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**The Jewish Expositor,**

and Friend of Israel:

March 1816

(p. 87) ....

ON THE SAMARITANS.

The following MEMOIR on the present state of the Samaritans, was read in the *Class of History and Ancient Literature of the Imperial Institute of France*, by **M. SILVESTRE DESACY**; and (p. 88) was extracted from the 52nd No. of the *Annals of Voyages*, &c. published in Paris, A. D. 1812. We give it to our readers in the hope that it may lead to discussion; or at all events to further information on the subject. But it must be obvious that with respect to articles of this kind, we do not pledge ourselves for the accuracy of the facts stated, or declare our assent to every observation to be found in them.

THE Memoir which I have now the pleasure of presenting to the Public, has not so much for its object a minute research into the origin and former circumstances of the Samaritans, as a brief exposition of the present state of that singular people, who, without having ever acted a distinguished part on the theatre of the world, have yet been preserved distinct from all others, for nearly three thousand years, and whose history is necessarily connected with that of the Jews,—with that of the Christian religion, and of the books which contain the only authentic principles of that religion.

The Samaritans differ from all other people in this respect, that they never had an independent existence. Subject successively to the Assyrians,—the Persians,—the Greeks,—the Governors of Judea,—the Romans,—and to the several dynasties of Mohammedans, which, since the conquest of Syria by Omar, have succeeded to the government of that country, they have preserved their religion, their language, their sacred books, and the chief seat of their worship. Yet perhaps, before the expiration of a few more centuries, they may be sought for in the only places where they have still a few families left, and shall not be found. The probability that this may happen must render them not unworthy of our regard and attention; and will be my apology for the office I have now taken upon myself of collecting, in this Memoir, their last sighs, if I may so express myself, and of handing down to ages that shall survive-them, the last traces of their existence.

The origin of this nation, which we call *Samaritans*, stands recorded in the historical books of scripture which we have received from the Jews. We there read that Salmanasar king of Assyria, having overthrown the kingdom of the ten tribes, and taken Samaria, the capital, led away into Assyria all the richest and most distinguished of the inhabitants, and planted in their room colonies of his own subjects, which he had selected from different parts and provinces of his dominions. These colonies of idolaters soon mixed with the ancient inhabitants of the country that had been suffered to remain, who, notwithstanding their strong propensity to idolatry, have never *wholly* forsaken the Law of Moses, and the worship of the God of Abraham, to this day. A mixed form of worship soon prevailed, as we read in the Second Book of Kings, com- (p. 89) posed of the worship of the true God, to which the members of each different colony joined that of the

particular deity whom they had been taught to serve in that province of Assyria from which they were taken. We have much reason to conclude that the Israelites who were left formed the most numerous part of this mixed community;<sup>1</sup> for their worship, doctrines, and religious ceremonies, and likewise their civil polity, as prescribed in the Books of Moses, soon became common to them and the Assyrian colonists, which the right of conquest had introduced into their country. Nor do we find that the Jews had ever accused the Samaritans of idolatry, at least till our Saviour's time, notwithstanding the rooted dislike which they have borne to them, ever since their own return from Babylon. If, with a view to escape the same fate with the Jews, the Samaritans had actually consented, as Josephus reports, to consecrate their temple on mount Gerizim, to Jupiter, in the reign of Antiochus; that should be ascribed to the feebleness of a nation long oppressed and enervated, yielding to tyranny and to fear, and not viewed as the effect of religious opinion, or a measure which they approved. And it is plain, that if idolatry had been then *established* among the Samaritans, they would not in that case have had any thing to fear from the enmity of Antiochus; nor would they have been in danger of being confounded with the Jews.

Besides, the history of the Jews, under the government of the Asmonaeon princes, and that of the establishment of the gospel, represent the Samaritans in no other light than as a nation, or, if you please, a sect, agreeing with the Jews in the same articles of faith, and dissenting from them only in their public worship, and in regard to the place to which it should be confined. There were, no doubt, some other lesser points of difference between the two nations, but perhaps none greater than those which subsisted between the Pharisees and the Sadducees, in our Saviour's time, who, notwithstanding, acknowledged the same priesthood, joined in the same ceremonies, and sacrifices, and took their seats together in the same assemblies and on the same tribunals.

The widest ground of difference between the Jews and the Samaritans, consisted without doubt, then as at this day, in the latter's receiving only the Law of Moses, and so rejecting all the rest of the books of the Jewish Canon.

Some may be disposed to ask here, whence the name *Samaritans* is derived, and what is its meaning? Such a question will appear highly unnecessary, I know, to most readers, who, having never enquired into the subject, suppose (p. 90) there cannot be a doubt that the name Samaritans means only the inhabitants of Samaria, and is derived from the name of that city. But this etymology, however natural it may at first appear, is not unattended with difficulties, for it is not admitted either by the ancient Fathers of the Church, or by the Samaritans themselves, both of whom derive it from שומר *Schomer*, in the plural שומרים *Schomerim*, the participle of the verb שמר *Shamar*, to guard or keep. Epiphanius translates the name *Samaritans* by the Greek word φυλακες, and says, that "the Samaritans were so called, because they had been placed in that country to guard, or that they might be guardians of the Laws of Moses."<sup>2</sup>

Eusebius, or St. Jerome his translator, adopts the same interpretation, and seems to admit in proof of it, the second of the reasons here assigned by Epiphanius. "Rex Caudaeorum," says he, "ad custodiendam regionem Judaeam accolas misit Assyrios, qui aemulatores legis Judeae facti, Samaritae nuncupati sunt, quod Latina lingua exprimitur, custodes."<sup>3</sup>

The same Father plainly alludes to this meaning of the word *Samaritans*, in several parts of his works. And I am of opinion that these Fathers have borrowed this interpretation from the Samaritans themselves, who admit of no other to this day, as appears from their letters to their brethren, whom they conceived to be in England, in which they express themselves thus: "We assure you, dear brethren, seed of Israel, that we are sincerely attached to the law of Moses, the prophet, and that we *guard the holy Law, and are hence called GUARDIANS.*"

This at least is certain, that such a meaning of the word *Samaritans* could not have originated with the Jews, who, being their avowed enemies, could never have looked upon them as guardians of the Law of Moses, and indeed, never spoke of them in their own language but under the name of *Cutheans*, a name which originally belonged to one of the nations, from which the

<sup>1</sup> It will be observed, that this account does not precisely agree with that given by Prideaux, in his *Con. v. i.* p. 46.

<sup>2</sup> Epiph. *Lib. i. Her. ix.* (where see the Greek which stands here in the text.)

<sup>3</sup> Eus. *Pamph. Chron. Lib. Poster, num. 1270.*

colonies were taken that the king of Assyria had sent into the kingdom of the ten tribes. It may be presumed that the *Cutheans* furnished the greatest number of those colonists, and that so their name became common to all the strangers, and even to the remains of the ancient population with whom they gradually incorporated.

Josephus positively affirms that *Σαμαρείτας* is the Greek name of those whom the Jews called *Χαθαιοί*, and whom the modern Jews call כוּתִיִּים *Couthiim*. Besides, the name of Samaria being in Hebrew שְׁמֶרֶן *Schomeron*, if this word had been actually the root of the word *Samaritans*, it would have been written שְׁמֶרֶנִּים *Schomeronim*, and not שְׁמֶרִים (p. 91) *Schomerim*. This last word is not found in the Hebrew text of the Bible. The word שְׁמֶרֶנִּים *Schomeronim*, regularly formed from שְׁמֶרֶן is found only in 2 Kings, c. xvii. v. 29. where it signifies the inhabitants of the city of Samaria, before the destruction of the kingdom of the ten tribes by the king of Assyria. The expression *frequentia Samaritanorum*, to be found in the Vulgate translation of 2 Esdras, c. iv. v. 2. is not exactly conformable to the original, which is תַּרְבּוּת שְׁמֶרֶן *turba Samaria*. I am therefore of opinion that they were the Greeks who first gave to those whom the Jews called *Cutheans*, the name of *Samaritans*, derived from the word Samaria; that it must have been in use before the era when Samaria began to be called *Sebasti*, or even the *city of Gabinius*, *πολις Γαβινίων* or *Γαβινίτις*; and in short, that this name, invented by the Greeks, having been known to the Samaritans, they endeavoured to give it a meaning honourable to themselves, and which was the more natural, as the formation of their language did not permit them to derive the word *Samaritan* שְׁמֶרִים from the name of the city Samaria, שְׁמֶרֶן.

I do not think it necessary to detail here the history of the Samaritans after the historical books of the Jewish canon, the Evangelists, Josephus, and the other monuments of ecclesiastical and civil history, and shall refer the reader to the learned works of Cellarius, Basnage, and Reland. My present plan will only admit of a few facts which may have hitherto escaped the notice of most of my readers.

The Samaritans have all along possessed the Law of Moses, in the Hebrew language, which is still in their possession, at this day. This copy, the same in general with that of the Jews, differs from it, not only in a great number of variations, such as we are apt to find in different copies of the same work, and which arise from the ignorance or the carelessness of transcribers, but also in a considerable number of additions, omissions, and changes, which have been made designedly, either in the Jews' copy, or in that of the Samaritans. The Samaritan copy differs yet more from that of the Jews, in the character of the writing; and we have strong reasons for believing that the character in which the former is written, is the very same which was in use among the Jews, before their captivity in Babylon. Nor have the Samaritans yet imitated the example of the Jews, the Syrians and the Arabians, who have introduced into their writing proper signs to supply the absence of vowels, and so fix the pronunciation.

Besides the text of the five books of Moses, of which we have been speaking, the Samaritans possess a version of the same books written in the same characters with the original text, but in a particular dialect, which is called from their name, (p. 92) the *Samaritan dialect*, and which is a composition of the Hebrew, Chaldee, and the Syriac, and yet widely differs from all these languages, both in the formation of its grammar, and in roots which are peculiar to it, &c.

The ancient Samaritans seem to have had in use among them a Greek version of the books of Moses, as they have had, in later times, an Arabic translation of the same books, together with commentaries in the same language. They have likewise liturgies written either in Hebrew or in Samaritan; and they sometimes write the Arabic language in Samaritan characters, as the Jews write it in Hebrew characters. It is highly probable that they have had some historians; but we know nothing of their works, excepting two sorry chronicles in Arabic, full of gross mistakes and ridiculous anachronisms. The Samaritans have not been more free from divisions than the Jews, the Christians, and the Mohammedans; and there is a sect among them of some note, distinguished by the name of *Dositheans*.

Having made these brief remarks, which can be of little service to learned readers, but which I notwithstanding thought necessary, I now proceed to state, in few words, the several circumstances which, in later ages, have introduced into Europe some knowledge of the state, the religion, the doctrines, and the religious ceremonies of the Samaritans.

Julius Scaliger appears to have been the first of those who aroused the attention of the learned, and of learned travellers, zealous for the extension and improvement of knowledge, to the importance of introducing the Samaritan Pentateuch to the acquaintance of Europeans. In this he was seconded by Wazer, in his Commentary on the Mithridates of Gesner. Pietro Della-Valle had the good fortune to accomplish their wishes, in so far as that, having procured a copy of the Samaritan Pentateuch, at Damascus, in 1616, he presented it to M. Achille Harley de Sancy, the French ambassador at Constantinople, about the year 1621. This minister sent it to the monastery of the Fathers of the Oratory, in St. Honori.<sup>4</sup> It was from this single manuscript that Father Morin published, in the Polyglot of Le Jay, the correct text that is there given, of the books of Moses. P. Della-Valle brought with him into Europe several other Samaritan MSS. besides; and other travellers followed his example, insomuch that we can now reckon at least fifteen or sixteen MSS. perfect and imperfect, of the Samaritan text, besides the Samaritan version, some fragments of liturgies, commentaries on the Pentateuch, &c. To these monuments of the religion and religious doctrines of the Samaritans, we may fur- (p. 93) ther add the Arabic version of the books of Moses, made for the use of this sect, of which I have given some account in a dissertation originally published in Latin in the *Repertorium fur Biblische und Morgenland Literatur* of M. Eichorn, and afterwards in French, with various improvements and amendments, in the forty-ninth vol. of the *Memoires de l' Academic des Inscriptions et Belles Lettres*. Nor should we here forget a Latin dissertation published at Leyden in 1803, by M. Van Vloten.

But my chief object in this Memoir is to direct the attention of my readers'-to various letters written at different times, by the Samaritans, to certain learned Europeans who wished to establish a correspondence with them, with the hope of obtaining from them new and interesting information respecting divers points of the laws, ceremonies, and history of the Jews. The two earliest of these, addressed to Joseph Scaliger, but which never reached him, were written, the one by the Samaritans of Sichein, or Naplouse, the other by those of Grand Cairo.

They are both dated in the 998th year of the Hegira, which answers to A. D. 1589. Scaliger had written to the Samaritans of those two places; and the answers, which did not arrive till after his death, were put into the hands of Genebrard. They afterwards fell into those of Peiresc, who sent them to Father Morin. This learned Oratorian translated them into Latin, and his translation of them was published after his death, by R. Simon, in a collection entitled *Antiquitates Ecclesic Orientalis*.<sup>5</sup> The originals were deposited in the king's library, Paris. But Father Morin's translation being by no means correct, I published the text of these two letters, with a new Latin translation and critical notes, in the thirteenth vol. of the *Repertorium fur Bibl. und Morgenl. Liter.* of M. Eichorn.

In the year 1671, Robert Huntington, who was then chaplain to the English factory at Aleppo, but was afterwards promoted to the see of Raphoe in Ireland, and died in 1701, made a visit to Jerusalem, and took that opportunity of likewise visiting the Samaritans at Naplouse, with a view to collect new information respecting their religion, their doctrines, and their worship. The interest which he appeared to take in their affairs, excited the astonishment of the Samaritans, and induced them to ask him whether there were any Israelites in his country. Upon his replying in the affirmative, they presented him with a sheet<sup>6</sup> written in Samaritan characters; (p. 94) and when they found that he could read their characters, they were still more astonished, and then concluded that the Israelites settled in England, of whom Mr. Huntington spoke, must be their brethren. Mr. H. availed himself of that circumstance to propose then writing to these their supposed brethren, a brief statement of the principal points of their religion, and above all, of those particular points by which they are distinguished from the Jews, and to subjoin to their letter a copy of the law. Upon this they put into his hands a copy of the Pentateuch; and in the

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<sup>4</sup> In Paris, we presume, the author means.

<sup>5</sup> This collection was first published in London in 1682. It is now before me, and has the life of Morinius prefixed, written by an unknown hand in 1676. The epistle to the reader states, that this collection was found among the books of Amelot the Oratorian, after his death, and says nothing of Simon's having any concern in the publication of it.

<sup>6</sup> "Une feuille," a leaf or sheet.

course of eight days, they sent after him to Jerusalem, the letter which he requested them to write to their English brethren. Both the letter, which was written in 1672, and the manuscript were duly received in England.

Dr. Thomas Marshall, who was then Rector of Lincoln College, Oxford, and died Dean of Gloucester in 1685, replied to the letter, and the correspondence thus begun, was carried on for several years. Before the Samaritans received the Doctor's reply to their first letter, they had addressed a second to Mr. Huntington, written in the Hebrew language, but in Samaritan characters, and of date the 1085th year of the Hegira, *i. e.* the 1675th A. D.

Mr. H. having at length received Dr. Marshall's reply, forwarded it to the Samaritans, together with a letter from himself, wherein he requested to be favoured with an explanation of what was then reported respecting their paying worship to a dove. To this they replied in a letter written in Arabic, and dated in the year of the Hegira 1086. They at the same time sent other two letters to Mr. H. to be forwarded, through him, to England; the one written in Arabic, and dated the 1096th year of the Hegira; the other, which was written in Hebrew, is lost: at least, only a fragment of it is preserved, and even that is not the original. In short, there is yet another letter from the Samaritans to their brethren in England, written in Arabic, and dated the 1099th year of the Hegira.

Of the letters addressed by the Samaritans, either to Mr. H. or to their brethren in England, the first, dated in 1672, has been published, but only in Latin, by Job Ludolph, in a small volume, of which I shall have occasion to speak below. And here I cannot help expressing my surprise that M. P.J. Bruns, who is certainly in possession of a copy of the original text of this letter, written in Hebrew, has not sent it to the press. Cellarius has quoted several passages of it in his dissertation *De Gentis Samaritanae Historia et Ceremoniis*, and also M. Bruns, in the *Repertorium* of M. Eichorn, vol. xiii. p. 292. The letter addressed to Mr. H. as above, before the reception of Dr. Marshall's reply, has been (p. 95) translated into German, and published in that language by M. Schnurrer, who possesses a copy of the original. It may likewise be found in the *Repertorium* of M. Eichorn, vol. ix. P. 8.  
(To be continued)

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ON THE SAMARITANS.

( *Continued from p. 95.* )

Dr. Marshall's reply to the first letter of the Samaritans, written by that learned man in Hebrew, was also published by M. Schnurrer, in German. (Eichorn, vol. ix. p. 11.)

There may likewise be found, (p. 16.) in Arabic and German, the letter of the Samaritans in reply to Mr. Huntington, of date the 1086th year of the Hegira.

Of the two letters written by the Samaritans in the 1096th year of the same era, to their, brethren in England, that which was written in Arabic is subjoined, in the original, and with a German translation, to the preceding (p. 22): with respect to the other which was written in Hebrew, I have already observed that it is' lost, except a small fragment of the translation which M. Schnurrer has published as above, (p. 35.)

In short, that distinguished scholar has published in the same collection, (torn. ix. p. 36.) in Arabic and in German, the last letter of the Samaritans *to* their brethren in England, (p. 128) dated the 1099th year of the Hegira.

In the year 1684, a Jew of Hebron, but originally from Spain, named Jacob Levi, passing through Frankfort on his way to Amsterdam, with a view to collect alms for his brethren in the east, communicated some fresh information to Job Ludolf respecting the then present state of the Samaritans. Ludolf took advantage of his return to enter into a correspondence with the Samaritans of Naplouse, and transmitted to them, by him, a letter written in the Hebrew language, and in Samaritan characters. This letter was safely delivered to those to whom it was addressed,

by the Jew who kindly undertook to be the bearer of it; and having received from the Samaritans two replies, written also in Hebrew and in Samaritan characters, addressed, *To Frankfort, to M. Job Ludolf*, he likewise got them safely transmitted to the place of their destination. Ludolf having translated them into Latin, and added some hasty notes, communicated them to Cellarius, by whom they were published in both languages, at Zeitz, in 1688. To these he subjoined Edward Bernard's Latin translation of the first letter that the Samaritans wrote to their supposed brethren in England. The volume is intitled, "*Epistolae Samaritanae Sichemitarum ad Jobum Ludolfum; cum ejusdem Latina Versione et annotationibus. Accedit Versio Latina persimilium literarum a Sichemiis haud ita pridem ad Anglos datarum, Cizae, 1688.*"

Ludolf having replied to the two letters of the Samaritans, as we learn from the preface of the work just cited, received another letter from them in 1691. But though he promised in the same preface, to publish their reply when received, I am not aware that he ever fulfilled this promise. The letter, however, was communicated to Cellarius, who has quoted several passages of it, in the new edition published at Halle in 1699, of his *Historia Gentis et Religionis Samaritanae*; the edition, after which Walchius re-published this same history in his collection of the *Philological Dissertations of Cellarius, Leipsic, 1712*. There we find several extracts of this letter written in the Hebrew language and in Samaritan characters. The whole letter was at length published in the original, with a translation and notes, by M. P. J. Bruns, in 1781, in his Inauguration Address on entering on the duties of his office in the University of Helmstadt. It has likewise been re-published, and subjoined to the letters of the Samaritans to J. Scaliger, in the thirteenth part of M. Eichorn's *Repertorium*.

All these letters of which we have now been speaking, have enabled several literary men to draw up and publish a pretty correct sketch of the doctrines, the rites, and the opinions of the modern Samaritans. (p. 129)

Basnage, Carpzovius, Cellarius, Lobstein, and others, have treated this subject at some length. And M. Bruns in particular, published in 1797, in the collection of M. Staedlin, entitled *Beytraege zur Philosophie und Geschichte der Religion und Sittenlehre*;<sup>7</sup> a small treatise, wherein may be found collected in one point of view, all the information on the subject that had' been furnished by public documents till then. "If," (says M. Bruns, in the beginning of this short but valuable treatise) "it were true, as M. Hasse supposes,— a supposition, however, which I reject,—that the whole sect of the Samaritans is now extinguished, there would of course be no room for seeking for any further communication or correspondence with men of this sect, and we must regard all inquiries respecting them as finally closed. It would only be necessary to inquire more minutely as to what were the religious and other opinions of the Samaritans, that a just opinion of them may be formed."

Such was the state and extent of our information respecting the Samaritans, when the senator M. Gregoire, who was engaged in collecting information respecting the existing differences of religious opinions in the last century, among professing Christians of all denominations,—among the Jewish sects and other religionists, transmitted to the Levant several questions respecting the Samaritans. In these he requested information as to the actual state of the Samaritans, the number of individuals that were supposed to belong to that sect, the places which they inhabit, their occupations, their tenets, their synagogues, their usages, their manners, their connections, — provided they had any connection with the Jewish Karaites, or Rabbinists, — their church books, and the extent of their information. He at the same time expressed his desire to be particularly informed, whether the Samaritans of Naplouse still offered animal sacrifices on mount Gerizim.

The Count de Champagny, then minister of foreign affairs, having forwarded these queries to several of the French consular agents in the Levant, and having requested their particular attention to this business, M. Gregoire had soon the satisfaction of receiving answers from M. Guys, the French vice-consul at Tripoli in Syria; from Corancez the elder, consul general of France at Aleppo, now consul-general at Bagdad, and correspondent of the third class of the Institute; and also from Pillavoine, the French vice-consul at St. John d'Acre. All these letters are dated in June or July 1808.

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<sup>7</sup> See another valuable work of Dr. Staudlin, In "The Religious World Displayed," vol. ii. p. 356.

The letter of M. Guys, who was at a great distance from the residence of the Samaritans, contains nothing on this subject that deserves to be extracted (p. 130) here. The little information it contains, he received from a Rabbinical Jew of Tripoli, and even what he is thus enabled to communicate, can scarcely be said to be new. I shall here be satisfied with making a single extract from his letter. "The Rabbi of Tripoli assures me, that Naplouse is the only place in Palestine where the Samaritans have a synagogue, or even are tolerated. He highly commends the uncharitable zeal with which the *sarrafa*, who is a Jew, who accompanies the pacha of Damascus in his annual circuit through Palestine, to collect the usual tribute, imposes on these obstinate heretics heavier taxes than those with which the *Rata*, and particularly the Jews, are charged."

The reply of M. Pillavoine is more in detail; but if I understand it aright, I perceive that he likewise had received his information from some Jew, though he does not acknowledge it, and therefore we ought to be cautious in admitting every thing that is advanced in it. On the other hand, it should not be disregarded, for it is plain that the person, whoever he was, who communicated the information it contains, was not a stranger to the Samaritans of Naplouse. I therefore beg leave to subjoin the following extract.

"There are no-where any *Samaritan Jews*<sup>8</sup> but at Naplouse: those in Egypt are Karaites, as are likewise those in the Crimea, at Constantinople, at Damascus, at Jerusalem, and in two small villages near Bagdad.<sup>9</sup>

"The Samaritan Jews believe that the Jews in England are of their sect. They consist, at the utmost, of only about sixty persons, men, women, and children, the poor remains of a miserable sect that is daily dwindling into non-existence.

"A few, who are least to be pitied, are in the service of the chief of the province, an employment which gives them much pain. The others earn a scanty subsistence by their industry at home, where they inhabit some wretched hovels in a dirty quarter of Naplouse.

"They can scarcely be said to believe in God. The desk on which they place the scripture is surmounted with the figure of a bird, which they call *Achima*, a word peculiar to this sect.<sup>10</sup>

"When they invoke the Supreme Being, they do not say, like the other Jews, *Adonai*, but always *Achima*, which has (p. 131) given occasion to the belief that they worship the Deity under the symbol of this bird, which has the figure of a pigeon, and which they believe to be the principle of all things,—perhaps even the Deity himself.

"Their only synagogue is a very small and very mean apartment. When they join in public prayers, they ought in fact, to be clothed in white, and not to mix with strangers. But they notwithstanding make no scruple of departing from these rules. They pray in the synagogue without any peculiarity of dress; it is open to all the world. Strangers are, however, but seldom seen within its walls; and when curiosity does carry any thither, they are placed by themselves.

"They do not observe the sabbath so strictly, as to reject opportunities of promoting their worldly interests on that day. They make a point of killing, themselves, those animals that they use for food. And they are careful of touching nothing that does not belong to their own sect. If they should happen, on any occasion, to touch a stranger, or even his clothes, they are required to wash as soon as possible, in order to purify themselves. They never marry but among themselves.

"According to them, dead bodies are impure; they therefore keep at a distance from them, and even employ Christians or Turks in burying their own dead,

"They form no connection with others; not even with the Karaites or the Rabbinites: and it is remarkable, that these parties, reciprocally, look upon all intercourse or connection with the others, as a dishonour. They live in general among themselves and at home, necessity obliging them to do so.

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<sup>8</sup> This expression, *Samaritan Jews*, ought not to be admitted. Vide Huntington's Letters, p. 50.

<sup>9</sup> There are, no doubt, Karaites in Egypt, but I much question whether all the Jews in Egypt are Karaites.

<sup>10</sup> This calumny has long been refuted: and it is observed that the Samaritans, in reading the law, instead of pronouncing the ineffable name, or *Tetragrammaton*, use the word  $\text{אֲשֶׁמ}$ , *Haschem* (the noun). They are not more blameable in this than the Jews, who substitute for it the words *Adonai*, or *Elohim*; who, at other times, as well as in the reading of the sacred books, also use the word *Haschem*, instead of the name of God. TR.

"The scripture is their only book; and it is written in characters of which a specimen is here subjoined.<sup>11</sup> They teach their children the knowledge of it, which comprehends the whole extent of their education, so that they are grossly ignorant. A very few of them indeed are taught to read and write in Arabic, with a view merely to a miserable subsistence; and after all, the exercise of this knowledge is usually confined to taking notes.

"At their Passover, they repair annually to mount Gerizim, there to offer a sheep in sacrifice. It seldom happens that they sacrifice more than one. This, however, they would be happy to do, did their circumstances permit. Formerly each family, or at least those in better circumstances, (and there were till of late several families that could afford that expence) sacrificed either a sheep or a lamb: but now, and for these last twenty years, they are satisfied with one common sacrifice."

To this letter is subjoined a postscript which, though foreign to the subject of the (p. 132) present memoir, is sufficiently curious to deserve a place here. "One may, no doubt, get more and correcter information respecting every thing connected with the Jewish Samaritans, by paying them a visit himself. But no one should go to the Levant with empty hands, for it is necessary to be liberal to the Jews, to induce them to be sincere and obliging; and no less necessary to conciliate, by the same means, the haughty Arab, who commands with despotic sway at Naplouse, though apparently subject to the pacha of Damascus, to whom he pays an annual tribute, and whose officers he resists, when they would force their way through the territories that are subject to himself. It is necessary to apply to him for a sufficient escort,— to pay for it at a high price,— to lodge with him, for this he will not fail to require, — to accept from him a sorry or an unsafe horse, which he will pretend to be of inestimable value, and to reward all this with liberal presents. In no other way can one hope to succeed."

But here M. Pillavoine has forgotten to say, that in order to succeed in the object of such a journey, it is further necessary to be acquainted with what is already known in Europe respecting this sect—to understand Hebrew, — to be able to read the Samaritan Pentateuch with tolerable ease, —and, in short, to be master of the principal grounds of religious difference between the Samaritans and the Jews. Unhappily this branch of knowledge is very rare in the present day; and it is not in the Levant that one can make acquirements in sacred literature and Hebrew antiquities, who has not made these his study before leaving Europe. That a study so important, and so intimately connected with both history and religion, should have fallen into almost universal discredit, is doubtless matter of serious regret.

M. Corancez took the true way of procuring more full and satisfactory information. With this view, he transmitted a letter and a string of questions to the Samaritans of Naplouse; and in the mean time, before an answer could be returned, he thought it his duty to communicate to M. Gregoire the amount of the knowledge of them that he had already obtained, accompanied with an intimation that several of the particulars it contained, were not to be implicitly depended upon. Such is this assertion which we find in his letter of the 4th of June, 1808: "It is certain that the Samaritan Jews who still inhabit Naplouse, offer animal sacrifices there, both in their synagogue and on mount *Ha'ibaal*, and not on mount Gerizim;" and also this, which occurs in the memoir subjoined to the letter of the 27th of the same month: "Their only book, the Bible, is grossly corrupted; insomuch that of ten words, the other (p. 133) Jews do not find in it five of their own." But notwithstanding this, the memoir contains several curious facts which are not unworthy of being preserved; and of these I beg leave to subjoin the following extract as a specimen.

"Naplouse<sup>12</sup> is the only place, throughout the east, where any remains of the sect of the Samaritans are to be found at this day. From twelve to fifteen families, or from sixty to about

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<sup>11</sup> This specimen is extremely sorry, and exhibits thirty-three letters, instead of twenty-two. TR.

<sup>12</sup> The paragraph that appeared in the *Moniteur* of the 6th of July, 1811, contains the whole of this extract, together with several other particulars. But it is necessary to remark here, that this information respecting the Samaritans, was communicated to the consul by some Jews, who had long resided among them at Naplouse. The author says he received none of their reports, but those respecting which they were unanimous, and thence concludes that they are correct. He notwithstanding admits that credit should not be hastily given to the accusation of idolatry as being well founded. This restriction is certainly just; nor is it the only point respecting which we have grounds of hesitation, as every well informed reader will readily

eighty individuals, are still to be met with there. They wear the *bonnet-rouge*, and the *schall-blanc*, which last, to distinguish their sect, is parted on the forehead, where a red spot is left uncovered.

"The Turks of Naplouse, who are as weak as indolent, do not molest the Samaritans. Djezzar did indeed attempt to tax and oppress them, but they happily got off by insisting that they were Jews. With the Karaites they adhere strictly to the letter of their copies of the law of Moses. Their only book, the Bible, is grossly corrupted; insomuch that of ten words, the other Jews do not recognize in it five of their own. They have a chief or highpriest (*khacan*). They wear long hair, while, on the contrary, the other Samaritans wear their hair cropped.

"The Samaritans occupy a particular quarter of Naplouse which bears their name. This quarter is a pretty large *khan*, consisting of ten or twelve houses communicating with each other. In one of these, on the first floor, is the synagogue, which occupies two or three apartments, in the largest of which is a desk on which their Bible is placed. This Bible is concealed by a curtain, which the *khacan* alone has the privilege to draw aside, and when he presents the Bible to the view of the faithful, they stand up. The figure of a turtle dove is inscribed on the Bible; and this has given occasion to the report that has gone abroad, that the Samaritans worship a dove.

"The Samaritans permit the Jews to enter this apartment. But opposite to it there is another apartment that is always shut, and into which no one who does not belong to their sect, is admitted. And hence the suspicion that they practise certain ceremonies that we consider as idolatrous. .

"The first day of the Passover the Samaritans celebrate, at midnight, the feast of the (p. 134) sacrifice. The *khacan* kills a sheep in the synagogue, where they kindle a fire, in a particular place prepared for that purpose. The whole victim, in its fleece, is put upon a spit and placed upon the coals, which are then lighted up with a fresh supply of wood. It is then divided among all those who assist on this occasion, who eat it on the spot.

"At the two extremities of Naplouse are the mountains of *Haibaal*<sup>13</sup> and *Gerizim*. On the former is the sepulchre of a saint who is highly honoured by the Samaritans. There it is that they sacrifice a lamb yearly, at the feast of the Passover, and after the sacrifice which is offered in - the synagogue. This sacrifice of the lamb is offered at noon-day, and is accompanied with particular ceremonies. Yet it is suspected that the grand object of this sacrifice is, that they may thereby honour the saint on whose tomb it is performed.

"The Samaritans wear, in the synagogue, a white surplice. 'Il y a dans l'eglise un lieu separe pour les impurs. Ce sont cieux qui ont touche un mort, les femmes dans leur temps critique, les hommes qui les ont approchees a cette epoque.

"Les femmes, des que l'incommodite periodique qui afflige leur sexe s'est declaree, sont separees de la seciete, et releguees dans un lieu particulier de la maison. Au bout de sept jours elles se purifient dans une eau courante. Les homines impurs s'y purifient egalement, mais au bout de vingt-quatre heures.'

"The Samaritans, like the eastern Jews, eat no animal food but what has been killed by one of themselves, and with certain formalities. And hence they still remain distinct from Turks, Jews, and Christians. They never marry except among themselves; nor do they form alliances even with the Jews.

"They are in general poor and of no repute. Several, indeed, keep shops, and carry on a little trade; and there are among them some bankers, or money brokers, particularly the *sarraf-elbeled*, or government banker. Their language is Arabic and a corruption of the Hebrew."

The letter and memoir which M. Corancez addressed to the Samaritans of Naplouse, did not long remain unanswered. It is unfortunate that we have not a copy of the memoir translated by him, for it would have thrown light on several of the replies to the questions it contained. M. Corancez has not kept a copy, as I have learned from himself, nor can one be found in the archives of the consulate-general of Aleppo, where search has been made for it, at my request. It

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admit. See on this subject my letter to the editor of the *Moniteur*, inserted in that journal on the 31st of August, 1811.

<sup>13</sup> It should have, been called *Ebal*.

had no doubt been originally composed in French, and afterwards translated into Arabic; and the obscurity of some of the answers gives room to think (p. 135) that the translation of the questions into Arabic has not been correct. But however that may be, the reply arrived at Aleppo on the 2nd of Oct. 1808. It was written in Arabic, and dated, *the 15th July, in the year 1808 of Jesus Christ, the 6246 of Adam, the 3246th of the departure from Egypt, le mardi 3, de djoumadi 1223*. But the calculation proves that it was *djoumadi second*. The author of this letter calls himself *Salameh, fils de Tobie*, and has written at the beginning of his letter, his name and designation, in Hebrew and in Samaritan characters, at the same time remarking that that was a specimen of true Hebrew writing. We there read thus: *אמן. הלוי כשכם אודה את יהוה אני שלמה בן טביה הבהן* "I Salameh, son of Tobias, priest of the tribe of Levi at Sichein, I praise the Lord. Amen."  
(*To be continued.*)

**The Jewish Expositor, and Friend of Israel:**  
July, 1816

(p. 241)

ON THE SAMARITANS.

[*Continued from page 135.*]

A copy of Salameh's letter in Arabic was forwarded from Aleppo with a French translation; and the whole having been communicated to me by M. Gregoire, I corrected the translation, which was in many places incorrect, because the translator, though perfectly well acquainted with the Arabic language, seems not to have understood the subject of the letter. Nor was the copy of the text in Arabic wholly free from faults, and some of its faults were of such a nature as to render the sense, in a few instances, quite unintelligible. M. Corancez, having about this time left his situation at Aleppo, and M. Rousseau, son of the consul-general at Bagdad, and a correspondent of the third class of the Institute, having succeeded him, I wrote to him to request the favour of another copy of the letter in Arabic, whereof the original was lodged in the archives of the consulate. I accordingly received a fresh copy, which has cleared up the difficulties of the former one; but even the translator of this copy seems to have taken great liberties with the original, insomuch that the true reading of some passages cannot even yet be fully ascertained.

The two copies of the letter in Arabic, together with the translation, having been put into the hands of M. Schnurrer, chancellor of the University of Tubingen, and a correspondent of the third class of the Institute, that distinguished scholar, to whom Samaritan literature lies under great obligations, has given a German translation of them in the first volume of his collection of tracts, entitled *Mines de r Orient*.

Before I received the second copy of the letter of Salameh, in Arabic, I had drawn up, at the request of M. Gregoire, another letter and a fresh memoir to be transmitted to this priest; and these were translated into Arabic, under my direction, by M. Michel Sab- (p. 241) bagh, a Syrian refugee, attached to the School of the living Oriental Languages, situated near the Imperial Library. I likewise added all the words, or all the Hebrew and Samaritan texts, in Samaritan characters, and caused three copies of the whole to be written and forwarded, by different conveyances, to Aleppo, from whence they were transmitted by M. Rousseau to Naplouse. The Samaritan characters which I used must no doubt appear to this priest to be very uncouth, for I imitated the forms of the letters that are consecrated to our oriental typography by the Polyglotts of Paris and of London, forms which differ widely from those used by the Samaritans. The several questions contained in my memoir were founded on the faults of the first copy in Arabic of Salameh's letter, which was the only one that I had then before me. Both these causes have influenced his reply, more or less. This reply I did not long look for in vain. It was forwarded to me from Aleppo, in the original, and unaccompanied with any translation, in the summer of 1811. It consists of a long memoir written in bad Hebrew, and in Samaritan characters, to which is joined a letter written in Arabic. I translated the whole into French, except two or three words, which I did not fully understand, and humbly think the translation may be depended upon. If I continue this correspondence, as I fully intend at present, I am now of opinion that every thing forwarded to Naplouse, should be written in Arabic and in Hebrew, using for this last language

the Samaritan characters. This appears to me to be the best means of inspiring the Samaritans with confidence, and of obtaining satisfactory replies from them, at least, as far as can be expected from plain and ignorant men. Perhaps we may, in this way, obtain from them, sooner or later, some books that they would not choose to give to any, except to their brethren. The success of the correspondence which Mr. Huntington happily established, was owing in a great measure to this, that from their having observed him read Hebrew written in their own characters, they did not doubt but he had opened a correspondence between them and other Samaritans settled in England, and the ambiguous replies which they received, it would appear, confirmed them in this idea.

I propose, God willing, to publish the whole of the correspondence of Salameh, with my translation and notes; but, in the mean time, I shall be satisfied with giving an abridged statement of it here, under different heads, according to the subject.,

*Of God;—of the worship that is due to him; — and of their abhorrence of all other worship. . .*

The Samaritans hold here, (p. 243) in regard to these several points, the very same language which they have all along held in their correspondence with J. Scaliger, Huntington, and Ludolf. They boast of their attachment to the precept of the law which forbids them to render to any creature whatever, that worship which is due unto God alone. They refer to the principal texts in the law, wherein the unity of God is expressed in the clearest manner, and where all other worship is forbidden as criminal, and inconsistent with the respect due to his divinity. They disclaim, in express terms, and as wholly groundless, the charge that has been brought against them, of worshipping, on a particular spot, the figure of a dove, or of some other animal. They maintain that they cannot even conceive how any could suppose them capable of so gross a breach of the divine law.

Reland, in his dissertation *De Monte Gerizim*, has taken much pains to ascertain whence this imputation of their paying an idolatrous worship to the figure of a dove could have originated; and what he there says on the subject appears to be highly probable.

Schultz, who visited Palestine in 1754, relates, in the work entitled *Leitungen des Hoechsten nach seinem Rathe*, vol. v. p. 133, that when at Ptolemais, or St. John D'Acre, Madam Usgate, a Jewess by birth, and wife of the English consul with whom he lodged, and another lady, told him that the Samaritans read, publicly in their synagogue, the five books of Moses, without being able to say whether those books were written in the Hebrew language, or in the Samaritan: and that instead of attaching, as is the custom among the Jews, crowns of gold or of silver to the upper part of the sticks or wooden rollers on which they roll the books of the law that are used in their synagogues, the Samaritans adorn them with the figures of doves in silver. Agreeably to the information contained in the letter of M. Corancez, the Bible (they should have said *the Law*) is placed, in the synagogue of the Samaritans, upon a desk, and concealed by a curtain, which the *Khacan* only has the privilege of drawing aside. When he presents it to the view of the faithful, they stand up. On this book is the sculptured figure of a turtle-dove; and hence the prejudice against the Samaritans that they worship that bird.

These different reports, though devoid of consistency, and founded on mere hear-say, have given occasion to a question that I introduced into the memoir which I forwarded to Naplouse. I endeavoured to state it in such terms as not to hurt the feelings of the Samaritans; and I beg leave to copy it here entire.

"As to what you say, that you acknowledge only one God, the Creator of heaven (p. 244) and earth, who gave you his law by the ministry of the prophet Moses, the son of Amram, it quite accords with the reports which we have received respecting you. How then could you possibly worship, or pay adoration to, any creature whatever, while you recollect that God himself has said, 'I am the Lord thy God, thou shalt have no other God before me. Thou shalt not make unto thyself any graven image,' &c.

"We are well aware, clearly beloved brethren, that you do by no means worship the figure of a dove; such a crime be far from you. But some of the inhabitants of the countries where you dwell, and some French travellers who have visited your abodes, have told us that you have, in your synagogue, a sacred place where you keep the book of the law,—that this sacred book is concealed by a curtain,—that when you are there assembled, the priest draws aside the curtain,

and shews the book to the congregation ;— and that all present then instantly rise and worship the sacred book. They add, that on the outer cover of the book of the law, or at the extremity of the stick upon which it is rolled, is engraved or cut out, the figure of a dove. Ignorant and malicious observers of your conduct, having seen you prostrate yourselves before the sacred law of God, have actually believed, or have maliciously said, that you pay worship to the image of that dove. But we firmly believe, my brethren, that you worship none but God. At the same time, we entreat that you will have the goodness to satisfy us whether there be any truth in what is thus reported concerning you, and whether it is actually the case that you have the figure of a dove engraved on your sacred book. And we repeat the assurance of our giving no credit whatever to the report generally circulated here, that you worship the figure of a dove, or of any other animal. Do us, then, the favour to tell us candidly if the figure of a dove is found, as an ornament, either in your synagogue, or on the book of the law."

The priest Salameh, to whom this question was addressed, seems to have fully entered into its meaning, and I here beg leave to subjoin his reply.

"As to what you say that we have made upon the part of the curtain which covers the sacred book, [I give the literal translation] the figure of a dove, that, my brother, is what we could not dare to do, for God has said, "Thou shalt not build them of hewn stone." This text, which is taken from the twenty-fifth verse of the twentieth chapter of Exodus, does not appear to have much connection with the subject in hand. The author of the reply plainly assimilates the recess, or the place in which the book of the law is kept, and which is somewhat elevated, to the altar on which sacrifices are offered, (p. 245) and which are forbidden to be built of *hewn stones*. And it is obvious to remark, that he could not ground the dislike of his nation to a kind of ornament which was supposed to be placed in some manner or other on the book of the law, on texts where it is forbidden to make idols or images to worship them, for the question itself rejected all idea of worship and adoration. The meaning of his reply, I presume is this: God having forbidden us to hew stones for building his altars, much less ought we to admit any figure or image into the place consecrated to his worship, and where the book of the law is kept. And not satisfied with this, he adds, "God hath moreover said, *You shall not introduce an abomination into your house*. How, then, in the face of such a command, should we dare to do that with which we are charged?"

I think it necessary to take notice here, of another charge of idolatry that has been brought against the Samaritans, by a critic who believes that he has discovered, in a Samaritan MS. undoubted proof of their paying worship to the sun. But the mass of erudition which this author has collected in support of this his assertion, is wholly thrown away; for it seems to be founded on a mistake of M. Lobstein, who, having found at the end of the book of Genesis, in the MS. of the Samaritan Pentateuch, a note in which the proprietor of that MS. had marked the way in which it had come into his possession, has translated the last words of the note in this manner. *Zadok filius Chalephi filii Thamaris sacerdotis solis: scriptum Abisae filii Phineas in congregatione terra Aegypti nunc doctoris*; whereas he should have translated them thus:— *Scripta manu Sadakae filii Chalesi, filii Tamaris sacerdotis, ministri scribae Abisce filii Phinece, in synagoga terrae Aegypti, tempore supra dicta*. One may, at first sight, suppose the meaning to be this, that the priest Sadaka, who had written this copy of the Pentateuch, was the amanuensis of a scribe of distinguished rank, named Abischa, the son of Phineas; but this does not appear to me to be the true sense. The Samaritans of Naplouse boast, both in their letters and in their conferences with Mr. Huntington, of their being in possession of a copy of the law, written by Abischa, son of Phineas, son of Eieazer, son of Aaron. It is therefore very natural for those who are employed in transcribing the law, to consider themselves as servants or disciples of Abischa, the son of Phineas. Perhaps instead of *ministri scribae Abisae*, it should have been translated *ministri scholar Abu see*, for to this interpretation the form of the word מכתב *mactab*, appears to be more favourable.

I have already corrected this mistake of M. Lobstein in (p. 246) the forty-ninth vol. *Des Memoires de ;'Academie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres*.

*Of their sacrifices.*

The Samaritans, in admitting the obligation imposed by the law on the children of Israel to offer animal sacrifices, say that this branch of divine worship has ceased since the time that God's

favour to them and the tabernacle have disappeared. They further add, that their pontiffs, the priests of the family of Aaron, have substituted in the room of sacrifices, the repetition of certain prayers which they have composed for the use of the faithful, whereby they honour God, pay him the homage of their reverential fear, humbly solicit his favour, and implore the forgiveness of their sins.

The Paschal sacrifice, with all its rites, is the only one that they still retain. It can be lawfully offered only on mount Gerizim; but for about these last five-and-twenty years, the Samaritans, having been prohibited from ascending that mountain, offer it within their city, *because that is considered within the precincts of the sacred place.*

They are always careful, in killing the victim, to turn towards mount Gerizim. They likewise turn towards the same place whenever they pray, "because it is to them" say they, "the house of the Almighty, the tabernacle of his angels, the place of the presence of his majesty, the place appointed for sacrifices, as it is written in the law." They maintain that it is not lawful for them to prostrate themselves, or to turn their faces towards any other place.

It was asked whether it was not requisite that the Paschal lamb should be taken from a particular species of sheep or of goats, to the exclusion of others, and what the bitter herbs are which are eaten with the Paschal lamb. To the first of these questions Salameh made no reply; and to the second he only said that the Samaritans eat the victim with unleavened bread and bitter herbs.

It was likewise asked what the obstacle was which now prevented their ascending mount Gerizim to offer the Passover there; whether it was, for instance, a contribution or tax imposed upon them by the Turks, as the price of their permission, or something else. The answer to this question is thus expressed: "You desire to be informed of the tyranny which the nations exercise upon us: — know, then, that they use violence towards us, that they will not permit us to ascend mount Gerizim, that they impose contributions upon us. We are poor and miserable; we mourn and weep at the recollection of former ages, —of the tabernacle and of its exaltation."

Salameh absolutely denies the fact stated in M. Corancez's letter, relating to the sacrifice of a lamb, different from the Paschal sacrifice, but of- (p. 247) fered, as is reported, at the Feast of the Passover on mount Ebal, near the sepulchre of a saint for whom the Samaritans have a great veneration, and meant to honour the memory of this servant of the Most High.

There is every reason to believe that this imputation is a mere calumny invented by some of the Jews: for I cannot allow myself to believe, for a moment, that it could ever come into the head of a Jew or a Samaritan, to offer sacrifices in honour of any saint; and besides, mount Ebal, being to the Samaritans the mountain of maledictions, they could never think of choosing that place for the performance of any act of religion.

*Of the law.*

Salameh tells us what, indeed, we were perfectly aware of before, that the Samaritans are in possession of the law written in the Hebrew language, and that it differs from that of the Jews only in the character of the writing, for the Samaritans have preserved the ancient character. This the Jewish *Khacans* who came from Jerusalem, and had examined their books, have freely admitted. Salameh recognized the version in the Samaritan dialect, of which two or three lines had been copied and sent him, from the beginning of Genesis and of Exodus. The ambiguity of a few words in his reply, renders it uncertain whether he meant to say that this version was given by God, or that it had for its author a Samaritan named *Nathaniel* (*Deus dedit.*) This last is most likely to be his meaning. He knows that the Samaritans have had, in former ages, learned men who have explained the law and written comments upon it, but he has given no details in reply to the questions that were put to him, respecting the names of those commentators, — the age in which they lived, and the titles of their works. Perhaps we ourselves know more of these matters than he does. He acquaints us that the Samaritans still use the Hebrew language, but do not speak it before strangers. They teach their children the law in that language, and they have it not, says he, in any other language. But we are not here to understand him literally, for he himself has acknowledged the existence of a version in the Samaritan dialect, and it is highly probable that the Samaritans are likewise in possession of the version in Arabic that was made for their use, and of which I have spoken at some length. Salameh repeats what the Samaritans have all along maintained, (though Mr. Huntington occasioned them considerable embarrassment, when he

wished them to verify the fact) that they possess a copy of the law written by Abiseha the son of Phineas, the son of Eleazer, the son of Aaron.

I requested to know how the Samaritans pronounce the Hebrew, and represented in Arabic (p. 248) characters, as exactly as I possibly could, the Rabbinical pronunciation of the different names of God, and some of the first verses of Genesis; begging the favour of Salameh to represent, in like manner, their pronunciation of the same words, and in the same characters. His reply to this was by no means satisfactory, for he only repeated the different names of-God, saying, " Know that these words are *Jehovah, Elohim, El, Schaddai, I am that I am, Adonai*. The case is, in (his respect, with us, as you suppose. You entreat us to write and transmit to you a few lines of the law; know that our book is written just as this letter which you have before your eyes." Notwithstanding the ambiguity of this reply, it might lead us to conclude that the Samaritans pronounce the Hebrew in the very same manner as the Jews, if Salameh had not said in his former letter, "Our pronunciation is different from that of the Jews, but the law is the very same from the beginning to the end." The whole system, of grammar may, indeed, be common to the Jews and Samaritans, and yet these last may pronounce the letters differently, and particularly the gutturals and the vowels, as the pronunciation of the Greek and the Latin is not in all respects the same, although these languages are written, in all respects, after the same manner; and, to give an example still more appropriate to the matter in hand, as the pronunciation of the Hebrew is different among the German Jews and the Spanish Jews, the Italians and the Oriental Jews. The question is therefore still undecided, and must remain so, till some one who is perfectly acquainted with the Jewish mode of pronunciation of the Hebrew, shall have heard the Samaritans pronounce it.

I begged the favour of the Samaritans, to transmit to Europe a MS. of the text of the law, of the Arabic version which it is supposed they use, and likewise of their prayers and liturgies; observing that the French consul at Aleppo would pay for the two last of these, and make an acknowledgment for the other by a present, being well aware that the holy book was a species of property too sacred to be sold. No answer, however, was returned, except to the second, of these proposals. "You request," say they, "the favour of a copy of the book of the holy law; but we cannot comply with this request, unless you were of the number of those who conform to this law, (i.e. *Samaritans*) and keep or observe its ordinances." It is worthy of remark, that Salameh here alludes to the manner in which they interpret the word *Samaritans*, שמררים, *Schomerim*, by guardians or *keepers*. These sectarists are so tenacious of this principle of the Samaritans, that it must be one. common to them with all those who desire to hold any (p. 249) communion with them. For as, in requesting to know the manner in which they pronounce the Hebrew, it was said, "Do you pronounce it as we have just said that we do, or is your pronunciation different? Have the goodness to inform us, for you know much better than we can, that we may imitate you, and that our manner of reading may be one as our hearts are one."— They answer, "In regard to what you observe, in saying, *as our hearts and your hearts are but one*, know, my friend, that such language should not be used unless by those who observe our law, and are of the same faith with ourselves."

*Of the angels ;—of the resurrection ; — of rewards ; — and of eternal punishments.*

Many learned men have believed that the Samaritans do not believe in the existence of angels. But on examining their versions of the Pentateuch, and some other books written by them, or for their use, we find so frequent mention of angels, that we are obliged to think otherwise concerning them in this respect. Yet the learned Had. Reland conceives that he has discovered, on a very minute examination of the sense which they give to the word *angel*, a word for which they sometimes substitute other expressions, such as *the instrument of the Creator, the commandment of God, Sec.* strong proofs that they do not consider the angels as essences, but as the attributes of the Divinity, the power or the will of God,—a certain *force, δυναμις*, or divine *virtue*, which cannot be distinguished, from God himself. He believes that the Sadducees, who denied the existence of angels, understood in this manner all those passages of scripture in which actions are attributed to angels. Reland further believes that the Samaritans describe the Messiah under the name of the *Great Angel, i. e.* the great virtue of God.

This gave occasion to a question which was expressed in these terms: "What is your opinion of the angels of whom mention is made in the law? Do you distinguish between the angels and the genii? and do you think that there are good and evil angels, and also good and evil genii? Is it not an angel that you describe under the name of the *Great Angel*?" To this Salameh replies in two words: "We believe in the holy angels who are in heaven." It is not easy to say whether it is through ignorance, or from a desire of keeping us still in the dark respecting them, that he has not entered into any of the details that were requested of him.

His reply on the subject of the resurrection of the body is more satisfactory. The Samaritans have been accused of denying this truth also. But Nottinger and Reland have maintained, with much appearance of truth, that they admit it. To ascertain, however, as exactly as possible, their opinion (p. 250) of the state of man after death, and also of the rewards and punishments which they consider as due to good and bad actions, this question was proposed to them: "The Jews, the Christians, and the Mohammedans, believe that the dead shall rise at the last day, —that the souls shall be reunited to the bodies which they animated in this world, and that all men shall then appear before God, — that God will judge them,—that he will admit those who have done good actions into Paradise, where they will dwell for ever, and throw the wicked into hell, there to undergo eternal punishment. Some of the ancient sages and philosophers have believed that the dead will not be raised; and others have thought that the pains of hell will not be eternal. What is the faith, in these respects, of your forefathers and of your brethren?"

Salameh's reply to this is expressed in these terms: "As to what you observe in regard to the dead, that they will be raised at the day of recompense, we admit the truth of this, as it is written: *Their clothes will not be used, and their odour shall be like that of excellent myrrh*" (I have to observe here, *en passant*, that I know not whence this text here quoted by Salameh is taken. It is plain that it is not taken from the books of Moses; nor is the grammatical form of the words that of pure Hebrew. I am therefore of opinion that it is taken from some of the prayers in the Liturgy of the Samaritans.) "In regard to the wicked, a time will come when the Lord will say, *You perceive now that it is I who am God, and that there is no other God besides me: I kill and I make alive, I wound and I make whole, and there is no one who can deliver out of my hand. We shall be happy at the time of which it is written, for Jehovah shall Judge his people, and repent himself for his servants; and at the time of which it is said, He will be merciful to his land, and to his people.*"

The texts here cited by Salameh are taken from the last song of Moses. But if he applies them to the resurrection, and to the rewards and punishments which will follow the last judgment, it can be only by a sort of *accommodation*; and we need not be surprised, if the books of Moses, which are those only of the whole Bible that are received by the Samaritans, be thus produced by them as containing clear proofs in favour of every doctrine and opinion which they maintain.

Besides, Salameh's reply is by no means a satisfactory answer to the question, and says nothing of the eternity of future punishments. The same may likewise be observed of the prayers which are used at the funerals of the Samaritans, for nothing decisive can be collected from them on the subject of this question.. [*To be continued.*']

**The Jewish Expositor, and Friend of Israel:**  
August, 1816

(p. 281) ON THE SAMARITANS.  
[*Concluded from page 250.*]

It is well known that the Samaritans, as well as the Jews, expect the coming of a prophet who is to deliver them from oppression, re-establish their law, and subject all other nations to their dominion; and that they ground their expectation of this prophet on these words of God to Moses, "I will raise up a prophet, like unto thee, of thy brethren."

This prophet they call הַשְּׁחָב HASCHAB, or, according to the Samaritan dialect, הַתְּחָב HATHAB, a word of which no explanation has as yet been given that is at all probable. But so far from applying to the coming of the Messiah the well-known prophecy of Jacob, that the sceptre shall

not depart from Judah until *Shiloh* come, they believe that this word, whose meaning has so much puzzled critics and commentators, is meant to designate a certain personage, an enemy to the true religion, who has seduced the nations, and turned them from obedience to the law.

This personage, if we can give any credit to some writings of the Samaritans that have reached us, is Solomon; an interpretation which, considering their gross ignorance of history, need not surprise us. According to a conjecture, more ingenious, perhaps, than solid, of M. Bruns, it should be Jesus Christ. But however this may be, it was thought proper to interrogate Salameh on these two points of his belief, and I here subjoin his replies, in which he evades the use of the word *Messiah*.

"What you remark to us on the subject of the prophet *Hathab*, is exactly as you say; Jehovah said to Moses, *I will raise up, of your brethren, a prophet like unto thee.*<sup>14</sup> There is a great mystery in regard to *Hathab* who is yet to come, (p. 282) and who will manifest his spirit. We shall be happy when he comes. As to what you say of *Shiloh*, the same is our opinion; he hated the law of Moses."

To the question, How the Samaritans pronounce the word *Shiloh*, no answer has been returned. But in a postscript to his last reply, Salameh resumes the subject of the *Messiah*, and thus expresses himself: "In regard to what you say respecting the prophet of whom Jehovah spoke by Moses, know that we have certain distinguishing marks by which we shall know him when he appears. We know his name, agreeably to what is maintained by the Rabbins." This I understand to mean that the name of *Messiah* משיח, is known by the Samaritans. But they shew a reluctance to explain themselves on this point, always using something enigmatical when they have occasion to touch on the subject, as may be seen by a passage in one of their letters to their brethren in England, where they express this name by writing only its first letter, מ. Nor, indeed, is it to be wondered at that they entertain prejudices against this name, which they could receive only from the Jews, for it is not to be found in the Pentateuch.

*Of their priests, or the ministers of religion.*

The Samaritans have long boasted of their having a descendant of the family of Aaron at the head of their religion. But now they admit that the race of Aaron has been extinct among them for these hundred and fifty years, and that the high-priesthood is now filled by merely a descendent of Levi.

They acknowledge all the rights and privileges that are given by the law to the highpriest, whom they call in Hebrew הכהן הדול, *Hacohen Haggadol*, and in Arabic, *Alreis Aldjelil*, or the most illustrious.

Salameh, to whom we are indebted for the correspondence of which I have here given an extract, now enjoys this dignity, and takes the title of *Pretre Levite*.

*Of their marriages; — of polygamy;—of divorce; and of marrying the brother's widow.*

Various questions were proposed to the Samaritans on the subject of marriage, polygamy, and divorce. The substance of their replies is, that they religiously abstain from contracting marriages within the degrees prohibited by the law; but they specify none of these in particular. They reject all conjugal unions with the Jews: they practise divorce in conformity to the law; but their reply specifies none of the legitimate causes of divorce, contenting themselves with expressing them in the terms used in the book of Deuteronomy, because *he hath found some uncleanness in her*, and in a sense respecting which commentators are not agreed.

The reply on the subject of polygamy is very obscure. One might be led to conclude from their former letters, that it was entirely prohibited. But if I rightly understand Salameh's reply, a Samaritan may at first marry two wives, and cohabit with them, so long as both these shall live; but if one of them happen to die before him, he is not at liberty to fill her place with another. Should he lose both, he may marry again as often as he shall become a widower; but he is not again allowed to have more than one wife at a time.

As to the law which requires a man to marry the widow of his brother who has died without children, Salameh's reply is very remarkable, for it maintains, agreeably no doubt to the interpretation which the Samaritans have put upon this law, that the word *brother* is not here

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<sup>14</sup> This and the above reference to Deut. xviii. 15, are scarcely correct. See that text. TR.

meant to express any degree of parentage, but is to be understood in a metaphorical sense, and signifies merely a man united by the same faith and the same religion, a *coreligionaire*, if I may so express myself.

*Of the marks which distinguish the Samaritans from the Jews.*

I decline entering into a detail of all that is contained in the two replies of the Samaritans to the queries put to them by M. Gregoire and myself. I say nothing here of various matters that seem to be of little importance, or to afford no new information, as what relates to the celebration of the sabbath, and the feasts, circumcision, the legal impurities, the *טטפות*, *totafot*, or phylacteries; the *ציציות* *sisiot*, or fringes; holy water prepared with the ashes of a red heifer; the education of children; inheritances; the impositions which the Samaritans pay; the professions which they exercise: passing over these and such like things, I proceed to take notice of some of the leading marks which distinguish the Samaritans from the Jews, as specified by Salameh.

The Samaritans have their synagogues and their houses appropriated to their own particular use and occupation. They do not permit the members of any other sect to be buried in their cemeteries. They do not eat with the Jews; nor do they eat meat that has been killed by them;— they do not contract marriages with them, for the *Jews are excommunicated by them*; nor do they follow the practice of the Jews in the use of phylacteries and fringes. Their law, however, is the very same; it comprizes, with the Samaritans, as well as with the Jews, six hundred and thirty precepts; but there is some difference between them as to the observation of these precepts, in regard to purifications, to which the Samaritans strictly conform, while the Jews are obliged to disregard them, Jerusalem being no longer in their possession. The Samaritans have a form of writing and of pronun- (p. 284) ciation different from those of the Jews. They make no change in the characters in which the law is written, and they add none others, conforming in this to the command which God gave when speaking of the law: *Ye shall not add unto the word which I command you, neither shall ye diminish ought from it*. The vowel-points they regard as an addition made by the Jews to the text of the law. But notwithstanding what is here said produced a long exposition of the identity of the law that is in the hands of the Jews and of the Samaritans, we read thus in another place: "We have precepts different from theirs, and we have not two doctrines; we all follow one and the same law." It appears highly probable that by those precepts which are observed by the Jews, and which are different from those that the Samaritans oppose their unity of doctrine to the division of the Jews into Karaites and Rabbinites; a division to which they declared in their last reply that they were not strangers. That they professed to say quite the contrary in their former reply, might have been owing to this circumstance, that the person who was employed to translate the questions into Arabic, not being acquainted with the subject, had strangely disfigured the names of these two Jewish sects. The Samaritans insist, on the other hand, that there is neither division nor sect among them; and it appears that even the name of *Dositheans* is not known among them to this day.<sup>15</sup> The question that was put to them in order to know whether they had different sects among them, having been expressed in the Arabic translation, in an ambiguous manner, gave occasion to a misunderstanding of which I have spoken elsewhere, and produced a long exposition of different covenants of God with Noah, Abraham, Moses, Phinehas, and the children of Israel, which it does not suit my plan to take notice of here.

*Of their funerals.*

The object of one of the questions proposed to the Samaritans, was to learn from them their ceremonies and observances in regard to the dead, and to interments. It was particularly desired to know whether there was any truth in the singular statement in the reply of M. Pillavoine, that in order to avoid the defilement produced by touching a dead body, they employ Turks, or Christians, in burying their brethren, which appears to us to be highly incredible.

I shall here transcribe Salameh's reply: "You wish to know what is our practice in regard to the dead; it is this. Before the departure of the soul from the body, we read for the dying, some passages (p. 285) chosen from the law, and we put up prayers to God on mount Gerizim. After

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<sup>15</sup> The Samaritans were formerly supposed to be divided into four sects, of which the *Dositheans* was one. TR.

the patient is dead, we wash the body in pure water with our own hands, and we recite over it the whole law. When the interment is about to take place, we suspend our reading; and while the corps is carried to the grave, we read before it, from that place where we left off, to the end of the law. Our sepulchers are our own property, and no strangers is buried in them. They are situated in sight of mount Gerizim. We observe hymns and prayers that Jehovah would pardon the dead, and the priest purifies them by prayer.”

*Of their calendar.*

Some of the religious customs and practices of the Jews being indispensably connected with the season of ripe grain, it is highly probable that the Israelites regulated their year according to the labours and seasons of husbandry. On the other hand, it is certain that their months were lunar. It is therefore highly probable that they used, in old times, the same means as now, for reconciling the lunar year with the solar, or rather the agricultural. This means consists, as is well known, in adding a month to the lunar year, which is thus made to contain thirteen lunations.<sup>16</sup>

But it is not quite certain whether they regulated these intercalations according to a permanent cycle, or determined them annually, after observing the state of the earth and of its productions. These two systems long divided the Jews after their dispersion.

It appears probable that when they formed an independent nation, they adopted the latter system, which does not require any knowledge of astronomy, and that the office of determining the intercalations was a privilege of the high-priest.

The rule for fixing the new moons has not been less a bone of contention among the Jews, than among the Mohammedans. The one party would not fix the time of keeping the new moon till after her appearance, the other employed calculation, and fixed it at the conjunction of the sun and moon. It appears that the former mode, which agrees better with the simplicity of ancient times, was the only one in use long after the captivity at Babylon.<sup>17</sup>

We have never had in Europe a just idea of the kalendar of the Samaritans. It seems that their high-priest was in the habit of sending every year, or every half year, to the members of their body, established in different places, a kalendar which fixed the time of the different eras, and of the conjunct- (p. 286) tion of the sun and moon, and consequently of the beginning of each lunation. Scaliger has published two of these kalendars, but they are filled with difficulties that cannot be readily got over. Various questions relating to this subject were proposed to the Samaritans. These I shall here transcribe, together with the answers.

"God (it was observed) has commanded you to keep the Passover on the 14th clay of the first month, and to offer the first fruits of your harvest on the second day of the feast of weeks. Your year ought not, then, to be like the year of the Mohammedans, whereof the first month happens sometimes in the winter, sometimes in the summer;—at other times in the spring, and in some years even in the harvest. By what rules are you guided in fixing the beginning of the year, on which depends the order of the feasts and their regulations? Do you conform to the practice of the Christians, who are guided by the solar year, or of the Jews, who observe the lunar year, but introduce an intercalation?

"Do you keep the new moons, and have you prayers appropriate for that season? How do you fix the stated time of the new moon? Is it from the appearance of the moon, or by calculation? Do you make use of astronomical tables?"

A paragraph in Salameh's former letter contained something on this subject. In replying to the question that was put to him in order to learn whether the Samaritans were divided into sects, a question which I have already observed he did not fully understand, he said, among other things, "We have still the divisions of the heaven,—astronomical tables in Hebrew, by which we know beforehand the eclipse of the moon and of the sun, and the conjunction (of the sun and moon) which fixes the time of the new moon, and the particular days on which the several festivals should be celebrated." The person who copied the letter in Arabic had so disfigured this passage,

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<sup>16</sup> The Jewish year consists of only *twelve* lunar months, some of which have twenty-nine, others thirty days. TR.

<sup>17</sup> This is the mode now in use among the Jews. TR.

that no sense could be made of it. Fresh questions were therefore proposed, as now transcribed, and to these Salameh replies thus:

"You wish to know, my brother, whether we regulate our new moons by observation or by calculation: I therefore beg to acquaint you, brother, that the new moons and all the feasts are regulated agreeably to a calculation which we use, and which was made by Phinehas for the latitude of mount Gerizim. We keep the manuscript of this book, and every six months we draw up from it rules for fixing the time of the new moons and the feasts, and we disperse them in Israel. We likewise know the moment when the dragon attacks the two stars, (it is plain that he here means the eclipses of the sun and of the moon), together with the (p. 287) hours, the minutes, and the years, in an exact manner. You inquire whether we have astronomical tables; we have only those which I have now mentioned."

These tables seem to contain a perpetual kalendar. The reply of Salameh is here attended with several difficulties; but yet I do not suppose that I have misunderstood it in any material point. I have, however, begged the favour of M. Rousseau to procure for me some of those kalendars which the Samaritans construct and circulate every six months.

*Of the present state of the Samaritans.*

It now only remains for me to extract from the letters of Salameh, and from his replies to the questions that were proposed to him, what relates to the present state of the Samaritans, their number, their places of residence, and their opinion as to a numerous colony of their brethren which they believe to exist in Europe.

There are no Samaritans to be found at this day, except at Naplouse and at Jaffa.<sup>18</sup> It is now upwards of a century since there have been any remains of them in Egypt. The number of the Samaritans, men, women, and children, both at Naplouse and at Jaffa, may amount to about two hundred. They consist of thirty families; they occupy at Naplouse the *Hue Verte*, which Jacob has called *Halkat Assamara*,<sup>19</sup> and where they make their abode, as it is said in the law. They are, in fact, Israelites by descent, and of the posterity of Jacob, likewise called *Israel*. They are of the tribe of Joseph. Their costume, by which they distinguish themselves from all other sects and nations, is a turban which they always wear upon their heads. On the sabbath, and on all their festivals, when they go to the synagogue, they wear white surplices, or dress in white. There were formerly Samaritans in Egypt, at Damascus, and at Gaza. There were likewise some formerly at Askelon, but these were led away by the Franks about six hundred years ago. Those residing at Cesarea were in like manner led away by the Franks about the same time.

The Samaritans confidently believe that there is now a considerable number of their brethren in Europe. They tell us that these Samaritans reside in the country of *Aschkenuz*, meaning, without doubt, Germany. In Salameh's first letter, instead of *Aschkenaz*, we read *Djanaouz*, which gave some occasion to suppose that he there meant the country around Genoa; but this was a mistake. The Samaritans observe that they received a letter from their brethren in Germany, about a century ago, in which these latter say that they amount in number to 127,960 persons. They request to be favoured with fresh and correct information respecting this colony of Samaritans, and express a strong desire to renew their correspondence with them. They further tell us that they have also some brethren in Russia.

In replying to Salameh it has been observed, that a great many Jews, both Karaites and Rabbinists, reside in Europe, but that no Samaritans are found in any part of this quarter of the world. The favour of a copy of the letter of which he had spoken was requested; and it was remarked that we have no accounts whatever of the Franks having brought with them a colony of Samaritans, when they were finally expelled from Syria; it was therefore asked on what authorities this report was grounded. To this query I here beg leave to transcribe his reply.

"You say, my brother, that there are not to be found among you, any of our brethren who observe and keep the law of Moses, our prophet (I have already observed that the word *Samaritan*, as understood by us, means *guardians or keepers of the law*); this is what we do not

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<sup>18</sup> The ancient Joppa. TR.

<sup>19</sup> In the two copies of the letter in Arabic now before me, we read *Halkat Assamara*, but I am convinced that in the original it is *Halkat Assade*; i. e. the חלקת אשרה of Genesis xxxiii.

feel disposed to believe; for we are in possession of letters, and a book of the law, which were sent us by our brethren residing in your country. The name of the city from which this book was sent, is *Aschkenaz*, in the kingdom of the Franks. You even say that there is not to be found among you a single man of our brethren; this assertion, my brother, is not correct, for we know for certain, that a great many reside there. You beg to be favoured with a sight of the letter that is now in our hands, and in which it is said that it comes from our-brethren of whom we are speaking. It is written, my brother, in the very same language as the present."That is to say, in the Hebrew language and in Samaritan characters.

Salameh resumes this subject in the letter in Arabic which accompanied the one in Hebrew. He repeats that the Samaritans reside, in great numbers, in the city and country of *Aschkenaz*, and adds, "We intreat you to collect and transmit to us correct information on this subject, as you kindly promised, that we may know more thoroughly, their situation, the leading tenets of their religion, their customs, their laws, the order of their worship, under what name their sect is known, what form of religion they observe; and, in short, whether they are in all respects such as they describe themselves in their letter, or otherwise. Fail not, then, to communicate to us all that you can learn of this society of our brethren, who reside in *Aschkenaz*."

An assertion so positive as this, presents a problem very difficult to be resolved. It is certainly well known that there are no Samaritans in Germany, (p. 289) or in any other country of Europe. But as Dr. Marshall, in writing to the Samaritans, expressed himself in such a manner as to give them cause to believe that those with whom they corresponded were Samaritans settled in England, it is possible that some learned German may have attempted to induce the Samaritans of Naplouse to enter, under the cover of such a deception, into a correspondence with him, to which we are as yet strangers. The Karaites, also, who are to be found in great numbers in Poland and Russia, and whose leading principles are in some respects similar to those of the Samaritans, may have been taken for them. But we shall know better to what cause this mistake should be assigned, if we could obtain a copy of the letter of which Salameh speaks; and I have entreated M. Rousseau to use every means of obtaining it.

As to what the Samaritans say respecting a copy of the law in Samaritan characters, which was sent them by their brethren in Germany, that is not without some foundation; for Maundrell, who visited Palestine in 1696, says that he saw with the high-priest of the Samaritans, the first volume of the London Polyglot Bible, which contains the Hebrew Samaritan Pentateuch, and the Samaritan Version.

I here close this exposition of the doctrine and the present state of the Samaritans, meaning to publish the curious correspondence, of which I have now given some extracts, as soon as I can obtain the further information on the subject, that I expect from the zeal and the friendship of M. Rousseau.

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

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