



# The Samaritan Update

“Mount Gerizim,  
All the Days of Our Lives”



November/ December 2015

Vol. XV - No 2

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On January 1, 2015, the Samaritan Community numbered 777.

## Future Events

It has been 3654 years since the entrance into the Holy Land  
(Samaritan's typical calendar)

**2016**

Special prayer on Wednesday evening, April 6, 2016  
New beginning – Month of Spring – Thursday, April 7, 2016  
Passover Sacrifice – Wednesday Evening, April 20, 2016

*[Calculated by: Priest Yakkiir ['Aziz] b. High Priest Jacob b. 'Azzi  
– Kariat Luza, Mount Gerizim]*  
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## Sotheby's Auction Results

THE VALMADONNA TRUST LIBRARY: PART I MAGNIFICENT <https://us-mg5.mail.yahoo.com/neo/launch?.rand=8aijo4rq3f7o8> MANUSCRIPTS AND THE BOMBERG TALMUD  
22 DECEMBER 2015 | 10:00 AM EST NEW YORK

The Valmadonna Trust Library: Part I

<http://www.sothebys.com/en/auctions/2015/valmadonna-trust-library-part-i-n09443.html>



**Samaritan Torah Scroll (Aktaba Kadisha),**  
Land of Israel [ca. 1166, Scribe: Shalmah ben  
Abraham bar Yosef of Sarepta]  
Estimate: 40,000 — 80,000 USD  
LOT SOLD. **162,500 USD** (Hammer Price with  
Buyer's Premium)

**Samaritan Pentateuch (Arhuta Kadishta),  
Land of Israel: late 14th–early 15th century**  
Estimate: 80,000 — 120,000 USD

LOT SOLD. **87,500 USD** (Hammer Price with  
Buyer's Premium)

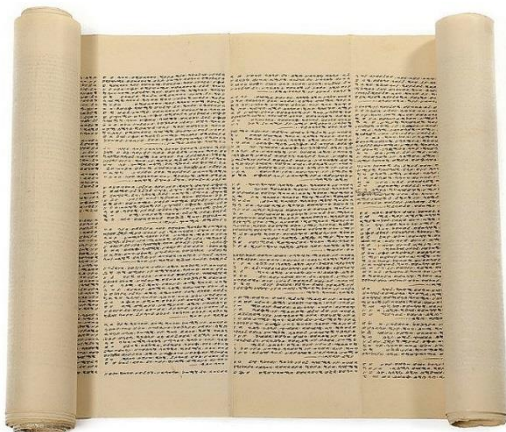
**SAMARITAN PENTATEUCH - LAND OF ISRAEL, 14-  
15TH CENTURY**

Samaritans, who claim descent from the post-Solomonic northern Israelite kingdom, only include only the Five Books of Moses in their biblical canon. While they do not recognize divine authorship or inspiration in any other book of the Hebrew Bible, they do maintain a non-canonical secular version of the book of Joshua. This exceedingly rare miniature Samaritan biblical codex was formerly in the fabled collection of David Solomon Sassoon (est. \$80/120,000).



<http://www.sothebys.com/en/auctions/ecatalogue/2015/valmadonna-trust-library-part-i-n09443/lot.1.html>

<http://www.sothebys.com/en/auctions/ecatalogue/2015/valmadonna-trust-library-part-i-n09443/lot.2.html>



### **Kedem Public Auction House Ltd**

Rare and Important Items by **Kedem Public Auction  
House Ltd** December 2, 2015 Jerusalem, Israel

Lot 76: Samaritan Torah Scroll – Nablus, 20th Century  
Auction no. 48 - **Realized Price: \$7,000 Verified**

<http://www.invaluable.com/auction-lot/samaritan-torah-scroll-nablus,-20th-century-76-c-6e94539ade>

### **Sadaqa al-Hakīm and his Commentary on Genesis** **H. Shehadeh University of Helsinki**



In this study an attempt is made to shed light on a central subject in the field of Samaritanism that has not yet received adequate investigation despite the progress made in recent decades. Already in the first international conference on Samaritan studies, held in the Holy Land in 1988, I called attention to the need to investigate the Samaritan exegesis on the Torah. This exegesis is written almost entirely in Middle Arabic and is still unpublished. Sadaqa's commentary on Genesis is the oldest such work to come down to us almost in its entirety, and in two manuscripts. Samaritan commentaries on the entire Torah indeed existed in the Middle Ages, but have not survived. The Samaritan Torah differs from the Masoretic Torah in over 6, 000 cases.

The following subjects are discussed in this study.

- A) The Samaritan manuscripts, especially Abraham Firkovich's collection, approximately 1,350 manuscripts in number, purchased in Nablus in 1864.
- B) A survey of the exegesis of the Samaritan Torah: what has been studied and what has been published to date?
- C) Who was Ṣadaqa al-Ḥakīm, who died in 1223? A sample of his opinions and poetry rendered into Hebrew.
- D) Ṣadaqa al-Ḥakīm's commentary on Genesis: MS. R. Huntington 301 at Bodleian Library in Oxford and other manuscripts at the National Library of Russia in St. Petersburg.
- E) What portions of Ṣadaqa's commentary have been published?
- F) Ṣadaqa's exegetical methods accompanied by examples.
- 1) Literal, homiletic and symbolic.
  - 2) The method of similes.
  - 3) Removal of anthropomorphism.
  - 4) Etymology, Semantics and linguistic analysis.

A systematic and comprehensive study of the Bodleian manuscript, which consists of 203 folios, provides the core of this study. I began publishing Ṣadaqa's commentary in a preliminary edition in a series: The first four parts, which include the first forty chapters of Genesis, were published in 2014-2015 in "Samaritan Update." At a later stage the substantial variants of Cam III 14 at the National Library of Russia in St. Petersburg will be added to the list of variants.

Read the article in Hebrew: [http://shomron0.tripod.com/articles/al-Hasad\\_5.pdf](http://shomron0.tripod.com/articles/al-Hasad_5.pdf)

<http://shomron0.tripod.com/2014/julaug.pdf>

<http://shomron0.tripod.com/2014/novdec.pdf>

<http://shomron0.tripod.com/2015/mayjune.pdf>

<http://shomron0.tripod.com/2015/julyaugust.pdf>

Also see:

### **Differences between the Samaritans and the Jews**

Written in Arabic by **Haseeb Shehadeh**

<http://shomron0.tripod.com/articles/differencesinarabic.pdf>

[On a Manuscript of 'Kirāb al-Ḥulf' by Ḥadr \(Finhāas\) b. Ishāq al-Hiftāwī](#) 2011 (Full Version) by **Haseeb Shehadeh**

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### **New Publication:**

### **The History of the Israelite Keepers Based on Their Own Sources**

By **Benyamim Tsedaka**

A.B. - Institute of Samaritan Studies Press  
Holon, Israel; Mount Gerizim, Samaria

The book is written in modern Hebrew by Benyamim Tsedaka, and covers the period from Joshua bin Nun (17th century BCE) to the present (2015 CE).

It is the third major lifework of Benyamim's extensive writing career, and is the highlight of his 106 publications.





It was published in Holon, Israel, on 17 November 2015 by the A.B. Institute of Samaritan Studies, with the help of the Ministry of Culture of the State of Israel.

Benyamim dedicates his book to the Israelite Samaritan community, each family has received a complimentary copy.

The Israelite Keepers almost disappeared completely, their numbers having fallen to 141 individuals in 1919. Today, the community is thriving, comprising some 800 souls, with a promising future guaranteed by the grace of the Almighty.

The book is divided into 120 chapters. At the end of each chapter detailed references to the sources for that chapter are provided. The entire book is written in the traditional vocabulary of the Torah, which gives it a unique style. This work is the result of painstaking research carried out over ten years. During this time Benyamim

reviewed all the Israelite Samaritans' own resources, historical collections, ancient manuscripts, poetry, Midrash and Halacha.

He found relevant material in hundreds of letters written by members of the community over a period of five hundred years, and in thousands of documents in the archives of the second president of Israel, the late Yitzhak Ben Zvi. Yitzhak Ben Zvi who was a father-figure to, and patron of the Israelite Samaritans, from his first meetings with them in his early 20s, until his death in 1963.

This is the most complete historical collection, since ancient times. It encompasses 10 groups of sources, including the 14th century unfinished work of Abu Elfath Hadinfi, who came from Damascus in 1352-1355 on the instruction of the Israelite-Samaritan High Priest, Phinhas b. Yusef Harrabbab (High Priest in the years 1308-1363 CE). Abu Elfath wrote in Arabic, describing the period from the time of Joshua bin Nun up to the tenth century CE, 350 years before his own time.

The 450 pages of this new book are divided into 900 columns, with lines numbered consecutively so they can be quoted or referenced conveniently.

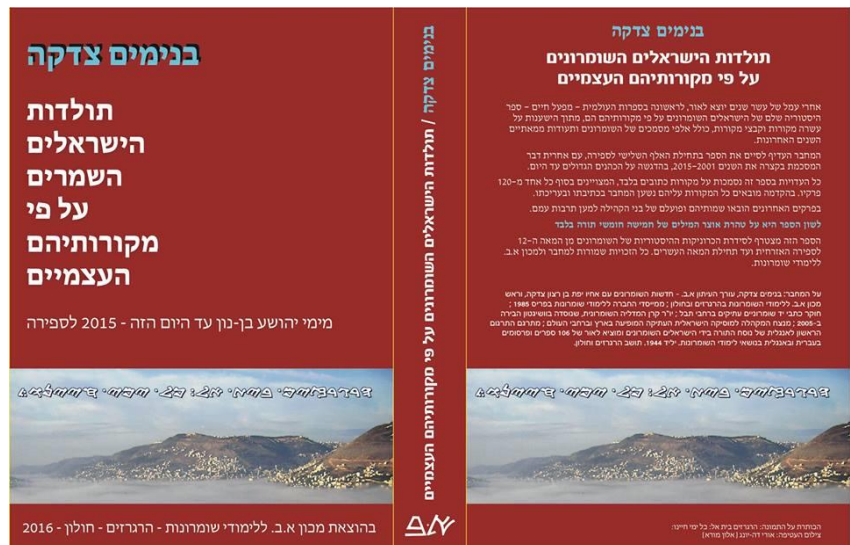
The book complements the author's earlier work on a related subject: A Short History of the Israelite Samaritans, which draws on external sources to give a complete picture of what the Samaritans wrote, compared with what was written about them.

The price of the new book in Israel is \$150 (ILS 600)

In the rest of the world it costs \$200 (ILS 800), including shipping.

Orders: through the secure PayPal button on this page Israelite Keepers of the website israelite-samaritans.com

Or from A.B. - Institute of Samaritan Studies, P.O. Box 1029, Holon, 5811001, Israel.



בנימים צדקה, תולדות השמרים על פי מקורותיהם העצמיים. חולון: מן א. ב. ללימודי שומרנות בסיוע המשרד לתרבות של מדינת ישראל. 2015, 450 עם

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## The Tragedy of the Israelite-Samaritans and Their Ancient Manuscripts

By Benyamim Tsedaka A.B. - Institute of Samaritan Studies

I had the pleasure today to accept the invitation of **Mr. David Wachtel**, one of the directors of **Sotheby's**, the international public auction company in its New York branch to come and see two ancient Israelite Samaritan manuscripts that will be given to sale in the public auction of December 22, 2015.

Myself consulting from time to time with dealers of antiquities and public auction companies in Israel and abroad, helping institutions and private collectors in cataloging and identifying such manuscripts and adding under request my own estimation of the value of each item. I had no contact so far with Sotheby's. Today was the first time, because Mr. Wachtel through our friendship on Facebook became aware to my work in cataloging Israelite-Samaritan manuscripts.



The source of these two manuscripts of the small collection of Israelite Samaritan Manuscripts bought mostly in public auctions from the large collection owned by late famous collector David Sassoon of Bombay and London. These two and others were bought by Mr. Jack Lunzer of Valmadonna Trust, London for his own collection.

To make the story short, I was so excited to see again the two manuscripts after 15 years when I cataloged the entire collection with the permission of Mr. Lunzer

and published it in "A.B. - The Samaritan News Bi-Weekly Magazine.

The more important of the two is a long fragment of the Pentateuch contains all the Book of Genesis and the first eight chapters of Exodus, divided into columns and written on a pure sheep skin - No doubt one of the most ancient manuscripts in the world today. Another fragment of the same scroll of Deuteronomy 9-34, I found in the Klau Library of Hebrew Union College in Cincinnati and published its details in the catalog of all 61 Israelite Samaritan Manuscripts in that library in 2012. Another fragment of this scroll of the Pentateuch of the last chapters of Leviticus and the beginning chapters of Numbers I found incidentally with Mr. **David Sofer** in London.

Since the fragment found at the Hebrew Union College, Cincinnati, includes part from an unknown copyist is known to be dated = 1145 CE, in the city of Gerar, the ancient name of Ashqelon, north of Gaza, where a written testimony of the famous Jewish traveler Benjamin of Tudela when he visited the city in 1187 CE, recording 300 Israelite Samaritan families there at that time.



In that part of the testimony also mentioned that this Pentateuch, is one of two of the same unknown copyist dedicated to the Synagogue of Ashqelon, might be due to growth of the community and one of the synagogues there.

During the persecution of the Ashqelon community, some of the ancient manuscripts found their way to the Shechem [Nabulus] synagogue. The deteriorated ones were kept in the Nabulus synagogue Geniza. 1348 mss fragments were sold by the Samaritan leaders in 1864 to the Russian Karaite Chacham Abraham Firkovitz. The rest of the ruined fragments were sold to American and European visitors since then. This fact explains why there are fragments of the same scrolls in different collections.



Concerning the other manuscript for sale it is a small Pentateuch codex also written on mostly sheep skin. The exact date of copying is missing but no doubt the manuscript was written in the 14th century or early 15th century. Other small sized manuscripts of the Pentateuch are located now in John Ryland Library in Manchester, England and Linder Museum of the Smithsonian in Washington DC. The specialty of the small sized Pentateuch was in use by Samaritan priests

who would hang them on their necks to read most of the day.

It's a pity that large collections of ancient manuscripts in Europe being sold off in pieces at many public auctions, some times without knowing who bought them, but at least it is known that they are kept well in any place.

Most of the 4000 Israelite Samaritan Manuscripts sold by the Israelite Samaritans during the 17th-20th centuries was at the time of awful poverty and decreasing numbers of Samaritans from hundreds to 141 individuals in March 1919 [today app. 800].

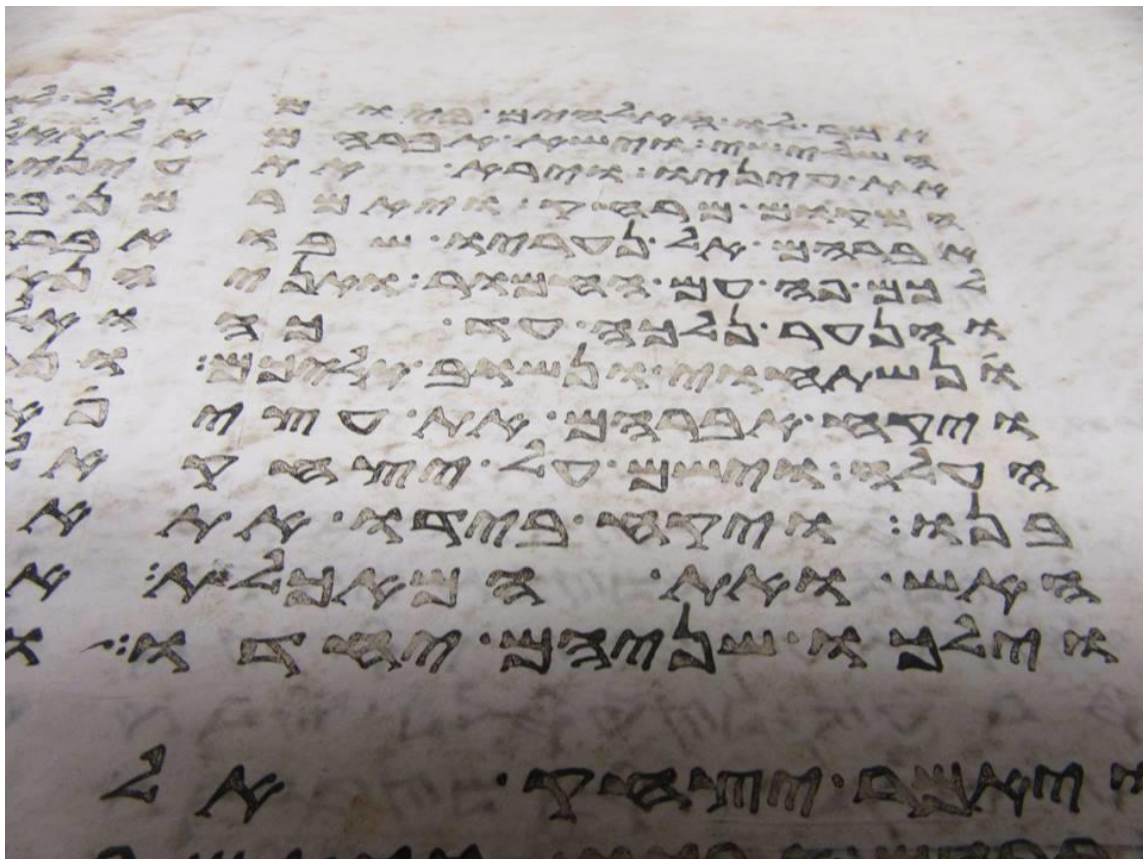
Now, ancient Israelite Samaritan manuscripts are some of the most valued manuscripts in public auctions.

### **Benyamim Tsedaka**

Pictures: from B. Tsedaka: Samaritan Scroll and codex of the Pentateuch for sale

On December 10<sup>th</sup>, Benyamim Tsedaka posted on [his Facebook page](#) several photos from the collection of Israelite-Samaritan Manuscripts in the Library of Hebrew Union College, Cincinnati. Benny wrote, 'How precise and clear is the handwriting that has been well protected. It was copied in Ashkelon 1479/80 C.E.'





**Société d'Etudes Samaritaines: Call For Papers****Société d'Etudes Samaritaines**

Dear Colleagues,

I would like to invite you to present a paper at the 9th Congress of the **Société d'Etudes samaritaines** that will be held in Prague, from July 31 to August 5, 2016. Please, write me the topic of your paper with a short summary before March 31, 2016.

The congress will be held at the Protestant Theological Faculty, Charles University in Prague, Černá 9, P.O. Box 529, CZ-115 55, Czech Republic.

The participants at the congress will be accommodated in two hotels in the Old City of Prague, near the Old Town square. Both hotels will give to the participants of the congress prices much lower than usual in this historical locality. Please, write me at your earliest convenience the dates of your arrival and departure, and if you want a single room or a room for more persons. Please, write me the information concerning your accommodation before March 31, 2016. The date is the same as for the papers.

The hotels are about 15 minutes by walk from the Protestant Theological Faculty, where the congress will be held. For that reason, those, who want to reserve an accommodation in closer proximity of the faculty, are free to book by themselves.

The breakfast will be served in the hotels. Unfortunately, we cannot organize the lunches and the dinners; our university has no appropriate capacity for that in the city center.

The amount of the conference fee will be specified later, when we are able to estimate the expenses related to the congress.

For any information please write to me ([dusek@etf.cuni.cz](mailto:dusek@etf.cuni.cz)).

Yours sincerely,

**Jan Dušek** Ph.D.

Centre for Biblical Studies, Protestant Theological Faculty  
Charles University  
Cerna 9, P.O.Box 529  
CZ-115 55, Praha 1. Czech Republic

See the **Société d'Etudes samaritaines** website at <http://www.socsam.org/>

President: **Magnar Kartveit**

Vice-president: **Stefan Schorch**

Secretary: **Arnaud Sérandour**

Treasurer: **Ursula Schattner-Rieser**

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[Naor Ban Abraahm](#) posted this on his facebook page on Dec. 11, 2015

Nota:

Shomrey há Torá Maranhão parabenizar nossos Candidatos

O Sr. [Ariel Haddad Ben Abraahm](#)

E o Sr. Ed Ben Abraahm pela postura , carinho e dedicação para

com a nossa Comunidade. — with [Franklin Adriana Pyetro Gad](#)

[Yossef](#), [Eli Ben Abraahm](#), [San Tardis](#), [Mosheh Ben Mazal](#), [Ben](#)

[Sedaka](#), [Ariel Haddad Ben Abraahm](#), [Alex de Moraes](#) and [Aryah Ben Abraahm](#).

Brazil has a large number of people that believe in the Samaritans and their Torah. The group has been stimulated by the support of Samaritan **Benyamim Tsedaka**.

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### **Past Lecture at the University of Wyoming sponsored by their Department of Religious Studies**

Thursday, September 17, 2015

Professor **Menachem Mor**, **University of Haifa**, will present two lectures on Thursday, September 17, 2015. Please attend as follows:

1:20-2:35 p.m., Business Building, Room 9, "Samaritans Past & Present—Who are They?"

Abstract: Classic Jewish sources make it clear that they were considered Jews who had relinquished Judaism but would be accepted if they accepted "Jerusalem and the resurrection of the dead." "Who is a Samaritan?"-- hotly disputed in ancient Jewish sources—emerged again in modern Israel with respect to the Law of Return, when they wanted to immigrate from Nablus to Israel and live as part of Israeli society. The first part of this lecture discusses a variety of ancient sources; the second part surveys how these considerations influenced the Supreme Court's final decision.

Source: <http://www.uwyo.edu/relstds/guest-speakers/>

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### **Digitale Samaritanen: erfgoed en het Palestijns-Israëlsch conflict**

Amerikaans onderzoeker Jim Ridolfo probeert de Samaritanen via digitalisering opnieuw toegang te geven tot hun erfgoed. De kleinste religieuze minderheid in het Heilige Land verloor door de eeuwen heen immers veel van haar religieuze manuscripten. Deze onvervangbare werken liggen nu verspreid in de archieven van tientallen landen. Met herwonnen toegang tot hun erfgoed, hopen de Samaritanen als brug te kunnen dienen in het Palestijns-Israëlsch conflict.

C.H.I.P.S. StampMedia – Tom Cassauwers

<http://www.dewereldmorgen.be/artikel/2015/11/20/digitale-samaritanen-erfgoed-en-het-palestijns-israelsch-conflict>

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**Photo post** by Priest Husney, the manager of the Samaritan Museum on Mount Gerizim.  
This picture was in the 1940s.



### **From the Editor**

Here is a very interesting article, [‘40 Predictions for Epigraphy in the Next 40 Years,’](#) by Christopher Rollston in *Biblical Archaeology*, 2015, pages 74-76.

I also learned that Rev. Canon Elias Marmura was an author of a book called, *The Samaritans*, Jerusalem: The Syrian Orphanage House, 1934, 100 pages. This does not appear in any Bibliography.

From old Newspapers (The Palestine Post), I have learned that a Rabbi I. Raffalowich gave a lecture on the Samaritans with lantern slides at 8:45 p.m. Sunday, April 2, 1939 at 15 Rehov Nahmani; Auspices; in Tel Aviv. The Rabbi appears to have had a Hebrew article in the *Palestine Review*, Vol. III, No. 51, April 7, 1939 on the Samaritan Passover. The article does not appear in the *Bibliography of the Samaritans* by Crown and Pummer.

Also it appears that an Inspector of Antiquities, Mr. Naim Shehadi Makhoully at Nablus on February 13<sup>th</sup>, 1935 to inspect and take photographs of the antiquities unearthed by the recent flood attributed to a storm at Wadi Tuffah. (See article from the Palestine Post below dated, Thursday, February 14, 1935; page 5.) Now there must be a report that he made buried in a box somewhere of his findings. The photo or photos would also be very interesting.

Apparently the flood revealed inscription at Wadi Tuffah was found to be destroyed a few days later as reported on Monday, February 15, 1935, in the Palestine Post. (See article below)

Ben-Zevi apparently had seen this inscription which he says was at Beit el-Ma in the Wadi Tufah, west of Nablus and he published his article in the *Bulletin of the Jewish Palestine Exploration Society*. Another reference is: Ben-Zevi, I., and W. F. Albright. "The Beit El-mā Samaritan Inscription". *Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research* 84 (1941): 2-4.

I have not had much time lately to research!







**Latest News Articles****Smaller Religious Community in the World lives in Palestine and speaks Arabic, Hebrew.. know it.**

Anatolia/ Huffington Post Arabic 12-13-2015

[http://www.huffpostarabi.com/2015/12/13/story\\_n\\_8798020.html?utm\\_hp\\_ref=arabi](http://www.huffpostarabi.com/2015/12/13/story_n_8798020.html?utm_hp_ref=arabi)

**'Beni Israel': The Samaritans of Palestine's Mt. Gerizim**

Claiming descent from ancient Israelites, Samaritans deny sacredness of Jerusalem and see contemporary Judaism as deviation from true faith

<http://www.dailysabah.com/feature/2015/12/19/beni-israel-the-samaritans-of-palestines-mt-gerizim>

<http://news.videonews.us/beni-israel-the-samaritans-of-palestines-mt-gerizim-1844481.html>

<http://aa.com.tr/en/culture-and-art/-beni-israel-the-samaritans-of-palestine-s-mt-gerizim/492899>

**Old News**

[Samaritan **Benyamim Tsedaka** said that the collection of reports were written by the late High Priest Yaaqab ben 'Azzi (1884-1987) who lived in Nablus 1899-1987. He had sent similar reports also besides the following to Haaretz, Davar and Doar Hayom.]

In [The Sentinel](#), Friday, June 5, 1914; page 19



The United States Ambassador at Constantinople (Mr. Henry Morgenthau), accompanied by Mrs. Morgenthau and their daughter, are making a tour of Palestine. Recently they were in Jerusalem. In the above picture, Mr. Morgenthau is seen on the summit of Mount Gerizim being shown by the Samaritan Priests the ruins of their ancient Temple.

From left to right: Miss Ruth Morgenthau, President Bliss of the Beiruth College, Samaritan Priest, Dr. Peet of Constantinople, Ambassador Morgenthau, Samaritan Priest, Dr. Hoskins of Beiruth and Deputy Consul Whiting of Jerusalem.

**“Samaritan and Karaite Inscriptions” in *The Palestine Bulletin*, Thursday, October 4, 1928; page 3**

Mr. Pinchas Grayevsky has just published a pamphlet containing the text of two ancient inscriptions: two Samaritan and one Karaite, all three in Hebrew. He added useful comments on the Karaites and the Samaritans which are to be continued in his following issues.



(Photo above from [פארווערטס](#) Sunday, February 28, 1926; page 19. **“Interesting Types from Palestine.”** Caption reads: Priests of the Samaritans. – These three gentlemen are Kohanem of the Samaritan congregation in Nablus, the ancient Schechem. The little fellows on the floor are Kohanem-lech.)

**“Notes for Tourists, XIX Nablus” in *The Palestine Bulletin*, Wednesday, March 5, 1930, page 2**





Photo in [פארווערטס](#) Sunday, December 11, 1932, page 15. Captions reads: Jacob Ben-Amrom, High Priest of the small remnant of Samaritan Jews, who died recently at Nablus (the ancient Schechem), Palestine. He is here shown with his grandchild in a picture made at his home (Kacyzne). **Benyamim Tsedaka** said



that the priest is the late High Priest Yitzhaq b. Amram b. Shalmah b. Tabia (HP 1916-1932) who lived in Nablus 1862-Dec. 2, 1932, and the child is the late High Priest Shalom b. Amram (2001-2004) who lived in Nablus 1922-2004, who died of prostate cancer.]

[Photographer: [Alter-Sholem Kacyzne](#) (1885-1941)]

**"A Samaritan Tablet"** in [The Palestine Bulletin](#), Monday, September 29, 1930; page 4

Mr. J. Ben Zvi who is not only a labour leader but also a diligent archaeologist, publishes in Zion (the review of the Palestine Jewish Society for History and Ethnography) a study of the Samaritan tablet which was found in a ruin at Kufr Kullil, near Nablus. The tablet dates back to 1214 A.D. There is an inscription of 12 lines which are incomplete. The names mentioned are those of well known Samaritan families. The tablet is now in the Palestine Museum.

**"The Late High Priest of the Samaritans."** (From a Correspondent) [The Palestine Post](#), Tuesday, Dec. 6, 1932; page 5.

The small remnant of the Samaritans at Nablus have suffered a severe loss with the death of their High Priest, Isaac ben Amram, on Friday last, at the advanced age of eighty.

The deceased had been High Priest to the little community since 1918. The night before his death he summoned the members of his family and the leaders of the Samaritans to a feast at which he informed them of his last wishes prior to going the way of all flesh. It was his desire to be borne to the grave by fellow-Samaritans, not by Arabs as had been the custom.

His funeral was attended by a concourse of nearly a thousand people, including the Deputy District Commissioner, The Mayor of Nablus, Dr. Luria on behalf of the Jewish Agency, Mr. I. Ben Zvi on behalf of the Vaad Leumi, Moslem notables and representatives of the various Christian denominations.

Masliah ben Pinhas, formerly the Second Priest, will now become the new High Priest.

The Samaritans are of great interest to the historian, ethnologist, anthropologist, Semitic scholar and ordinary tourist as a relic of Bible days and a rarely equaled example of group continuity. They observe the Law of Moses as given in the Pentateuch but do not recognize any post-Mosaic tradition as binding and hold Mount Gerizim rather than Mount Zion to be the Holy Place referred to in Deuteronomy. It is still their custom to sacrifice a Paschal lamb on the Eve of Passover, the date of which differs from the common Jewish one.

The present family of priests claims not Aaronite but Levite descent, as the direct priestly line is now extinct.

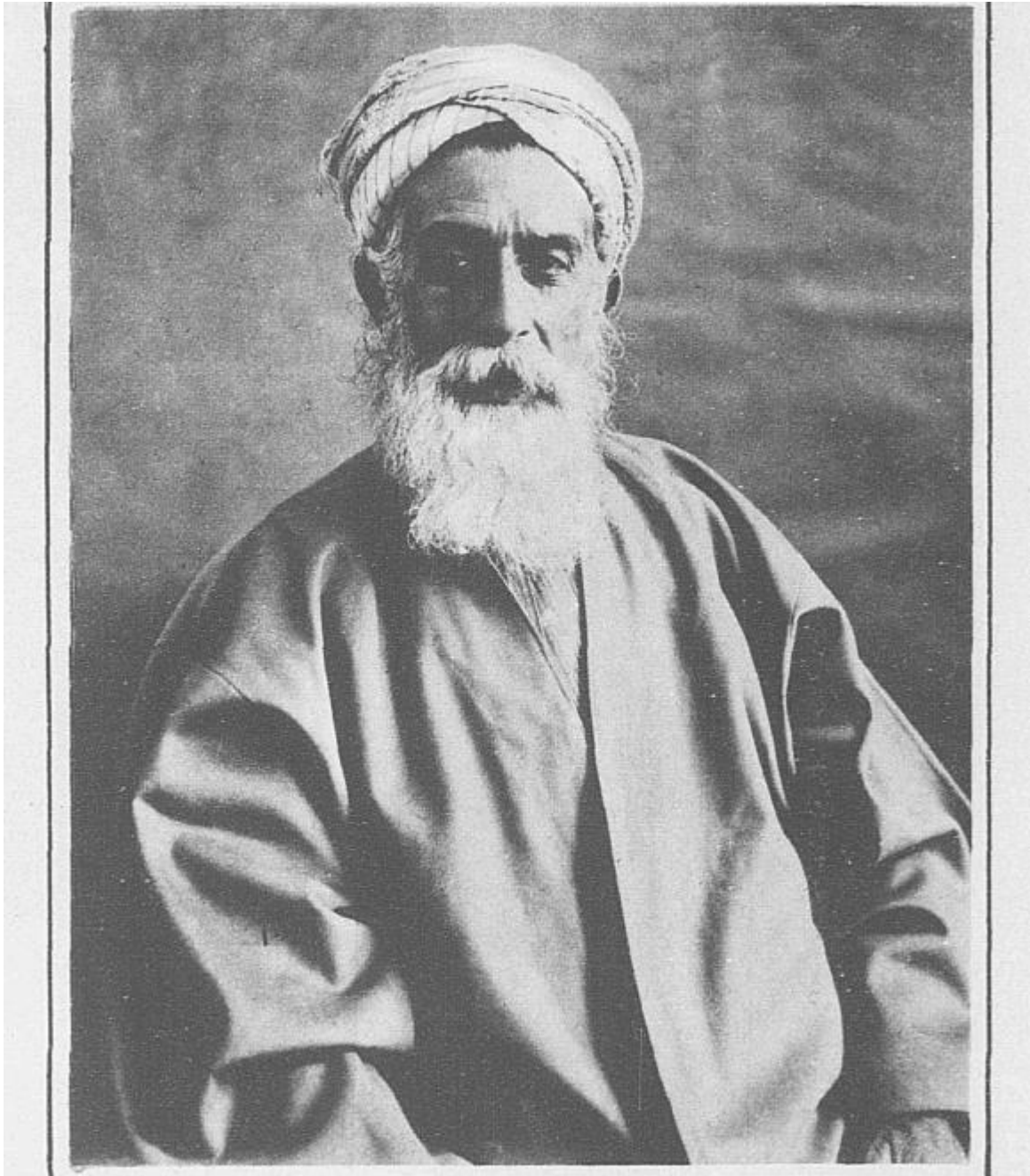
**"Fracas among Samaritans, Succession To High Priest"** in [The Palestine Post](#), Monday, January 2, 1933; page 5

Last Wednesday there was a fracas between two sections of the Samaritan Community at their synagogue in Nablus, with regard to the succession to the late High Priest. It was necessary for the District Officer to intervene and take possession of the keys of the synagogue.

**Samaritans' Protest**

The acting Samaritan High Priest has sent the High Commissioner a telegram protesting at the proposal on the part of the Nablus Municipality to the use part of the Samaritan graveyard in connection with a water supply scheme.

**"Studies in Facial Expressions"** in [פארווערטס](#) Sunday, June 18, 1933; page 20



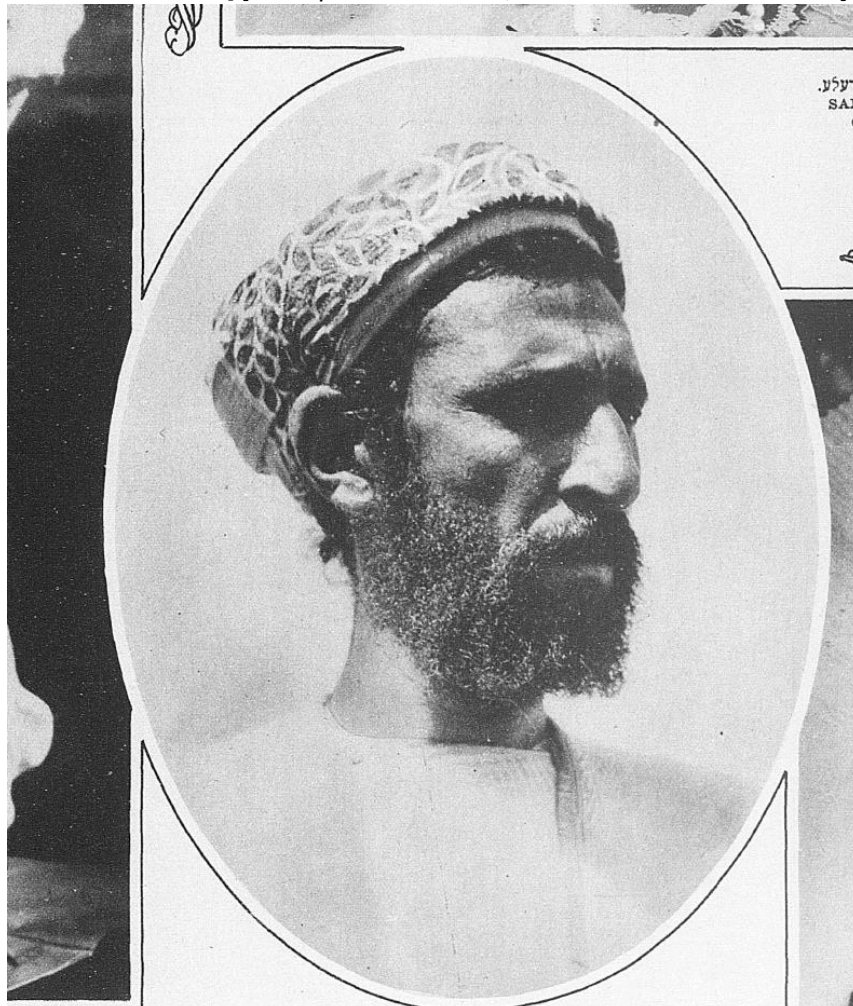
Caption reads: A Samaritan Jew of Nablus, the ancient Schehem, Palestine. [**Benyamim Tsedaka** said this is Yessahq b. 'Amram (1916-1932) lived in Nablus 1855-1932. He died on Dec. 4, 1932 from prostate cancer.]

**"Samaritans' Torah Hidden from Thieves"** in [The Palestine Post](#), Thursday, December 28, 1933; Page 6.  
The Scrolls of law of the Samaritans in Nablus, said to be a very ancient manuscript, has been hidden in a secrete place as the result of a letter received recently from Paris warning the Samaritan community that a group of famous thieves planned to steal it.  
Police were informed and precautions are being taken.

**"Studies in Facial Expressions."** in [פארווערטס](#) Sunday, June 17, 1934; page 18



(Caption reads: Samaritan Girl (H. Orushkes) [**Benyamim Tsedaka** said that this is his aunt, the late **Samicha Tsedaka**] *[Also spelled Oroshkes, his real name was Zvi Oron]*)



(Caption reads: Study of a Samaritan Jew (H. Orushkes) [**Benyamim Tsedaka** said that this is the late High Priest 'Amram b. Yesaahq (1961-1980) who lived in Nablus 1889-1980])



**“Samaritan Disputes Mar Worship, Many Abstain from Synagogue Attendance”** (From Our Correspondent) [The Palestine Post](#), Tuesday, September 18, 1934; page 2.

Nablus, Sept. 16.- Owing to disputes which have risen among the Samaritan Israelite community on Mount Gerizim, many refrained from attending the synagogue during the past year, and this led to an awkward position during the present Festival season.

The High Priest has now initiated reconciliation efforts between the two parties, and it is regarded as likely that harmony will be restored to the Samaritan fold so that all worshippers will be present at the Yom Kipur and Tabernacles services.

**“Samaritans Mourn Baron Rothschild.”** (From Our Correspondent) in [The Palestine Post](#), Sunday, November 11, 1934; page 2.

Nablus, Wednesday.- The Samaritan community was one of the many objects of the generosity of the late baron Edmond de Rothschild, one of his more recent donations being for the construction of a new building. A memorial service was held by the community on the news of his death being received. Many tributes were paid to the late benefactor.

**30 Samaritan Men to Three Women, Marital Depression among Nablus Community** (From Our Own Correspondent) in [The Palestine Post](#), Monday, November 12, 1934; page 2

Nablus. Oct. 6.- A “marital depression” seems to have struck the ranks of the Samaritans due to the depressing fact that the would-be grooms outnumber the would-be brides ten to one. Three maidens are being wooed by thirty Lochinvars. Apparently there is no solution to the problem, since the Samaritans are forbidden to choose brides belonging to any other community. The parents of the much besought three young women are, it appears, as a loss to choose husbands because of the abundance of the candidates.

**“Land on Mt. Gerizim, Bargaining with the Samaritans”** in [The Palestine Post](#), Wednesday, January 23, 1935; page 5.

Speculation regarding the sale by Samaritans of 700 dunams of land on Mount Gerizim is made by “Al Difa.” It is stated that the Supreme Moslem Council is negotiating for the purchase of the area, which is believed suitable for fruit growing.

The Samaritans previously discussed the sale with Jews, but as the price offered by the prospective Jewish purchasers has been agreed to by the Moslem body Council, the paper expresses the hope that the latter will be successful in completing the bargain.

*[SU Editor comment: 700 dunams is 173 acres]*

**“In Short”** in [The Palestine Post](#), Tuesday, January 29, 1935; page 5

700 Dunams- of land will shortly be sold to Moslem Supreme Council by Samaritan Jews near Nablus; delegation of Samaritans left for Jerusalem to complete negotiations.

**“Synagogue in Nablus Uncovered by Storm”** (From Our Own Correspondent) in [The Palestine Post](#), Thursday, February 14, 1935; page 5

Nablus, Wednesday.- An Inspector of Antiquities, Mr. Naim Shehadi Makhoully, arrived here to-day to inspect and take photographs of the antiquities unearthed by the recent floods at Wadi Tuffah.

Among the finds to be attributed to the storm are what are believed to be remains of a synagogue of the Roman period on which the ten commandments in Samaritan script seem to be inscribed.

The inspector also viewed the column uncovered on Mount Gerizim.

**“In Short”** in [The Palestine Post](#), Monday, February 15, 1935; page 5

Stones uncovered during the recent storms and bearing Samaritan inscriptions have been defaced by unknown persons.

**“What Mean Ye by These Stones?”** in [The Palestine Post](#), Wednesday, March 20, 1935; page 4

This question as everyone remembers, marks a well-defined moment in the history of Palestine. It is also the perfect motto for a Department of Antiquities in Palestine, whose function it is first to preserve, secondly to explain, and thirdly to seek out still more relics of Palestine's past stages of civilization. Having said so much, it is interesting to pick up the report which is now circulating in the local Press concerning the alleged Samaritan (or Pagan) remains laid bare near Nablus during the recent floods. (We are not in a position to vouch for the truth of the facts reported nor for the intrinsic importance of the remains referred to.)

The Nablus floods revealed a not very remarkable Samaritan inscription, and they also exposed a series of steps by the side of Mount Gerizim which, it was assumed, indicated the likelihood of more remains, and perhaps more important remains, in the vicinity. The matter was, we believe, investigated at the time by representatives of the Department of Antiquities. It is now reported that not a vestige of these Samaritan or Graeco-Roman relics remains. There is only circumstantial evidence from which to deduce what has happened. Several metres away from these (supposedly) important historic relics, a stone grinding machine was at work. This machine use for these survivals of ancient Palestinian history; it uprooted them from their centuries-old resting place, took them into its capacious and indiscriminating jaws; and now these relics of Neapolis's ancient glory are performing a function which not even the Department of Antiquities can be sure of. The theory has been spun that these steps were part of the long series of steps (depicted on the coins of Neapolis) leading up to the temple of Zeus.

The point, however, would seem to be that these cheaply excavated remains were either important, or of so little importance that no care or any attempt at preservation was justified. Either alternative may be the truth; but the prevailing notion is that a Government Department has been sadly unfaithful to its trust. It would at least be helpful to have this impression, if it is false, corrected.

**“Samaritan Pulpit Smashed”** (from Our Own Correspondent) in [The Palestine Post](#), Sunday, April 7, 1935; Front section, page 1.

Nablus, April 4.- Unknown persons have smashed an ancient stone pulpit in the courtyard on Mount Gerizim where the Paschal sacrifice is offered.

It was a relic believed to date back to the “Golden Epoch” of Samaritan history, and it was the custom for the High Priest to use this stone when addressing his flock on Samaritan Passover.

The outrage was discovered when preparations were put in hand for this year's ceremony. The police have now undertaken inquiries.

**“Samaritans Stoned by Boys, Intervention by Arab Resident”** in [The Palestine Post](#), Monday, October 28, 1935; page 2

Nablus, October 26.- A crowd of boys armed with stones, attacked the house of Munir Abdullah the Samaritan who occupies the first house in the Samaritan Quarter, outside the old city. They broke four window panes and the glass of a cupboard. The attack was stopped by the intervention of Farid Eff. Anabtawi who used his influence and dispersed the crowd.

**“In Short”** in [The Palestine Post](#), Monday, November 4, 1935; page 5

A “Good Samaritan,” Abdullah Munir, whose house in the Samaritan Quarter of Nablus was stoned by about 50 boys during the Arab strike ten days ago, has refused the damages which the parents of the boys were ordered to pay by the Assistant District Commissioner, Mr. Foot.

**“Samaritan Wedding Celebrated”** (From Our Own Correspondent) [The Palestine Post](#), Tuesday, February 18, 1936; page 5.

Nablus, Monday.- There was rejoicing in the small Samaritan Community here when a marriage was recently celebrated between a Samaritan, C??? Sabata, and a Jewess from Aleppo, Gracia Azizi. This marriage is significant because many of the Samaritans are unable to marry as the number of marriageable girls in the community is less than the number of young men. No marriage had been celebrated for some time.

The Chief Priest of the Samaritan Community blessed the couple and hoped that many other young Samaritans would follow this example.

**“Page Dan Cupid... A Kingdom for a Bride!”** in [The Sentinel](#), Thursday, March 26, 1936; page 36

Jerusalem, March 25, (JTA)- The marriage problem is causing great concern to the ancient and fast-dwindling Samaritan community in Nablus, whose members do not marry outside their own community. They now number 200 souls in all.

There are 25 men seeking wives now and their choice is restricted to the 15 unwed women. Some of the women are more than 30 years old, which is an advanced age for marriage in the East.

The bride shortage has prompted parents to set high requirements for suitors, including a dowry of \$48. Parents whose daughters work and contribute to the family's support are demanding much higher prices.

In protest against the high cost of marrying, some of the eligible men who are brothers or cousins of marriageable women are exercising their ancient prerogative of insisting that the younger girl not marry until they have been wed. This has brought the marriage market to a stalemate.

Several conferences have been held by the elders of the community, but no solution has been reached.

**“5 Arabs Arrested Possessing Arms, Official Communique”** in [The Palestine Post](#), Monday, July 27, 1936; page 5

Sunday, July 26.....

Last night a Samaritan, from whom money was demanded by two unknown Arabs in Nablus, was shot at by one of them and slightly wounded.

**“The Samaritans of Nablus, Hard Hit by the Strike”** in [The Palestine Post](#), Monday, October 5, 1936; page 5

The people of the small Samaritan community of Nablus are among those who have suffered the most hardship during the disturbances. Being entirely dependent on Nablus trade, they have lost their livelihood and are naturally not receiving support from the strike committee.

On the whole the Samaritans are afraid to leave their houses, and they have been practically without communication with the rest of the country during the past six months. The fighting is often near their quarter, and in many of their houses windows have been broken by stray bullets.

It is reported that in spite of the fact that they leave their houses only when absolutely forced to do so, they have been called upon by the authorities to contribute LP.50 of the LP.5,000 collective fine imposed on Nablus. As no money was forthcoming the sum was collected from the houses in kind.

**“Listeners’ Corner”** in [The Palestine Post](#), Friday, February 5, 1937; page 6

Last night's broadcast of Samaritan sacred and secular music, introduced by a talk in Hebrew and in English, was one of the most interesting items on the P.B.S. programme for some time past.

The singers were Samaritan priests, among them the High Priest himself, the programme including chants for Passover, the Day of Atonement, and the coming week's lesson. A drinking song and one rendered at the celebration of circumcision were among the secular songs heard.

The most striking feature of the Samaritan music is the comparative unimportance of the melody, rhythm and variations of tone being the chief means of expression. These Samaritan liturgies have been preserved intact and uncontaminated by foreign influence for many centuries, although the Samaritan community has long been small and surrounded by other religious groups.



Although the possibility of the extinction of the Samaritan community cannot be denied, there need be no fear that their music will be lost completely, as efforts are now being made to collect and preserve this valuable chapter of musical history. –C.

**“News Brevities”** in [The Sentinel](#), Thursday, July 15, 1937; page 3

Jerusalem (WNS-Palcor Agency)- An attempt to bomb the ancient Samaritan synagogue at Nablus, Arab town, was reported here. An unidentified person hurled the explosive. No damage was reported to the structure which is a symbol of one of the most ancient Jewish sects.

**“Samaritan Priest Weds 17-Year-Old Girl”** (From Our Own Correspondent) [The Palestine Post](#), Thursday, February 10, 1938; Page 3

Nablus, Wednesday.- There was rejoicing and celebration this evening in the Samaritan encampment on Mount Gerizim when the first wedding in the last ten years was celebrated with ancient rites. Yacoub Hacoheh, 40 years old and six-foot-three, scholar and member of the priestly clan, was married to a 17-year old girl.

For many years, Yacoub Hacoheh has been one of the eligible bachelors of the Samaritan community. But owing to internal dissension, mainly arising from the obduracy of patresfamilias over the question of dowry, there had been no marriages except with non-Samaritan women. Recently, the High Priest Tewfil intervened in the dispute and succeeded in arranging a settlement. As a result, several marriages were arranged, of which that of Yacoub Hacoheh is the first to take place. The bridegroom some time ago completed the translation into Arabic of the ancient Samaritan Scrolls of the Law.

The wedding festivities will last for seven days.

**“Samaritans Celebrate A Marriage”** by Yacoub Bin Shafic Bin Yacoub in [The Palestine Post](#), Friday, March 4, 1938; page 4.

(From Today's Palestine Review, By Arrangement)

The writer, Yacoub Shafic bin Yacoub, son of the High Priest, aged 37, was himself married last week to Afaf, daughter of the mukhtar (headman) of the Samaritan community, Ghazar bin Khader el Kahren. His bride is 17 years of age. Their marriage is a great event in the life of the dwindling community. Principally owing to the scarcity of Samaritan girls, no marriage had been celebrated for ten years.

Wedding festivities among the Samaritans last a full week, beginning on the Saturday and reaching the peak on the Wednesday, when the actual ceremony is performed. During these seven days the bridegroom spends to the last penny the savings he has put by all his life for this great event. He buys jewels and clothes for the bride, furnishes their new home and makes presents to the members of the bride's family.

The ceremonies and customs of the wedding week derive from ancient Samaritan sources, which in the intervening time, however, have absorbed certain Arabic customs. On the morning of the first Saturday the bridegroom, if he be of age, or his father, if the former is still a minor, stands at the synagogue gate at the end of the service and formally advises the worshippers of the festivities' commencement. The invitation to participate in them is accepted by all present. Headed by the High Priest, the congregation proceeds to the bridegroom's home, where they are received by the bridegroom and his father. However small the house, every guest must find room for himself under its roof. The week's lesson in the Torah is read, each male guest intoning a portion. Songs and hymns, in the ancient Hebrew-Aramaic dialect, are chanted until lunchtime, a meal is which all the male guests only take part. The bridegroom hands sweets and drinks.

Ring and Tray Games

In the evening the guests return to pass the whole night in the bridegroom's home. Most of the time is spent in playing traditional games, such as the ring and tray games. In the former a ring is passed

round unseen among the guests. At a given signal, its passage is stopped. All then hold out their hands with fists clenched, and every player is called on to guess where the ring is hidden.

The second game is similar. Ten small brass cups, under one of which a ring is hidden, are set on a tray. The guests are divided into two groups, one of which hides the ring, the other having a guess under which cup it lies. The losing group is subjected to droll and derisive verses which are composed by the winning group on a small board kept for the purpose.

In all these activities the men alone take part. But the women are by no means kept out of it. ON the Sabbath, after their menfolk have left, they visit the groom's home, and inspect the cloths, jewels and furniture that the bride is to receive from him. They are critical, and do not hesitate to voice their disapproval if the groom has not given of the best. To their criticism of the articles, in such a case, they add slighting remarks about the groom himself. After each article has been handled and rehandled, the women proceed to speculate, on the basis of the gifts to the bride, on the nature and the quality of the gifts that the bride's family will receive.

Meanwhile, the men come to the bridegroom's home again on the second night, and again remain until dawn, singing, playing games, eating and drinking. If the bridegroom is wealthy, he engages one of the Arab cafes in the town for the night, where some Arab singer is commissioned to entertain the Samaritan guests and the Arab friends of the bridegroom's family who are specially invited to the performance, which lasts until dawn.

The third evening is given over to singing, among the songs being original compositions extolling the virtues of the host. The languages used are Arabic and the Hebrew-Aramaic dialect.

The fourth evening, that before the ceremony proper, the bridegroom engages a bath-house for the night, and entertains his guests and himself with a hair-cut, shave and bath, a procedure that lasts until dawn. Thence the company proceeds to the groom's house where a sumptuous breakfast awaits them. Of all the meals served by the groom during the wedding week, this is considered the *piece de resistance*. From then until evening the bridegroom's home receives a constant stream of visitors, neighbours who, not on sufficiently intimate terms to take part in the rest of the week's festivities, know that on this day they will be made welcome, the needy people of the vicinity who are offered a free meal, beggars who come for alms, and strangers who come to see a rarely-celebrated Samaritan wedding. The purse strings are open all day, and by sunset almost the bottom of it has been reached.

#### The Bride's Turn

Now it is the turn of the bride and her women relatives and friends to visit the bath-house, and again it is specially engaged by the bridegroom. Coloured lights are festooned across the ceiling in honour of the bride and spices are plentifully sprinkled on the floor and walls. An Arab woman singer, who is usually also a dancer, entertains the bride and her friends while they bathe. Late in the afternoon the bathing party breaks up, the bride returning to her father's house, where a festive dinner, at the expense of the groom, is given for the relatives and friends of her family.

While this banquet is in progress at the bride's home, the merriment continues at the groom's. After the evening meal, the men guests take part in the ceremony of changing the groom's clothes. He is stripped completely naked, and clothed in an entirely new outfit. All the while songs are sung, the High Priest leading with a hymn, the refrain of which the others take up.

At sunset the marriage ceremony takes place, conducted by the High Priest. The bridegroom stands before him and listens as the Ketuba (marriage lines) is read out by a priest. The language is ancient Hebrew-Aramaic, and it is written by hand on an illuminated parchment.

The marriage lines begin with a paeon of praise to the Lord, followed by the date of the marriage, the genealogy and titles of the bridegroom, the names of the bride, of her father and grandfather and their titles, if any. The rights and duties of both parties are then defined.

#### The "Red Day"

The reading completed, the bride's father declares that freely and of sound mind he gives his consent to the marriage. The young men present conduct the groom to the bride, when they are formally introduced. For a few minutes they are left alone, to be interrupted when one of the groom's

bachelor friends invites him to spend the night at his home. The Samaritan women meanwhile invite their Arab women neighbours to their section of the house to spend the night in dancing and song. For a reason that no one remembers, this day of the wedding week is known as the "red day." Thursday night again sees the bridegroom receiving and entertaining guests at his home. On Friday night, the bridegroom and bride absent themselves from the festivities; but the bride is still the groom's "guest." Saturday, the eighth day since the commencement of the celebration, known as the "first Saturday," the bride ceases to be the groom's "guest" and becomes his wife.

**"Samaritan Flees Sect Following Arab Threats"** in [The Sentinel](#), Thursday, July 28, 1938; page 34. Nablus, Palestine, July 26 (JTA)

-For the first time in 2,000 years a Samaritan has left this community, as the nephew of Tewfik Cohen, High Priest of the dwindling remnant of a once-proud Isrealite tribe, fled in the face of terrorist threats.

Adul Rahim, Generalissimo of Arab bands, had assured the closely-segregated community of 200 on Mount Gerizim near Nablus that they would not be molested, after he had exacted tribute from the High Priest, but a subordinate band-leader continued to threaten the group.

High Priest Tewfik recently was ordered to appear before Abdul Rahim with tribute. He was conducted, blindfolded, to his secret headquarters in the hills, bearing jewels, narghillas, perfumed soap and cash.

**"Samaritans Curtail Feast of Tabernacles"** in [The Palestine Post](#), Friday, October 7, 1938; page 2

The Samaritans, who live at Nablus, will begin the Feast of Tabernacles on Saturday, but owing to the present state of the country they will not erect their traditional booths on Mount Gerizim, as they have done for hundreds of years.

**"Social and Personal"** in [The Palestine Post](#), Monday, January 9, 1939; Page 2.

Lady MacMichael accompanied by her daughter and the Military Commander in Nablus visited the High Priest of the Samaritans on Friday.

The High Priest presented Lady MacMichael with a Samaritan Scroll of the Pentateuch.



[Photo not part of news article from a [website](#): [Sir Harold Alfred MacMichael](#) and his wife Lady McMichael and daughter Araminta (photo between 1934 and 1939). The High Priest mentioned above was Matzliach ben Phinhas. Where is the scroll today? [His collection information](#) may determine this.]



**“Samaritan, Not Arab, Haifa Victim Identified.”** In [The Palestine Post](#), Tuesday, July 4, 1939; page 2  
Haifa, Monday.- The man murdered yesterday in the Haifa Eastern Quarter (as reported in the After Midnight column) was identified today as Yussef Abed Kahan of Nablus, a Samaritan, and not an Arab, as first thought.

After the murder the police rounded up 64 Arabs for interrogation and detained 32 for further investigation.

On the scene six rounds of parabellum ammunition were found.

**“Samaritan Buried”** in [The Palestine Post](#), Thursday, July 6, 1939; page 2

Nablus, Wednesday.- The body of Ibrahim Youssef, a notable of the Samaritan Community, who was shot dead in the Eastern quarter of Haifa on Sunday night, was brought here for burial on Monday. His funeral was attended by the Samaritan Community and many Arab friends.

The deceased, who was 65 years of age, was a leading merchant in Nablus who had gone to Haifa to collect debts.

A number of Arabs were detained in connection with the crime.

**“Samaritan Pascal Sacrifice Feast, Ceremony on Mt. Gerizim.”** In [The Palestine Post](#), Sunday, May 7, 1939; page 2.

The number of visitors at the Samaritan pascal sacrifice which took place on Mount Gerizim, on Wednesday night, was small this year compared with the previous years, among those present being the Military Commander of Nablus. Large numbers of British police were on guard.

His Excellency the High Commissioner sent a letter to the High Priest expressing regret at his inability to accept the invitation to attend the ceremony, and congratulating the community on the occasion of the feast.

**“Vanished Samaritans Back Home”** [The Palestine Post](#), Thursday, Oct. 26, 1939; page 2

Four Samaritans who disappeared from their quarter in Nablus on Sunday night while returning from the Day of Atonement Service there, returned to their homes on Tuesday morning.

They are: Ibrahim Saad, Amin Mafraj, Mafraj el Mafraj, and Mubarak Saad.

**“Samaritan Cantor Dead.”** In [The Palestine Post](#), Friday, February 23, 1940; Page 2.

Nablus, Thursday.- Abraham Hachohen, brother of the High Samaritan Priest and Cantor of the community, died suddenly this morning at the age of 60.

He is survived by a wife and six children.

**“Samaritan Elder Dead”** in [The Palestine Post](#), Friday, November 20, 1942; page 3

The death took place this week on Mount Gerizim, outside of Nablus, of Shalom eff. Marjan, one of the leaders of the Samaritan Israelite community, at the age of 70.

Shalom Marjan was the only surviving authority on ancient Samaritan Music. He was known also as an expert in Samaritan law and solved many of the problems with whom the small community was from time to time confronted.

He is survived by two sons and two daughters.

**“Samaritans without High Priest.”** In [The Palestine Post](#), Monday, February 16, 1943; Page 3

Nablus, Sunday. – Reports that a successor has been chosen to the late High Priest of the Samaritan Community are premature, and the small community which dates back to the early days of the Second Temple is for the time being without a spiritual head.

Some doubt has been voiced as to the eligibility of Naji As-Samri (who was erroneously reported to have been chosen) although he is the oldest living member of the late High Priest's family. According to the Bible (Leviticus XXII, “no one of the seed of Aaron that hath a blemish may come nigh to offer

the offerings of the Lord” and As-Samri is stated to have an eye defect and to suffer from an impediment of speech.

Persons who are disqualified by this verse include a blind man, or a lame, or he that hath a flat nose or anything superfluous: or crookback or a dwarf or that hath a blemish in his eye.

One school of thought holds that the verse refers only to the lower category of priests who, on behalf of the worshippers, ‘offer the offerings of the Lord.” Another school holds that if this is true of lesser priests, it most certainly applies to “he that is the High Priest among his brethren.”

There is yet a third school which claims that the restrictions therefore no longer apply as the Aaronic line became extinct in the 17<sup>th</sup> century and the priesthood was transferred to families claiming descent from the Levites.

**“Three Samaritan Priests Appointed”** in [The Palestine Post](#), Friday, March 5, 1943; page 3

Nablus, Thursday.- The functions of the late High Priest of the Samaritan Community will be vested in three elected community leaders following the dispute over the succession to the late spiritual head. Settlement followed the intervention of the District Officer, Abdullah eff. Kneir. At a meeting held on Thursday, the 65-year old Naji Avisha eff. Hacoheh was chosen to act as Reader of the Law on Sabbaths, while Avihesda eff. Hacoheh (63) will maintain contact with the authorities and retain his present status as Conductor of Services. The third High Priest is Amram Hacoheh (50) who will deal with the community’s political affairs.

A committee of nine was elected to deal with the secular affairs of the community, the settling of disputes and other matters. A meeting was held today when the District Officer participated in framing a statute to be submitted to the authorities.

**“Good Samaritans in Jerusalem, Join in Prayers for Persecuted Jews of Europe.”** In [The Palestine Post](#), Tuesday, February 1, 1944; page 3.

For the first time in history since the days before contemporary writers said “the Jews have no dealings with the Samaritans”, representatives of the Samaritan community came down from Mount Gerizim near Nablus to Jerusalem to meet their Jewish brothers on Sunday.

The delegation consisted of five priests, headed by the newly elected High Priest, Avisha Ben Pinhas Hacoheh, and three attendants. They came to join in prayer for persecuted European Jewry as well as to give news of their sect which claims to be the only remnant of three of the lost tribes of Israel- Ephraim, Menasseh and Levi- which has never left the soil of Palestine.

The Hall of the Girl’s Hostel in Rehavia, where the meeting took place, was filled to capacity on Sunday night. Red-turbaned and clad in traditional robes, the priests sat on the platform; their attendants wore tarbushes. Before them on a long table were the famous 750-year old Scroll of the Law in Samaritan script, and other ancient ritual books, as well as the “guest book” for visitors to Mount Gerizim. The community claims to own books written by a great-grandson of Aaron, brother of Moses.

**Link with Palestine**

Surveying the history of the community, Mr. I. Ben Zvi, Chairman of the Vaas Leumi, emphasized their link with the land of Israel, their faith in monotheism and their literature. Their one difference from the Jews was their belief in Mount Gerizim as the site of the rebuilding of the temple.

Addressing “the elect of the Jewish nation in Jerusalem” in the “holy Hebrew language”, Yaakov Ben Uri Hacoheh, one of the younger priests, sketched the history of his people and gave a vivid description of the Samaritan Sabbath. During the last war, he said, Samaritan soldiers had fought and fallen in foreign lands while at home families had starved. The war had cost the community over a quarter of its number, including the then High Priest.

Later Samaritans had married Jewish women from Tel Aviv and Jaffa and children of these marriages today formed some of the best elements in the community. Out of the 260 individuals who today formed the community, 50 were priests.



Concluding, the priest appealed to the Jewish Community for help in rebuilding their synagogue and in opening a school, the lack of which was a grave danger to the younger Samaritan generation.  
Prayers for Persecuted

Later the priest offered a special prayer for his persecuted brothers in Europe, and sang traditional Sabbath songs, and the famous "Mariam" song from the Samaritan Passover ritual. The audience stood to hear the reading by the High Priest of the ten commandments from the Holy Scroll. The meeting was held under the auspices of the Bnei Hayishuv (Sons of Yishuv) Association.

**"Palestine Post Reporter" in [The Palestine Post](#), Monday, November 26, 1945**

Nablus, Sunday.- A road is now being constructed from Nablus to the top of Mt. Gerizim, providing the first convenient approach to the Samaritan community which lives on the slopes of the mountain. The new road, it is to be learned, is being laid in connection with the building of a Radar station on the mountain-top as one of the five sites planned in various parts of Palestine.

**"New Synagogue For Samaritans." in [The Palestine Post](#), Tuesday, July 13, 1943; page 3**

Nablus. Monday.- A new synagogue is to be built by the small Samaritan Israelite community, each family is to contribute a fixed amount towards the cost.

The Palestine Government has promised to allot LP500 for this purpose.

There are some 200-250 families in this community, which has its centre on Mount Gerizim outside Nablus. The Samaritans say they observe the original Mosaic law and claim never to have left the soil of Palestine even after the Jewish Dispersion.

**"Samaritans Want To Rebuild Synagogues" in [The Palestine Post](#), Tuesday, September 4, 1945; Page 3.**

Nablus, Monday.- Elders of the Samaritan community at Nablus have asked the Government Department of Antiquities to continue the rebuilding of the ancient Samaritan synagogue which they began some time ago.

Funds were contributed for the purpose by the Government, Nablus Municipality, and the Samaritan community, but were not sufficient to cover the entire cost of reconstruction.

The elders now point out that it is Government's duty to put this ancient monument into repair.

**'Can't Marry Jews, Samaritans of Israel Doomed to Die Out' By Leo Heiman (National Jewish Post Correspondent) [The National Jewish Post](#) Friday, April 6, 1956, page 9.**

Haifa (NJP)- The 250-strong Samaritan community, of whom about half live in Israel and the rest, in Jordan-occupied Palestine, is doomed to certain extinction unless they find women, according to an official statement made by community leaders.

The statement came as the Samaritans made final preparations to cross the armistice lines to offer their annual sacrifice on the Mount of Blessings, near Nablus, during the Samaritan Pesah in mid-April.

The reason for the gloomy prediction is that the Samaritans, who believe themselves the true Jews, will not marry Christian or Moslem women, and the Israeli rabbinate, despite government objections, have ruled that Samaritans are not bona fide Jews.

Although President Ben Zvi and Prime Minister Ben-Gurion strongly support the pleas of the Samaritans to be accepted as equal members of the Jewish community, the rabbinate has over-ruled their wishes.

To the question: Why don't the Samaritans marry their own women, the answer is that for some unknown quirk of genetics, more males than females have always been born to the Samaritans.

Several thousand years ago, during the Second Kingdom of Israel, the Samaritan community numbered more than 250,000, and now its total number 252, and it is getting slowly but steadily smaller all the time.

Unless they get women, there will be no Samaritans left in the year 2000, scientists say.

Some scientists have come forward with interesting theory that the Samaritan male surplus is a direct result of close intermarriage.

According to their precepts, Samaritans must marry closest relatives. While in first-degree relationship, such as between brother and sister, marriage is forbidden, second-degree relationship marriage, such as between first cousins or uncle and niece, is encouraged.

The scientists say that, over the years, the Samaritans have become blood relatives of each other so that all of them have now exactly the same blood.

While the thesis that intermarriage results in a surplus of males has still to be tested, the fact is that out of 252 Samaritans now alive, the majority are old folks, hardly expected to live more than 25 years, which at the same time, there are 34 surplus bachelors with no hope of marrying a Samaritan woman in their lifetime.

As a matter of fact, there are more than 34 bachelors in the Samaritan community today, but some have been promised the little girls as wives as soon as they grow up.

More boys are born than girls each year. The girls born this year will be eligible for marriage by 1972 according to law, but by that time there will be more than five times the number of bachelors.

The main difference between Samaritans and Jews is general aside from their ancient dress and the fact that they still offer sacrifices, is that Samaritans believe only in the Five Books of the Torah, and in Moses as the only prophet.

Although these differences exist, the Israeli rabbinate maintains the main reason Samaritans are not considered Jews is that they are descended from Canaanites, who inhabited the Holy Land before it was conquered by Joshua. The Samaritans, on the other hand, claim they are descended directly from the high priest Aaron, brother of Moses, who was their first to formulate the Jewish religion as they believe in it and who commanded his seven great-grandsons, the heads of the seven Samaritan families, to keep it clean and pure.

President Ben Zvi and Prime Minister Ben-Gurion, both well-known experts on the history of the Jewish law, say that the Samaritans are right in claiming to be bona fide Jews. In fact, the Samaritans are more Jews than any others, if only because they have never left Eretz Israel.

In Israel, the Samaritans still dress as they did 3,000 years ago in white flowing robes and are forbidden to talk on the Sabbath except concerning religious subjects. Young Samaritan boys, who see the freedom of their Jewish neighbors, suffer from inferiority complexes and try to imitate them. So, many young Samaritan boys will probably not stick to their fathers' religious precepts and will become "regular Jews."

Unless they are permitted to marry Jewish women, the Samaritans will be a thing of the past in the near future, and their Torah Scroll which, they say, was written by Avish, great-grandson of the High Priest Aaron in the 13<sup>th</sup> year of Joshua's conquest of the Holy land, will become a museum piece.

Frankly speaking, however, the Samaritans' chances of survival as a community are very slender even if they get rabbinical permission to marry Jewish women. The fact is that there are no Jewish women willing to marry Samaritans.

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### **Biblio**

**Knoppers, Gary**



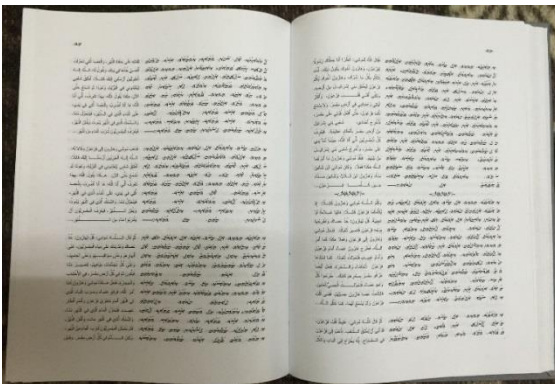
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## For Sale on Ebay

**Jewish Samaritan Poetry: Ateret Shalom by Rachel Tzadaka**, 94 pp. Israel 1979

Price US \$20.97 plus shipping from Israel

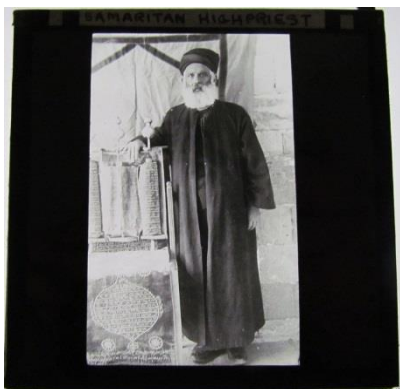
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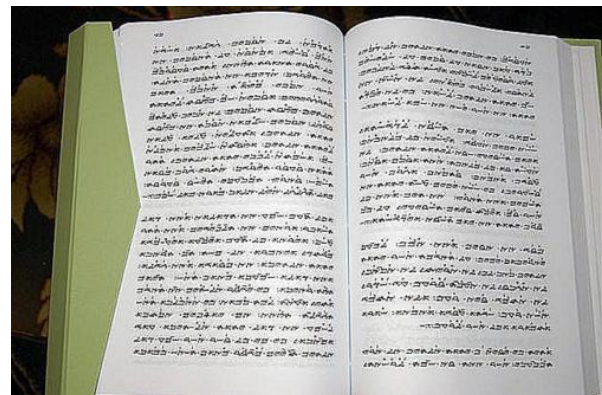


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