6	Ki Tissa Numbers 30:11-30:16
Ki Yiviacha	Deutonomy 7-11:30	Va' Yishkon-Deutonomy 33:24-33:29
Ki Atem	Deutonomy 11:31-13	Va' Yishkon-Deutonomy 33:24-33:29

**THE SAMARITAN-ISRAELITES AND THEIR RELIGION**

Banim Atem	Deutronomy 14-16:17	Va' Yishkon-Deutronomy 33:24-33:29
Shoftim	Deutronomy 16:18-22:11	Va' Yishkon-Deutronomy 33:24-33:29
Ki Yikach Eish	Deutronomy 22:12-26:15	Va' Yishkon-Deutronomy 33:24-33:29
Hayom Haze	Deutronomy 26:16-29	Va' Yishkon-Deutronomy 33:24-33:29
Ve' Haya Ki Yavou	Deutronomy 30-34	Torha Tsiva Lanu Moseh...

Torha Tsiva Lanu Moshe: Natanna Elohim Yitbarach: Baruch Eolhenu le Olam:

U Baruch Shemo Le Olam

## Appendix II

### Early High Priests from Aaron

The following chain is the sons of Aaron, the High Priests of the Samaritan-Israelites, starting from Aaron, the brother of Moses. (b. means ben, meaning 'son of')

**Aaron** b. Amram

**Eleazar** b. Aaron b. Amram

**Phinhas** b. Eleazar b. Aaron b. Amram

**Abisha** b. Phinhas b. Eleazar b. Aaron b. Amram

**Shishai** b. Abisha b. Phinhas b. Aaron b. Amram

**Bahqi** b. Shishai b. Abisha b. Phinhas b. Aaron b. Amram

**Uzzi** b. Bahqi b. Shishai b. Abisha b. Phinhas b. Aaron b. Amram

**Shishai** b. Uzzi b. Bahqi b. Shishai b. Abisha b. Phinhas b. Aaron b. Amram

**Bahqi** b. Shishai b. Uzzi b. Bahqi b. Shishai b. Abisha b. Phinhas b. Aaron b. Amram

**Shebhet** b. Bahqi b. Shishai b. Uzzi b. Bahqi b. Shishai b. Abisha b. Phinhas b. Aaron

**Shallum** b. Shebhet b. Bahqi b. Shishai b. Uzzi b. Bahqi b. Shishai b. Abisha

**Hezekiah** b. Shallum b. Shebhet b. Bahqi b. Shishai b. Uzzi b. Bahqi b. Shishai

**Jehonathan** b. Hezekiah b. Shallum b. Shebhet b. Bahqi b. Shishai b. Uzzi b. Bahqi

**Jair** b. Jehonathan b. Hezekiah b. Shallum b. Shebhet b. Bahqi b. Shishai b. Uzzi

**Daliah** b. Jair b. Jehonathan b. Hezekiah b. Shallum b. Shebhet b. Bahqi b. Shishai

**Jair** b. Daliah b. Jair b. Jehonathan b. Hezekiah b. Shallum b. Shebhet b. Bahqi

**Jehonathan** b. Jair b. Daliah b. Jair b. Jehonathan b. Hezekiah b. Shallum b. Shebhet

**Ishmael** b. Jehonathan b. Jair b. Daliah b. Jair b. Jehonathan b. Hezekiah b. Shallum

**Tobiah** b. Ishmael b. Jehonathan b. Jair b. Daliah b. Jair b. Jehonathan b. Hezekiah

**Zadok** b. Tobiah b. Ishmael b. Jehonathan b. Jair b. Daliah b. Jair b. Jehonathan

**Amram** b. Zadok b. Tobiah b. Ishmael b. Jehonathan b. Jair b. Daliah b. Jair

**Hilkiah** b. Amram b. Zadok b. Tobiah b. Ishmael b. Jehonathan b. Jair b. Daliah

**Amram** b. Hilkiah b. Amram b. Zadok b. Tobiah b. Ishmael b. Jehonathan b. Jair

**Aqob** b. Amram b. Hilkiah b. Amram b. Zadok b. Tobiah b. Ishmael b. Jehonathan

**Aqbiah** b. Aqob b. Amram b. Hilkiah b. Amram b. Zadok b. Tobiah b. Ishmael

**Halel** b. Aqbiah b. Aqob b. Amram b. Hilkiah b. Amram b. Zadok b. Tobiah

**Seriah** b. Halel b. Aqbiah b. Aqob b. Amram b. Hilkiah b. Amram b. Zadok

**Levi** b. Seriah b. Halel b. Aqbiah b. Aqob b. Amram b. Hilkiah b. Amram

**Nathanel** b. Levi b. Seriah b. Halel b. Aqbiah b. Aqob b. Amram b. Hilkiah

(Nethanel is the High Priest in the time of Nebuchanezzar)