

How The Israelite SAMARITANS PRONOUNCE THE NAME OF GOD?

BY: **BENYAMIM TSEDAKA** of the A. B. The INSTITUTE OF STUDIES SAMARITANS

I never judged any group of people according to their quantities but their qualities. The Samaritan-Israelites in any number, when they numbered over a million on the fourth century A.D. or 146 souls in 1917 or 625 today, January 1, 2000 in both centers in Holon/Israel [324] and Mount Gerizim/Samaria [301] they always have and had the same qualities although they lost some of their old traditions and habits due the dwindling in the number. But they never lost the most important ones in regard to the commandments of the five books of Moses and the principles of the original Israelite religion:

- 1-The Unity of the God of Israel;
- 2-The Unity of the prophecy of Moses and Moses himself;
- 3-The unity of the Torah;
- 4-The unity of the chosen place of God - Gerizim Mountain.

Again, there is no any link between numbers and qualities. We all know a number of peoples a great ones in numbers that have a false believes and traditions...

In regard to the pronunciation of the name of God the way the Samaritan Israelites do, let's say first that Yod-Hey-Vav-Hey [in the original Hebrew: Yoot-Eay-Baa-Eeyor Shema. Note: the "VAV" is pronounced in this case as "Baa" but written as "vav" with horizontal line over it to change the pronunciation from "WaW" to "Baa"], Adonay [Adani]. Elohim [Eluwem] is one unity that will never be divided {It is said: "And you will know today that Shema is the God".} The Samaritans never pronounced the Yod-Hey-Vav-Hey as a complete word but the letters one after one :Yoot-Eay-Baa-Eey or the nick name Shema[=the Name]. The meaning of Yoot-Eay-Baa-Eey is written already in the Torah and Shema has explained it to Moses: I will be as I will be, means I will expose myself in the way I will choose, by myself or by sending my angel or expressing my word through my messenger - the prophet=Moses ["Moushe"] or a prophet like Moses that will be sent by me at the right time, just before the end of the days. This what he did indeed and this is what Shema will do.

But Shema has also many Titles, some of them in the Torah itself and some that described by many Samaritan-Israelite sages. In the Holy Ark at the Samaritan synagogue on Mount Gerizim there is a box called "The Name" and it is full of ancient parchment pieces with names and titles of God written on all of them. The Samaritan Israelites in great festivals are kissing this box in admiration and it shows the importance of the holy names of God in there believes. The Samaritan tradition has quoted 76 names and titles of God in the Torah. They Say: "Aieen-Vav-76- the eye of light=Ain-Baa Ain Amma'or".

The Samaritans always knew and they still know to distinguish in pronunciation between the revelation of God and human being: such men as Anashin[=Enashem] to

Anashim[=Enushem] the 3 angels revealed to Abraham; Between my master=Adoni[=Adanni] to my God=Adonai[=Adaani] or between to be faced by the man-Lehera'ot et pney ha'aish, Joseph[=lerra'aot IT fani aa'aish] to 'to see the face of God'=lehera'aot et pney adonai[=lerra'aot AT fani Shema. Note: AT means 'with']. The Samaritan-Israelites were and still very careful from any expression of the unity of God in a personification way. The Torah version in the hands of the Samaritans said in "The Song of The Sea" - Ex. 15 - God is hero in war = Shema gibbor bammamma, not like version in hand of the Jews: God is a Man of War - Adonai Eash Milchama.

For conclusion I have to tell you a Samaritan folk tale on an argument between a Samaritan sage, my grandfather's father, Abraham Tsedaka [1852-1928] and a Moslem sage, The Moslem said that the Islam is the right religion but Abraham Tsedaka has dared to say that the Israelite religion is the original and true one and the Islam religion is a false one.

"How dare you say that?" screamed the Moslem.

Abraham Tsedaka said that he is going to prove his words. He said: "you know the last words of the Moslem before he is passing away are to admit the unity of God by saying "La Illah Illa Alla"=No God but God - four words. The Israelite says the same but in his words: "Shema Eluwwinu Shema A'aad"= Our God one God - four words."

"Yes, I know that," said the Moslem, "so what?"

"Oh, let me tell you by that," said Abraham Tsedaka to the Moslem sage, "If the Moslem soul is passing away before he expressed only one word 'No', so it is negative, and if he has expressed only two words " No God" it means that there is no God = heresy, and if he expressed only three words "No God But", nobody will know but whom, and it is also heresy. Only if his soul will pass away after he has expressed the whole four words he will admit the unity of God.

At the same case each word the four words of the Israelites has its significance for the unity of God - said Abraham Tsedaka - If the dying person has expressed only the first word: Shema, he has identified already the divinity, and if he has said only two words: Our God, it has a meaning. If he has said three words: Our God One, it is leading to the unity of God. He does not have to say the whole words to express it.

It is only a tale but saying much on the Samaritan acceptability of the unity of God of Israel.

Let me quote from the Samaritan Israelites' prayer, any prayer: "The glory is yours forever, Yoot-Eay-Baa-Eay, Shema, merciful and gracious....."