

## **The Israelite Samaritans Today, July 2011**

By: **A.B. - The Samaritan News Services**

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The Samaritans are aware of the latest changes among the Palestinians in their attempts to organize a united government from all their different political parties. The Samaritans are in no way taking sides or cooperating with these changes, but as an entity that is fighting for her existence in the most sensitive region in the political world - the Middle East in general and the region of the conflict between the Palestinians and Israelis in particular. The Samaritans cannot be indifferent to what is happening and yet they have to prepare themselves in all ways in order to ensure their future existence. They keep their activity with an aim in becoming a bridge of peace between all entities involved in the Middle East Conflict, by keeping friendship with all sides. This policy proves itself every day when Palestinians from every stream and the Israelis from all of their streams give respect to the Samaritans and speak favorably about the Samaritans. This is also expressed by both sides granting aid to the Samaritans for different projects on Mount Gerizim.

For this matter a delegation of Samaritan seniors came in recent days to meet with Dr. Salam Fayaad, the Prime Minister of the Palestinian Authority. The High Priest, Aaron Ben AbHisda, the Secretary of the Community Committee, Yitzah Altif, and the member of the committee, Abed Cohen - all came especially to wish Fayaad well who is now recovering from the CPA to his heart that was done while he was in the USA. Fayaad welcomed the delegation warmly and spoke of his deep friendship with the Samaritans.

The future changes in the Palestinian government caused the delay of the transmitting of the sum that was donated to activate the sewage project on Mount Gerizim

Fayaad promised that he would make it happen faster, and regarding this it should be stated that Fayaad is the most discussed candidate as the Prime Minister of the United Palestinian government, a fact that will expedite all development projects on Mount Gerizim.

At the end of the meeting the Palestinian Prime Minister insisted to escort his guests for a long distance from his office to the elevators, while he continued to hug them and to make friendship statements to the Samaritans. On the other side, the recent calm regarding the tomb of Joseph in Nablus is due to the cooperation between the Palestinian security forces and Israeli security forces and has caused an increased number of visits from within the Samaritans in Holon and Mount Gerizim. Joseph, the righteous, the father of Ephraim and Manashe, the forefathers of the Israelite Samaritans, holds a place in the Samaritan belief having the qualities at this tomb of receiving blessing and healing for thousands of years. The testimonies of the visits to the tomb of Joseph are the most ancient testimonies in written sources that tell about the history of the region without leaving any doubt about the ancientness of the place. Unfortunately the tomb of Joseph became in the last three decades a center of political confrontations between Palestinians

to religious Israelis and extremists on both sides, some of these confrontations ended with casualties on both sides, but mostly the tomb of Joseph suffered destruction and burning by Palestinian extremists as a reaction to stimulation of Israeli extremists that entered the site during the middle of the night without coordination of the security forces. There are some people that we call intelligent ignorants from the academia, the media and politics, that destroy the peaceful atmosphere by creating doubts if this is the original tomb of Joseph. When we say intelligent ignorants we mean that there are people who have ambitions to know something about everything, but there are some things that they are totally ignorant about, and they cannot admit that they do not know. In this matter we must note that the unending visits to the tomb of Joseph of Jews and Samaritans for thousands of years never lied. It is not the tomb of Yosef Alony, nor Sheik Yusef London, nor Yusef Kirchenbaum, and not even the Islamic Sheik Yusef being buried there, but this is the original righteous Joseph. To this place came Jews and Samaritans to visit for thousands of years. This is a historical fact.

The uprising of thousands of Israelis in recent days to visit by the thousands to this place, who are not coming for pure intentions of admiration to Joseph the Righteous. In a talk that we had with Mr. Noam Arnon, one of the leaders of the visitors, agreed with us that all holy places should be ex-territorial and out of the political conflict and should be accessible to everybody without any of the site we try to control the holy place by force. To these attempts there are three results, destruction of the place, casualties, and reinforcing the hatred between Jews and Muslims.

Lately there is cooperation between Palestinians and Israelis to give the tomb of Joseph its original respect as it was the first 15 years after 1967. A.B. the Samaritan News begs the Israelis and the Palestinians to start mutual cooperation. Joseph the righteous was a seeker of peace and consolation as he acted between his own brothers, and it is recommended that everybody learn from him. In Holon since the centrality of the activity moved to the hands of Elitzur Marchiv there is feeling that there is movement in the activity of the community committee. He leaves all his business as a manager in private business and arrives as an official of the committee. The result is more grants to the pleasure of the committee and activity that is very prominent in the area after a long stagnant period. There are new air conditioners in the central synagogue in Holon and the sight of the two synagogues improved. There is activity to preserve the respect of the two cemeteries in Kiriat Luza in Mount Gerizim and Kiriat Shaul in Tel Aviv. Elitzur reported lately that the committee allowed the payment of 500 shekels monthly to a private contractor for the maintenance of the cemetery on Mount Gerizim. During the last Pesach the cemetery on Mount Gerizim was cleaned totally, but since then the bushes became overgrown. Constant care will prevent the neglect of the cemetery on Mount Gerizim.

A.B. the Samaritan News is very satisfied with the fruitful participation of the committee in Holon with the committee in Mount Gerizim. The trust between the two has increased and both are active with full energy for the communities of Luza and Holon.