

The Good, The Bad, and The Ugly

by Brian Convery, January 2006

Is the World Karaite Movement organization and its founder a Blessing or Cursing?

Well there he goes again! My old friend Nehemia is once again talking out of both sides of his mouth in an effort to encourage those who get his "Karaite Korner Newsletter" to send him (I mean his organization) some of their hard earned dollars because of the perilous efforts he undertakes on their behalf to bring them godly proclamations.

Some things just don't change. Biblical wisdom instructs us that there is nothing new under the sun.

Before I get into documenting his double speak which is causing damage to the body of Christ lets establish one very important thing. When you see or hear anything from that organization; World Karaite Movement or Karaite Korner Newsletter, you are not looking at or hearing from a mass of people involved with them. You are in fact hearing from one man who has a handful of volunteers who are zealously supporting his ideology. That man is Nehemia Gordon and his ideology is Karaite Judaism. The vast majority of Karaite Jews, neither know him, nor share in his teachings, nor do they want to. Judaism regardless of the sect is the same Judaism that the apostle Paul rejected when Jesus Christ personally converted him to Christianity as it was practiced in the first century. That Christianity has little resemblance to the "Christianity" practiced today by the vast majority of Christians.

Nothing is done, decided, or carried out under the names, "World Karaite Movement or Karaite Korner Newsletter" without originating in Nehemia's mind. It would be accurate to say they could be called the "Nehemia World Movement and Nehemia Korner Newsletter". These should be construed as compliments to him for his ability to put himself over as a big movement with credibility. As his mailing list grows and dollars sent in increase it probably emboldens him more to believe he is a great teacher of the times. When I first had correspondence with Nehemia and first met him he came across as being a much more humble man. It is quite amazing what some recognition and a few dollars can do to a man's ego and vision of himself.

Under the category of "there he goes again!" let's start with his recent newsletter # 250 and entitled "Aviv Search and Potential Holiday Dates", dated 1/19/06.

As is the notes operandi or pattern of many in similar positions he starts out with a request to separate you from your cash. I guess he figures there is no sense in beating around the bush! The appeal for cash this time is predicated on the notion that your funds are needed to cover his costs for the upcoming Abib Expedition, which will be taking place at the end of February. I will briefly discuss that fallacy later for there is very little expense involved on his end. It is just another attempt at separating your cash from your wallet. It is easy for the facts to bear that out.

Now listen to this quote from Newsletter #250. "These are dangerous times and to carry out the Aviv search we need your prayers and financial support." This implied threat of danger is used to help extract your admiration and cash for one so brave as he, to conduct such dangerous searches on your behalf. Do not be deceived, today you have a greater likelihood of having harm done to your person driving to work at rush hour in any American city than you do in Israel conducting the abib inspections. But if that isn't enough he plays the "authority card". "Last year we saw the confusion caused by an inexperienced and ill-informed Aviv searcher spreading spurious reports." That by the way for any who do not know it is me. Somehow he leaves out the fact that there were two others inspecting with me, one who has experience as well. Nehemia does not want to mention my name in his Newsletter for 2 fearful reasons. I will just mention the one. If he did mention my name those who are receiving the letter would be able to simply enter my name on their search engine and it would take them to this site: <http://steve.brun.com/brianconvery.html> That he does not want for they would get the rest of the story. All the reports from 2002 onward of our inspections are there for all to read as well as the exchange from last year's two separate groups and more. That would expose his underbelly to the truth, thus that is a no! no!

As much as his two earlier quotes are whoppers the best and biggest is here to come. "The irony was that last year we also saw the most pronounced evidence of Aviv at the end of the 12th month in nearly two decades." Two real big ones here folks, which we will address shortly.

You can access his newsletters for the abib reports of the past at:

(http://groups.yahoo.com/group/karaite_korner_news/) The particular newsletter he used for the abib report last year is #194 and is dated 3/8/05. "Large quantities of Aviv barley were found near Ein Mabua and smaller quantities near Alon Junction." Later on in the letter he says, "In light of this discovery, the New Moon on Friday March 11, 2005 will be the beginning of the coming biblical year."

Old Nehemia, (actually I should say young, for he isn't that old) went out on a limb here. No longer did Nehemia have the checks and balances surrounding him as he had in the past 3 years of inspections to curtail such things with reason and experience. His limb was about to break.

He also states in this newsletter the following. "The main Aviv Search, which will cover the Northern Negev and Jordan Valley regions will still be carried out on March 10-11."

Nehemia's early declaration of the start of the year was probably an attempt to beat us, the other inspectors not participating with him to the punch. As a result Nehemia broke many of the rules and guidelines we had set up and followed the previous 3 years as a group, as well as some of his own personal ones. One of his personal ones was not to go out as a group to make the inspections until two days prior to the first availability of spotting the new moon. Nehemia would always insist that those attending be sequestered into a room to review teachings on the subject. That changed in 2005. He says he brought the class out for a field trip to Alon Junction. Lo and behold they found aviv barley. A short trip down the road to the grotto in Ein Mabua they find it again. None of this is a coincidence folks. Nehemia inspected these sites on the previous Sunday and planned the whole chance happening. I know this because when he called me (on the second day into our inspections) he told me he had been there

then. That was after he calmed down from screaming at me and telling me it was my obligation to contact him when I land in Israel. Now doesn't that speak volume's. Of course you can read about all that in our 2005 reports and follow-up. So why would he change stripes like that? The answer will get clearer if it isn't already.

His timing of the proclamation of the new year was not only made early before any other areas of the country where inspected by him and others, but also based on shoddy work and evidence of unacceptable barley. Once again you can read all about that in the 2005 reports.

For arguments sake, let's say they were acceptable just to illustrate a point. Would these constitute enough evidence to declare the start of the harvests in the agricultural areas of Israel? Keep in mind Ein Mabua and Alon Junction are not harvestable fields in agricultural areas and never have been. In the prior 3 years searches we had operated under the premise and guideline that we needed to find fields in at least two of the agricultural areas of the country, which would be ready for harvest within the middle of the upcoming month. Actually Nehemia wanted to find them in that state by the end of the 12th month. We all operated under this guideline. Nehemia actually taught on his web site that in fact this is how ancient Karaites functioned. You can reach that instruction at; http://Karaite-korner.org/ancient_abib_reports.shtml. Oh that's right, it isn't there anymore. A sign comes up saying it has been removed. That actually took place shortly after he was confronted with this by other experienced inspectors who were not present in 2005. Don't fret however for I will quote part of it for you. "In Medieval Karaite discussions of the Abib, it is emphasized that the barley must not only appear in a certain form but must also appear in a large quantity to fulfill such verses as Lev 23,10 you will bring the sheaf of the beginning of your harvest [i.e. the barley has to be Abib in large enough quantities so that it can be harvested on the morrow after the Sabbath during Hag HaMatzot]. It was generally agreed that the barley must be Abib in a majority of fields and in each field a majority of the stalks must be Abib".

Yes, he was caught with his pants down and moved to contain the damage. He was so desperate to find

further evidence to support his erroneous proclamation that he actually went into Gaza to try and find any supporting barley stalks. This is an area he would not go into on the 3 prior searches for fear of the Palestinians. Not only did he and his students not find abib there, they didn't find it anywhere else in Israel as well. The reason is simple as our reports explain. There wasn't anything remotely close to being aviv for it was still the dead of winter there. His actions to remove the article he had pushed as historical evidence as to searching for abib to declare the start of the year is very transparent. It was nothing short of a slight of hand. To his disbelief many Christians who follow the reports discounted this deceptive move and the reasons for it. The gravy train was still alive and flowing.

Now lets look at one of the big ones.

"The irony was that last year we also saw the most pronounced evidence of Aviv at the end of the 12th month in nearly two decades." That would mean that 2005 inspections produced more fields of barley in a state of "aviv" than in any previous year. Keep in mind he makes his proclamation from 2 areas a short distance apart on the slopes of the Judean Desert, which he claims are harvestable fields. Lets let him tell us in his own words if this is a whopper or not. Lets go to his 2002 and 2004 reports. For 2002 those would be #97 and #98.

(http://groups.yahoo.com/group/karaite_korner_news/messages/97). In his own words he tells us aviv barley was found everywhere we went. To get even more info on the trip read our 2002 report on this site. Over 70% of all the fields we inspected were aviv. That's a lot of aviv barley. We found it in the Northern Negev, Jordan Valley, Judean Hills and all around Jerusalem even on the slopes of Mt Zion. That's all in the written record.

Now turn to the 2004 report from Nehemia. It is newsletter #154. "During a two-day search on March 21-22, 2004 fields of Aviv Barley were found in the Jordan Valley and Northern Negev in Israel" Read the rest for yourself. Even in 2004 we found it in multiple agricultural areas, which allowed us to make a very clear biblical decision just like in 2002. In 2002 there was even much more barley in a state of abib than in 2004. Many have asked themselves why would he contradict his own written testimony so blatantly? You

be the judge yourself.

We are not finished yet. In his recent newsletter he claims to have been inspecting barley in Israel for "nearly two decades". I am not the best at math but that means 20 years to me. Now is that correct? Has he been doing so for nearly 20 years? That isn't what he told me. He spoke of inspections starting in the 90's and then they were only frail attempts, one of which he used wheat thinking it was barley. I can easily understand how he would have done that. I wonder if this attempt at trying to establish his inspection authority at nearly 20 years has anything to do with the fact that brethren have recently come forward who live in Israel and who have been inspecting the barley since the early 1980's to set their calendar.

Once again you be the judge.

It is very apparent that something has changed. In the beginning I had a tremendous amount of respect for Nehemia as my writings attest to.

The members of the body of Christ who have been conducting these inspections for the last 4 years have no preset agenda's and are not looking for recognition or money. We conduct these inspections as a service to that body. Each year we fully wait for God to show us His desire. It is no different than waiting to see our Messiah return as He promised us. We work together for this end.

As for the expense side of this issue let me fill you all in. Anything outside of what would be normal daily expenditures exists only for those who are traveling to Israel. They have airfares, lodging, transportation, etc., to deal with. That can cost big bucks. For those residing in Israel there is very little expense outside of gas and a few days off work. There is no need to send cash to "offset" expenses of this inspection to those living there for they are not spending any amounts of money, at least they shouldn't be.

On our first expedition in 2002 we had all the expenses I mentioned a moment ago plus a \$500 dollar participation fee. I know we Christians paid it anyway. As well, many Christians who did not participate sent lots of money. I know many of them. The same was the case in 2003. In 2002 Nehemia had rented the

services of armed guards, armored vehicles, and drivers who also provided us with bulletproof vests. It didn't take long to figure out this was an unnecessary expense. The following year was not as dramatic but there still was an armored bus and an armed guard. Nehemia truly believed these were for our good but it has become clear even to him they are unnecessary. As well the room I shared with Richard Dolan was used for the seminars and studies in both years, once again negating any other expenses for a meeting room, etc. I do not know if folks paid the \$500 dollar participation fee in 2004 for I conducted inspections myself while others were in class with Nehemia. I do know however that I met up with them later for two days and used my vehicle to drive folks around for the inspections along with the one Nehemia had. Once again no need for any additional expense to carry out inspections at present, in Israel. So when you hear a plea to send cash for the trip, be aware. I am sure God would be much more pleased if in fact you used it to comfort the widow, the fatherless, and the stranger, you have near you.

Many have asked when Nehemia and I fell out of each other's company. I guess you can say it culminated in 2004 on my end when he sent out a false new moon report in November and wouldn't retract it. That again is a matter of record. The report I refer to is contained in his newsletter #172. This report stunned many of us who follow the new moon sightings in Israel. Upon receiving it via e-mail I called Nehemia on his cell phone. He was on his way back from the Eliat region where he hoped to be able to see some glimpse of it even though the astronomical algorithms said it would be impossible to see with the naked eye. In fact even with binoculars. He told me the two individuals who

reported seeing it were credible. The conversation was short. The following day he issued another report #173 which simply stated the same thing. He would not reconsider his erroneous report.

Fortunately for many of us we had some time prior to this started receiving reports from another group in Israel who looked for each new moon. In fact in 2003 we were able to join some of them in such a pursuit in Jerusalem. They too had the same concerns that we did, over Nehemia's November 2004 report, for they were not able to see it even though they have lots of very experienced observers. They contacted the witnesses who said they had seen the first crescent. Under testimony their stories changed. (Read full report at:

http://www.geocities.com/royh_il/news/index.htm scroll down to 14th Nov 2004, 1st report. Now it was they might have seen it for a few seconds. Still Nehemia would not revise his proclamation of the start of the new moon.

I could ride this horse a lot longer but at this time won't. The whole idea about who is experienced and who is not can easily be illustrated from what transpired on the inspections. Maybe if it is needed in the future I will articulate such things but that will have to wait. And once again there are witnesses to the events and written testimony. To those in the body of Christ you are without excuse in these matters.

Our peace I give to you

Brian