

CHAPTER III.

THE MODERN SAMARITANS.

In the southwestern quarter of their ancient city, close to the path which leads to the holy place on Gerizim's top, is the Ghetto of the Samaritans.¹ They live crowded together, being quite segregated from the Muslim population, not only out of desire of separation but as well for fear of their violent neighbors. According to statistics of 1901² they number 152 souls, and the doom which confronts the community is presented in the proportion of males and females, the former numbering 97, the latter only 55. They do not marry outside of their own body, the Jews, the only race with whom they might intermingle, of course refusing such alliances. The people call themselves by the ancient geographical appellative, Samerim, which they interpret however as meaning "the Observers," i.e. of the Law.³

Concerning the ethnology of the Samaritans, Robinson makes this observation: "The physiognomy of those we saw was not Jewish; nor indeed did we remark in it any peculiar character, as distinguished from that of other na-

¹ Called Charat as-Samira, the Quarter of the Samaritans, although incorrectly, not being a proper city-quarter. The name also appears as Charat as-Samâra, *SWPM* 204. Rosen vocalizes it as Sumereh.

² Reference is here made to the valuable statistics and anthropological tables presented by H. M. Huxley in *JE* x, 674, the materials for which were collected by the American Archæological Expedition to Syria in 1899-1900. (The publication of the full material by Huxley is promised for an early date as Part V.) The figures given by travellers in the XIXth Century are discrepant; Robinson estimated them in 1838 at 150, *BR* iii, 106; Petermann, in 1853, at 122 (*Reisen*, i, 265); Mills, in 1855, at 150 (*Nablus*, 179); Rogers, in the same year, at 197 (*Notices*, 16). *SWPM* gives 135 for the year 1875, 160 for 1881.

³ See Additional Note B.



tives of the country.”⁴ But this judgment has been controverted by almost all other visitors to Shechem, who remark upon the distinctiveness of the Samaritan type, and bear witness with some surprise to its comparative nobility among the races of Palestine; the representatives of the priesthood, the only educated ones, have called forth much admiration for their intelligence of expression and dignity of bearing. The Rev. John Mills, who lived among them for three months, also paying them a second visit, and who seems to have been a very intelligent observer, writes as follows of the race:⁵ “I had seen individuals, among Arabs and Jews, of as noble aspect as any one of them; but as a community, there is nothing in Palestine to compare with them. A straight and high forehead, full brow, large and rather almond-shaped eye, aquiline nose, somewhat large mouth, and well-formed chin, are their chief physiological characteristics; and, with few exceptions, they are tall and of lofty bearing. They seem to be all of one type, and bear an unmistakable family likeness. In this they differ from the Jews, who have assimilated in physical as well as in moral qualities to the nations among whom they have long dwelt.”

These impressions of travellers are corroborated by the exact figures and scientific observations that are reported in the article in the *Jewish Encyclopædia*, above cited. I refer the reader to the tables contained there, and quote here only the summary, as follows:

“The general type of physiognomy of the Samaritans is distinctly Jewish, the nose markedly so. Von Luschan derives the Jews from ‘the Hittites, the Aryan Amorites, and the Semitic nomads.’ The Samaritans may be traced to the same origin. The ‘Amorites were men of great stature’ and to them Von Luschan traces the blonds of

⁴ *BR* iii, 106.

⁵ *Op. cit.* 180; cf. 182, 184.

the modern Jews. With still greater certainty the tall stature and the presence of a blond type among the Samaritans may be referred to the same source.⁶ The cephalic index, much lower than that of the modern Jews, may be accounted for by a former direct influence of the Semitic nomads, now represented by the Bedouins, whose cephalic index according to measurement of 114 males, is 76.3.⁷ The Samaritans have thus preserved the ancient type in its purity; and they are to-day the sole, though degenerate, representatives of the ancient Hebrews."

The principal employment of the Samaritans is petty trading, a few of them being engaged in manufacture, especially of woollens; none of them are agriculturists. Their past history shows that their *forte* has lain, like that of their Jewish relatives, in finance, and they appear to have maintained an honorable reputation in the handling of moneys, for down into the past century individuals of their number have regularly acted as the fiscal agents of the local government. Travellers vary in their impressions concerning the virtues of the Samaritans; many are disgusted by their participation in the everlasting oriental demand for *bakhsheesh*, "the one Arabic word the traveller never forgets," as a French scholar has said. But while ready to drive hard bargains for fees and manuscripts, and equal to deceit in imposing upon the credulous tourist, no charges of commercial dishonesty or faithlessness have been laid against them. The retention of their sacred volume of the Law of Moses against the captivating attempts that have been made for its purchase by European scholars, is demonstration that they can put principle before Mammon. Some travellers speak very warmly concerning the social traits of the perishing community. The violence and extortion from

⁶ Earlier in the same article it is shown that the Samaritans are the tallest people in Syria. Also the figures given for pigmentation reveal "a distinct blond type noticeable in the race."

⁷ That of the Samaritans is 78.1, of the modern Jews, 82.

which the people of Nablus have suffered in the XIXth Century have reduced the Samaritans to a condition of poverty.

The Samaritans have adopted the Arabic vernacular to such an extent that only the few learned ones among them carry on the tradition of the Hebrew and Aramaic which were the earlier tongues of the people.⁸ Every Samaritan man possesses two names, one of which is generally composed of names taken from the Pentateuch, especially from its heroes, while the other is drawn from the common Arabic nomenclature for persons. Despite the assimilations with the Muslim population into which the Samaritans have drifted, their political masters have taken pains to keep them conscious of their inferior position. Following the principles of the caliph Omar, who required distinguishing costumes for unbelievers, an Abbaside caliph ordered that the Samaritans should appear in public with a red turban on the head, a regulation which has been more or less stringently enforced, according to the temper of the government.⁹ Their native costume, especially on gala occasions, is white.

We come now to the consideration of the inner life of the Samaritans as a religious community, and this phrase means, it must be remembered, for an oriental sect practically the whole of the community's life. Here a thesis must be advanced of which the whole of the following work gives proof, and to which all modern investigators bear testimony. Even as the Samaritans are shown by anthropology to be Hebrews of the Hebrews, so the study of their religion and manners demonstrates them to be nothing else than a Jewish sect. This is not the traditional view concerning their origin, nor is it as yet generally known to the lay mind.

⁸ For the languages, see Chap. XIV.

⁹ Not as Petermann, *op. cit.* 274, says, a "Mamluk Sultan," but the Abbaside Mutawakkil; see below, p. 129.

Samaritanism is still commonly looked upon as a mixed religion containing elements of Judaism and ancient heathenism, and although the compound is not supposed to have been analyzed, it is considered to be full of theological heresies and moral corruption.

Subsequent chapters will expand and substantiate the points at present only summarily given. This chapter will treat only of the customs of the Samaritans as they have lain under the observation of Europeans for over three centuries. But their religion may be summed up in these few words. It is a monotheism identical with that of Judaism, whose very terms they use throughout, while it bitterly opposes any attempt to associate with God other deities, as in polytheism, or to find in him any distinctions, as in Christianity. It is a spiritual religion, which not only rejects any representation of Deity, but even eschews, after the letter of the Second Commandment, all pictorial designs.¹⁰ It is moreover an ethical religion which has flowered in just such virtues and which is circumscribed by just such limitations as mark what is known as orthodox Judaism. We will now consider those points of the life of the Samaritan community which come under the eye of the observer, and mark, as we proceed, wherein they agree with, and wherein they differ from, the forms of Judaism, leaving to subsequent Chapters the history of the sect and the formal presentation of its theology.¹¹

The intelligent visitor to Nablus naturally soon takes his way to the Samaritan quarter, and discovers their synagogue, which is called after the same name used by the

¹⁰ Petermann, *op. cit.* 282, relates that on the visit of the highpriest to his room, the latter requested him to turn the face of some hanging portraits to the wall.

¹¹ The facts in the following pages are drawn from the statements of the travellers already cited, from the Samaritan correspondence with Europeans, and in some cases from other Samaritan literature. In moot questions or points of particular interest, reference is made to the authorities, all of whom are listed in the Bibliography.

Jews for their places of worship, *Kenîsat as-Samira*, the Samaritan Synagogue. It is also commonly called among themselves *Bit Allah*, the house of God.¹² This is a plain building, of no great antiquity.¹³ It contains a room whose greatest length is 37 ft., 5 in.; on its right hand and running for about two-thirds of the length of the main portion is an extension with a raised floor. On the left is a curtailed recess, about 4¼ ft. sq. There is no adornment, and light is admitted only by a glazed circular aperture in the roof.

Entrance is had upon application to the highpriest,—Kohen hag-Gadol, he is called in Hebrew, or in good Arabic, the Imam. He is of the blood of Levi, the direct Aaronic line having failed, according to Samaritan testimony in the XVIIth Century, although this fact it has become the fiction to deny.¹⁴ With him is associated a Levitical relative, the Shammash, or minister, who performs most of the service, but the priest is required for the blessing.

This great man, who always appears in robes of white, is not too dignified to demand of the visitor a large bakh-sheesh for the privilege of inspecting the synagogue. The terms of the bargain having been arranged, the stranger desires to look upon the sacred roll of the Law of Moses, the greatest treasure of the Samaritans. This is contained in the recess already mentioned, which is called the *muşbach*, or altar, even as the Jews call the synagogal ark containing the scroll the *heikal*, or temple. The recess has an important function in the services, as it corresponds to the

¹² Mills, *op. cit.* 222.

¹³ The Samaritans claim that the neighboring mosque, Chizn Ya'qub, was originally their synagogue, which was confiscated about 1300; see below, pp. 134, 273. The present synagogue contains an inscription recording the restoration of the building A. D. 1711, and asserting that it had been built 320 years before. The inscription is given by Rosen, *ZDMG* xiv, 624.

¹⁴ See p. 139.

michrab of the Muslim mosque, that is, the niche which indicates the *qibla*, or direction of prayer — for the Muslim towards Mecca, for the Samaritan towards Gerizim; the whole congregation face this point in their devotions in the synagogue. The recess contains a plain chest, which holds rolls of the Law of Moses, unimportant copies of which are shown to the ignorant tourist, but amongst them the greatest treasure of all, a codex which, it is claimed, was written by Abishua, the great-grandson of Aaron.¹⁵ How old this roll is cannot be ascertained, for it is never submitted to examination, only a section being exposed to view at a time. But its sacredness in the eyes of the Samaritans and its appearance of relative antiquity naturally arouse the ambition of scholars for its acquisition, or at least for its inspection, a wish that may never be gratified until the community has perished. The exhibition of one of the rolls, although not of that sacred codex, is an important part of the Sabbath service. At the proper point, the minister brings forth the roll, and presents it to the congregation, opened at the Aaronic blessing, *Num.* 6, 24–27, which passage is then kissed by the worshippers.¹⁶

It has been said that these rolls contain the Law of Moses. They are indeed codices of the Hebrew Pentateuch, containing a somewhat variant text, with a few intentional alterations made in support of the peculiar tenet of the Samaritans concerning the holiness of Gerizim,¹⁷ along with many textual variants, and written in the Samaritan script, an alphabet derived from the Phœnician and more antique than the Hebrew square character.¹⁸ The Law of Moses is the Samaritan Bible, and herein is the first great difference between this sect and the Jews, who

¹⁵ See Chap. XIV, § 6.

¹⁶ Hence in many copies of the Law this and other sacred passages are found blurred to illegibility by the contact of the faithful.

¹⁷ See Chap. XII, § 6.

¹⁸ See Chap. XIV, § 4.

include in their Scriptures, although on a lower plane than the Law, the Prophets and the Hagiographa.

The services in the synagogue are said to be decorous, although the rendering of the service and the music sound barbarous to European ears. The Samaritans once possessed an extensive liturgy,¹⁹ much of which in its written form is now lost to them, and is probably to be found only in European libraries. The portions that are still used are always recited from memory, and concern the chief solemnities of life, the feasts and fasts, birth, marriage and death. But probably the Samaritan memory has retained but a small part of its one-time liturgical wealth. As the language of all their offices is in either Hebrew or Aramaic, tongues for centuries lost to vernacular usage, and as in the last half of the XIXth Century there has been a sad decline in the learning of the priesthood, the majority of the people know nothing of what is said in the services, and the ministers themselves have often only a superficial knowledge of the words they use. The Law, it may be said, is read through once in a year, thus differing from the Jewish arrangement which distributes its sections over three years. The lections are begun with the month Tishri.²⁰ There is also a rude kind of music, with a number of various airs, for which the Samaritans claim a high tradition.²¹

We have seen that the Samaritans possess three of the great institutes of Judaism, the synagogue, the Law of Moses, the priesthood, the last of which has only a traditional survival amongst the Jews. The highpriest is the theocratic head of the community, he is the authority both spiritual and secular; after the rule of the old Jewish state and of the early Christian Church, believers dare not go

¹⁹ See Chap. XIV, § 10.

²⁰ For the order of lections, see Cowley, *JQR* vii, 134. The lectional divisions are called *qaçin*.

²¹ Grove (*Nabloos*) and Mills, *op. cit.* 230, seem to be the only ones who have noticed the music.

to law against one another before infidels.²² The priests also combine both the sacerdotal and the teaching functions; the sect has never developed the difference between the priests and the doctors of the Law to the extent which marks Judaism, and in modern times the former possess all the learning of the community, although the literature shows that in earlier days laymen were also masters in theology.²³ The old Nazirite rule is still observed by the priests, that no razor shall touch their head;²⁴ they are specially careful about defilement, and avoid contact with a dead body. They always wash before handling the rolls of Scripture.

The laymen also possess their traditional claims. They are all of the tribe of Joseph, except those of the tribe of Benjamin, but this traditional branch of the people, which, the Chronicles assert, was established in Gaza in earlier days, seems to have disappeared.²⁵ There exists a strong aristocratic feeling amongst the different families in this petty community, and some are very proud over their own pedigree and the great men it has produced. In the services the laymen also wear white robes, and have some antiphonal parts to recite, either from memory or with the use of books. They do not use the Tephillin, the frontlets or phylacteries of the Jews, nor the fringes, nor the Mezuzot, or prayer-boxes for the door-posts. The reason given by them for the non-use of the Tephillin is such a one as a Christian would give, that the law is to be spiritually observed. The priest wears at the reading of the Law a talith, but without fringes.²⁶ The women are not admitted

²² See the Samaritan Epistle to Kautzsch, *ZDPV* viii, 149.

²³ *Abu'l Fath*, 129, speaks of the Wise Men, adding that "the priests as a body are not called Wise Men."

²⁴ There seems to be a reference to the Nazirite profession in *Chron. Neub.* 459.

²⁵ See p. 149.

²⁶ See *N. et E.*, 123, 218; *Mills, op. cit.* 192. The former passage seems to indicate the use of some kind of fringes, but the custom was denied by the priest at Mills' visit.

to the synagogue, even as the rule is amongst the oriental Jews to this day. They, as well as the men, have a morning prayer to recite, in this differing from Jewish custom. They also follow the ancient custom of keeping their hair,²⁷ which they never shave off, as do the Muslim and Jewish women upon marriage. There is no *Minyan*, or minimum of ten persons, as in the Jewish law, for the observance of a service.

Mention has already been made of services on the Sabbath. This cardinal Jewish institution is observed by the Samaritans with like solemnity to the Jews, but with far greater rigor, for the former have never developed that casuistry, which Jesus so often attacked, whereby the explicit directions of the Law could be circumvented. They stay strictly within doors on the Sabbath, except to go to the synagogue, and have none of the Jewish fiction of the *Erub*, whereby several houses or a whole street could be artificially designated as a single tenement; nor is there any "Sabbath-day's journey." They follow strictly the injunctions of *Exodus* not to light a fire on the Sabbath, nor may they procure the service of Gentiles for this convenience, as in Judaism; nor may they use any contrivances to keep their food warm, which must all be cooked the day before. It is thus seen that they are purists and literalists, and closely resemble, in their lack of a tradition of the elders which mitigates the rigor of the Law, the Sadducees, with whom, as we shall later see, they are historically connected.

From the weekly Sabbath we naturally pass to the sacred year of the Samaritans. The Samaritan year is of the same nature and has the same months as that of the Jews, the secular or economic year beginning in the autumn, with Tishri, the ecclesiastical year in the spring, with Nisan. The months have 29 or 30 days, and a second Adar is intercalated when necessary to avoid the variation of the lunar

²⁷ Cf. I Cor. II, 2ff.

year from the solar, which would result in the gradual recession of the sacred seasons through the year. The times of the new moons and of the beginning of the two kinds of year are calculated by the priests in advance for a short period, and the results used to be announced to the scattered communities. The Samaritans appear never to have adopted the Metonic Cycle, by which, in the IVth Century, the Jews finally regulated their year, but still depend upon empirical observation. As late as 1820 such a table was drawn up and sent to the supposed brethren in Europe.²⁸ The Samaritan Passover and other feasts therefore do not necessarily coincide in date with those of the Jews.

The Samaritans celebrate the seven sacred seasons appointed in the calendar of the Law, *Lev.* 23. Three of them, those which in ancient times were the chief feasts, namely, Passover, Pentecost and Booths, are always celebrated on Mount Gerizim, unless, as often has happened, even for terms of years, they are prevented by Muslim fanaticism; in such case the solemnities, including the Passover sacrifice, are celebrated in the town.²⁹ We must accordingly make a diversion to observe Mount Gerizim and the sanctity which it holds in Samaritan eyes.

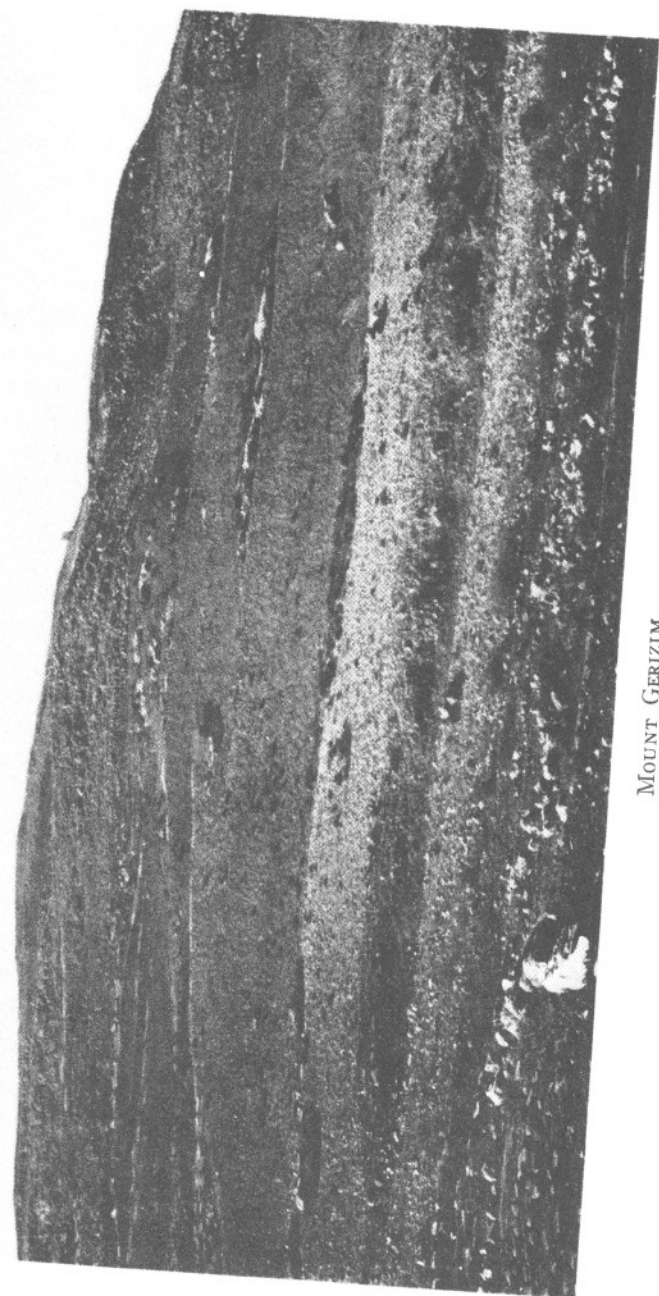
The article of faith in Gerizim is the great differentiating tenet between the Samaritans and the Jews; if they yield this heresy, teaches a Talmudic tractate, they can be readmitted to the true Israel.³⁰ Doubtless since prehistoric times both the mountains of Shechem, Ebal and Gerizim, were counted amongst the most holy of "the highplaces" of Palestine; as we have seen the Egyptian traveller of the XIIIth Century B. C., makes an allusion to one of them.³¹ Of the

²⁸ See quite fully on this subject, Mills, *op. cit.* 240. See further Chap. XIV, § 12.

²⁹ For the interruption of the visits to Gerizim, see p. 141; for the celebration of the Passover in Shechem, *N. et E.* 72.

³⁰ See Chap. XII, §§ 2, 6; Chap. XI.

³¹ See above, p. 19.



MOUNT GERIZIM.

two Ebal is the higher (3076 ft. above the sea), and the more commanding in its noble prospect, while Gerizim has an altitude of only 2848 ft.³² According to Hebrew tradition, upon the conquest of the land, these two mountains formed the amphitheatre for the great convocation of all Israel, when the curses were recited from Ebal, and the blessings from Gerizim (*Dt.* 27; *Jos.* 8, 30ff). The comminations alone are given in the story of the rite, a fact which gives greater prominence to Ebal; this was felt by the Samaritans doubtless because of Jewish taunts, and they deliberately altered the text in *Dt.* 27, 4, so that the stones of Jordan and the altar should be reared on Gerizim.³³ There can be no doubt, despite the assent of such a scholar as Kennicott, that the Samaritan reading is a falsification. But the reason why Ebal was chosen for the curses, which appear as the more important part of the ceremony, was simply due to the fact that it lay on the north, the side of ill-omen. Gerizim then would be the auspicious one of the pair for worship, and the Samaritans have in all probability preserved the ancient tradition concerning the relative religious worth of the two.³⁴ On Ebal's top only ruins of a very rude construction, a great enclosure 90 ft. sq., have been discovered,³⁵ while the ruins on Gerizim are much more extensive and of considerable architectural importance.

The easiest path from Nablus to Gerizim's top is one which leads from the Samaritan quarter up a defile; following this the traveller, after nearly an hour's climb, reaches the eastern summit of Gerizim, upon or near which are

³² The Samaritans deny the greater height of Ebal, in fact hold that Gerizim is the highest of all mountains.

³³ See Chap. XII, § 6, for this falsification, and also for the Samaritan legends connected with Gerizim.

³⁴ This superstition as to points of the compass would be enhanced by the comparative bleakness of Ebal's southern slope, seared by the sun's heat; it is also more difficult of access.

³⁵ *SWPM* 186.

found all the sites and ruins of interest. At the northern and eastern end of the natural platform lie the remains of what once was a massive and noble structure. The history of the building is a story common to the holy places of the Orient. One compartment of the enclosure is now used as a Muslim mosque; the octagonal building situated in the midst is doubtless the Church of the Virgin Mary erected by the emperor Zeno, which succeeded a Roman temple, while this heathen structure was preceded by the Samaritan temple, destroyed by John Hyrcanus in the II^d Century B. C., and built according to tradition by Sanballat the reputed founder of the sect in the time of Alexander the Great. And behind the history of these respective fanes stretches the succession of primitive cults, of Yahwe and of Baal and of many another deity, back into the beginnings of history. But it is only probability that leads the archæologist to find here the site of the Samaritan temple; no local tradition corroborates it, and the Samaritans ignore it.³⁶

On the west side of these ruins are the Twelve Stones, which according to Samaritan tradition are the stones Joshua brought from the Jordan and set up in this place, *Jos.* 4. These seem to be the remains of an upper tier of stones forming the edge of some ancient platform. At a distance of 240 ft. to the south of the ancient temple lies the holiest spot in Samaritan eyes; this is a platform of natural rock, about 48x36 ft. In its southern end is a hollow, like the depressions which are found in many of the Syrian rock-altars, designed doubtless for the collection of the sacrificial blood. At the northwestern end is a cistern lined with primitive masonry, which may have been a natural cave. To the Samaritans this stone, the Sakhra,³⁷ is

³⁶ See, for the ruins and holy sites on Gerizim, C. W. Wilson, *Ebal and Gerizim*, in *PEFQS*, 1873, p. 66 (with plan), containing the results of explorations made by Wilson and Lieut. Anderson in 1866; Guérin, *Samarie*, i, c. xxv; *SWPM* 187.

³⁷ The priests are sometimes designated as Priests of the Stone; see *JBL* 1906, pp. 34, 36.

the Holy of Holies, which a member of the community approaches only with bared feet; the tradition is that the temple was built over the cave. This stony projection with its cave and pool for blood reminds us at once of the corresponding Sakhra, or holy stone, and cave which have been the immemorial sanctuary on Mount Zion. In the south-eastern quarter of the top of Gerizim, according to tradition, was the site of Abraham's sacrifice on Moria, while the seven steps leading down into a neighboring trench are those by which Adam descended when he was expelled from Paradise. For almost every sacred incident from the beginning of history to its consummation is connected by Samaritan credulity with the top of Gerizim.³⁸

Strangely enough it is not at these sites consecrated by tradition that the Samaritan celebrates his holiest rite, the Passover. But the celebration takes place at a point which is reached by the path above described about ten minutes before arriving at the top of the mountain. There is nothing distinctive about the spot, which is surrounded by dilapidated stone walls and contains some sunken trenches. Probably it has been the malice of the Muslims that has driven the sect to this insignificant piece of land. We read in a Chronicle how a benefactor from amongst them in the middle of the XVIIIth Century bought from the Muslims a piece of ground on the mountain,³⁹ and we may suppose that this is the lot which the Samaritans still use in lieu of the holier sites from which they have been debarred.

It is within this enclosure that the Samaritans celebrate their only sacrifice, the Passover, and here alone in the world is that historic rite of Israel maintained.⁴⁰ No wonder

³⁸ For lists of the other holy places as claimed by the Samaritans in the neighborhood of Shechem, see *SWPM* 218f; Conder, *PEFQS* 1876, p. 192.

³⁹ See p. 139.

⁴⁰ The family Passover of the Jews is only a symbolic rite, not a sacrifice.

then that both lovers of the Bible history and students of antiquity have eagerly availed themselves of the opportunity to witness the survival of this decaying ceremony, so laden with historic memories. Petermann first, and many observers since have witnessed the Samaritan Passover, and the reader is recommended to turn to their easily accessible descriptions for graphic accounts of the ceremony.⁴¹ Here only an outline of the function can be given.

The solemnity is a veritable *Haj*, or pilgrim-feast. The whole community proceeds to the place of sacrifice on Mount Gerizim, allowing abundance of time for the preparations. The tents are pitched, and all eagerly await the appointed hour, which occurs at sunset,⁴²—for so the Samaritans interpret the phrase “between the evenings,” *Ex.* 12, 6.⁴³ A number of lambs have been carefully selected from those born in the preceding Tishri, and of these so many as will suffice for the worshippers are destined for the sacrifice, generally from five to seven, although others are at hand in case anyone of them is ritually unfit. Some hours before the sacrifice two fires are started in the trenches above described; in one of them a caldron is heated for boiling the water necessary to fleece the lambs, in the other a mass of fuel is kindled to make the oven for roasting the lambs. All these preparations are in the hands of young men (cf.

⁴¹ For descriptions of the Passover by eye-witnesses, see the Bibliography under the titles: Curtiss, Grove, Macewen, Mills, Moulton, Petermann, E. T. Rogers, Stafford, Stanley, Thomson, Trumbull, Warren, Wilson. The notice by the young American scholar, Moulton, is based upon particularly critical observation.

⁴² Variations in this appointment, however, are caused by the incidence of the Sabbath. If the 14th Nisan is a Sabbath, the feast takes place the day before, in which case the functions must be proceeded with at earlier hours so that all may be over before the advent of the Sabbath; if the feast falls on Sunday, the preparations may not begin until Saturday is past, the days being measured of course from sunset to sunset.

⁴³ The Samaritan use here agrees with the Sadducean as against that of the Pharisees, according to whom the sacrifice should be made between 3 and 6 p. m.

Ex. 24, 5), who sometimes are clad in blue robes.⁴⁴ Coincident with the starting of the fire the service begins, and this is kept up until the lambs are put into the oven; it consists in the reading of the Passover lections from *Exodus*, and ancient Passover hymns. A certain number of representative men render the antiphons. In the service all turn towards the Kibla, the top of Gerizim. At sunset the sacrifice takes place, not on an altar but in a ditch; the throats of the lambs are deftly cut by a young man, not by the priest.⁴⁵ The ritual inspection then takes place, the sinews of the legs are withdrawn (*Gen.* 32, 32), the offal removed, and the lambs fleeced by aid of the hot water. The lambs are then spitted with a long stick run through their length,⁴⁶ and are conveyed to the heated oven, over which they are laid, the spits protruding on either side, while above them is laid a thick covering of turf to seal the oven. The process of roasting takes three or four hours, during which time the worshippers may rest, the service being mostly intermitted. When it is deemed the proper time, the lambs are withdrawn, and present a blackened and repulsive aspect. A short service then ensues, the congregation now appearing with their loins girt up and their staves in their hands (*Ex.* 12, 11), and when the service is over, veritably “eat in haste,” for they fall ravenously upon the coal-like pieces of flesh, devouring it and taking platters-full to the women and children, who remain in the tents. When all the flesh is consumed, the bones, scraps, wool, are carefully

⁴⁴ So Mills saw them, *op. cit.* 253, although others witness to white robes, in which the community appear. For the use of blue in sacred vestments, see the Samaritan Epistle, *N. et E.* 123.

⁴⁵ Petermann saw individuals applying the blood to their faces, and parents streaking it on their children; Moulton, the most recent observer, saw nothing of this, and learned that this rite had been omitted for some years for fear of the Muslims.

⁴⁶ The statement of Justin Martyr, a native of Neapolis, that the Passover lamb was trussed on a cross-shaped spit does not, as is usually noted in this connection, refer to the Samaritan sacrifice, but explicitly to the Passover at Jerusalem; *C. Tryphon.* c. 40.

gathered up, and thrown into the still smouldering fire, until all is consumed, "so that none of it remain till the morrow." After the meal ablutions take place, and the ceremony is concluded with further prayers and chants. According to the prescriptions of *Num.* 9, the "Second Passover" is allowed.

In close connection with the Passover is the feast of Unleaven, or Massot, which is reckoned as the second sacred feast, being distinguished from the Passover, although coincident with it, according to the language of the Law. On the 13th of the month a careful search is made for all leaven, which is scrupulously removed, and from the 14th day till the 21st no leaven may be eaten. The 21st is the great day of this feast, and on it they make pilgrimage to Gerizim, reading through the book of Deuteronomy on the way and at the village Makkada, where they finally halt.

The ensuing Pentecostal period, which is measured not after the Jewish method from the second day of Unleavened Bread, but literally according to *Lev.* 23, 15f from the morrow of the Sabbath in that week,⁴⁷ is an especially holy portion of the year; on the third day before Pentecost is celebrated the third great feast, that of the Stay of Moses upon Sinai, that is of the beginning of the Lawgiver's sojourn in the holy mount. On this day the whole Law is read.⁴⁸

The fourth feast is that of Weeks, or Pentecost, which is reckoned as above stated. It is celebrated by pilgrimage to Gerizim, where the whole Law is again read. Its primitive character as a harvest feast is particularly observed, with regard to *Dt.* 16, 9ff. The fifth feast is that of Trum-

⁴⁷ This was also the method of the Boethusians and is still that of the Karaite sect.

⁴⁸ This feast does not appear in the lists given in the Epistles, *e. g.*, *N. et E.* 76, 157, 176; in these lists it is difficult to discover how the seven feasts that are claimed are actually counted; probably the 8th day of Weeks is reckoned the seventh feast.

pets, the New Year's day, falling on the first day of the seventh ecclesiastical month. But the Samaritans do not regard this so much as a New Year's festival as rather the beginning of the great penitential season of the year.⁴⁹ The sixth holy season is the solemn fast of the Day of Atone-ment, the Jewish Kippur.⁵⁰ The day is most strictly observed; none, man, woman nor child, is allowed to eat, drink, sleep, or converse for the whole day; all adult males must spend the whole day in the synagogue, except, according to Mills' narrative, for a solemn excursion to the tombs of certain of the prophets. The service consists in the reading of the whole Pentateuch, and in the singing of special hymns, which are by far the most spiritual of all in the liturgy, dwelling as they do most earnestly upon the need of repentance, and likening the fast to the great final "Day of Recompense and Vengeance." Towards the conclusion of the service occurs the most solemn event of the year, the exhibition of the ancient roll of Abishua, which occurs only on this occasion. More than usual ritual solemnity accompanies the rite; the priests are clothed in light-green satin dresses, and upon emerging from the recess with the roll are covered with a talith. Before the exposed roll the congregation repeatedly prostrate themselves, then press forward to touch, kiss, caress it, the cynosure of all eyes.⁵¹ This solemn day makes the month the holiest of all to the mind of the Samaritans.

The feast of Booths completes the circuit of the seven seasons, and is observed in close accord with the Pentateuchal regulations, the booths being erected in the courts of the houses. Each day of the first seven they make pilgrim-

⁴⁹ Cf. *BS* ii, 96, line 14. Herein doubtless ancient Semitic usage is followed; cf. the first month of the Muslim year, Muharram.

⁵⁰ Called Kippurim, as amongst the Jews.

⁵¹ The only eye-witness of this celebration I know of is Grove, in Galton's *Vacation Tourists*. Azazel, the "scapegoat," is known correctly enough — only, as a demon. See below, p. 219.

age to Gerizim, and abstain from all work throughout the week; the eighth day, "the last, great day of the feast" (*Jn.* 7.37), is sabbatically observed in the synagogue. Among the minor days are to be reckoned the New Moon feasts, which are observed in the afternoon of the day following the appearance of the young moon.⁵²

We turn now to the observation of the functions of domestic life, every detail of which is also consecrated by religion. In connection with birth the laws of purification are scrupulously regarded. The male child is always circumcised on the eighth day, no postponement being allowed as in the Jewish rite. The priest generally performs the operation, and at home,⁵³ the cruel act of "tearing" performed by the Jews is not observed. The naming of the child takes place at the same time. The redemption of the firstborn, formerly practised, is now omitted because of the poverty of the community.⁵⁴ There is no initiation into the community like that in Judaism which makes a boy Bar Miswa, a child of the Law; the child's accountability begins with his "knowing good and evil." Marriage takes place early, with boys in the 15th or 16th year, with girls in the 12th; celibacy is abominated in this declining community. Divorce takes place at the pleasure of the husband, who gives a bill of divorce, according to *Dt.* 24;⁵⁵ but because of the paucity of females, if for no better reason, such separation rarely occurs to-day. Polygamy is allowed only

⁵² See Mills, *op. cit.* 238. The same authority also refers to a celebration of Purim, which is held, not as by the Jews on the 13th Adar, but on the last three Sabbaths of the preceding month, the mission of Moses to deliver the Israelites being the object of commemoration. The Samaritans interpret the word Purim in the sense "rejoicings" (the root *pa'ar*?). Petermann, *op. cit.* 290, describes the two tithing days, the Summot. Also for the order of the seasons and their services, see Cowley, *JQR* vii, 128.

⁵³ It was once performed before the community; see the anecdote of Bishop Germanus, p. 101.

⁵⁴ Mills, *op. cit.* 191.

⁵⁵ *N. et E.* 122.

in the case of the barrenness of the wife, when a second wife may be taken, but a third is not allowed. The Samaritans strikingly differ from the Jews in the interpretation of the law of the levirate marriage, according to *Dt.* 25.5ff. They regard as the "husband's brother" the coreligionist who lives in the husband's house, and whose duty it is to marry his widow, if childless; if he refuses, the contemptuous ceremony of Chalisa follows theoretically, but is never now practised.⁵⁶ The law of prohibited degrees is strictly followed, and the marriage with a niece is prohibited.⁵⁷

The Levitical laws of defilement are scrupulously regarded, both in respect to all natural defilements, and in the purifications required before participation in the rites of the community. Large ablutions of water are used, and in earlier days fire was employed as a purifying agent.⁵⁸ The early Samaritan sects developed the notion of "baptisms" to a great extent, and have probably affected the orthodox community. According to the Epistle of 1672 the lustral water made with ashes of a red heifer was still used, but this had been given up by the age of the Epistle of 1810.⁵⁹

Upon death the corpse is carefully and ceremoniously washed; it is not forbidden to the Samaritans, as has been frequently stated, to handle their dead, except in the case of the highpriest. Candles are burnt at the head and foot of the corpse before burial. Coffins are used — an exception in modern Palestinian custom. The mourning ceremonies last until the following Sabbath, the community going each day to the tomb, where they read and pray. On the Sabbath the community again visit the tomb, where they partake of a meal, while further appropriate services are

⁵⁶ *N. et E.* 123; Petermann, *op. cit.* 280. Earlier there was a different interpretation of "brother's wife"; see p. 184.

⁵⁷ *N. et E.* 179. Marriage with a niece was a bar to the priesthood in the early Catholic Church; see *Apostolical Canons*, No. xix (Fulton, *Index canonum*, 87).

⁵⁸ See Additional Note C.

⁵⁹ *N. et E.* 178, 127.

held in the synagogue. The Samaritans appear to-day to make a point of forgetting their dead, and have no subsequent commemorations, except their visits to the tombs of the Patriarchs. However the liturgy contains requiem hymns. They are said to share with the Jews the custom of burning combustible articles at Joseph's tomb.

Finally a word remains to be said concerning the ethical quality of the Samaritan religion, for the elaborate system of cult and custom which envelopes the sect might be considered to tend to the deadening of all true religion. But both their literature and the reports of travellers who have spent any time with them show that the Samaritans have developed a spiritual appreciation of the essentials of religion, which finds utterance in phrases frequently equal to the best in Judaism and Christianity. The practical cessation of sacrifice has led the Samaritans, as in the Jewish synagogue, to replace the primacy of the rite with the worship of the heart; so we read of "the altar of prayer," and "the altar of conversion," "tears of blood"—i. e. in place of bloody libations,—"drink-offerings of song."⁶⁰ Much is said about the circumcision of the heart, and prayer must be made from "the heart and soul." The sense of sin is strong, appearing especially in the liturgy for Kippur, when a call to real repentance is made; God alone can forgive sin (although the saints have certain merit), and no rites of religion replace true conversion and God's merciful forgiveness. Many expressions are akin to those in Christian usage, as the "being clothed with faith" (cf. *Eph.* 6, 11ff); "the bread of forgiveness"; "the clothing of atonement" (cf. the clothing with Christ's righteousness).⁶¹ The Samaritans have not developed the hardness of Rabbinic exegesis, and they have given large play to allegorizing, which

⁶⁰ *BS* ii, 154, line 17; p. 202, line 1; p. xlii. Cf. Hosea's "calves of the lips," 14, 2.

⁶¹ *BS* ii, p. xlii; 197, v. 24.

with all its absurdities often contributes a poetic touch to their hymns. At the same time their exegesis is frequently rational and spiritual, as in their interpretation of the frontlets between the eyes, or in finding, after the example of Jesus, a proof of immortality in the verse, "I am the God of thy father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob."⁶²

The facts given in this Chapter abundantly prove the thesis that, whatever its beginnings, Samaritanism has become and is a Jewish sect. The history of its origin must now be taken up.

⁶² So Mills relates, *op. cit.* 219.