

# PROJECT

## A CURRICULUM FOR TEACHING ETHIOPIAN JEWRY IN A HEBREW HIGH SCHOOL

Until recently, the origins, as well as the history of the Ethiopian Jewish community have been obscured in an abyss of ignorance. More disconcerting however, has been the apathy that characterizes world Jewry's reaction to their present dangers. In this curriculum, the history of Ethiopian Jewry is related from the vantage point of the cognitive and moral development of the adolescent. The material considers the theories of various psychologists, particularly Bruner. Discrimination, a key element to be considered, vis-a-vis the half-hearted response they have received, is treated fully, as well as a critique of the few existing curricula on the subject.

IAN STERN

Advisor: Dean Paul M. Steinberg

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Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion  
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"And it shall come to pass in that day, That the Lord will set His hand again the second time to recover the remnant of His people, That shall remain from Assyria, and from Egypt. And from Pathros and from Cush...."

(Isaiah 11:11)

History of Ethiopian Jewry  
Chapter I of Master's Thesis

Ian Stern

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## Introduction

Isolated from world Jewry, in the highlands of Ethiopia for over two thousand years, they built an empire and lived their lives strictly according to biblical prescription. As in all Jewish communities around the world, they participated in an integrating process that allowed for a certain give and take with the general population. Nevertheless, they resisted physically as well as spiritually to missionary pressures. Only in the seventeenth century was their kingdom finally vanquished, and yet even then they persisted as Jews, their ranks continually decimated by pressures and enticements to convert. In the nineteenth century, European Jewry was jolted into the realization that there were black Jews in Ethiopia by the actions of English missionaries. To this challenge, the European Jewish community summoned the tireless and devoted Dr. Jacques Faitlovitch. His work was a start, but was abruptly pushed to the sidelines by the Italian invasion. Unfortunately, while his influence can still be felt today, this can be attributed more to the lack of attention and aid that Ethiopian Jews have received from the world Jewish organizations than to the magnitude of his success. It is estimated that there were close to one-half million Ethiopian Jews at one time. Due to a history which was continually punctuated by pogroms, blood libels and pressures to convert, in conjunction with the general poverty and chaos, only 28,000 Jews remain; a living testament to their numerical decimation. Debates over the authenticity of these Jews, along with organized world Jewry's (in-

cluding Israel) desire not to rock the boat with former emperor, Haile Selasie, led to a "do little or nothing" policy. Today, 200 Jews live in Israel and most, if not all of the rest, wish to join them. The burden of this responsibility, as in the case of Soviet, Syrian and other persecuted communities, falls on the world Jewish organizations and Israel.

### Origins

Although the origins of the Beta Yisrael is a much debated subject, the most celebrated story relates that they are descendents of King Solomon and Sheba.<sup>1</sup> An Ethiopian national epic (written in the fourteenth century to reinforce the ruling dynasty's claim to the throne)<sup>2</sup> describes how the Queen of Sheba came to Jerusalem to visit Solomon and converted to Judaism. They later cohabitated and after her return to Ethiopia, had a son, Menelik (Ben-Melek). According to the epic, Menelik returned to Israel for his education, only to travel back to Ethiopia later in life with the original Arc of Covenant and a delegation of sons from Israel's high state officials.<sup>3</sup> The story is told in detail in the sacred book of the Ethiopian Church called Kebra Negast ("Glory of the Kings").<sup>4</sup> The Ethiopian Jews claim to be descendents of Menelik, (as did the monarchy) and the Jews who came with him to Ethiopia. Levin mentions the tradition that the Beta Yisrael are descendents of the Jewish craftsmen sent by Solomon to aid Sheba develop her land.<sup>5</sup> In either case, since the Christian monarchy claimed descent from Menelik, another version of this legend evolved, which was recorded by Samuel Gobat, in 1826. The version he was

told relates how Menelik, on his return from Jerusalem, crossed a river with some of his followers and the holy ark on Shabbat and subsequently became Christians. Those who refused to transgress the Shabbat remained Jews; the forefathers of the Beta Yisrael.<sup>6</sup>

Another story suggests that during the Exodus from Egypt, while most of the Hebrews went to the wilderness, some Jews went south to Ethiopia.<sup>7</sup> The narrative of the story of the Exodus occupies a prominent place in many of their services even today. They also repeat several versions of a story claiming that they are descendents of Jews who fled from Jerusalem to Ethiopia. There is confusion, however, as to whether this is a reference to the first or second Temple.<sup>8</sup>

Another version of their origin, proposed by many throughout the ages, is that they are of the Ten Lost Tribes, the tribe of Dan in particular. This theory was first proposed in Kuirwan, in the ninth century, by Eldad HaDani, who himself claimed to be one of them. His writing, "Ritual on Slaughtering," (otherwise termed "the Talmud of the Falashas") is said to represent the religious practices of the Beta Yisrael, as well as of their life in Abysinnia.<sup>9</sup> This tradition prevails in Yehudah Halevi's work on the Khazars, when the rabbi, in pressing his argument with the pagan ruler, stated that Jewish law prevailed wherever the Jew lived; both in Palestine and Ethiopia. Moreover, he stated that the only independent Jewish kingdom that existed at that time was in Ethiopia.<sup>10</sup>

This tradition prevails in the responsa of Rabbi David ibn Abi Zimra, who claimed that in the mountains of Cush (Ethiopia) lived the descendents of Dan.<sup>11</sup> Goldman suggests that the RDBZ may have been entrusted with the political and religious affairs of the Ethiopian Jews. He refers to them in two responsa.

1. At one time the Falashas, called *עַלְמֵי דָן* -who are of the seed of Israel and the tribe of Dan, living in the land of Cush - were attacked by enemies and robbed and killed. The enemies attacked the synagogue and killed all the men. The women and children were taken captives and sold as slaves. A Jew bought one of these woman-slaves together with her two children. This woman was considered by all as an Aguna. In the meanwhile, the Jew who bought her had relations with her, and she bore him a son. This son now wants to marry a Jewess. The question is therefore addressed to R. David whether this son should be allowed to marry a Jewess and thus be allowed to enter the Congregation of Israel or whether his status is that of a Mamzer and he should not be so allowed. R. David maintains that this Falasha woman is in the status of a married woman. He bases his opinion on the law in Mishnah Yebamot XV, 1: "If there was peace between him and her, but war in the world...and she came back and said: 'My husband is dead,' she may not be believed... She may not marry again." It is known that "among the kings of the land of Cush there always exists a state of war. They have three kingdoms there: the kingdom of the Ishmaelites, the kingdom of the Christians..., the kingdom of the Israelites from the Tribe of Dan. It seems that the latter are descended from the sect...who are called Karaites. They do not know the Oral Law. They do not light candles on the Sabbath.

2. A Jew purchased a freed slave who was "of those Jews who dwell in the land of Cush." Does this slave become a free man after six years? Do the other Biblical laws relating to slaves apply to him or not? R. David maintains that only under two circumstances can there be a Jewish slave. "First, if the Bet-Din sold him as such because of his thievery; second, if he sold himself on account of extreme poverty. This is not at all the case with this Falasha Jew. He is to be considered as a Jewish captive. It was therefore the duty of the Jew who bought him to redeem him, in fulfillment of the duty of 'Redemption of



Captives,' in order that he should not be assimilated among the Gentiles. This Falasha has a right to go forth as a free man any time he chooses."

"While it is true that all these Falashas who dwell in the Land of Cush, conduct themselves like Karaites...and therefore we are not commanded to redeem their captives nor to provide for them, it seems to me, that this applies only to those who live amongst Rabbanites. For they see the teachings of the Rabbis yet they mock at them and abuse them. But these Falashas who come from the land of Cush, they are from the tribe of Dan. They accept the literal interpretation of Scriptures only because there are no Rabbis among them who know the Oral Law. But if the Falashas would be adequately instructed they would not deny the teachings of our Sages. They are to be likened to children who have been in captivity among Gentiles...<sup>12</sup> It is therefore a meritorious deed to redeem them."

This assertion continued more recently when Chief Sephardic Rabbi Ovadia Yoseff, agreeing with the RDBZ, stated that the Beta Yisrael were Jews with the right to return to Israel with full citizenship. "...our brothers, Felasheem, as was written in the books of the Law givers, that they are Jews from the Tribe of Dan -- to come out of Ethiopia and make aliyah and be unified with the other Israeli tribes...."<sup>13</sup>

None of the theories above, however, are accepted as historically accurate by scholars.<sup>14</sup> There is documented evidence of an exchange of populations, languages, and cultures between South Arabia, which was exposed to Judaism, and Ethiopia, beginning around the year 1000 B.C.E. Most scholars agree that the Judaization of Ethiopia must have occurred before Christianity entered the country in the fourth century.<sup>15</sup> Both Ullendorf<sup>16</sup> and Levine<sup>17</sup> place it during the first common era centuries. There has been speculation (although no firm evidence), about the possibility of Elephantine Jews, in the fifth century B.C.E., fleeing south to Ethiopia. This sug-

gestion stems from fifth century Egyptian papyri describing the destruction of holy places (Jewish temple in Elephantine), the geographic proximity of the two places, and the long standing historic relationship between Egypt and Ethiopia.<sup>18</sup>

Substantial historic evidence indicates that the Beta Yisrael are descendents of the indigenous Agau population, who inhabited the Ethiopian highland plateau, and acquired their Jewish beliefs over a long period of time. Only very intensive contact, over a period of centuries, could have resulted in the heavy Judaic character of so many facets of general Ethiopian culture.<sup>19</sup> Shelmay and Leslau agree that the possibility of Jewish missionaries, from either Elephantine or Yemen/South Arabia is strong.<sup>20</sup>

#### Rise of Christianity

Ullendorf maintains that the Beta Yisrael are possibly the most intact remnant of a heavily Judaized population of Ethiopia that resisted conversion to Christianity in the fourth century.<sup>21</sup> Christianity became the official state religion with the negus (emperor) Ezana's conversion around the year 330 C.E. (about the same time that Constantine converted). He attempted to spread Christianity throughout Ethiopia, continually trying to incorporate the Beta Yisrael and other non-Christian groups into his empire.<sup>22</sup>

Ephriam Isaac points to the expansionist policy of his successors, especially negus Kaleb (514-543) and his son (550-580), who conquered South Arabia, and the Jewish kingdom under Dhu Nawwas. The Ethiopian Church, however, entered a

period of decline, becoming a Christian island between Islam and paganism. Between the seventh and thirteenth centuries little is known of Ethiopian history. A notable exception is to be found in the stories surrounding the rise of the "non-Solomonic" Zagwe dynasty (1137-1270). Legend has it that a Jewish queen, Judith, founded this dynasty.<sup>23</sup> Another story tells that the Zagwe dynasty was descended from Solomon's union with Sheba's royal handmaid.<sup>24</sup> While the historicity of Kebra Negast is questionable, its use in religio-political propaganda by the leading churchmen proved highly effective in the overthrow of the Zagwe dynasty and the ascension and restoration of the "Solomonic dynasty" under Negus Yekumo Amlak (1270-1285).<sup>25</sup>

The classical period of Geez literary development started around the fifth century, beginning with the translation of the Gospels by missionaries and finally incorporating the Septuagint by the end of the seventh. While the Humash is the major body of literature in Geez, the Beta Yisrael have many other texts including the Book of Jubilees, the Commandments of the Sabbath, the Book of Abba Elijah, Book of Angels, Baruch, some prayers and more. The Humash and the Book of Jubilees are their main sources of religious laws and precepts. The pseudepigrapha and apochrypha were received from the Christian Ethiopians as were many of the other writings. Thus, just as Judaism had a considerable impact on Ethiopian Christianity, the inverse was also true. It is important to note that the Beta Yisrael were unfamiliar with the Talmud.

This cultural period was followed by a period of decadence which ended with the fall of the Zagwe dynasty.<sup>26</sup>

The period between 1270-1413 was one of expansion, evangelization, and revolt; a time of intense political and religious pressure on the Ethiopian Jews. In the late thirteenth century the "Solomonic dynasty" seized power. The new dynasty legitimized its revolt and later expansionist policies by claiming to be the rightful heir of the Solomon legacy.<sup>27</sup> It achieved the total fusion of church and state.<sup>28</sup>

The immediate reasons for Christian activity in Jewish territory (northwestern Ethiopia) stemmed from theological controversies within Ethiopian Orthodoxy itself during the reigns of Amde Tsiyon and Siyfe Arad (1344-71). The disputes ended with the exile of monks to remote areas, including Lake Tana (Beta Yisrael territory), where they were involved in missionary activity amongst the Jews. This resulted in the establishment of a small Christian community in the Lake Tana area as well as the conversion of many Christians, including an important monk, Qozimos, to Judaism.<sup>29</sup>

When the government sent officials to collect taxes and administrate the areas between Lake Tana and the Tekezze River they were essentially prevented by the ensuing revolts. The revolts took on a religious character though. During one of the revolts, in the time of Dawitt II (1380-1412), the converted monk, Qozimos, led the Jews against a monastery, killing monks and nuns as well as secular officials. The insurgents were viewed as religious renegades; former Christians who had become like the Jews and therefore had to be killed. These

revolts were minor conflicts compared to later wars of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. Even the most serious of these did not require the personal intervention of the emperor. Moreover, the immediate consequences of these defeats for the Beta Yisrael were minor. There is no evidence of large scale land confiscation nor of a population dispersal. This can be attributed to the fact that neither side had firmly established religious or political control over the area by 1413.<sup>30</sup>

It must be kept in mind that although they resisted strongly, they were not a military threat to the existence of the Ethiopian State but rather, an impediment to Ethiopian political-religious unity as the state expanded to the northwest. More importantly, the Beta Yisrael were viewed as a religious threat because they envisioned their faith as equal to or superior in every way to Ethiopian Orthodoxy. Secondly, many Christians were attracted to it; converts becoming full members of its society. The Ethiopian Chronicles refer to them as renegades who threatened the religious unity of Ethiopia and therefore should be overcome forcefully. This reference has been interpreted as an attempt to deny the legitimacy of the Beta Yisrael claim that they too are descendants of Solomon. In Quirin's words, "Both groups were conflicting for the mantle, 'House of Israel'."<sup>31</sup>

#### Loss of Independence

Emperor Yishaq's harsh attitudes and policies towards non-Christians was bound to precipitate war. The Beta Yisrael,

however, were divided along generational, religious and political lines. Most refused to recognize Yishaq's claim to overlordship of their territory or pay him tribute. Others urged an accommodationist policy, which caused them, when their leaders disagreed, to seek aid from Yishaq. In the end, the negus attacked them, killing the leaders.<sup>32</sup>

As a result of this defeat, the Beta Yisrael lost their independence and a fundamental reorganization and redirection of society ensued. While they had once partook in independent agriculture on their own land, they were now relegated to tenant farming on the land of their conquerors or worse yet, handicrafts. Yishaq issued a proclamation stating, "he who is baptized in the Christian religion may inherit the land of his father; otherwise let him be a Felasi (exile)."<sup>33</sup> The intent of the decree was to eradicate any semblance of Jewish religious and economic independence. In essence, the decree, in conjunction with land confiscations, and the replacement of Beta Yisrael rulers with those loyal to the Ethiopian State, undermined the economic and political basis of their society. These actions were reinforced by forced conversions and the establishment of many churches in Jewish territory.<sup>34</sup>

The Jews responded by attempting to maintain some semblance of their social integrity; by developing new economic and ideological basis for their society and moving their political center into the Simeon Mountains. Their religious leaders gained preeminence, adopting monasticism and religious books from Ethiopian Christianity in order to provide a revitalized ideology and moral focus. Moreover, the need for

better weaponry was an additional incentive for many Jews to become blacksmiths, a shunned profession in Ethiopia.<sup>35</sup>

The religious revival and the working out of institutions and practices is attributed to Abba Sabra (1434-68). He is given mythical, almost holy characteristics. He and his disciple, Tsega Amlak, are enshrined in prayers still recited today. He is said to have established the religious codes through which the monks and priests henceforth taught the people the way to live.<sup>36</sup> Monasticism played a vital role in the creation, adoptation, and perpetuation of Beta Yisrael religious texts. Its origin in Jewish life is tied with the story of the son of emperor Zera Ya'agov who became attached to Abba Sabra, converted, and lived in a monastic community. Meanwhile the emperor, who offered a reward for his son, was led with his army to the community. When they arrived, however, God hid the community from view and the son acquired the name Tsega Amlad (Grace of God).<sup>37</sup>

The period of Ya'aqob marked a flowering of Jewish as well as Christian culture and religion. For the Beta Yisrael, the religious revitalization was part of an effort to redirect their society in wake of the political defeat. This was followed by a bloody revolt which defeated Ya'aqob's army. Beta Yisrael society became a refuge for rebels against the state. Although Ya'Aqob failed to put down the rebellion, it was short lived because the next negus, Be'ide Maryam (1468-78) managed to have it quelled.<sup>38</sup>

While the Jews always desired independence, by the end of this period, they were to lose all remnants of their former

kingdom and therefore only exercise limited control over their affairs in villages or sections of villages. They were able to maintain the integrity and independence of their religious institutions and practices. The years 1478-1634 are marked as the "Era of Transition:" monks carrying out religious duties and acquiring secular powers.<sup>39</sup>

Most attempts to convert the Jews by force were resisted, especially in Simeon where most of the fighting took place. For example, during the reign of Minas (1559-1563), the Beta Yisrael accepted Ethiopia's political rule and payed taxes, but when Minas attempted to force them to convert, they refused and successfully fought off his army. Later, during the bloody and protracted war against Sertse Dingil (1563-97) many Jews could have saved their lives after their defeat by accepting, even nominally, Christianity. Nevertheless the sources are full of examples of resistance to conversion to the death. Many, who converted still maintained ties to their Judaism; enough to warrant the label "converted Felasha."<sup>40</sup>

The main causes of the major wars between Ethiopia and Beta Yisrael were either pressure by the Ethiopian government or Beta Yisrael attempts at independence. The latter was usually done in conjunction with a third party. In 1530, for example, King Gideon, aided the Moslems in their invasion of Ethiopia.<sup>41</sup> After they turned and devastated Jewish villages, in the 40's, Gideon turned to the Portuguese. In return for



their support the Portuguese restored to them control of Simeon. During this period of good relations between the Portuguese and Ethiopians, the Jews were employed building churches and other buildings that had been destroyed by the Moslems. The Jewish king, Redai aroused the wrath of negus Sertse Dingil when he renamed the mountains of Simeon after those of ancient Israel. The real reason for the war was Dingil's weak and erratic character and his propensity for slave raiding and pillaging expeditions - that were a main source of revenue for his army. Redai failed to pay tribute which caused Dingil to launch a successful raid into Simeon. In the end, many were killed, enslaved, and converted, while many religious books were burned, but no land was confiscated, nor was Simeon totally destroyed.<sup>42</sup>

When Negus Susinyos came to power in 1607, the Jews offered refuge to royal dissidents and pretenders to the throne. When one of the pretenders was arrested in Simeon by an official of the negus, he was freed by the Jewish governor, Gideon, who then gathered together a large army. After a number of setbacks to his army, Susinyos himself led a successful attack on Simeon, devastating the villages and forcing Gideon to surrender. Gideon, in return for his freedom, handed over the pretender, who was hanged. Then Susinyos had all the Beta Yisrael living in certain regions executed and those in other areas forcibly converted. Despite this, in 1612, Gideon again provided refuge for a political rebel (great grandson of Minas). Gideon proclaimed him the legitimate negus which provoked Susinyos to reconquer Simeon, and kill Gideon, the pretender, and

their sons. The two wars destroyed all remaining vestiges of Jewish political independence, even at Simeon.<sup>43</sup>

#### Anti-semitism

Thus, this period, 1270-1632, can be aptly described as a time of wars. For the Christian empire it was a period of political and religious development and expansion, especially in the northwest. In response to the ensuing social and cultural change, the Beta Yisrael took steps to create and develop a separate means of economic livelihood. They were reinforced by an isolationist ideology and a detailed code of interaction with the dominant society. As their political elite declined in authority, an emerging religious elite manipulated to reformulate and regenerate their society.<sup>44</sup> During the ensuing period of urbanization those Jews, especially in the Gondar area, were institutionally, but not socially, incorporated into Ethiopian society.<sup>45</sup> In addition to the segregation mandated by Beta Yisrael religious law, government policy endorsed the separation in an effort to force them to convert. An edict in 1668 decreed that Moslems and Jews were forbidden to live with Christians. They were required to inhabit separate villages or quarters in a town.<sup>46</sup> They provided the essential tasks of artisans, producing plowshares, sickles, tools, clothing, etc. and yet "they are socially shunned and considered to be buda (evil eye) by the dominant society."<sup>47</sup>

In order to fully understand the seriousness of this label, reference is made to a folktale which tells of the crucifixion; charging the buda with deicide.<sup>48</sup>

When God cursed the 15 children that Eve hid from Him, declaring they be henceforth devils, some of the cursed children complained. God heard them, and being merciful, made some of them foxes, some of them jackals, some rabbits, etc., so that they might find a way to exist as earth's creatures. Now some of these children he left human and these are the ancestors of the buda people. (a pleat in time takes us to Christ's baptism at age 30) The angry devils, jealous of God favoring Christ while they suffered God's curse, tried to kill Christ. But Christ fled from his enemies and hid in the crevice of a great cliff which was inhabited by a great...lizard. While hidden, many children were killed by the devilish children in their search for God's favorite child...No one could get Christ from where he hid. But then the clever buda people made giant tongs of wood and plucked Jesus Christ out of the crevice. The blacksmith made the nails and the carpenters made the cross. And while Christ hung on the cross, he cursed those people whose skills made it possible to crucify him.<sup>49</sup>

The ramifications for the Ethiopian Jews were not unlike those their brethren faced in medieval Europe. Ethiopians felt it dangerous to live near a buda person, believing they could cause illness or attack at night after turning into hyenas. For this reason, even today, few Ethiopians enter areas of the Beta Yisrael after dark.<sup>50</sup>

During the years 1755-1868, "...ideals of moral superiority emerged on both sides and served as the reinforcement and justification of an elaborate set of regulations of social separation."<sup>51</sup> The reasons for the separation were due to conflicting ideologies and different economic bases; the Beta Yisrael relegated to masonry and carpentry. This situation did not undergo any serious change through the modern period.

### The Missionaries

In the middle ages, Ethiopia was known to Europeans as the country of Prestor John; where the Ten Lost Tribes resided. In 1790, J. Bruce mentioned the Beta Yisrael in his book, Travels to Discover the Source of the Nile, and aroused world curiosity, as did the Frenchman, Antoine d'Abbadie in 1840. But it was only in 1862, when Flatt and Stern, two English missionaries, mentioned them, that a European study of Beta Yisrael was undertaken.<sup>53</sup> The missionaries, in particular the London Society for Promotion of Christianity amongst the Jews, were the major catalysts.<sup>54</sup>

The London Society had special funds for Henry Stern's exploratory mission. Stern, who negotiated with Emperor Theodore to build a mission to convert Jews, told them that he was "a white Falasha."<sup>55</sup> In 1885, Jewish Intelligence reported that "the law of Moses is the foundation on which they pretend that their creed is based, and no one who has been among them can question their solicitude to confirm, as far as possible to all its injunctions."<sup>56</sup> Nevertheless, "Multitudes, who not long ago hated and despised the Crucified, now rejoice in Him."<sup>57</sup> In 1892, the magazine reported that Dr. Stern had found the Ethiopian Jews ignorant in the Old Testament but "anxious to hear and possess the word of God." The report went on, "it is a joy to him, and likewise the committee, to know that in this country...there are now some hundreds of Falasha Jews who are believers in the Lord, Jesus Christ."<sup>58</sup>

During this period, in the time of Theodore II, there was a religious dispute between the Beta Yisrael and the Protestant missionaries. Many of the Jews, fearing conversion attempts, left Ethiopia for Jerusalem (1862). Expecting miracles, and unprepared for the journey, most perished or returned home broken.<sup>59</sup>

#### World Jewry's Reaction - Faitlovitch

A number of European Jews were disturbed by the missionaries. Azriel Hildesheimer, in 1863, called for immediate action to save the Beta Yisrael from them. Due to public pressure, Alliance Israelite Universelle sent the distinguished scholar, Joseph Halevy to Ethiopia to investigate. His conclusions were considered unreliable (that they were Jews) and no further action was undertaken by the Alliance.<sup>60</sup> In 1905, Jacques Faitlovitch first visited the Beta Yisrael and henceforth dedicated his life to publicizing their existence and seeking aid for them.<sup>61</sup>

Halevy's student, Faitlovitch, was responsible for exposing the Ethiopian Jews to Pan-Jewish traditions as well as enlisting American and European support for them. In 1924 he started a school in Addis Ababa which was forcibly closed twelve years later by the conquering Italians. Nevertheless, he managed to arrange a foreign education for a number of young Ethiopian Jews who later became the leaders of their community.<sup>62</sup>

Faitlovitch felt that the Ethiopian Jews were victims of anti-semitism, stating "Like all Jews, the Falashas have undergone centuries of misfortune and persecution...Great was their

resistance to the mighty attack of their enemies, and without assistance from their co-religionists they have kept the flag of Judaism flying in their country...The Abyssinian government, driven by the fanaticism of the priests, does the most abominable crimes, determined to destroy the Falashas on the plea that they were the murderers of the gods..."<sup>63</sup> He spent considerable time enlisting American and European support of Ethiopian Jews, setting up Pro-Falasha Committees in several countries.<sup>64</sup> By the end of the Italian occupation, the Jewish population had decreased by one half. New schools were open and twenty Jews were sent to Palestine to study.<sup>65</sup>

For a commentary on the extreme apathy that characterized the attitudes of world Jewry vis-a-vis their Ethiopian brethren one need merely to gaze at the pages of Cyrus Adler's biography. Although he headed the American Pro-Falasha Committee (1922-32) he did not even mention these Jews once, while including minor matters such as his involvement in the Boy Scouts, etc.<sup>66</sup> The N.Y. Telegram, in 1935, reported that the committee's treasury was empty and they were seeking help.<sup>67</sup> In short, their effectiveness has been limited.

The Beta Yisrael today live much the way they did for thousands of years. They live primarily in separate villages or hamlets interspersed among the Christian Amharas.<sup>68</sup> A typical village is still composed of mud walled circular huts (tukuls), with grass thatched roof, set in hedge rimmed compounds (some new homes have tin roofs). They have neither

windows nor chimney, the door allowing light to enter and smoke to leave. Electricity and plumbing are, for the most part, unknown: water being retrieved from the nearest river, or pond. What differentiates them from typical Amhara villages is the synagogue (mesgeed) and small huts on the outskirts of the village.<sup>69</sup>

Until the Land Reform Proclamation of 1975, which nationalized all rural land, much of their land was owned by absentee landlords who had inherited it. The Beta Yisrael paid taxes to the government and the landlords for the use of the land. Three quarters of the households supplement their subsistence level farming with income from metalwork or pottery.<sup>70</sup> Markets exist in neighboring Christian communities and at large regional centers.<sup>71</sup> Because they do not travel on Shabbat, and for dietary reasons, they do not sell in caravans as the other Ethiopian traders do.<sup>72</sup>

### Religious Life

Like the Karaites, they worship according to the Humash and have no Talmud. They have no Hebrew scrolls, although there is recollection that at one time there were some.<sup>73</sup> Seventeenth century Portuguese Jesuits claimed that the Ethiopian Jews possessed the Bible in Hebrew and were familiar with a faulty Hebrew. According to one tradition mentioned by Filosseno Luzzatto, the last Jewish King, during the time of Susinyos, burned their books before his death. Another tradition relates that the books were buried in order to hide them from their enemies.<sup>74</sup> In any case, today the Orit (Bible - a

book rather than a scroll, made of parchment from kosher animals) is written in the ancient Ethiopian tongue, Geez, which only the priests and monks understand (it's not a spoken language anymore). The general Beta Yisrael population understands neither Hebrew, (with a few exceptions who were educated in Israel), nor Geez, but speak the local vernacular; Amharic.<sup>75</sup>

Religious life evolves around the Mesgeed (see pages 31 & 32 for diagrams). It is usually a one or two room hut, with the second room being the qeddesta qeddusan (holy of holies) where only the priests and deacons may enter. This room contains the Orit, ceremonial clothes and the sacred objects. If there is only one room the Orit is placed on a decorated board hung fairly high on the East wall, or suspended from the ceiling. Finally, there is a sacrificial altar which is on the north side of the mesgeed.<sup>76</sup>

The service of the altar and synagogue are conducted by the Kahen (priest). Although they claim descent from Aaron, the priesthood is not necessarily hereditary. That is, a son is not obligated to become one. While members are nominated by the community the requirements are rigorous; seven generations of family without moral or physical defect, along with extensive training in Geez and holy literature. The main criteria for knowledge is expertise in Geez.<sup>77</sup> The High Priest is chosen by other priests after they have carefully scrutinized his character, learning and family. While a priest may marry, a divorce would require him to forfeit his position,



(a monk may do the duties of a High Priest).<sup>78</sup> Traditionally the priests were supported by the community, but today, for economic reasons, the priests work at various occupations (metalwork is forbidden).<sup>79</sup>

The duties of the priesthood range from reciting daily prayers in the synagogue, to being a ritual slaughterer, to mohel, to confessor, (Christian influence), and counselor and spiritual authority. They are assisted by deacons who, if they qualify, may eventually enter the priesthood. As deacons they may say prayers with the priest, cut bread offerings, prepare animal sacrifices, etc. On Shabbat the deacons spread grass and herbs on the earthen floor to give the synagogue a refreshing fragrance.<sup>80</sup>

The service begins when the priests informally enter the synagogue and move to their places in the room. A short spoken prayer may introduce musical liturgy, or singing may begin immediately, perhaps prefaced by several gong beats. Once the music starts, it proceeds without pause for the duration of the ritual. Occasionally a biblical excerpt will be recited. A circular gong, small kettledrums, play an ostinato rhythm for large sections of the service. When standing for this, the priests lean on prayer staffs of carved wood.

The service has an elaborate structure with an esoteric tradition transmitted by a small group of men intensively trained since childhood. Beta Yisrael priests do not discuss the liturgy and its content, (as did the rabbis). They perform the whole service but can sing only the opening and closing

sections of the ritual out of context. Shelmay found that there is a close association of text and music. One priest told her, "When I just speak the words, it has no meaning, but when I do the music, then it will be useful to you."<sup>81</sup> On holidays the priests read the portion relevant to that day, (no special pericopes on Shabbat), but since the laymen do not understand Geez, another priest translates the lesson into Amharic.<sup>82</sup>

It is important to note that there has always been some Hebrew in their prayers such as "Adonai", "gadol", "Sanbat", "El Saday", "Elohe", "Torah", "goyim", and the names of some of the Hebrew months (Nisan, Ab and Tammuz).<sup>83</sup> Due to the Christian influence, ascribed as originating under Abba Sabra, the Beta Yisrael have monks. These monastic Jews live in huts enclosed in stone walls, on the outskirts of villages. Anyone can become one, but usually the servants of monks become monks. They renounce conjugal life and have no contact with fellow Jews except in work. They work in the fields and prepare their own food and drink. After working with others, they wash their clothes and change. At times one may leave his native area entirely to receive divine inspiration: to return later to preach. Those who did this were considered saints. Although little is written about them, women also live apart at times.<sup>84</sup>

Much of ritual life is spent in activities to purify the individual and separate the sacred from the secular. When a woman is about to give birth she goes to a small hut (the

same hut of malediction she enters every month) on the outskirts of the village with two midwives. Before returning to the village the midwives must wash themselves and their clothes in order to become ritually cleansed. If the child was a male, on the eighth day he is circumcised<sup>85</sup> by the Kāhen and twelve shouts of joy ring out from the village.

The mother must stay in the hut until the eighth day, forbidden to eat any meat. Her family brings her food but without touching her. Meanwhile her family builds a "hut of woman in childbed" where she goes after bathing, on the day of the brit, for 32 days. If the child is a female there are only nine shouts of joy, the woman remains in the first hut for two weeks and in the second for 66 days. In either case, while she is separated, the housework is done by her daughters or neighbors. On the last day, she bathes, shaves her head and rejoins her family at sunset. The hut is then burned and there is a feast.<sup>86</sup> A comparable operation to the brit called an excision was performed on females (it had no fixed date) but is not done anymore.<sup>87</sup>

A girl age nine and a boy age seventeen are deemed marriageable, although a betrothal can last up to two or three years. Due to the heavy rains there are no weddings during Nisan.<sup>88</sup> The ceremony<sup>89</sup> takes eight days (May have been ten in the past) is a celebration of the bride's virginity. If it is discovered that she was not a virgin, she is banished from the village.<sup>90</sup>

Except for during Shabbat and the Day of Atonement, a person is buried the day he dies (time permitting, before sunset). If possible, he has a confession with the Kāhen before his

death.<sup>91</sup> For the next seven days, members of the family do not work. A series of memorial services, tazkar (remembrance day), are observed at fixed intervals after the burial. On the first anniversary of the death, priests recite special prayers in synagogue, and the family traditionally slaughters a bull or sheep for relatives and neighbors, in memory of the deceased. The cemetery is located outside the village. The graves are uninscribed, simply covered with stones (to keep away animals) and sometimes a young tree is planted there.<sup>92</sup>

The biblical laws concerning kashrute are observed strictly by the Beta Yisrael. They only eat animals that both chew their cud and are cloven hoofed. They obey the laws of Leviticus governing birds and fish and refrain from eating raw meat, blood or of an animal that has died. Moreover, an animal slaughtered by a non-Jew cannot be eaten, nor can any food, except peas, be accepted from them.<sup>93</sup> A Jew who ate unclean food would be required to undergo a week long purification ceremony. For this reason and others they had limited contact with their Christian neighbors.<sup>94</sup>

Strict rules mandate ritual cleanliness before holidays, washing clothes and body, and cleaning one's house. There were also special rules for the priesthood, since they had to be ritually clean before performing their duties. Most holidays were observed by services at sunset on the eve of the day and before sunrise the following morning. On certain holidays there were all night services which included more extensive sections in the vernacular.<sup>95</sup>

### Holidays

The Beta Yisrael determine their own festivals and fasts ("som") by a lunar calendar of Judaic mold (twelve months, thirty/twenty nine days alternately, the thirteenth month added every four years).<sup>96</sup> In order for them to conform better with pan-Judaism, some changes were initiated by Faitlovitch. Today, due to western Jewish influence, they call the months by their Hebrew names. They originally knew the name of the month of Nisan and referred to the others by numbers. "The use of ordinal numbers to designate the months reflects a practice adopted in Israel shortly before the destruction of the first Temple in 586 B.C.E.: it was only near the end of the period of the second Temple of Jerusalem,... that months received names that have survived until today." Therefore, the Beta Yisrael practice reflects a system that was in existence from 600 B.C.E. to the present.<sup>97</sup>

The liturgical cycle of the Beta Yisrael suggests many strata of influence that fall into three general categories. Judaic origin which is common also to the pan-Jewish cycle: observances that are Judaic or biblically inspired, but are not observed by other Jews: and finally, observances of mixed or indeterminate origin, unique to the Beta Yisrael liturgical cycle.<sup>98</sup> Several overlap, as is shown in diagram 1. The following is a list of holidays celebrated by Ethiopian Jewry and a brief description of each.

Tazkara Abraham (Commemoration of Abraham), also called Berhan Saraqa, (The light has appeared), is a holiday that

memorializes the time that Abraham was commanded to sacrifice Isaac (first day, seventh month). Today the holiday is also celebrated as the beginning of the new year. It was also called the "day God sits in judgment upon his throne." At one time Ethiopian Jews blew the shofar to commemorate the sacrificial ram but today the custom is no longer observed.<sup>99</sup>

Astasreya (to forgive) is a fast day (tenth day of seventh month) that is penitential in character: parallel to Yom Kippur. The ceremony consists of an all night service with only parts in Amharic, continuing all through the next day. Midway through services members of the congregation rise and jump up and down for several minutes, ululating and hissing. Priests then call for order and resume service. Shelmay was told that the jumping is a biblically prescribed way to purge oneself of sins.<sup>100</sup>

Ba'ala Masallat (fifteenth to the twenty-second of the seventh month), is the feast of tabernacles and is the same as the holiday commemorating the pan-Jewish one celebrating the sojourn of Israel in the wilderness after the exodus. Shelmay found that its significance had been forgotten by many priests who said it was only a "happy holiday." The first and last day of the holiday were considered holy, but no work was permitted on interim days either. For economic reasons this is not observed today. They have no booths, but spread fresh leaves on the floor of the synagogue.<sup>101</sup>

Seged, which means "bow" or "prostrate oneself" is a pilgrimage festival and fast day (twenty-ninth day of eighth month). The Beta Yisrael climb a certain mountain that day to

commemorate Ezra's proclamation against the Babylonian wives (Ezra 10: 10-12). Portions of the books of Ezra and Nehemiah are read that day. In the past, they observed a fast on the twenty-ninth of each month which served as a reminder of the approaching new moon. The Beta Yisrael observe days each month that remind them of annual festivals and fasts. Seged is the yearly fast marking the most important new moon and the reminder of this annual occurrence is, "some maleya".<sup>102</sup>

Pilgrimages to a hill outside their villages are frequently compared to Mount Sinai and therefore the Ten Commandments are usually read during the ceremony. Early in the morning, before the pilgrimage, the priest kills two oxen in a compound of the synagogue. The meat is roasted and later eaten by the people to break the partial fast. This was once a ritual sacrifice. The priests lead the procession up the hill singing, followed by the deacons who balance the Orit, wrapped in sacred cloth, on their hands. On top of the mountain the priest stands beneath trees within small enclaves of stones. There they hold a service of prayers, readings and speeches and finally descend singing, while laymen blow small metal horns.<sup>103</sup> Wolfe Leslau describes,

When the whole community gathers in their sacred places, the ceremony has solemn character. One takes the Orit and other sacred books and special chapters are read: the reading includes the Apocrapha Ezra. "And they climbed the mountain every year in order to adore God: on the ninth hour at dusk during that month, the sons of Israel assembled and they covered themselves with sackcloth." Sometimes they also offered sacrifices. They remain all day, reading, praying.....Such pilgrimages...occur on specific occasions.

These usually include the "three pilgrimage festivals", the fast of Ab and the inauguration of the month of Heder. By law, one must make the pilgrimage on the eve of the new month. It seems to me that the sentence from Ezra quoted above serves as a basis for this date of Heder...<sup>104</sup>

Although sacrifice has been discontinued in recent years, both for economic reasons and because of pan Jewish influence, traditionally the Beta Yisrael offered them. Aside from the major annual sacrifice on the eve of fasika, smaller sacrifices were offered to commemorate special occasions (i.e. circumcision, initiation into the priesthood, etc.).<sup>105</sup> The qerban (sacrifice), which was chosen by the deacon, had to meet the biblical requirements of having no defects. A bar of salt was held over the back of the animal in accordance with Leviticus 2:13. The High Priest then recited a benediction and a priest would slaughter the animal with a two edged knife used only for this purpose. The skin, blood and internal parts were burnt and the rest was washed, cooked and eaten the same day. Aside from sacrifices, offerings such as beer, coffee, bread or grain were brought to the synagogue on Shabbat or holidays. The priest would take the offering: turn towards Jerusalem and recite a benediction. Then he or the deacon would divide or cut the offering in half, the priests taking half; the other half for the deacon and elderly.<sup>106</sup>

Ma'rar (twelvth day of the ninth month) is a reminder of the "real" harvest festival. It is believed that this second Ma'rar marks the grain harvest since the Amharic word for grain



is one of the names of the holiday.<sup>107</sup> Some "Aster is the Fast of Esther (thirteenth and fourteenth of the ninth month). While the Beta Yisrael accept the Book of Esther and fast, they do not celebrate the festival in a pan-Jewish way. Their observance is derived right from the book (Esther 15-16). The "real" fast (11th-13th of the 11th Month, which is an additional festival, stems from confusion between the name of the Jewish month, Adar, and the Ethiopian month, Adar, and the Ethiopian month Hedar, which is the ninth month on the Ethiopian calendar.<sup>108</sup>,

Some Fasika and Fasika are the holidays that commemorate the exodus (14th day of the 1st month, which is the fast of Pesach, which precedes the Fasika celebration, 15th-22nd).<sup>109</sup> The first and last days are holy and one cannot work or travel, although on the other days one is permitted to travel. One is forbidden to eat anything leavened or fermented, which they interpret so strictly as to mean that only fresh milk can be drunk, for once it becomes creamy, it is considered fermented and thus must be given to the animals or thrown out. During this week they eat special bread called quita and formerly sacrificed a lamb on the eve of the festival.<sup>110</sup>

Soma Tomos or Fast of Tomos (4th-10th of the 4th month) is of unknown meaning today. It has been suggested that it is related to the fast commemorating the breaking of the walls of Jerusalem on the seventeenth of Tammuz, celebrated throughout the Jewish world.<sup>111</sup> Another fast, Soma Ab, (1st-17th of the

15th month) is the same as the ninth of Ab. In the past the Beta Yisrael prostrated themselves on a mountain outside their villages and fasted. Today they only refrain from eating from sunrise until sunset, and do not eat meat or milk products. In the evenings, prayers are said to lament the destruction of the Temple in Jerusalem, and the exile of the Jews from Israel.<sup>112</sup>

A special Shabbat, called Zabarabu Sanbat is a yearly observance that has no fixed date, fluctuating with the calendar each individual year. Its meaning is unclear today and has been officially omitted from the modern Beta Yisrael calendar. Nevertheless, it is still observed by an all-night service characterized by a convivial mood, having beer in the middle of the service.<sup>113</sup>

Both Anakel Astar'i and Asarti Wasamantu are minor holidays. The first is a fast (our atonement), which is a reminder of Astasreyo, which is exactly one month later. The second commemorates the deaths of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.<sup>114</sup>

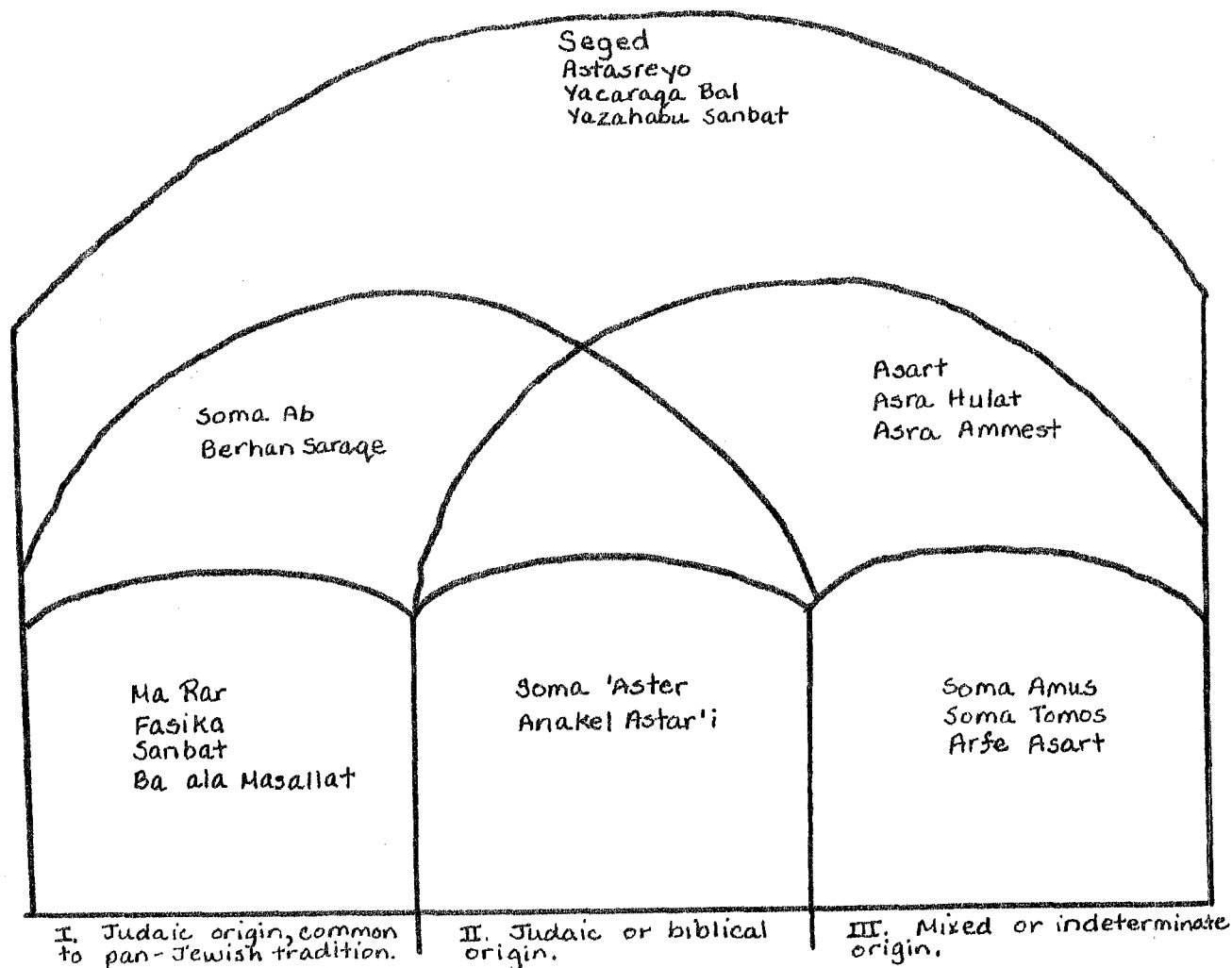
The most central pillar to Beta Yisrael religious observance is Sanbat (Sabbath). Traditionally women prepare food for Sanbat and wash the family's clothes Friday afternoon. Fire is not kindled after sundown although today fires are allowed to burn out during the evening, rather than be extinguished beforehand, as in earlier times. Until recently, Ethiopian Jews ate only cold food on Shabbat, in unlit huts (strictly abiding by biblical law). It is a day of rest; no work is permitted nor can one cross a river, thus curtailing any travel that day.<sup>115</sup>

Sabbath is considered in anthropomorphic terms, as the holy queen who intercedes with God for the righteous and sinners alike. The book, Commandments of the Sabbath, contains a picturesque description of how the crowned Sabbath goes down to Sheol to deliver the sinners from their punishment.<sup>116</sup>

God's justice will rejoice in Heaven with the Sabbath of Israel. The Sabbath will rise from her seat on Friday at dawn: the spirit of God will descend through the seven heavens and will then rise. Then the archangels will crown the Sabbath of God, and the priests of Heaven will leap for joy... 90,000 angels will crown the Sabbath of God and will bring her down from on high...<sup>117</sup>

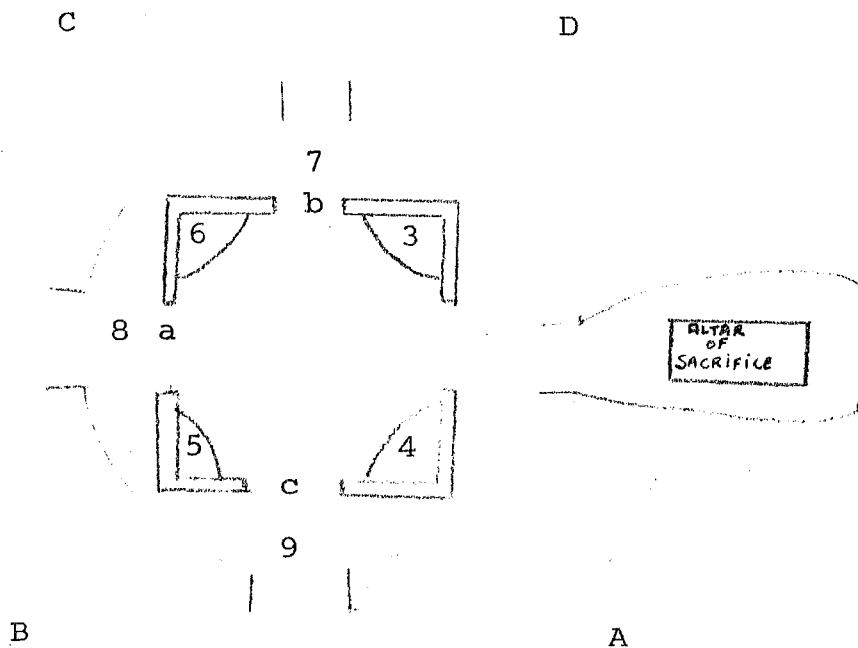
On this day the greeting, "Sanbat Salam" is exchanged.<sup>118</sup>

Diagram 1. <sup>119</sup>



It should be noted that post biblical Jewish observances have been added within the last century (i.e. Shmini Azeret, Simchat Torah, Hanukah, Purim, the Omer, Fast of Gedalia) while Beta Yisrael observances that had no pan-Jewish parallels were deleted (i.e. Arfe Asart, Yasanbat Sanbat).<sup>120</sup>

Diagram 2.<sup>121</sup>



2-holy of holies, 3-table with Orit on it, 4-vessels for ashes of red heifer and the holy water, 5-place for priestly vestments and vessels used in the service, 6-place where books are kept, 7-place for laity, 8-place for deacons, 9-place for women, a,b,c,-openings for windows, A,B,C,D,-enclosure around mesgeed and court of sacrifice.

The diagram is a reproduction of a sketch of a floor plan of a Mesgeed, by a visiting missionary in the nineteenth century.

Diagram 3.

122

Beta Yisrael Liturgical Cycle

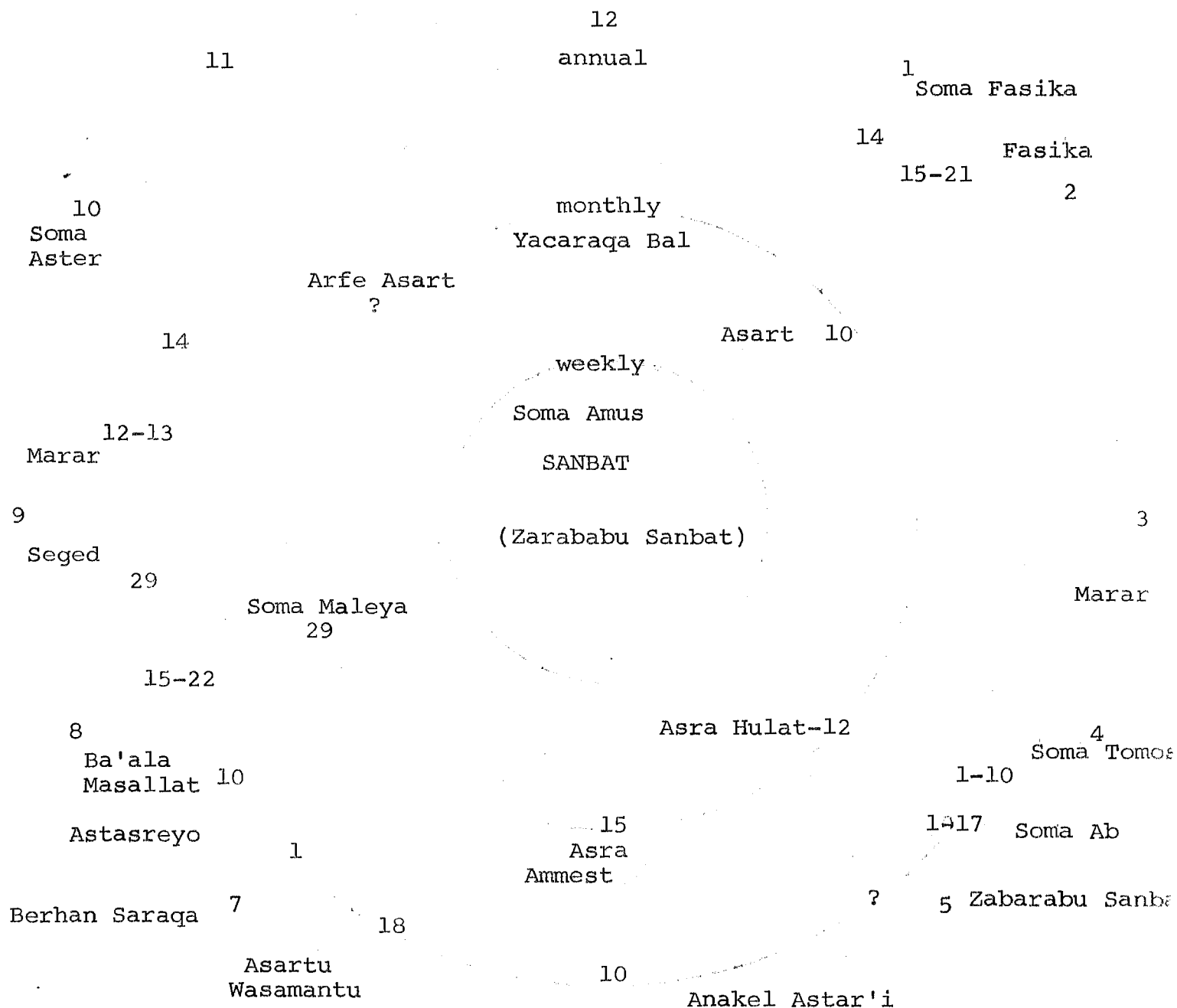
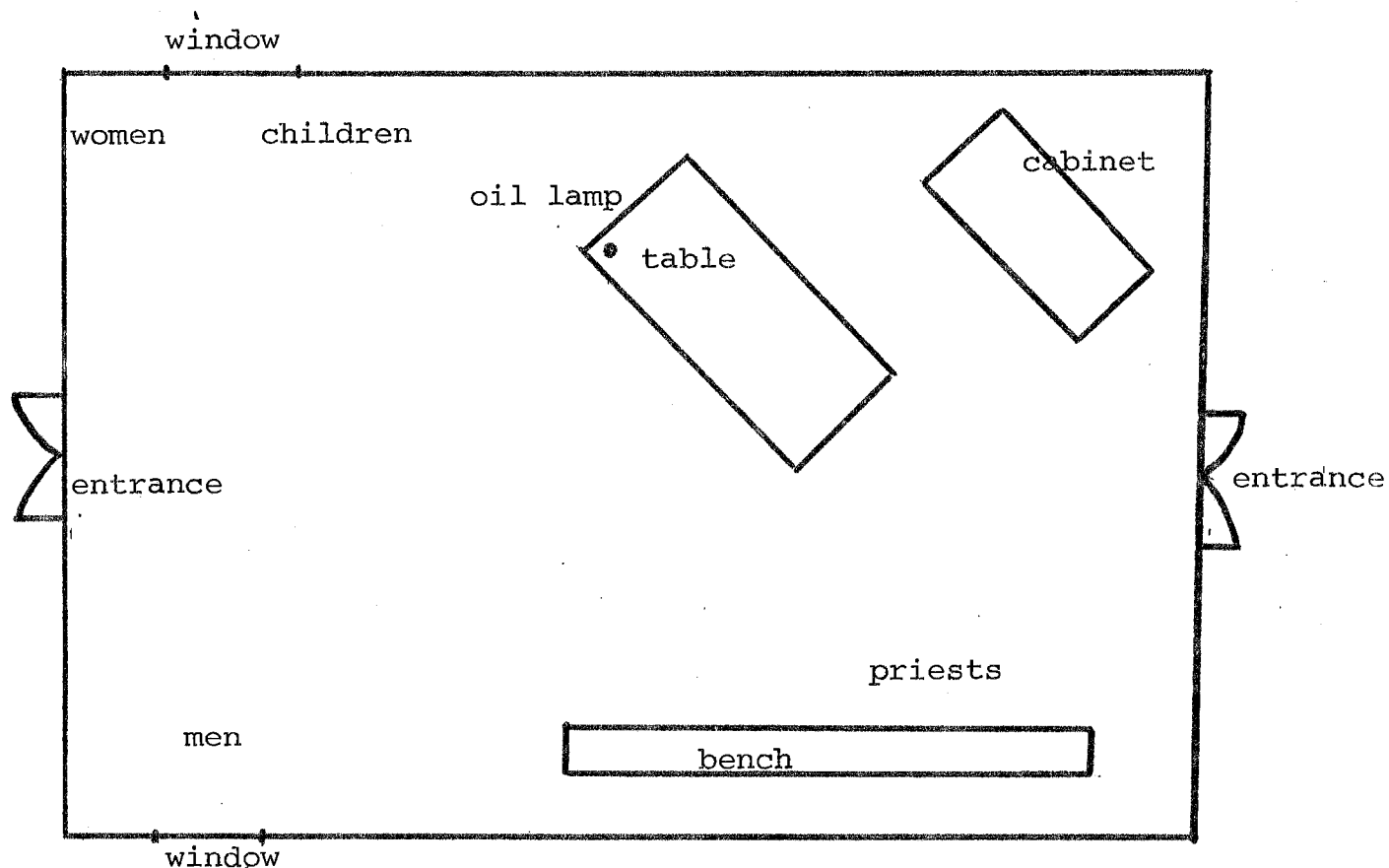


Diagram 4.

## Ambober Synagogue 123



The mesgeed accommodates 50-60 people. The priests and congregation use the west door, the east door reserved for monks (the last one in the region died seven years ago and thus that door is only open when the mesgeed is filled to capacity).

Contemporary Situation

The Beta Yisrael congregations are changing. Stringent rules of the past that only permitted unmarried or postmenopausal women to enter the ritual space; the others were required to stand outside the door. Today all are allowed to enter although seating is by sex, age and position in the community. The participation of the congregation is limited to bowing on entry and brief responses to a few prayers, although women occasionally ululate during the service. "It is germane to note that members of the Falasha community who were trained in Israel or who have a strong sense of pan-Jewish identity, are reluctant to participate in the prayer-book liturgy. Many of the teachers and young people with secular education boycott the traditional worship altogether. They attend services in Hebrew following the traditional ritual..."<sup>124</sup> Due to this, the priests now wear talitim for Seged, or symbolically lift a small Hebrew Torah brought by a tourist, when the Geez Orit is read. To the young Ethiopian Jew, traditional Beta Yisrael ritual has lost its significance; it is no longer central to his identity.<sup>125</sup>

Yona Bogali, the last of the four Ethiopian Jews selected by Dr. Faitlovitch to be educated in Europe, has devoted the last fifty years of his life to his people. He is the headman, fund administrator, and international minister in touch with various world Jewish organizations, all in one.<sup>126</sup> His people are scattered in 450 villages throughout the country paying up to seventy-five percent of their crops as rent and taxes.

Their average annual income is around sixty dollars per year, thirty dollars less than the average Ethiopian and two hundred dollars a year less than the average black African.<sup>127</sup>

The Beta Yisrael show a lot of concern for education, encouraging their children to walk many miles to one of their 18 schools, only one of which goes beyond the second grade. Unfortunately, only fifteen percent of the children are able to obtain this meager amount of schooling. The 48 teachers, of whom only seven are trained, teach reading and writing Amharic, some Hebrew, prayers and the Pentateuch.<sup>128</sup>

There are two primitive and undersupplied one room clinics serving the 28,000 Ethiopian Jews. They are staffed by two paramedics and ten apprentices. Smallpox, trachoma, schistosomiasis and a number of other tropical diseases are rampant in Ethiopia, and thus the efforts of this medical team can only postpone the inevitable.<sup>129</sup> In all, Ethiopia spends one dollar per person for medical care and two dollars per person for education, when schools are open (per year).<sup>130</sup>

Virtually the only hope for employment for an education has been through conversion, since Christian missionaries offer better services of one kind or another than those offered under Jewish auspices.<sup>131</sup> Many Christian sects have active missionary groups all over the country bartering food, housing and a free education for conversion. This was particularly effective during the drought a few years ago. In any case, thousands have opted, out of desperation, for Christianity, although it would be accurate to say that many of these



are living a Marrano type existence.<sup>132</sup>

### Relief Efforts - Who's To Blame?

No attempt was made to bring these Jews to Israel before 1948. After formal diplomatic relations were established between Ethiopia in 1956, no shlichim were sent to recruit or prepare them for aliyah. A report by an international Jewish body in 1959 stated that, "'both Israel and Ethiopia are officially opposed to the Aliyah of the Falashas.'" <sup>133</sup> The Jewish Agency has secretly and modestly supported a Jewish education program there since the 1950's, offering the only source of hope to these people. <sup>134</sup> The vast majority of the aid sent to them has been used in Ethiopia itself. The Pro-Falasha committees in England, United States and Israel have worked hard for over fifty years to help them there. So has the Jewish Agency, the Jewish Colonization Association and the Jewish National Post of Indianapolis. <sup>135</sup> The J.D.C. which is mandated to help Jewish communities around the world in crisis, averages over a hundred dollars a year per Diaspora Jew in 33 nations. The allocations for the years 1971-76 in Ethiopia came to approximately one dollar per Jew per year. When asked about this inequity, the J.D.C. admitted to some negligence, explaining that due to their isolation it was difficult to bring in aid. The Pro-Falasha Committees remained unconvinced, maintaining that the J.D.C. managed to aid Jews in Arab lands and Russia during more oppressive times than those existing in Ethiopia today. <sup>136</sup> Graenum Berger, President of the American Association for Ethiopian Jews states that "The record shows

that no shaliach has ever been sent there to help a powerless and grossly uninformed group of Jews without money or influence to acquire the instruments for moving out of the country. Israelis, resident non-Falasha Jews, workers for Jewish organizations in Ethiopia are warned not to mess around with migration.<sup>137</sup> No independent, official or unofficial mission from abroad - one of the most effective means of educating contributors to Israel - has been permitted to go there and see for itself the dismal conditions under which they live..<sup>138</sup> The Ethiopian airlines issued an information brochure about the Falashas as a special tourist attraction.<sup>139</sup>

Although nobody has bothered to prove the assertion, it is conveniently assumed by some that the Beta Yisrael are not really Jews.<sup>140</sup> In 1972, however, Chief Sephardic Rabbi, Ovadia Yosef declared that the Beta Yisrael are Jews and thus entitled them Israeli citizenship under the Law of Return. The Ashkenazik rabbi was not so certain but agreed to a conversion formula that would permit intermarriage of Beta Yisrael with other Jews. This humiliating quasi-conversion that the Beta Yisrael must undergo consists of a three to five month course of instruction at an orthodox kibbutz along with a "drop of blood" ceremony for males. Although some of the Ethiopian Jews objected, feeling it an indignity, they had no choice but to succumb.<sup>141</sup>

More recently assistance has slightly increased. Under the new leadership of Ralph Goldman, the J.D.C. - ORT has increased their aid almost fivefold. Although still not on par

with aid given to other needy Jews, it was progress.<sup>142</sup> Some aid has even been extended to the 200 Ethiopian Jews that have managed to escape to Israel. Mizrahi Women, for example, have given their help in Kfar Batya.

Nevertheless, the situation for the Beta Yisrael is becoming more precarious. According to an unconfirmed report by a Jerusalem Post correspondent, Jewish graveyards were being ploughed up and entire Jewish villages being massacred by their Moslem and Christian neighbors. The correspondent went on to report of a letter from an Ethiopian Jew to the World Jewish Congress in May, 1973, which stated, "' The Christians have started to kill us. They have told us to move from their land, and some of us left the place. The Christians are saying we are sucking their blood. Many of our people were killed a few months ago. Please help us as you do other Jews. If you will not act quickly, it is evident to everybody we will not be any more in this world.'"<sup>144</sup>

Israel, which has had diplomatic ties with Ethiopia since 1956, has done little for this Jewish Community. The severance of diplomatic relations after the Yom Kippur War had a traumatic effect on them.<sup>145</sup> Throughout this period of time the rationalization for not launching a "magic carpet" type evacuation was the sensitivity of Emperor Haile Selassie. It was told that he felt such a mass departure would bring national dishonour on his country. Many felt that a gradual exodus could have been arranged if the will to do to it had existed. Moreover, when the question came before the Israeli cabinet, a num-

ber of years ago, it was vigorously opposed by Yosef Burg and subsequently "filed" for further consideration.<sup>146</sup>

Rather than dramatizing their desperate situation, the international Jewish press has described them as "exotic", omitting suggestions that they be brought to Israel. Those few that were brought to Kfar Batya in the fifties to be trained as teachers and dressers (medical) were sent back to Ethiopia without encouragement to remain on to persuade others to immigrate.<sup>147</sup> The fact of the matter is that Ethiopia is vital to Israel vis-a-vis its oil supply routes to the Red Sea, its El Al flights to Kenya and South Africa and its contacts and commerce with other African nations. In fact, today there is a complete censorship on all news related to Ethiopian Jews in Israel.<sup>148</sup>

Those few that made it to Israel came in small groups. If they were able to obtain a visa it was only after they had pledged to return, bought a round trip ticket and deposited a six hundred dollar bond. This sum of money would take a lifetime for an average Ethiopian to save. Therefore, some, posing as non-Jews, took ships from the Red Sea port of Massawa to Eilat, or came as Christian pilgrims at Easter or Christmas time. Others were the lucky beneficiaries of occasional Jewish tourists who sent them passage to Israel<sup>149</sup> or were helped by their compatriots in Israel like Hazi Ovadia who mortgaged his home for funds.

Today, Ethiopia is in turmoil and the Beta Yisrael are trapped between the various warring factions. The revolution

in 1974 which was dedicated to land reform, has not changed the lot of the Jewish tenant farmers. In fact, some have been dispossessed by their non-Jewish neighbors. Spiritually too, the revolutionary doctrine is attracting its share of Jews, adding to the numbers that are assimilating.<sup>150</sup>

The sad irony is that the proclaimed reason for the lack of Ethiopian aliyah is the chaos. It is said that negotiations which would be sensitive, would have to be secretive and timed for the right moment.<sup>151</sup> The seemingly endless series of rationalizations for passivity caused Dr. Berger to declare that he "became convinced that no serious effort was being made to help anyone get out of Ethiopia."<sup>152</sup> This statement was made from his empirical findings of official procrastination. While there was continuous pressure by a few American Jews, significantly missing were the leaders of the major Jewish organizations (i.e. Conference of Presidents of Major Jewish Organizations and the World Zionist Conference). The Begin government recently found it possible to sneak 121 Ethiopian Jews into Israel. The significance of this can only be measured by what follows.<sup>153</sup>

Those Beta Yisrael that have made it to Israel have been painlessly absorbed, adjusting to twentieth century Israel with unexpected ease. They have entered all spectors of the community, from paraprofessionals, to the army, to kibbutzim, to the first Ethiopian Rabbi.<sup>154</sup> One can only speculate as to the reasons for world Jewry's indifference, but the conclusions one generally reaches are not comforting.

### Conclusion

The remnants of a strong and proud Jewish community which had remained isolated for over two thousand years in the mountains of Ethiopia, is in terrible need today. The apathy of the world Jewish leaders can no longer be rationalized as involving the emperor's sensitivity, nor can it be scoffed at with the all encompassing "behind doors" approach, since no results have been forthcoming. The Jews of Ethiopia, recognized as such after much procrastination, deserve the same treatment that Jews in other "troubled" areas of the world receive. To do otherwise is to make a sham and a mockery of the concept of "Klal Yisrael."

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22. Shelmay, op. cit. p. 14
23. Isaac, op. cit. p. 22-4
24. Ibid p. 56, see "Kebra Negast"
25. Ibid p. 24
26. Leslau, op. cit. p. XXVII-XXXVIII, Many of the books that the Beta Yisrael use are unknown today to other Ethiopians, see Leslau, F.A. for translation of five of their works.
27. Quirin, J. The Beta Israel (Falasha) in Ethiopian History: Caste Formation and Cultural Change; 1270-1868 , University Microfilms International, Ann Arbor, 1977, U.of Minnesota, Ph.D., p. 14
28. Isaac, op. cit. p. 26
29. Quirin, op. cit. p. 51-2
30. Ibid p. 53

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32. Ibid p. 57
33. Ibid p. 58 (this may be the origin of the word "Falasha")
34. Ibid p. 59
35. Ibid p. 58-60
36. Ibid p. 62
37. Ibid p. 63
38. Ibid p. 65
39. Ibid p. 67-8
40. Ibid p. 69
41. E.J., p. 1144
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43. Ibid p. 75-6
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45. Ibid p. 50 and 31
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56. Ibid
57. Jewish Intelligence, 1885, p. 67-8 "The Falashas"
58. Ibid, 1892, p. 147 "Martyrs of Jesus"
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66. Adler, C., I Have Considered the Days, 1941, Phil., J.P.S.
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68. Quirin, op. cit. p. 9
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70. These occupations were adopted after the defeat in the seventeenth century. Also, Ethiopians look down on craftsmen, especially metalworkers who they fear as buda people.
71. Shelmay, op. cit. p. 17
72. Leslau, op. cit. p. 14
73. Levin, M., op.cit. p. 45
74. E.J., p. 1151
75. Levin, op. cit. p. 45
76. Leslau, op. cit. p. 21-22



77. Shelmay, op. cit. p. 63
78. Leslau, op. cit. p. 23-4
79. Shelmay, op. cit. p. 63
80. Leslau, op. cit. p. 24
81. Shelmay, op. cit. p. 72-5
82. Ibid
83. Leslau, op. cit. p. 21
84. Ibid p. 25-6
85. If it falls on Shabbat it is done "Motze Shabbat".
86. Leslau, op. cit. p. 15
87. Shelmay, op. cit. p. 32
88. Leslau, op. cit. p. 18
89. See Meyer Levin's movie, "The Falashas" for a Beta Yisrael wedding.
90. Shelmay, op. cit. p. 32
91. Ibid p. 32
92. Leslau, op. cit. p. 19
93. Ibid p. 19-20
94. Shelmay, op. cit. p. 33
95. Ibid, p. 28-33
96. Leslau, op. cit. p. 29
97. Shelmay, op. cit. p. 37-8
98. Ibid p. 52
99. Ibid p. 39-41
100. Ibid p. 41
101. Ibid p. 42
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104. Leslau, op. cit. p.
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106. Leslau, op. cit. p. 22-7
107. Shelmay, op. cit. p. 44
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133. Berger, op. cit. p. 15
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137. See T. Torres article in Present Tense, Spring, 1974; she reports being told to make it clear to the Ethiopian Jews that she was not an emissary from Israel to help in emmigration.
138. Berger, op. cit. p. 4
139. Ibid p. 4-5
140. Weiss, op. cit.
141. Berger, op. cit.
142. Levin, op. cit. p. 47
143. Berger, op. cit. p. 2
144. Weiss, op. cit.
145. Berger, Present Tense, op. cit. p. 15
146. Levin, op. cit. p. 46
147. Berger, "...Extinction", op. cit. p. 5
148. Ibid p. 1
149. Levin, op. cit. p. 47
150. Berger, op. cit. p. 6
151. Ibid p. 5
152. Ibid. p. 1
153. Berger, Present Tense, op. cit. p. 15-6
154. Ibid. 15

The Psychology of the Adolescent

Chapter II of Master's Thesis

Ian Stern

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### Introduction

Just as human infancy is longer than that of any other species, so human adolescence is significantly prolonged. For man, adolescence is a period of personality development and social adjustment. A time of induction into adult living when one is trained to take an active role in community life.<sup>1</sup> The adolescent has attained the capacity for concept formation,<sup>2</sup> while developing the ability to deal with information in probabilistic terms and draw conclusions from pure hypotheses.<sup>3</sup> These cognitive advances effect his moral development; his ability to abstract having a profound relationship with his ability to make moral judgments. From an Eriksonian perspective, "The adolescent mind is essentially a mind of the moratorium, a psychosocial stage between childhood and adulthood, and between the morality learned by the child and the ethics to be developed by the adult."<sup>4</sup> A number of different theories and approaches to adolescent psychology will be outlined in this chapter, vis-a-vis abstract thought and moral development, in conjunction with an examination of a multiplicity of factors that effect adolescent development.

By the age of twelve a child has developed a new cognitive competence which allows him to examine the logic and consistency of his existing beliefs. This ability is catalyzed by experiences of the adolescent with phenomena and attitudes that are not easily consistent with his existent ideology. This causes him to reexamine and analyze his knowledge.

Erikson

In Erikson's psychosocial stages of ego development, the individual has to establish new basic orientations to his social world and self. Throughout the whole life cycle, personality development continues and in each stage there are positive and negative components. In each of the stages a new dimension of social interaction becomes possible, vis-a-vis himself and the social environment.<sup>6</sup>

In order to better understand the adolescent in Eriksonian terms, a basic understanding of his early stages is necessary. In Childhood and Society<sup>7</sup>, Erikson describes his "Eight Stages of Man." To summarize them very briefly, the first stage, "Trust vs Mistrust," is concerned with the infant. Erikson maintains that if its needs are met and discomforts quickly eradicated, it will develop a sense that the world is safe and people helpful and dependable. If care is inconsistent, rejectory or inadequate, a basic mistrust could be fostered. It should be noted that the problem of trust vs mistrust is not ultimately resolved in this first year, but continually arises in each stage to be reinforced or undermined, dependent on the respective situation. The second stage, "Autonomy vs Shame and Doubt" (second and third year), is related to the child's new motor and mental abilities that allow it to move and act independently. If parents recognize the child's need to do what it is capable of, the child will develop a sense of being able to control its environment; a sense of autonomy. On the other hand, if parents are consistently impatient and do for the child what it is capable of

doing itself, then the parents are reinforcing a sense of shame and doubt. An imbalance toward shame and doubt will make it difficult for the child to be autonomous in adolescence and adulthood and the same principle applies vis-a-vis autonomy. Nevertheless, the balance can be effected in later stages. The third stage is "Initiative vs Guilt" (fourth and fifth year). During this period a child can initiate his own activities. The state in which the child leaves this stage depends upon how the parents respond to the child's self-initiated activities. The term "activities" here, enters the realm of the child's fantasies. In the fourth stage, "Industry vs Inferiority", (sixth through eleventh year), the child is capable of deductive reasoning and of playing and learning by rules. During this stage the child's world expands past the home and therefore, school, for example, can effect its industry-inferiority balance. Again, if the child's sense of industry is rewarded and encouraged, then this sense will be enhanced, and of course, the inverse is true vis-a-vis inferiority.<sup>8</sup>

Adolescence, attained in the fifth stage, is a period of "Identity vs Role Confusion." While the adolescent matures mentally and physiologically, he experiences new feelings, sensations and desires resulting from changes in his body. He also develops a number of new ways of looking at and thinking about the world. He can now think of other people's thinking and wonder what others think of him.<sup>9</sup> This may be one reason why, "Young people can be remarkably clannish and cruel in their exclusion of all those who are different, in skin color or cultural background, in tastes and gifts, and often in such

petty aspects of dress and gesture as have been temporarily selected as the signs of an ingrouper or out-grouper."<sup>10</sup>

Erikson explains that this can be a defense against identity confusion. Adolescents temporarily help each other through this discomfort through cliques and by stereotyping their enemies and themselves.<sup>11</sup> If the adolescent cannot find a sense of personal identity, due either to a problem in an earlier developmental stage or difficult social circumstances, then he shows role confusion. The adolescent experiences "a sense of not knowing what he is, where he belongs or whom he belongs to."<sup>12</sup>

The adolescent can conceive of ideals of society, of religion, and of family and may become inclined to compare them to the imperfections of his own experience. The ability of constructing philosophies and theories in order to bring all the diverse and conflicting aspects of society into a harmonious, working, peaceful whole, is his. During this period of life of idealism, the adolescent is involved in a quest for something to which he can be true; that will not let him down. Erikson maintains that this "something" must be meaningful in the adolescent's terms. It cannot stand surrogate for the past but rather, must represent the wave of the future.<sup>14</sup>

Much of adolescent rebellion against adult society derives, in part at least, from his new capacity to construct ideal situations. These ideals, however, are almost entirely intellectual and the young person has little conception of how they might be made into realities and even less interest in working toward their fulfillment. The very same adolescent who professes his concern for the poor,

spends his money on clothes and records, not on charity. The very fact that ideals can be conceived, he believes, means that they can be effortlessly realized without any sacrifice on his part.<sup>15</sup>

The adolescent lacks compassion for human shortcomings in himself and others. This intolerance gradually comes to an end as the adolescent is forced to adopt to realities of adult world, reassess it and his own limitations, and becomes more tolerant and accepting of both.<sup>16</sup>

A young child does not understand the discontinuity between self contained information in a hypothetical problem and egocentric information he carries. The adolescent, on the other hand, can deal more consistently with rules from events with multiple attributes simultaneously. He is capable of inferring disjunctive and conjunctive concepts from data. While a young child is more absolute and mechanistic in his inferences (i.e. a hostile greeting is seen as a direct and immediate result of the child's action or existence), an adolescent can be relativistic (in the same example, an adolescent might perceive the hostility as a derivative of a bad report card or a hard day at work).<sup>17</sup>

#### Kagan

Kagan goes on to say, "The adolescent is disposed to examine his beliefs in sets, and to search for inconsistencies among them and between the beliefs and related actions."<sup>18</sup> One example that Kagan uses is the idea that "God loves man,"<sup>19</sup> and yet the world contains many unhappy people. The adolescent can see the incompatibility of the two statements and states, "If God loved man, he would not make so many people unhappy."<sup>20</sup>



The adolescent has a few options open to him to straighten out these inconsistencies. He cannot deny the idea that God loves man because that contradicts the definition of God. He might decide that there are not that many unhappy people but that would be difficult. He could rationalize from the perspective of Job and say that God has an ultimate reason that we cannot fathom. Another option open is to deny God's very existence. This causes the adolescent to realize that that which was seemingly permanently valid has become tentative. He will then apply this principle to other beliefs. Substitute other "truths" for "God loves man," such as "parents are omnipotent," or "Sexual activity and/or masturbation is bad," and the result is a serious reevaluative process stirring in the adolescent. A search for new premises begins and "sometimes this analysis leaves the adolescent temporarily without a commitment to any belief."<sup>21</sup> Erikson stated that, "at such times (role confusion), young people often seek causes that give their lives meaning and direction."<sup>22</sup> Crow and Crow agree, adding that adolescents may try emulating, sometimes unconsciously, the attitudes of someone they admire.<sup>23</sup>

#### Piaget

According to Piaget, intelligence is "only a generic term to indicate the superior forms of organization of cognitive structurings....behavior becomes more "intelligent" as the pathways between the subject and the objects on which it acts cease to be simple and become progressively more complex."<sup>24</sup>

Moreover, "Intelligence constitutes the state of equilibrium towards which tend all the successive adaptations of a sensori-motor cognitive nature, as well as all assimilatory and accommodatory interactions between the organism and the environment."<sup>25</sup> Therefore, according to Piaget, the problem of intellectual growth, particularly as the child passes through the middle years of childhood toward adolescence, is accommodation rather than assimilation, for accommodation is the higher intellectual hurdle.<sup>26</sup>

The culmination of each stage is characterized by a state of equilibrium. More particularly, the state of equilibrium exists when a balance between assimilation and accommodation has been accomplished. As new information enters, the equilibrium is thrown out of balance, causing a new assimilation-accommodation process to occur which results in a new, higher level equilibrium and a changed structure. This experience leads slowly to cognitive growth which is called equilibration.<sup>27</sup>

In Piaget's four developmental stages, sensorimotor (ages zero-two), preoperational thought (ages two-seven), concrete operations (ages seven-eleven), and formal operations (ages eleven or twelve-fifteen), the child is an active participant in his own development.<sup>28</sup> The sensorimotor stage is a period when cognitive functioning is highly event specific. During the preoperational thought stage symbolic or thought functions begin to appear. In concrete operations, the child develops operations which are implicitly based on the logic of classes

and relations, but lacks the combinational possibilities that characterizes formal operations. During the last stage, formal operations, the individual can deal with information in probabilistic terms and may reconstruct reality; interrelating propositions is also possible.<sup>29</sup>

The findings of Piaget and Inhelder show that there is a change from concrete to formal operations in adolescence.<sup>30</sup> The transition stems from both cultural pressures and the need of the adolescent to take on an adult role and exemplify adult modes of thought. The thinking of the eleven year old is more concrete, egocentric and tied to the present. He cannot yet envision long range consequences nor can he comfortably reason from premises. Finally, he has not attained hypothetico-deductive modes of analysis. The thirteen year old, on the other hand, has achieved these capacities but cannot display them with consistent effectiveness. He is the most labile. Meanwhile, any failure on the part of a fifteen year old in formal or abstract thought is more likely to be in content than abstract quality per se. The belief in the ability of the adolescent to think abstractly is shared by Harvey, Hunt and Schroder who stated that adolescence (their fourth stage) is "Characterized by abstract standards, the availability of alternative conceptual schema..."<sup>31</sup> There is only a moderate difference between the fifteen year old and the more refined and knowledgeable eighteen year old.<sup>32</sup>

#### Adolescent Egocentricity

An adolescent is capable of combinational logic which in

social settings has consequences. The adolescent is faced with many alternatives and decision making becomes a problem.<sup>33</sup>

According to E.A. Peel, "The capacity for comprehensive selection and rejection of possibilities seems to emerge only in late adolescence and early adulthood."<sup>34</sup>

The adolescent sees alternatives to parental directives and therefore questions them. This is a time of introspection and even secretive thoughts.<sup>35</sup>

Piaget explains that "The majority talk about only a small part of their personal creations and confine themselves to rumination about them intimately and in secret. But all of them have systems and theories that transform the world in one way or another."<sup>36</sup> Moreover, an adolescent will play with his new found ability and tries to incorporate it into self through egocentric assimilation.

"Adolescent egocentricity is manifested by belief in the omnipotence of reflection, as though the world should submit itself to idealistic schemes rather than to systems of reality."<sup>37</sup> The crux of adolescent egocentricity is his capacity to conceptualize the thoughts of other people. On the other hand, while the adolescent can cognize other's thoughts he cannot "differentiate between the objects towards which the thoughts of others are directed and those which are the objects of his concern."<sup>38</sup>

Therefore, due to the physiological metamorphosis that he is undergoing, the young adolescent is primarily concerned with himself and assumes that others are as obsessed with his appearance and behavior as he is.<sup>39</sup> Eventually, as the individual moves through adolescence, and gains

more control over his formal thinking, he will hopefully attain a new equilibrium, omitting the metaphysical egocentricity of early adolescence. Reality and formal thought become reconciled and the adolescent begins to perceive that the proper function of reflection is to predict and interpret experience.<sup>40</sup>

Thus it seems that whenever the system receives input which causes the immature individual to analyze, appraise and cope with new ideas, the egocentric and narcissistic stance tends to occur. Piaget believes, "An adolescent first hearing about social action, political action or other like matters tends to become quite egocentric and narcissistic in his approach. During this phase we speak of idealism and the intolerance of adolescents and also of their strongly expressed belief that they have somehow tapped the springs of eternal truth..."<sup>41</sup> At the same time it is important to remember that adolescent egocentrism is determined by the situation in which it occurs and the subject matter upon which it is operating. Also there are "individual differences and situational idiosyncracies."<sup>42</sup> The same individual can show egocentrism in some matters and not others. Thus, while before maturity, any newly introduced area will tend, to some extent, to elicit egocentric behavior, as maturity is approached and achieved, egocentrism is replaced by greater selflessness.<sup>43</sup>

With formal operations, the adolescent can conceptualize his own thoughts and discover the arbitrariness of his hypotheses. He learns the rules for testing hypothesis against

fact and therefore is able to deal with the two in experimental way. This leads to a recognition that many of his hypotheses are wrong which gives him new respect for data and less confidence in his own ability. Cognitive conceit is gradually given up as he begins to be self-critical. It is hastened by adolescent attempts at adult tasks, which he measures on adult standards.<sup>44</sup> Morris states that, "Normative expectations become more liberal, responses more flexible and qualified. There is a greater tendency for respondents to be unwilling to give an answer to situations as they stand and say, 'well it depends on a number of different things. For instance, if....' and to specify modifying conditions. Self interested elements also show a change from selfishness to more independent, autonomous responses."<sup>45</sup>

Adelson and O'Neal

In a study done by Adelson and O'Neal<sup>46</sup> it was found that younger adolescents find it difficult to transcend personalized modes of discourse, to conceptualize the community as a whole, to anticipate the long range effects of political action, and to be sensitive to individual liberties. They maintain that prior to adolescence the child's concept of political order is erratic and incomplete but by the end of adolescence, the child's mind can move within the categories of political discourse. In order to study this they designed an interview with the premise: a thousand people were dissatisfied with the way things were going in their nation and therefore they bought and moved to a Pacific Island. The people

interviewed had to devise laws and modes of government for the new community. The eleven year olds could not speak coherently on the political order since (due to their egocentricity,) they could not transcend a purely personal approach to matters which required a sociocentric perspective. Moreover, they treated political issues in a concrete fashion and could not manage the needed abstractness of attitude. The researchers found that pre-adolescents do not appraise a political event in light of its collective consequences. It is difficult for them to conceive of the social order as a whole, and frequently they cannot understand actions aimed to serve communal ends and thus interpret them parochially as serving the needs of individuals. They found that by the age of thirteen there was a decisive shift in emphasis; the stress was now on the protection of the community. While the eleven year old emphasized the negative or coercive functions of government, adhering to a Hobbesian view of political man, the thirteen year olds stressed the positive functions of government.<sup>47</sup>

Thus it can be said that the political thought of the early adolescent is constrained by concrete, personalized, present oriented modes of approach. However, "Once these limits are transcended, the adolescent is open to influence by knowledge, by the absorption of consensus, and by the principles he adopts from others or develops on his own."<sup>48</sup> The adolescent can anticipate the consequences of an immediate political choice for the long range future of the community and

can weigh the probable effects of alternative choices on the future.

### Bruner

Although Piaget and Bruner are in basic agreement on many aspects of their respective theories, they depart when it comes to the role of culture in human development. While Piaget omits the role of culture in cognitive growth, Bruner emphasizes it.<sup>49</sup> According to Bruner, the development of intellectual functioning from infancy to maturity "is shaped by a series of technological advances in the use of the mind."<sup>50</sup> Growth depends on mastery of techniques; skills transmitted with varying efficiency by the culture (i.e., the primary one being language). "Cognitive growth, then, is in a major way from the outside in as well as from the inside out."<sup>51</sup>

Man has changed by linking himself with new, external implementation systems of which there are three types. The first, amplifiers of human motor capacities (from cutting tools to the wheel to modern devices), secondly amplifiers of sensory capacities (from smoke signals to radar), and thirdly amplifiers of human ratiocinative capacities (an infinite variety ranging from language systems to myths to theories). All are more or less transmitted by culture.<sup>52</sup>

Bruner emphasizes the directive function of language on thought, while it is important to note that Piaget feels that thought is an internalized action. For Piaget, language is a means of sharing and communicating thoughts but does not facilitate them or their development. Bruner replies by pointing



to the prominent role that language plays in cognitive functioning. He points out that this is supported by the effects of schooling or instruction on intellectual skills. Piaget retorts by distinguishing between development and learning, stating that the latter is a restricted process provoked by a situation.<sup>53</sup>

Bruner maintains that any highly skilled activity can be broken down into simpler components and done by a less skilled operator. What higher skills require is an ability to combine the component operations. "Maturation consists of an orchestration of the components into an integrated sequence."<sup>54</sup> Integration depends upon patterns from outside; learning and internalizing them. Thus, Bruner visualizes cognitive development in terms of the "internalization of techniques from the culture, language and the effective technologies available."<sup>55</sup>

### Kohlberg

Individuals acquire and refine their sense of justice through a sequence of invariant developmental stages. Kohlberg's approach which is essentially a cognitive-developmental one, builds on Piaget. Justice, which is a major principal in Kohlberg's theory of moral development, is defined as the primary regard for the value and equality of people, and reciprocity in relationships. He views justice as inherent in human experience. Moral judgment is primarily a function of a rational operations and moral situations are defined cognitively by the judging individual. Thus, moral development is an

increased ability to perceive objective reality; to organize and integrate experience. Therefore, general intelligence and the ability to reason abstractly is crucial for development.<sup>56</sup>

The main experiential determinants of moral development seem to be quantity and variety of social experience; the opportunity to take a number of roles and to encounter other perspectives. Development occurs when the child becomes uneasy with his own judgments and finds other principles which provide more equilibrium and logical satisfaction. Kohlberg's six stages of moral development are defined not by particular opinions but by ways of perceiving moral matters and bases for choice.<sup>57</sup> A stage concept implies personality consistency and universality of sequence under varying cultural conditions. It is possible to become fixated at any level.<sup>58</sup>

In order to better understand what moral considerations are made in individuals it is important to understand Kohlberg's stage theory below.

#### Level I - Premoral

Stage 1. Obedience and punishment orientation. Ego-centric deference to superior power or prestige, or a trouble-avoiding set. Objective responsibility.

Stage 2. Naively egoistic orientation. Right action is that instrumentally satisfying the self's needs and occasionally others. Awareness of relativism of value to each actor's needs and perspective. Naive egalitarianism and orientation to exchange and reciprocity.

#### Level II - Conventional Role Conformity

Stage 3. Good-boy orientation. Orientation to approval and to pleasing and helping others. Conformity to stereotypical images of majority of natural role behavior, and judgment of intentions.

Stage 4. Authority and social-order-maintaining orientation. Orientation to "doing duty" and to showing respect for authority and maintaining the given social order for its own sake. Regard for earned expectations of others.

Level III - Self-accepted Moral principles

Stage 5. Contractual legalistic orientation. Recognition of an arbitrary element or starting point in rules or expectations for the sake of agreement. Duty defined in terms of contract, general avoidance of violation of the will or rights of others, and majority will and welfare.

Stage 6. Conscience or principle orientation. Orientation not only to actually ordained social rules but to principles of choice involving appeal to logical universality and consistency. Orientation to conscience as a directing agent and to mutual respect and trust.<sup>59</sup>

Each stage is defined by twenty five basic factors which enter into moral decisions (i.e., life, avoidance of punishment, exchange of favors, and avoidance of self-condemnation.) In the Milgram electric shock obedience test, a majority of stage six people refused, or quit when the victims expressed pain, while a majority, at lower stages, continued to administer the shocks.<sup>60</sup>

Kohlberg rejects the idea that moral character is either a deep emotional matter that is fixed in the home in earliest childhood, or purely a matter of "immediate situational forces and rewards."<sup>61</sup> He suggests that a specific act of misconduct may be determined by situation and that the predisposition to acts of misconduct are related to a child's capacity for judgment and to his ego-strength. This includes such traits as delay gratification and the ability to predict consequences and focus attention.<sup>62</sup>

According to Harthshorne and May's findings, character education classes and religious instruction programs have no influence on moral conduct as measured by experimental tests of honesty. Moreover, "Recent research suggests that the major consistencies of moral character represent the slowly develop-

ing formation of more or less cognitive principles of moral judgment and decision and of related ego abilities."<sup>63</sup> Acts of misconduct which are related to the two general aspects of a child's personality development are ego strength, which represents a set of interrelated ego abilities (i.e., intelligent prediction of consequences, tendency to choose greater remote reward over the lesser immediate reward, ability to maintain stable focused attention, etc.) and the level of development of the child's moral judgments (moral judgment is different than moral knowledge; the same desire to "look good" on a spelling test and cheat will apply to a moral attitude test by lying).<sup>64</sup>

In one study, the majority of the children at the premoral level cheated a great deal, while the majority at the conventional level cheated a slight or moderate amount. Adolescents, at the level of moral principle, "interpret the opportunity to cheat as involving issues of maintaining trust, contract, social agreement, and equality of reward for equal effort and ability." "Cheating then, is not a good indicator of moral character until the child has developed in adolescence a set of inner moral principles that prohibit it."<sup>65</sup> Thus, the goal of moral education is the stimulation of the development of the child's moral judgment; aiding the child to take the next step in a direction toward which he is already tending. Moral character must be seen developmentally rather than as fixed conventional traits of honest. In Kohlberg's own words, "... the sign of the child's moral maturity is his ability to make

moral judgments and formulate moral principles of his own, rather than his ability to conform to moral judgments of the adults around him."<sup>66</sup>

### Conclusion

From the above data one can better appreciate the particular strengths and weaknesses of the adolescent which are important to understanding this critical period of human development. When an individual approaches adolescence, he arrives with the baggage of childhood. During this preparatory period before adulthood, environmental, psychosocial cognitive, and moral forces are seen as focused on the inexperienced individual. From a psychosocial perspective, the adolescent is going through a time of trying to identify himself and his purpose in life vis-a-vis his environment. His main task is to reconcile what he learned as a child with what he is experiencing as an adolescent. Piaget views the adolescent as in transition from the concrete to the formal operational stage, gradually shedding his egocentricity for a more mature "weltanschauung." According to Piaget, adolescence "is the metaphysical age, 'par excellence'."<sup>67</sup> According to Kohlberg, there is an intimate relationship between cognitive and moral development, the latter being predicated on the former vis-a-vis the moral stages in his sequential theory.

The necessity for teaching this subject is based on the life and death situation of the Ethiopian Jewish community and complimented by the concept of Klal Yisrael. Inherent to the discussion of the psychology of the adolescent, already

outlined in the above, are the questions "why teach this subject to adolescents?" "Are adolescents ready?" "Is there an inherent need to teach this at the adolescent level?"

Erikson would say that this is a period when an individual can construct his own philosophies and bring diverse aspects of society together.<sup>68</sup> Thus, at this stage, man can analyze the "whys" behind the passivity of world Jewry. Piaget would point to the adolescent's ability to grasp all the implications of the idea of Klal Yisrael and the concomitant imperfections that apply to it. While the adolescent has certainly heard the term "Klal Yisrael" before and has probably discussed its significance,<sup>69</sup> the possibility of him previously grasping the idea of responsibility and having this catalyzed into some form of action is improbable before adolescence, due to excessive egocentricity.<sup>70</sup> According to Adelson and O'Neal pre-adolescents do not appraise a political event in relation to its communal consequences but rather in an individualistic, parochial manner. That is, while pre-adolescents have difficulty transcending personal modes of political discourse, the mature adolescent can anticipate future communal consequences and make decisions accordingly.<sup>71</sup> Perhaps for the first time, the individual is able to perceive an inconsistency between the concept and verbiage behind the term Klal Yisrael, and the actuality: that we Jews, like all other peoples, have our share of bigots. Furthermore, the adolescent can view this imperfect situation relativistically, and thus, rather than becoming cynical, can perceive the concept as a model to strive

towards. Kohlberg feels that the adolescent is ready to intellectually discuss and understand the moral challenges that we must confront vis-a-vis this endangered community. At this point in life the individual has reached the stage of cognitive development-rational operations and is able to organize and integrate objective reality. Furthermore, in order to be able to reach one's highest moral level, one must have developed cognitively to have self accepted moral principles and this development does not occur until formal operations - adolescence.<sup>72</sup>

### Existing Materials

Finally, the only existing classroom material concerning Ethiopian Jewry is either geared for pre-adolescents or is outdated. Samuel and Tammar Grand have recently published a series, Jews in Distant Lands,<sup>72</sup> with a teacher's guide, of which Ethiopian Jews are included as an "exotic" community. From a Brunerian perspective, the principle tool is language and therefore to label the Ethiopian community "exotic" is to distort an essential aspect in the study of this community.<sup>74</sup> In the teacher's guide they suggest using the antiquated filmstrips, "The Falashas of Ethiopia"<sup>75</sup> which are part of a film-strip series put out by UAHC in 1962. While some of the slides are good, the filmstrips on the whole are inadequate. Moreover, the educational principles of involving the students, asking their opinions before explaining the facts, having them puzzle through questions and explore alternatives to situations,<sup>76</sup> are all avoided. More significantly, however, is the absence of a moral sense, of an indignation, in either series,

be it expressed in either a clarification exercise or a thought provoking challenge. The Ethiopian Jews are portrayed more as exotic artifacts to be preserved and remembered than a remnant of a Jewish community that is in dire need of immediate help. Thus, it misses the essential educational purpose of discussing this community, for which adolescents are certainly cognitively, psychosocially and morally prepared.



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A Curriculum

Chapter III of Master's Thesis

Ian Stern

Lesson 1Goals

To introduce the students to the Ethiopian Jews; their history, lifestyles, origins, present conditions, and the fact that they are black Jews with a long tradition.

Motivation

## 1. Ethiopian Jewry Slide Show

In order to interest the students immediately, the floor could be covered with grass or hay and fragrant herbs, and the students, when they enter the class, could be asked to sit on the floor. Ethiopian music could be played throughout the class, being lowered at appropriate times such as during the narration of the slide show. Certain clues, such as a Jewish star and/or a sacrificial altar, could be put in the room and before the commencement of the slide show and the class could be asked to try to fit together, from their senses, what type of society they are "in". After a certain amount of discussion, the teacher should show the slide show, which can be obtained from Dr. Graenum Berger, 40 Corlies Ave., Pelham, New York or the Media Service of the National Jewish Welfare Board in New York. The slide show describes, in color, the contemporary life of the Ethiopian Jews, which has not drastically changed since their loss of independence in the seventeenth century. It includes their lifestyles, customs, means of livelihood, religious practices and even describes a bit about those few who made it to Israel. The slide show should be followed by a brief question and answer period.

2. A large map of Africa and the Middle East, with Ethiopia highlighted. A transparency on an overhead projector would also be effective. (See appendix 1)

The teacher should ask the class to suggest possible theories of origin, using the map, and , if necessary, the two lines provided in appendix 2 and 3. "Where could these Jews have come from?" "When would be the most likely times for Jews to immigrate, and why?" After the class has finished its suggestions, the teacher can fill in the lacunae. Another possible discussion point is the necessity of myths and legends to a people. "What purpose do they serve?" Then, time allowing, the teacher could ask questions referring to the slides. "What could have caused the Jews to become tenant farmers?" "Why does one have a gun?" Mention their numerical decimation, and ask what they think could have caused it. Discuss anti-semitism, the buda people, deicide, etc.

### Homework

Read the two page article by Barry Weiss in Israel Today, November 12, 1976, "The Black Jews of Ethiopia," It is a short concise article that is "realistic" in a Hebrew High School. For more ambitious students, the Encyclopedia Judaica article on "Falashas" in volume six, pages 1143-1154 is recommended.

Lesson 2Goals

To help the students clarify their own Jewish values and to help them define their concepts of what is a Jew for the purpose of recognizing the Jewishness of the Beta Yisrael.

Motivation

1. Value clarification exercise.

Group the following in a way you believe to be most appropriate: Hebrew, identity, compassion, God, Jewish, justice, Torah, giving, Israel, beautiful, peace, Zionism, responsibility, history, self-fulfillment, Exile, knowledge, pioneer, suffering, Abraham, freedom, memory, Egypt. Each student should be given the above list with each word on a separate sheet of paper.

The preceding is a values clarification exercise designed by Dr. Steven Copland. It helps students to clarify their own values or ideas by giving them the opportunity to make thoughtful choices. It cannot only aid in the development of the student's skills in analytic thinking, but it might suggest new insights or crystalize old or already held ones. The teacher must bear in mind that he must be non-judgmental. The exercise should include an opportunity to reflect further. Each student showing their classification, should answer how he happened to choose his particular arrangement. In other words, reasons for why words were grouped together should be mentioned. After a few students have shared their classifications, the

teacher can ask if someone came up with a different one that they would like to share. After that, the teacher might ask the class to think of reason(s) for making combinations nobody mentioned: perhaps "Exile" and "suffering" together, for example.

#### Option

Time allowing, the teacher could enter into a discussion on Judaism. Is it based on Faith? What else (action)? What kinds of actions make one Jewish? Have the class make a list of Jewish actions to be written on a large piece of paper. (Kashrute, Shabbat, Morals, Circumcision, etc.), which can be referred to in the next class.

#### Homework

Find out who the Karaites were (use Encyclopedia Judaica). Hand out copies of the two Responsa of the RDBZ concerning the Ethiopian Jews (see page      in thesis) and ask the class to think or write about the following: According to the Responsa, why were the Karaites not considered Jews by the RDBZ, while the Beta Yisrael were? What do you think of his opinion? Do you believe that anyone has the right to determine who a Jew is? If so, who?



### Lesson 3

#### Goals

To better understand Beta Yisrael traditions by comparing them to those of the Bible, Rabbinical tradition and Ethiopian Christianity.

#### Motivation

1. Hand out traditional wedding invitations to the students as they enter the class. Ask what they know of a traditional wedding. Where do the rituals come from? What do the rituals symbolize? (i.e., breaking the glass, the chupah, etc.) For additional information, concerning weddings and wedding invitations, see Strassfeld's Jewish Catalogue, I & II.
  2. Show Meyer Levin's movie, "The Falashas", which can be obtained from the same place as the slide show. Before showing the film, ask the class to look for anything that reminds them of a traditional wedding ceremony. What is not included? What is different? etc. After the film, discuss these things. Was there anything about the ceremony that must have been the work of Faitlovitch or his associates? For further comparison, see the chart in appendix 4. What do we learn from the chart about Ethiopian Jewish contact with the rest of the Jewish world? Can we place any dates? Why do you think that there are so many Jewish traditions in Ethiopian Christianity? (Before Emperor Nanza - 330 - Ethiopia was highly Judaized. Many of these traditions continue today in the Church.) Who were the Karaites? Discuss the homework assignment.
- Time allowing discuss what is happening to the younger genera-

tion of Ethiopian Jews vis-a-vis their attitudes toward Beta Yisrael tradition, (see Chapter 1). What will happen to the Beta Yisrael culture in Israel?

Homework

Find out the prices of certain food items. Give different items to different students. Basic food items such as eggs, bread, milk, cheese, meat, etc.

Lesson 4Goals

To have the class better understand the poverty of the Ethiopian Jewish community and thus better appreciate the magnitude of the enticements that the missionaries offer.

Motivation

## 1. Game

Perhaps one of the best ways to help an affluent generation actually feel poor is to give students a practical problem in figuring out a budget and attempting to live within it for a day. Use \$6,000 as the total annual income of a family of four (U.S. poverty level as defined by the government). On a monthly basis, how much will be needed for rent? (Direct class to the classified ads in the local newspaper for apartments.) How much for clothing, lunch money, utilities, transportation, etc. How much is left over for food, and what type of meals can they have? (Refer to the last homework assignment.) What would be a sample day's menu? Would the class be willing to stay on such a menu for a day?

This can be done in class by dividing the students into groups of three or four (give each group its own newspaper) and have the groups do the above mentioned budgeting. After all the groups have done this, and expressed themselves, proceed to analyze how the poor feel trying to make ends meet. What would the students have to do without (have the class make a list of these things)? Then discuss the status of the Ethiopian Jew

as a tenant farmer and discuss the enticements of the missionaries. This can lead into a discussion about how the missionaries were perceived by world Jewry, and what the resultant reactions were. (Faitlovitch).

Homework

Read Greanum Berger's article, "Tragedy of Ethiopian Jews" in July, 1978, Present Tense. Have the class stick to their prescribed menus for one day.

Lesson 5Goals

To discuss what is being done to help the Ethiopian Jewish Community and the reasons behind the passivity. One of the reasons, prejudice, will be a focal point for discussion.

Motivation

## 1. Label Game

Stick a label on the forehead of each student. The labels can read, "ignore me, agree with me, laugh at me, disagree with me, compliment me, be bored with me, act as if you cannot hear me, act condescending to me, bug me, encourage me, etc." The purpose of the game is to give the students an understanding of what discrimination is. That is to say, to show the students some of the general characteristics of prejudice while feeling some of its ramifications. The class is told that it should react to each other according to what the labels dictate. Nobody should know or inquire about their label. They will probably learn by interacting. They should be given about fifteen minutes to interact and then there should be a discussion about what had just transpired. The discussion should evolve around what discrimination is.

This should be followed by a discussion about the present plight of the Ethiopian Jews. President of the American Association for Ethiopian Jews, Greanum Berger, says that in a few years there will be no more Jewish community there. While at one time they numbered one-half million, today they number only 28,000. While Israel claims to be working behind the scenes,

results are illusory. As for the major Jewish relief organizations, little, if nothing, has been done by the majority of them. Meanwhile there are unconfirmed reports of pogroms, and conversions, which enable one to obtain an education or just sustenance, are increasing. The questions that must be raised are discomfoting to all of us. Why has world Jewry ignored them? Are the difficulties/excuses in the rescue more intense or the consequences more precarious than those involved in the Soviet Jewry movement, or the Arab Jewry movement, both of which deserve and receive the financial and moral support of the major Jewish organizations? What else is involved? What are the geopolitical factors involved, between Ethiopia and Israel? Is the passivity due to apathy or ignorance? What kind of help do they need, (aliyah or relief in Ethiopia)? What can we do to help? What does the class think about protesting one of the major Jewish organizations that is not doing anything to help? (This can be a major debate in the class). Years ago the major Jewish organizations did not want to do anything publicly for Soviet Jews, fearing reprisals. The claim was that clandestine meetings would be more productive. We have learned from experience that "going public" has its advantages. The last part of class should be devoted to planning some course of action for the Ethiopian Jews. If publicity will be needed, it should be decided upon now.

#### Homework

Think about what would happen to the Beta Yisrael culture if all of them were rescued and brought to Israel. Also, give thought to the course of action.

Lesson 6Goals

To actually help the Beta Yisrael, by educating the community, possibly raising funds, collecting religious articles, writing letters to heads of major Jewish organizations, or having some form of protest to publicize the issue.

Motivation

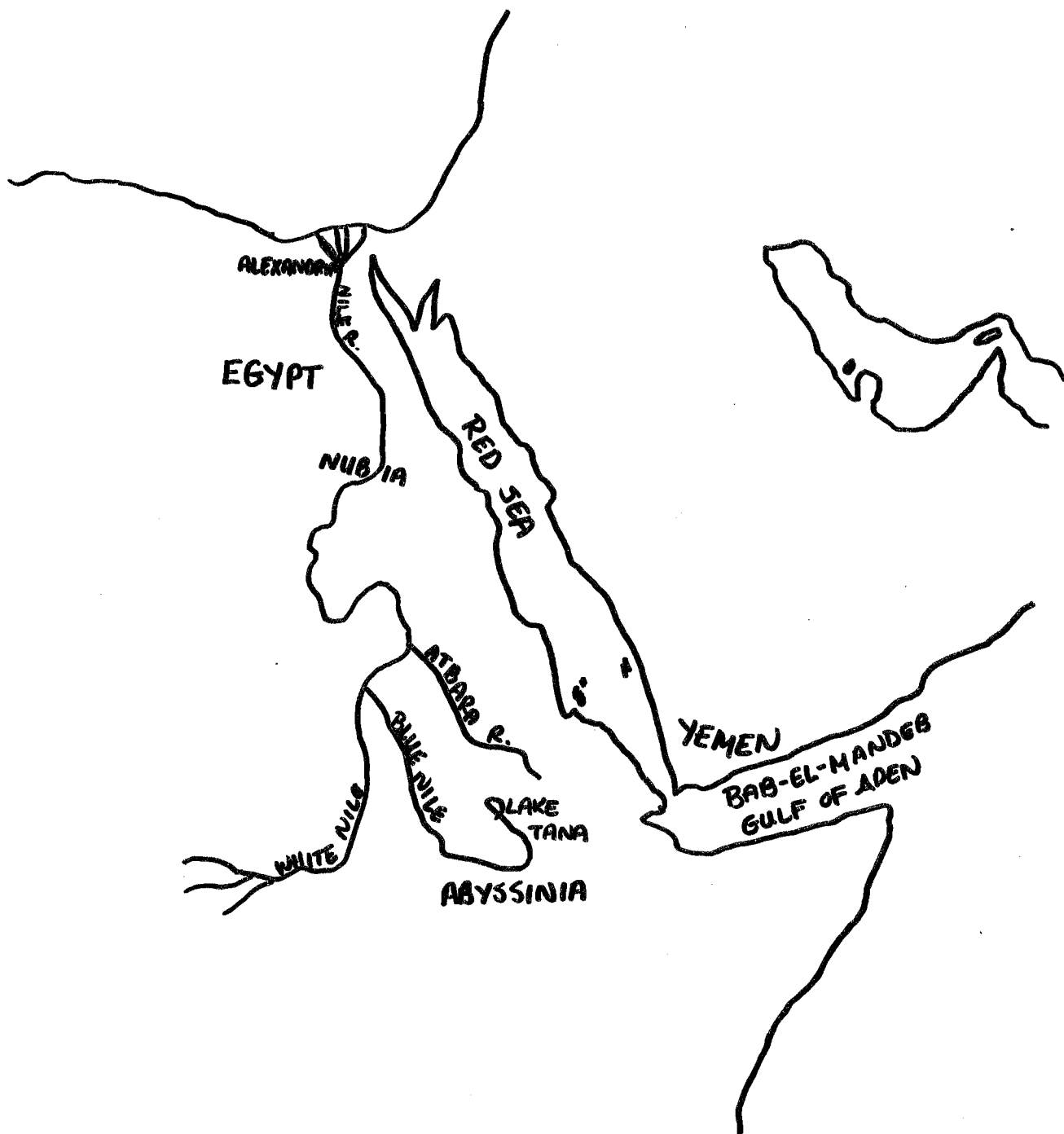
Tentative course of action.

Ask the students for ideas, as to what they want to do. Review the goals of such an undertaking. Be prepared with your own ideas such as the following:

Build a large tukkel, using large pieces of paper (from a roll), large enough to be the side of a "hut". Apply glue to the paper and then sprinkle hay or grass over the glue. This can be attached to the sides of the room, or a light wooden frame could be put together for this. A ceiling can be constructed in the same fashion. The floor should be similar to that of the class during the first lesson. One side of the tukkel should be made of white sheets, upon which the slide show can be shown. (If there is room, it would be desirable to show the slides from the outside of the tukkel onto the sheet, thus avoiding the possibility of hurting the mood with a camera in the tukkel. In other parts of the auditorium, or school, wherever the event is taking place, a table should be set up with envelopes, names and addresses of heads of major Jewish organizations, as well as drop off points where people

can leave needed religious articles (many people have tallisim and tefillin in their homes that they never use, and if they were made aware that these are really needed they might be willing to donate them). This should remain intact on a semi-permanent basis, near the school. The funds and the religious articles should be sent to Graenum Berger, whose address is listed previously. The class can man these booths, sell buttons, but most importantly, inform people of the present situation. They should be made aware that they are educators at this demonstration. Finally, there should be room for student creativity. The above is only one way of doing it, but the class may have other ideas. Discuss all the possibilities to come up with an organic creation.





(Taken from R. July's, A History of the African People  
Charles Scribner & Sons, 1970, p. 31

Appendix 2.Ethiopian Jewry History Continuum <sup>1</sup>

<u>B.C.E.</u>			
3,000	Agau Peoples	1620	Jews defeated and dispersed
1,000	South Arabian influence (Judaic Reference)	1830	Missionary activity begins
		1867	Pan Jewish activity begins Halevy visit
<u>C.E.</u>			
300	Christianity enters Ethiopia	1905	Amharazation Faitlovitch visit
500-700	Geez Literature Developes	1924-36	Beta Yisrael school in Addis Ababa opened
950	Queen Judith	1936	Italian Occupation
	-Zagwe Dynasty	1954	Jewish Agency school opened in Asmara, Adoption of pan-Jewish calendar
1270	Solomonic Dynasty		
1314-44	Ethiopian Royal Chronicles Mention Beta Yisrael	1973	Yom Kippur War, Ethiopia breaks relations with Israel, Beta Yisrael recognized as Jews
1350	Ethiopian Christian influence		
	Intermittent Jewish rebellions	1974	Ethiopian Socialist Revolution

1. Based on K. Shelmay's The Liturgical Music of the Falashas of Ethiopia, 1977, p. 9

Appendix 3Time Line of Pan-Jewish History

1600 - Abraham	Law of Return Ingathering of Exiles- 1950's
	Independent Israel - 1948
1250 - Exodus	Holocaust - 1942-45
	Balfour Declaration-1917
1100 - Judges	Herzl 1st Zionist Congress - 1897
1030 Unification 935 (3 Great Kings)	Pogroms in Russia, be- 1880's ginning of Mass emigration
750 - Amos and Isaiah	1840's - Reform & Conservative Jud.
722 - Exile - Ten Lost Tribes	1789 - Emancipation
	1700's- Hasidut
	1668 - Shabbtai Zvi
	1648 - Chelmnitski
586 - Destruction of 1st Temple	1565 - Shulchan Aruch
516 - Rebuilding of Temple	1492 - Expulsion from Spain
	900-1200 - Golden Age of Spain
333 - Alexander conquers Judea	700 - Rise of Islam
	611 - Mohammed
250 - Sanhedrin	300 - 500 - Babylonian Talmud
	200 - Mishna
168 - Hasmonean Revolt	132-5 - Bar Kochba Revolt
142 - Freedom	
63 - Rome	70 - Destruction of 2nd Temple

B.C.E.C. E.

Appendix 4

	Circumcision	Kashrut	Shabbat
Bible	Gen. 17:9-12, "God said to Abraham: you shall keep my covenant, you and your descendants after you throughout the generations...Every young male among you shall be circumcised ...he that is 8 days old..." Only circumcised males could partake in the paschal sacrifice- Ex. 12:44,48	Lev. 11- mammals and birds Gen. 9:4, Lev. 3:17,4:6, etc. slaughtering and bleeding. Lev. 11:7, Deut. 14:8- pork, Gen. 32:33- sinew of thigh. Ex. 22:31- terefah. Lev. 17:14-16- die of natural causes	Gen. 2:1-3- seventh day. Ex. 20:8-11- no work, even animals and slaves. (also Ex. 23:12, 34:21, Deut. 5:15-15, Num. 15:32.) Num. 28:9-10-Sacrifice
Rabbinic	Shab. 137b- it's so important, if not for it, heaven and earth would not exist. Sh. Ar., YD. 266:2- performed on 8th day after birth, even on Shabbat, by a mohel. <u>Ibid.</u> , 260:1- father's duty.	Hullim 8:1, separation of milk and meat. Hullim 113a- salting meat. Schitah, Nevelah- natural causes, Hametz on Passover.	2 candles lit- interpreted from Ex.20:8, and Deut. 5:2. In Mishnah- Shab. 7:2- 39 main classes of work, Hag. 1:8-states Shabbat laws and like mountains hanging by a hair. Shab. 118- whoever observes it is forgiven their sins. Inverse also true (Hul. 5c).

## Circumcision

## Kashrut

## Shabbat

Beta Yisrael

On 8th day after birth-circumcised, and twelve shouts of joy ring out from village. The kahen also does the operation-called excision, on girls, but no special date and 9 shouts of joy. A sacrifice (in past) and celebration follow.

Maintain all biblical laws strictly (see other page). Animals must be slaughtered by a kahen. Food that has been handled by a non-Jew, may not be eaten. They mix milk and meat. Do not eat leavened or fermented foods on Pessach.

Follow biblical injunctions strictly, Shabbat spent without fire for light or food, no work, travel, candles, water-drawn, drum or gong, sexual intercourse, traditionally- sacrifice, stop work midday Friday, bake and cook, all fires extinguished after sunset.

Ethiopian  
Christians

Herodotus refers to them as 1 of the few peoples who practiced it. Men and women - Gen. 17:27. Neither demanded nor rejected by doctrine yet practiced with devotion- no special ceremony. Felt a religious and national duty/custom and a sign of chosenness as heir of Israel.

Obey all biblical prescriptions in a general way. Never eat pork. No ban on simultaneous consumption of milk and meat.

Ambiguous- both Saturday and Sunday seen as Sabbath. Discrepancy between doctrine and practice. Day of rest- no work. Eucharist taekn on Sabbath.

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