



The Samaritan Passover

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was such as is constantly being discovered throughout the country, and which can be dated with a fair amount of certainty somewhere about the seventh or eighth centuries. To this Mr. Hanauer observes that there happen to be at present in Jerusalem several reproductions of the Medeba mosaics. They are not all of the same size, and are evidently by different hands. Two of them are at the Anglican College (St. George's), and one of these shows some of the panels referred to by Mr. Dickie. Amongst them is a picture of a man leading a horse or donkey. Mr. Hanauer hopes to be able to obtain and forward a photograph of this panel.]

THE SAMARITAN PASSOVER.

By the Rev. ROLAND G. STAFFORD.

THE following account of the Samaritan Passover¹ and the diagram were obtained from the present High Priest, Yakûb, in the course of a journey through Palestine during the winter of 1900. It was written at his dictation by his son, and having no knowledge of Arabic, I was dependent upon my dragoman for the translation, and cannot therefore answer for it :—

“On the eve of New Year's Day the whole sect assemble and appoint an elder ('a man who knows'). They collect a sum of 3,800 piastres to give to him to spend on the offering ('Corban') in order that he may prepare all things necessary 20 days before mounting Gerizim, when all things needful must be quite ready.

“After 20 days the ascent of Gerizim is made seven days before the 'Corban Festival,' though this early (beforehand) ascent is optional. There are some who mount 10 days before the appointed time, and some who mount seven days beforehand, and some who mount one day beforehand ; but those who mount one day beforehand will be those who are in mourning (owing to death). No one of this sect is allowed to be late in mounting at the appointed time of the 'Corban,' not even if he had the greatest of hindrances—*e.g.*, even if he is very ill—he is obliged to perform his duty and ascend the mountain : such a one they put on a mule and take him up to eat the Passover Corban. One day before this Passover they make thin unleavened bread like that of the Jews, which they call Massah, and they eat up this during the seven days of this Unleavened-bread Feast.

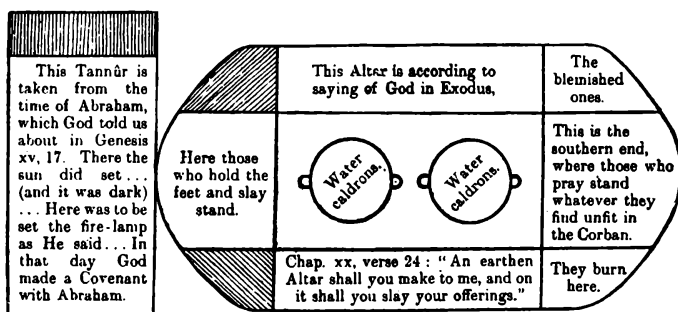
“The day which is the 3rd of Nisan (April 15th), or the 29th of Adâr (April 10th), or the 7th of Nisan (April 19th), or the 24th of Nisan (May 6th)—these are the appointed dates in their reckoning. They bring with them seven sheep which are unblemished, that is to say,

¹ Cf. *Quarterly Statement*, 1901, pp. 82–92. [Another interesting description of the Samaritan Passover from an eye-witness is given by Professor Curtiss in his recently published *Primitive Semitic Religion To-day* (Appendix F).]

which are not one-eyed, nor broken limbed, nor having one ear jagged, nor bald-headed, nor one horn broken. They stand on a spot well known to them, Jebel eṭ-Ṭôr (Mount of Light), a point on Mount Gerizim, which is one of their many possessions according to their title-deeds drawn out in their names for many centuries. Seven men slay the 'Corban' together. Each of these men who know the method of slaying stand to slay, and they all slay at once and at the same moment. Whilst this is going on the High Priest will be reading an appropriate passage, which is a thanksgiving to God for His Covenant with them.

"Even to this day do they still perform this 'Corban'."

"This 'Corban' dates from the time they left Egypt against the will of their enemies; they were happy at their safe and successful departure, whilst the natives of Egypt were in great distress at the cries of their first-born. And God instituted this 'Corban' as a memorial of the exodus from Egypt.



"This is the diagram of the 'Tannûr' (place of Sacrifice, *lit.* 'furnace,') on which they roast their unblemished sheep, out of which they take nothing except the entrails, otherwise they are intact. .

"This is the fashion of the altar on which they burn the entrails, and where they burn all that remains after they have finished eating. All must be burnt.

"They never allow any stranger to eat of this 'Corban,' nor do they give him a chance of touching it.

"And this 'Corban' they slay on the night of the 24th of Nisan (&c.) at sunset, and whilst they are doing this they continue praying to the One God. And the 'Corban' is ready at six o'clock of that night.

"They eat in happiness and joy.

"Every man stands with his staff in his hand and his loins girded, and eats and then retires. Now this is an account of the 'Corban'."

"And when the 'Corban' is finished they remain on this mountain for seven days and no longer, so as not to run the risk of touching, seeing, and eating any leavened bread as we have said before.

"This is the diagram of the caldron in which they boil the water to

scald the 'Corban,' and the form of the altar, and the 'Tannûr' on which they roast it after this fashion.

"And on this altar, under which are placed logs of wood, they burn the fat, as we have said before.

"In the centre are the two pans of boiling water for skinning and fleecing the 'Corban.' From under the altar (as in the diagram) they remove the ashes on which they have burnt the entrails.

"Half an hour before the 'Corban' is removed from the Tannûr a crier cries, and the sect appears to you so happy, as if they had won a great sum of money or a victory, to which there is nothing in comparison.

"This is the full and complete end."

NOTES ON PROFESSOR LIBBEY'S ACCOUNT OF THE JORDAN VALLEY AND PETRA.

By Professor HULL.

IN the last number of the *Quarterly Statement* (October, 1902) there appears an abstract of a paper by Professor William Libbey, read at the Belfast meeting of the British Association, on "The Jordan Valley and Petra," which is chiefly remarkable for its assumptions based on little or no evidence, and its ignorance of the geological structure of the region it professes to describe, notwithstanding all that has been written by previous explorers, of whose work, it may be presumed, the author appears to be entirely ignorant. It might have been supposed that an American professor (as may be inferred from several words and phrases), before undertaking an exploration of a region of such peculiar geological interest, would have mastered, at least, the main features of the succession of formations with which many published volumes, from those of Fraas, Lartet, and Lynch, to those of Tristram and the Expedition of 1883-4, sent out by the Palestine Exploration Committee, would have provided him; but this, it is clear, he has omitted to do.

We will notice some of the statements of Professor Libbey as they occur in succession, pointing out their inaccuracies :—

1. He states (p. 411) that the subsidence of the Jordan-Arabah fault is on its "eastern side"; the fact being that the subsidence, or *down throw*, is on the western side, as the relative position of the formations at each side of the valley show.

2. He supposes that the Jordan-Arabah Valley has been "widened and deepened by ice action." This is a purely imaginary hypothesis, unsupported by any evidence either on the part of the author or of anyone else, as far as we are aware. It is true that the moraines of ancient glaciers are found in the valleys of the Lebanon and Hermon, reaching down to a level of about 4,000 feet above the sea, as was shown