A POEM BY THE SAMARITAN HIGH PRIEST ‘IMRÂN BEN SALĀMA AGAINST MUBÃRAK AL-MUFARRAḠĪ WHO BECAME A CONVERT TO ISLAM IN 1841

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Religion is the major theme of Samaritan Arabic poetry. Within this wide range of religion, the following topics can be included: supplication, preaches, panegyrics of the fathers, Moses, high-priests, pilgrimages, circumcision, feasts, mourning, appeal for aid, hymns, asceticism, elegies, repentance, paradise, consolation, holy sites, weddings. Needless to say, secular subjects such as love in general, nature, social, psychological and economic situations, and even wine songs are represented in the Samaritan Arabic poetry written in Middle Arabic.

The subject of the following twelve line poem is rare. It is a deviation from the Samaritan religion which is, as we know, very rare among the members of the Samaritan community. The number of this religio-ethnic group today is 625. The writer of the poem is the high-priest ‘Imrân ben Salāma ben Ghazāl (1809–1875). He became high-priest (יִזְהָר הַיָּד) after the death of his father in 1856/7 until the year 1859.

Among the Samaritans, there was a rumour concerning the high-priest ‘Imrân, that he left (or was compelled to leave) the office of the high-priesthood during

2 Tsedaka 2001: 136. The number of the Samaritans at the beginning of 2003 is 655, 309 in Nablus and 346 in Holon; 346 males and 309 females; 286 married persons; 194 unmarried males and 132 unmarried females; 8 widowers or divorced males and 35 widows ot divorced females.
4 See Robertson 1938, col. 233, note 1. Since 1624 after Sadaqa ben Ghazāl (1624–26) high-priests stem from Ilhamar, Levites, and no longer from Aaron. See Robertson 1938, col. 227, note 2; Tsedaka 2001: 82. Tsedaka mentions at the same page that ‘Imrân functioned unofficially as high-priest since 1826.

his last fifteen years (1859–1874)\(^5\) because he married a woman divorced by a Samaritan who converted to Islam or because that woman was a widow.\(^6\) Nothing is known about that Samaritan man who belonged to the Mufarraqi (Marvivi) family. The name of the woman was Lea (Leqa).\(^7\)

‘Imran’s son (d. 1909) describes his father as ‘Fried Usmane Baha, ‘Fried ben, unique in his time’.\(^8\) Other epithets to be found are ‘al-karm al-faxm fikheen ‘Imran’, ‘the honored and venerated uncle the priest ‘Imran’, ‘honoured and distinguished’.\(^9\) Therefore, and on the basis of the following poem, one may have doubts about the correctness of the above-mentioned rumour. Furthermore, a Samaritan written source ascribes the renunciation of the high-priesthood by ‘Imran in favour of his brother’s young son Jacob b. Aharon the Levite (1838–1916) in 1859 to the hard situation of the tiny Samaritan community numbering 150 souls. A division of duties was established. ‘Imran became responsible for the secular affairs of the Samaritans and he was a member of a court for sects and minorities,\(^10\) whereas Jacob, the young man, dealt with the religious issues as a high-priest.\(^11\)

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5 Ben-Uzzi 1960:69.
6 It is an open secret that priests are not allowed to marry divorced women, see Leviticus 21:7. For further discussion see the two chapters (nos. 19 and 20) on marriage and divorce in the work of al-Kāfī by Muḥammad al-Dīn Yūsuf b. Sallāma al-‘Askari; Shavit, Goldstein & Beer 1983: 385.
7 Its Arabic equivalents are شفقة راية. The name of ‘Imran’s mother was Layiqa Sururi from Gaza who lived over one hundred years, Ben-Uzzi 1960:67.
9 Cowley 1909 (Vol. I): 148 line 1, 283 line 1, 362 line 12, al-farīz in the sense of ‘distinguished’ is not attested in Arabic lexicons. The adjective al-ḥaqr ‘the inconsiderable, despised, miserable’ is common in Samaritan literature when writers or scribes mention their names at the end of a work. See Cowley 1909 (Vol. I): 716 line 3, 765 line 16. This adjective is similar to the equivalent English ‘humble’ used in the 18th and 19th centuries. The adjectives ‘the smallest first slave and the most humble’ (العبد الأصغر الأول الحمّر) are used by ‘Imran about himself, see Firkovich Sam XIII 23, p. 2b in the National Library of Russia in St. Petersburg.
10 See Ben-Uzzi 1960:66 “He held a respected position in the Turkish government similar to a member in magistrate’s court in our time” (وقد تولى منصبًا مهترئاً في الحكومة التركية). Ben Uzzi, known as Abū Shafiq (1899–1987) was the grandson of Jacob ben Aharon.
11 See Ben-Uzzi 1974: 43–44 تولى الامامة يومًا كأنه فتى في زمن عمه الكاهن عمران. They are all names of the enigmatic person who is described as a descendant of the holy house of the Prophet and who is also described as a descendant of the kahans of Jerusalem, the president of the community of the Samaritans, and a member of the high-priesthood.
In addition to that, the high-priest 'Imrān functioned as an informant and teacher for J. H. Peternann\(^\text{12}\) in reciting the Samaritan Pentateuch, had connections with the British consul in Jerusalem, James Finn (1846–1862), and the ambassador in Istanbul and played a central role in the acquisition of the Samaritan manuscripts in the dasht (geniza) of Nablus in 1864 by the Karaite leader Abraham Firkovich (1787–1874).\(^\text{13}\) Last, but not least, he was a prolific writer of hymns and poems in Samaritan Aramaic and Arabic as well as a copyist and witness for marriage contracts.\(^\text{14}\) He wrote poems in Arabic when he was nineteen years old as demonstrated in a manuscript written and copied by him in 1828 shows.\(^\text{15}\) Among the works by ‘Imrān there are a commentary of two parts on the book of Exodus and a treatise on inheritance.\(^\text{16}\) The attempt of Mills to teach ‘Imrān the English language was not successful.\(^\text{17}\)

The difficult situation of the family of the priest ‘Imrān, as we shall see later, should be taken into consideration with regard to their being led to resign from the high-priesthood. His father, Shalma b. Ṭabia (1782–1857), also stepped down from the high-priesthood. Shalma described his community as sīrdīma, “a fragmented group”.\(^\text{18}\) It is noteworthy that ‘Imrān’s successor in the high-priesthood, his nephew, Jacob ben Aaron, faced in 1878 an attempt to dismiss him of his office. A procès-verbal (madḥaṭa) was admitted to the government. The appeal was supported by a great number in the Samaritan community including two priests who were his cousins. This position of the cousins was not in accordance with the testament of their father ‘Imrān discussed below. The claim that Jacob the high-priest was ‘evil doer’ (mufsīd) and should be punished was turned down because ‘the respected ones’ (al-muṯābarān), in the community were on the side of Jacob. The antagonists intended to ‘seize the findings of the synagogue’ (ṭabīθ

\(^{12}\) See Gaster 1906: 514, 519; Peternann 1868: 3.

\(^{13}\) See Harviainen & Shehadeh 1994: 170 seq. In those days Samaritans had good relations with the Karaites in Jerusalem, see A. B. Samaritan News 258–259 (28.4.1980), p. 38.

\(^{14}\) See Cowley 1909 (Vol. II): xcvi (index of authors); Roberson 1938, col. 405 (Index of names of Samaritans); Roberson 1962, col. 298. See the following manuscripts of marriage contracts in the Firkovich collection housed in the National Library of Russia in St. Petersburg: Sam X, 71, 72, 73, 75, 76, 78, 90, 91. These manuscripts date back to the 20’s until the 50’s of the 19th century. Compare also Ms Sassoon 716 found today in JRUL, as Sam 377 and Firkovich Sam IX 268, MS Shechem High Priest (v’r) 21 in the Jewish National and University Library in Jerusalem. See Pummer 1993; 1997.

\(^{15}\) Firkovich Ms Sam XIII 23 in the National Library of Russia in St. Petersburg.

\(^{16}\) Number three and number 53 in a hand-written list of Samaritan Arabic books at the disposal of the priest ‘Abd al-Muḥīn Ṣadaqa. A copy of this list was given to me by its writer ‘Abd al-Muḥīn Ṣadaqa in 13 March 1975 and I thank him for it.

\(^{17}\) Mills 1868: 186.

Another example of a Samaritan person who converted to Islam in the first half of the 19th century in 1841 is reported by Jacob Joseph Ṣadaqa al-Shalabi born in 1829. A woman called Ġalîla (Yokheved) Iṣḥaq al-Asmar al-Danafi, the widow of Shalabi ‘Abd al-Latîf ben Ṣadaqa married a Muslim lover. Her fourteen year old son Isaac was forced to embrace Islam and was given the name Aṣad while his sister Zaǧûla died as a result of torture.\

Samaritans today still tell of Mubârak’s being present at the horrible incident in which this woman and her two children were forced to embrace Islam. What he saw and heard led him immediately to declare that he accepts Islam. Though he continued to celebrate Samaritan feasts with his family he became excommunicated by the family of the priests and the other families which strongly condemned the event in order to deter others from following him. Mubârak was put upon a horse and passed through the city of Nablus in a procession of triumph. The subject of Samaritan conversion into Islam during the last few centuries need a separate investigation. Generalizations without evidence such as “Up until 1859 ... many Samaritans were killed and others were forcefully converted to Islam” do not contribute much to our knowledge and understanding.

It was during these days, when the ‘Ulamâ‘ declared the Samaritans not to be Ahl al-Kitâb (‘People of the Book’) that the Samaritan community underwent hardship. It was claimed that the Samaritan community did not possess any book of the following five holy books: the Torah, the New Testament, Psalms (Zabûr), the Prophets and the Qur’ân. The help to counteract this sensitive and dangerous accusation came from Jerusalem. Its Sefardi Chief Rabbi Ḥayyim Avraham Gagin (1842–1848) known as Ḥakham Bâshi acknowledged in a document that the Samaritans are a branch of the children of Israel and they do believe in the five books of Moses, the Pentateuch.

The governor of the Nablus district in the period in question was Maḥmûd ‘Ābd al-Hâdî the Qaysî and clashes between Qaysî and Yamanî factions were inflamed. The British consul in Jerusalem, James Finn, also extended some help

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19 See page 237, the last page in manuscript No. 7087 in Yad Ben Zvi Library in Jerusalem.

20 Other secular equivalents to Yokheved are: جلول، نجلاء، نجلة.

21 See Ben-Zvi 1970: 50–51.

22 I learned this from my friend Binyamim Tsedaka in a letter dated October 15, 2000. Compare what Jacob El-Shelabi say in the previous note.


25 Elazar 1977: 33; Rogers 1855: 30.

to the Samaritans. Minorities in Nablus were distinguished from the Muslim majority by the colour of their headcloths. Christians, numbering in the last quarter of the 19th century five hundred, used the blue colour, the two hundred Jews used the yellow colour and the Samaritans, about one hundred fifty, had the red colour. For two decades until 1849 the Samaritans were prohibited to celebrate their Passover (Feast of Qurban) on Mount Gerizim.

The poem in question is a sort of condemnation of the act of Mubārak (Mbārak, in spoken Arabic) Ibrāhim Mufarrāg (Barukh Avraham Marhiv) namely, leaving the Samaritan religion and embracing Islam. His new name became Muḥammad Saʿīd al-Misilmānī and it is claimed that the contemporary al-Misilmānī family in Nablus stem from him. But it should also be noted that the Arabic family name is known in Nablus since at least 1819, that is to say, more than two generations before the conversion of Barukh. The late high-priest Jacob ben 'Uzzi (1899–1987) related that the name of the father of the Misilmānī family was Mubārak Mufarrāg. His family, the Marhivī, comes in the second or third place with regard to number after al-Ālīf. After the division of Palestine (1947) the majority of its members moved to live in Jaffa and later in Ḥolon. The rest of Marḥiv family live in Nablus and most of its members are workers and craftsmen. The number of the descendants of Mubārak (Muḥammad Saʿīd al-Misilmānī) surpasses much the number of Marhiv family.

This short poem is preserved, as far as we know, in two manuscripts. The first manuscript has no title and it was copied by the priest 'Abd al-Mu'in Sadaqa in Nablus. This priest, as mentioned before, is the great-grandson of 'Imrān the high-priest, the author of this poem. The poem is on page 80. This manuscript including 109 pages numbered by Samaritan characters consists of the following sections:

27 On this period see Finn 1878; Warren 1876: 206–235; Mills 1868; Rogers 1863; Rogers 1855, A. B. Samaritan News 258–259 (28.4.1980), pp. 34–41.
28 Warren 1876: 207–208. Compare the twenty-fifth tale of the Thousand and One Nights.
29 Other Arabic equivalents to Barukh are مصادر, معمود, ممكن, راطب, see Firkovich Ms. Sam. III 2 page 46a. This manuscript housed in the National Library of Russia in St. Petersburg was copied in 1331 A.D.
30 A. B. Samaritan News 722–724 (9,10.1998), p. 80, Ben-'Uzzi 1960: 38: "وهي أيضا عائلة: Asembled من قبل سنة تقريبًا ويزيد عدد أفرادها الآن من المئة ([f al-Misilmānī] and it was a family that embraced Islam about one hundred years ago and the number of its members today exceeds one hundred").
31 'Īsā al-Misilmānī, See Firkovich Ms Sam XIV 33, p. 3b, in the National Library of Russia in St. Petersburg.
33 Sincere thanks are due to my friends the priest and Yefet ben Ratson Tsedaka who sent me a copy of the manuscript.
A) Fragment from Memar Marqe, pp. 1–16 in Samaritan script and marginal remarks are added such as Arabic translations of Samaritan Aramaic words such as: فائدة = 'ahwa (‘benefit’); أرض بارده = aruzah (‘uncultivated land’); تختيل = ‘al ‘adin (‘to be shy, ashamed’); لا يريد = al ‘adin (‘does not want’); ربتيمته = daratamah (‘their children’); حداثته = tellamah (‘his youth’); ذاته = kelamah (‘himself’): بارده = tamah (‘cold, f. s.’). At the end of this section the following colophon is given:

Translation: That is what I found in a book sent to me by a friend from Britain. He says that these additions he has found in copies (books) of Memar Marqe kept there [Britain] and they are not included in Memar Marqe which is available to us. Therefore I changed them into the holy language so that every one who likes to read them can distinguish between them. I am the poor and humble ElFazar ben Tsedaka the priest in Nablus, 20th of December 1964 AD.

B) Bilingual glossary, Samaritan Aramaic from Memar Marqe and Hebrew (עברית/ערמני) arranged according to alphabetical order, pp. 17–25. These nine pages, divided as a rule, into two columns (sometimes a third column is added at the beginning in which the root of the word is indicated) consist of approximately two hundred words. As a title for this section it is stated that these words used in Memar Marqe appear in more than one form. A few examples are in order: אביר = ‘enemy’; דרש = ‘to ask for’; לב, לבוב, למ = קולמים, קונים (‘heart, soul’); עב = ‘to pass’; אעשל = ‘to tormented’; רע = ‘uncultivated land’; שלח = ‘to send’. At the end of this section there is a colophon saying that the same priest copied it on the 24th of December 1963, almost one

Pages 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 11 and 12 respectively.

This manifestation of Neo-Samaritan Hebrew reminds us of mediaeval Hebrew under the impact of Middle Arabic, the absence of v in the first two phrases, asyndetic clause, Britain is written as in Arabic, plural feminine which does not refer to human beings is regarded as feminine singular (מהי, מהי) etc. does has the meaning of, in order, so that. The two words after the year are not ordinary, especially the last one. These two words are analogous to the common Samaritan colophon ал אסמאעיל, the followers of Ishmael.

Words in the marginal glossary form are modern Hebrew expressing the same meaning. The last words are a kind of calque from the Arabic language.

The colophon is written on the 24th of December 1963.

1963/12/24
year before writing the first section.

C) Collection of prayers, hymns, *bit durran* ('string of pearls') and songs of praise by various priests, elders and poets taken from the book of Dr. Cowley and other source at the disposal of the scribe in Nablus dating back to the year 1708. The authors of this religious material are ʿĀmram Dāre (ʿImrān al-Zamān), Ab Gillūgā b. Qala, the elder Ṭabīa b. Dārta, the high-priest Ṭabīa b. Tseđaka, Shālma b. Ab Zahūta b. Yosef ha-Maṭṭri, the elder Ḥizqia b. ʿĀbed El, Abraham b. Yūsef ha-Qābbāsī, Ṭabīa b. Isaac, ʿĀmrām b. Shalma b. Ṭabīa, Abraham Jacob al-Danfī known as al-ʿAyye, Ṭabīa b. Ab Zahūta, Abisha'. In addition one finds poems in the Arabic language and script as well as two testaments in Arabic by the high-priests ʿImrān and his grandson Tseđaka b. Isaac Tseđaka (1894–1971), the father of the scribe Elzāz Tseđaka (ʿAbd al-Muʿīn Sadaqa). This third section of the manuscript under discussion is the largest one. It begins on page 27 and ends at the the end, on page 109. The date of copying this part is the 26th of November 1986.

Marginal notes and explanations in Arabic can also be found in this section. On the top of page 70 the reader finds the two words عقد نية (‘setting of intention’). In the light of the material given in this third section, namely the poems, it is safe to say that ʿImrān experienced poverty, deaths of members of his family, desperation and failure in his first marriage at least. Some sources speak about a third marriage. Besides, the general conditions of the Samaritan community in Nablus were not encouraging. ʿImrān’s father, Salāma, was very poor and tried to earn livelihood as a tailor. He describes himself in one of his supplications as “humble, poor, unfortunate, in need, weak”. Samaritan oral tradition speaks about a close friendship between Salāma and Ḥusain ʿAbd al-Ḥādī, the governor of Gaza. The later used to help the high-priest financially. A written evidence by ʿImrān himself from the year 1826 speaks about very high prices in Nablus. The price of an ounce of meat was thirty

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38 Cowley 1909.

39 See Gaster 1940: 128. Mills 1868: 184 wrote about the second and third wives: “Both wives were living together with their husband on the best of terms”. Some Samaritans such as Salāma ben Yaʿqūb ben Muḥān al-Danafī from the 18th century married seven times. On the other hand the New Testament states that the Samaritan woman married five times and she had an illegal sixth, see John 4:18.


silver and the price of a saa of corn reached eleven Qurūsh (‘piasters’).

A virgin girl who did not like ‘Imrān became his first wife in 1826 when he was seventeen years old. All the children that she gave birth to (some say thirteen, others five) have died. Then ‘Imrān married for the third time Lā‘īqa bint As‘ad (1820–1910) whom he loved and she gave birth to four children, three boys, Ef‘azar, Salāma and Ishāq, and a daughter called Zahra. It seems that the daughter Badriyya was born from the other wife of ‘Imrān. The great-grandson of ‘Imrān, the priest ‘Abd al-Mu‘ṭīn Šadāqa (Abū Wadjah, Ef‘azar Tsedaka, born in 2.2.1927) calls her “Our lady the late Lā‘īqa may God sanctify her secret” and gives the venerated epithet “Imrān al-zamān” to her husband. El‘azar the son, as well as ‘Imrān’s two younger brothers, Isaac and Aaron, died while ‘Imrān was alive.

43 See MS Firkovich Sam III 19, p. 23a in the margin, in the National Library of Russia in St. Petersburg Y. (وكانت ذلك السنة خلاف شديد عظيم... وفيه اللحم)... فض وصاع الفضاح لحاق أحد عشر قرش) Compare Ms Firkovich Sam XIII 18 of the same year, saa of corn six, a roll of meat eighty four, roll of rice forty four, roll of oil seventy two.

44 She is most likely Hānunjah bint Ya‘qūb bint Šadāqa al-Dānī as indicated in the Ketubbah (marriage contract) in Firkovich Sam X 21 and 84 in the National Library of Russia in St. Petersburg, sąhīf, tārīkh tawārīkh lā‘īqa wa‘l-mu‘ṭīn Šadāqa, her dowry was 4900 Egyptian units of currency. The term “Egyptian pieces” (فلس مصريه) is used since the 17th century as shown in Firkovich Sam XIV 1. Other sorts of money such as μασαρι, μαμμνι, șirîqa, nişf akhl, bishli are mentioned in Firkovich Sam XIV 35. Cf. A. B. Samaritan News 544–545 (7.10.1991), pp. 55–76, Vilsker 1992; Pummer 1993: 35, who says that ‘Imrān was 24+ years!

45 See the marginal note by Ef‘azar Šadāqa in the manuscript of Nablus page 77 and compare Petermann 1868: 3. On the basis of a letter by the priest Ef‘azar Šadāqa sent to me on 8 November 2000 the following information is indicated. The high priest was called “Umrān al-zamān” due to his efforts to take care of the Samaritan community in all aspects of life. His first wife was Latīfa who gave birth to thirteen children who all died except one daughter called Warda. His second wife was Lā‘īqa who gave birth to Ishāq, Salāma and a daughter named Badri. He left the office of high priesthood because he was fat. Mubārak was named “al-mukāṭīs”. This information is based on oral tradition.

46 Zahra ‘Imrān Salāma got married in 1865, see MS. BL Or 12375d. This marriage is mentioned only in Kahle’s list where there is mention of six Samaritans who married three times see Kahle 1930: 89–103.

47 The full name of the priest is ‘Abd al-Mu‘ṭīn Šadāqa Ishāq ‘Imrān Salāma Ghazāl Ishāq Ibrāhīm Šadāqa (سيدتنا المرحومة لانفقة قدس الله سرها) in the manuscript discussed below, page 77 in the margin and see page 83 in the margin and page 98 at the top.

48 See the following selected lines of a poem on page 77:

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\text{אָבָר מֵאֵל אוֹכַל כְּפָרְקַיָּנָה}
\text{מַתִּתָּאֵל אֵל חַרְרִיָּנָה}
\text{כַּרְלָמִיָּהּ מֵאֵל כָּפָרְקַיָּנָה}
\text{אִרְבֻּה הָרָאוֹרֵי}
\text{שֵׁי נַעְרֹאֵל מֵאֵל כָּפָרְקַיָּנָה}
\text{בָּאָר מֵאֱלֹהֵי}
\text{מַתִּתָּאֵל אֵל חַרְרִיָּנָה}
\text{כַּרְלָמִיָּהּ מֵאֵל כָּפָרְקַיָּנָה}
\text{אִרְבֻּה הָרָאוֹרֵי}
\text{שֵׁי נַעְרֹאֵל מֵאֱלֹהֵי}
\]
His son Isaac visited London in 1903 and sold some Samaritan manuscripts to the Jewish Rabbi Moses Gaster (1856–1939) and to the British Library. Wardah (Ṣīṣ) was thirteen years old in 1855 when she married Šāliḥ ben al-Shalih _IOS_ Ibrahim al Šāliḥ al-Murğan ben Salāmah al-Danafi, the maternal uncle of her father. Educated elders of the Samaritan community either passed away or were ineffective and the ignorant ones and the bankers (Ṣarrafun) were the leaders and had the upper hand on the community. Evil intentions and idle talk prevailed. People were engaged with their carnal appetites. ‘Imrān the high-priest in person was hit and kicked by a soldier in a public place in Nablus and the new ruler was present.

In view of the facts stated above, it is no wonder to find that ‘Imrān became fed up with such a life (عَلَى حَيَاتِي) and has expressed his deep sadness and mourning in several lines as shortly we shall see. He wished on several occasions to depart this earthly life and to be buried beside his father in a very deep grave.

In his relatively short testament the following information is available. ‘Imrān does not want shouting, noise and increase in mourning on his death. He asked his family to take care in washing his corpse and covering it with winding sheet. The coffin should be taller than him and made of the best wood. The washing bench (dakka) should be new. After his funeral both should be kept for the use of other Samaritans in the future. Reading from the Torah follows putting the dead body in the coffin. He asks his children Ishâq (d.1932) and Salâma (d. 1909) and his wife (her name is not indicated) to continue their life as before. The key of a sort of an attic (siddi/e) should be kept with Ishâq only and not even with his mother. ‘Imrān had a shop shared by Jacob the son of his brother and with Yaqūb al-Mūsa. The father ‘Imrān says to his son Ishâq: consult your cousin Yaqūb, Ishâq Lutfi and others in the Samaritan community who like you especially Murğan

An elegy on his son Elpazar is to be found on pages 81–82 beginning with:


49 See Gaster 1906: 513.
50 See Robertson 1938, col. 333. Mills 1868: 194 writes: “The males are marriageable at fourteen, and the females at ten, and in some cases as early as eight years of age”.
51 Such as Jacob al-Shelabi who was illiterate but was one of the Samaritan leaders and tourists’s guide who lived mainly on tips (baqstitial, baqstitial) from them, see Smith 1870: 291 seq.; Warren 1876: 226.
52 See A. B. Samaritan News 258–259 (28.4.1980), p. 40. At the same day the priest wrote a letter to James Finn the British consul in Jerusalem.
53 See pages 75 line 2, 92 line 13, 98 line 12.
54 The term used here is عَلَى حَيَاتِي, other terms to be found in Samaritan Arabic literature are تَفْسِيل, مَفْسِل see Cowley 1909 (Vol. II): 852, 853, 854, 855, 858, 866.
the husband of your sister. The big house goes to Isaac and the small one to Salâma. The rest of the building (dâr) will be divided into three thirds (apparently, Isaac, Salâma and their mother). The father urges his son Isaac to read, learn and preserve his faith during all his life. With regard to Isaac’s marriage the father advises him to follow the choice of his mother. ‘Imrân urges his son Isaac to marry if possible the daughter of his sister Zahra the wife of Ishâq Luṭfi. Such a marriage would be realized if Ishâq Luṭfi agrees to give his daughter to Isaac instead of Isaac’s fiancée al-sinyüra (!) to the son of his wife. On the basis of a letter written by ‘Imrân in 1858 to al-Khawâfa’Õda it is clear that the priest had a share in an oil press and quarrels with regard to business. The priest used to visit Jerusalem for commercial reasons and stayed overnight at Karaite homes. Petermann mentions that one day ‘Imrân told him that the place of hell is in fact Jerusalem.

Charles Warren wrote about ‘Imrân whom he knew personally:

A delightful old gentleman, the only one of the Samaritans I had any sympathy with ... told me his melancholy state ... he felt he was gradually dying day by day, and talked of being fed on poisonous food; poor old man, whatever was the cause, it was evident he was sinking slowly, and that his energies were going; probably his house in Nâblus was filled with impure air from the bad arrangements within, or perhaps it was constitutional alone seemed to guard the treasures of the Samaritans...and prescribed charcoal for his disorder, which appeared to be a kind of dysentery ...

A few lines by ‘Imrân are in order:

وُقِفَ الْحُبُّ بِتِعْمَمٍ مَنْسَجٌ بِمِرَارٍ
عَلَى الْإِيمَانِ وَشِرُوعَةَ الْخَمْسِ اسْتَقَارٍ

After the loss of the beloved ones how my passion (fire) will sleep (die down) and how can I enjoy food mixed with bitterness. ‘Imrân says: “O Lord bestow upon me death while having faith in the five books (Torah):”

They are busy in satisfying the lust of their souls and in the love of women men were lost.

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55 See pages 92–93.
56 See Firkovich Ms Sam XIV 25, in the National Library of Russia in St. Petersburg.
57 Petermann 1860: 279.
59 See page 75 line 5.
60 Page 82 lines 8 and 11.
61 Page 98 line 7.
The second manuscript, by the high-priest ʿImrān ben Salāma ben Ghazāl al-Ḥiftāwī, which includes the poem on Mubārak Ibrāhīm Mufarraq who left the Samaritan religion in 1841 is kept in Berlin. It is Ms. Or. Quart. 1095 in the Staatsbibliothek and consists of 229 folios of prayers for the Sabbaths of Pentecost, Yom Maqrata (reading day of the Torah in remembrance of revelation on Mt. Sinai) and the feast of harvest. This manuscript was copied in 1845 by Shelaḥ b. Abraḥām b. Shelāh b. Ab Sakuwwa ha-Danfi. The poem in question is added at the end of the manuscript in 227b. A description of this manuscript as well as a publication of the poem accompanied by a Hebrew translation, were published in the periodical A. B. Samaritan News in 1998. It is to be noted that the poem in this manuscript appears in Samaritan letters while in the Nablus manuscript, the script is Arabic.

Moreover, there are several differences between the texts of the poem in these two manuscripts. It should be stated that the Hebrew translation is not always accurate. The poem on Mubārak / al-Musilmānī was written in 1262 Ḥīrā, 1846 A.D. five years after his conversion. It is known to us that this Mubārak was in 1840 one of the scribes of Ms No. 7023 in Yad Ben-Zvi Library in Jerusalem. A year later Mubārak / al-Musilmānī copied a prayer found in Ms. Or. Quart. 538 in Berlin on the 28th of Rabīʿ 1257 Ḥīrā, 9 September 1841 A.D. The high-priest ʿImrān, who condemned the conversion of Mubārak in the following poem, wrote these words in the same place “لا خرج كتبها ولم الحروف من گرس الس จากها اللى تو دع عزراء والذين” , which means “Its scribe having burns has left the religion of the God-fearing Moses for the religion of Muḥammad the atheist (zendik)”. One more piece of information about Mubārak is that he was one of the three scribes of Ms No. 7023 in Yad Ben-Zvi Library in Jerusalem. Mubārak accomplished his part in 1840, his brother Saʿd in 1857 and Ṣāliḥ ben Ibrāhīm ben Ṣāliḥ ben Muḥān al-Danfi in 1849.

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63 I did not examine the Berlin manuscript and here I depend on the version published in A. B.
Originally in Samaritan script. The title is missing in the Berlin manuscript.

66 Berlin manuscript reads: Mibarak, Ana, shaitan instead of Mibarak, Ana, shaitan respectively.

67 Berlin manuscript reads: Kada ya, ibgirin instead of Kada ya, ibgirin respectively.

68 Berlin manuscript reads: Nund, Kadar instead of Nund, Kadar respectively.

69 Berlin manuscript reads: Kadar, Kadar instead of Kadar, Kadar respectively.

70 Berlin manuscript reads: Matofta, Haier instead of Matofta, Haier respectively.

71 Berlin manuscript reads: Artecher, Haier instead of Artecher, Haier respectively.

72 Berlin manuscript reads: Lo, nant, keshin instead of Lo, nant, keshin respectively.

73 Berlin manuscript reads: Lo, nant, keshin instead of Lo, nant, keshin respectively.

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TRANSLATION

He Said it\(^\text{77}\) when Mubãrak Ibrãhîm Mufarrãq Left the Religion.

May God curse him\(^\text{78}\) forever until the Day of Judgement, O God Amen.

What a pity, where was your mind O Mubãrak? No doubt it was cooperating with the devil.

I did not think you would do that O fool, but my mind was directing and tempting your vain boasting.

The devil’s deception dominated\(^\text{79}\) your thinking and you are not accepted\(^\text{80}\) anymore, even your vows\(^\text{81}\) were numerous.

If only you had passed away from this world it would be better for you, O overturned because of your shame\(^\text{82}\)!

We hoped that you will be worthy of righteousness, disappointment came and all your lights grew gloomy.

I wonder, did the greediness of this world befall upon you or was the star of destiny of your birthday unblessed?

What happened so that you have lost the hereafter altogether\(^\text{83}\) and the future\(^\text{84}\) of your fire (hell) will not extinguish.

Paradise became forbidden to you, why should not be so since you are disloyal to your Torah?\(^\text{85}\)

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\(^\text{77}\) The pronoun is in the third person masculine singular though the feminine would be expected because it refers to ‘poem’ which is feminine in Arabic, spoken and written alike. Yet it seems possible to explain this masculine pronoun as referring to words which are masculine such as šīr, kalam meaning ‘poetry, speech’.

\(^\text{78}\) Literally, may God curse him a curse forever. In ordinary structure in written Arabic one finds either لعنة الله إلى الأبد or لعنة الله لعنة أبدية.

\(^\text{79}\) The usage of the verb طمس (‘to efface, erase, wipe out’) with the preposition على is meaningless. Therefore I translated ‘dominated’, taking into consideration that the required verb in this connection is طغي.

\(^\text{80}\) Accepted by the Samaritan community. The reader has to bear in mind that this statement is declared by the high-priest, the highest religious authority.

\(^\text{81}\) First of all the phoneme ُل which is used in cities instead of the phoneme ُل in literary Arabic as well as in fellahite dialects, for instance. Secondly, the standard plural form of the singular نادر is نادر. The form andār is not known in Arabic and it was chosen because of the needed rhyme -ārik.

\(^\text{82}\) معيار in the sense of عار (shame, disgrace) is used also on page 98 line 8 in the Nablus manuscript.

\(^\text{83}\) Either in the meaning of the colloquial ‘sawa’ or the written expression ‘awāːan bi-sawāː’.

\(^\text{84}\) The literal translation is ‘tomorrow’ and, in fact, the additional sense of bukra in Palestinian Arabic was attached to the equivalent literary word.

\(^\text{85}\) Literally ‘your five books’.
You are no longer accepted\(^86\) (or to be forgiven) by our lord the messenger (Moses), he is your antagonist\(^87\). O miserable if you can realize\(^88\)

My grief on you, by God, for what has occurred to you and nothing can be done in order to drive away your disgrace

Had you died we could have hoped to meet, Moses\(^89\) would have interceded and paradise would be your abode

After this state you are hopeless\(^90\) and after all this delusion you are not Barukh (his Hebrew name which means ‘blessed’) anymore

He who left the religion of Moses

Has no salvation

He will step into fire

Even though everything he did was good

To conclude, an attempt was made to deal with what was at our disposal concerning the life and works of the high-priest 'Imrân ben Salâma ben Ghazäl al-Ḫiftâwi (1809–1875). The main idea of the poem discussed is that Samaritans who convert their religion (in this case to Islam) have no chance of going to paradise. In another short poem it is obvious that Samaritans will enter the ‘abode’ viz ‘the paradise’ either through their good deeds which please God or repentance for the slips they committed\(^91\). This denomination of research, articles devoted to single scholars are important desiderata in Samaritan studies and their significance go beyond the “Who is Who” series.

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\(^86\) Compare Cowley 1909 (Vol. II): 463, line 8; 765 line 8 below.

\(^87\) The ordinary form is خَصْصُ.

\(^88\) The third verbal form is used instead of the fourth because of rhyme.

\(^89\) Originally ‘speaker’ and the meaning is obvious كليم الله which is an epithet of Moses.

\(^90\) Literally ‘hope in you is absurd’.

\(^91\) See the Nabûs manuscript page 98:

\begin{align*}
\text{yalit š‘urri bay al-bab ma al-dar} \\
\text{yripsi allah wa an khalfat fahmar} \\
\text{fahmar l-insaf al-adār taktar} \\
\text{wa an hafs wa fard al-bāb faghur}
\end{align*}

Death is a door and all people will enter it, I wish I knew what is the abode next to the door.

The abode is the Garden of Eden if you worked to please God and if you disobeyed then fire (hell).

They are the two places that a human being has, so chose for yourself one of them!

Human beings have nothing but paradise if they acted [well] and if they made a slip God is much-forgiving.

Similar opinion with regard to repentence is expressed by ‘Imrân in the handwritten book Kitâb sabîl al-lahfân li-matârfat al-‘imân by Eľązar bēn $adaqa bēn ‘Amram, Nabûs 1979, p. 2. I thank the priest Elfazar and Yefct bēn Ratson Tsedaka for the copy of this work too.
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