



Adult Ed November 23, 2008

Who Is a Jew? –

Lessons from the Jews of Ethiopia

When the Adult Education group first met, almost a year and a half ago, we discussed the concept of Jewish identity. For most of us, the issue is one for intellectual debate. But for the Jews of Ethiopia during the late 1970s and 1980s, the question was one of life or death.

In that early Adult Education discussion, I offered that Jewish identity had meant different things at different times. Being Jewish has meant being part of a particular race, a nation, a religion or a culture. The racial definition is one that is both sensitive and controversial, reminding us of Hitler's concepts of racial purity and the Final Solution to the Jewish question. But we, as a group that includes the nation of Israel, have been guilty of applying these same prejudicial concepts to our own people.

Imagine for a moment that is the 1940s again. We are on a mission to save a group of Jews from death in the concentration camps. We meet up with them and are ready to take them to safety in a Jewish homeland. Would we first ask them to prove if they were REALLY Jewish? I would hope not, but that is analogous to what happened in Ethiopia in relatively recent times.

At one time, there were perhaps as many as one million people living in Ethiopia, who clung to their Jewish faith. For a thousand years a deliberate genocide took place. They were forced to either convert to either Christianity or Islam or to die. Beginning in 1978 and continuing through 1979, efforts to eradicate the Jewish population of Ethiopia intensified. But it was not until 1984, under what was termed Operation Moses, that the Israeli government began large scale evacuations of this endangered minority.

The Jews of Ethiopia were called "Falasha" by their non-Jewish neighbors, a word meaning "Exiles" or "Strangers" in the Amharic language. Sometimes their non-Jewish neighbors would call them *ey'hud* or Jews. They in turn referred to non-Jews as *goyim*, one of the few Hebrew words commonly used. They prefer to call themselves the Beta Israel or the "House of Israel" in the Ge'ez language. Especially in the context of today's discussion, it is important to refer to them simply as Jews. Let me read from a letter written by an Ethiopian Jew, a religious teacher, writing to an Israeli who was trying to help the Ethiopians to escape in the troubled years of 1978 and 1979:

"Our people have entered into cold and into sleep, a very strong sleep. We are still waiting with much patience and to our salvation by the Israeli nation to our holy country for which we are dreaming. A few months ago, I wrote to you and you didn't answer to my letter. Haim, you have to think about the students, about the boys, the girls who are getting killed for many reasons. Is there any way to save their lives? Before they are all

killed and nobody will remain? I think that our days will not be long anymore, but I am asking you to at least take care of our families, our children, our small children.”



Figure 1 Ethiopian Jews carrying the Torah, image from <http://www.palestinefacts.org/>

Are They REALLY Jews?

Let's tackle the really difficult question first. If we were to visit an Ethiopian Jewish community in the hills of Ethiopia in the year 1972 for example, much of their observance would seem very strange. But other parts would be familiar. Their primary Holy Book is the Torah, but it does not have all the books as would a Torah anywhere else. Their Torah is handwritten on parchment pages that are assembled into a codex. The language of their holy writings is Ge'ez, although since the 1950s they have taught Hebrew in their schools.

They have other sacred texts not known elsewhere, including The Death of Moses.

Until the migration to Israel, they had no Talmud and were removed from Rabbinic Judaism. Until the 1970s their priests, called Kohainim, still practiced ritual sacrifice as in Temple days. For example, on Passover, in addition to eating unleavened bread called kita, the high priest would sacrifice a lamb on an altar at sunset and sprinkle the animal's blood around the entrance of the building. Then they would tell the story about how Elohim saved the Jewish people from slavery in Africa and took them to freedom in land of Israel.

The Judaism that they practiced is one frozen in time, cut off from the larger Jewish community.

Their dietary practices follow the guidelines of kashrus, with the addition that they are forbidden to eat the food of non-Jews.

Sometimes their names will seem familiar; Yonatan is a common boy's name. Others will seem like something from ancient history, Azariah for example.

As far back as a thousand years ago, Jewish visitors to the region reported that they had found a Lost Tribe of Jews; and moreover they averred that this was the Lost Tribe of Dan.

The ninth century Jewish traveler Eldad ha-Dani claimed the Beta Israel descended from the tribe of Dan, claiming Jewish kingdoms around or in East Africa existed during this time.

Rabbi Ovadiah Yare of Bertinoro wrote in letter from Jerusalem in 1488:

“I myself saw two of them in Egypt. They are dark-skinned... and one could not tell whether they keep the teaching of the Karaites, or of the Rabbis, for some of their practices resemble the Karaite teaching... but in other things they appear to follow the instruction of the Rabbis; and they say they are related to the tribe of Dan.”

In 1904, Jacques Faitlovitch, an Orthodox Jew working under the patronage of the Rothschild family set off in search of the Black Jews. His report, when he returned to Europe, stated “You see, M. le Baron, they really are Jews.” Rabbi Haim Nahum would also visit the Ethiopian Jews and would disagree with Faitlovitch's findings. He decreed that these Ethiopians were not of Jewish blood. It would take until the late 1970s before a definite rabbinic decision was rendered as to the authenticity of the Ethiopian Jews.

Where Is Ethiopia?

In understanding how a group of Jews ended up living in Ethiopia, pretty much cut off from the rest of the world's Jews, it is important to understand where Ethiopia is, especially in relation to Israel.

If you were to leave Jerusalem and begin heading southwest, you would cross the Sinai Peninsula until you came to Egypt, a land where Jews have lived and had interactions with for thousands of years, dating back to Abraham and Jacob according to the Bible. Continue heading south and you come to the Sudan, a land almost a million square miles in size and the largest country in Africa. Like both Egypt and Israel, the Sudan has ports on the Red Sea. In ancient times, the Sudan was known as the land of Kush, the seat of a great civilization in ancient times. Like Sumeria, this civilization arose from the fertile land created by the confluence of two rivers, the Nile and the Atbara. During what is

called the Twenty-fifth dynasty, the kings of Kush ruled both their own land and Egypt to the north. Continuing south and a bit east, we come to the land of Ethiopia.

There is another way to get from Israel to Ethiopia. Head south and a bit east and you come to the vast desert of the Arabian Peninsula. At the southern end is the nation of Yemen, which was at least at one time a Jewish-ruled kingdom. Cross the relatively narrow body of water leading to the Gulf of Aden and you are on the shores of Africa. The nation of Eritrea was part of Ethiopia at various times in history until 1993.

A fact that will come into play in the next section is that the Great Rift Valley, a six thousand kilometer section of the earth running from Lebanon in the north to Mozambique in the south, where a new division of the African tectonic plate is being formed, runs through Ethiopia. Iron is plentiful and accessible along the Rift, the area where the Ethiopian Jews lived. It has been recorded historically that the Ethiopian Jews were smiths, dating back to antiquity.



Figure 2 Map of Ethiopia

How Did Jews Get to Ethiopia?

The purpose of this geography lesson is to set the stage for answering that question. If you think in terms of the trade routes of the ancient world the existence of Jews in Ethiopia seems much less mysterious.

The Ethiopian Jews themselves, in their book the *Kebra Negast* or "Book of the Glory of Kings," claim descent from King Solomon through his son by the Queen of Sheba, Menelik I. The story goes that Solomon impregnated the Queen of Sheba, who returned home not knowing that she was pregnant. The land of Sheba was either in Yemen or Ethiopia or both, spanning the narrow stretch of water. On reaching adulthood, Menelik decides to visit with his father and journeys to Jerusalem, where he is well-received. When Menelik decides to return home, Solomon commands the elders of Israel to send their first-born sons with him, to establish a Jewish colony in Ethiopia. Before leaving, they either stole or were entrusted with the Ark of the Covenant, which they transport to the Ethiopian city of Axxom. (To this day, some Ethiopians believe the Ark to hidden somewhere near this city, making it a veritable new Jerusalem.)

The *Kebra Negast* was written in the 14th Century and provides a romantic version of how Jews got to Ethiopia. Most of the Beta Israel consider the *Kebra Negast* legend to be a fabrication. Instead they believe, based on the ninth century stories of Eldad ha-Dani (the Danite), that the tribe of Dan attempted to avoid the civil war in the Kingdom of Israel between Solomon's son Rehoboam and Jeroboam the son of Nebat, by resettling in Egypt. From there they moved southwards up the Nile into Ethiopia, and the Beta Israel are descended from these Danites.

Neither the Menelik story nor the theory of Eldad the Danite has much support in terms of history or archaeology. Both are written well after the establishment of Jews in Ethiopia. What is well supported is that throughout ancient times Jews had trading colonies throughout the region. For example, we know that there was a Jewish settlement in the city of Elephantine located on an island at the southern end of the Nile. In addition to trading, the city of Elephantine may have been a fort defending the border between Egypt and the African kingdom of Nubia (now the northern part of the Sudan.) Jews were stationed at this location by the Persians after their conquest of Babylon and built their own temple here. Evidence indicates a Jewish presence in the city as far back as 650 BCE during Manasseh's reign, to assist Pharaoh Psammetichus I in his Nubian campaign. The documents cover the period 495 to 399 BCE.



Figure 3 A modern view of Elephantine Island.

Were Jews in Africa even before then? When the ancient Israelites entered into Canaan, the tribe of Dan settled into the area around the modern city of Tel Aviv, which was built around the ancient port city of Jaffa or Yafo. During the reign of King of Solomon, the Danites hired out as sailors for Phoenician ship owners. It is reasonable to assume that they participated in trade along the Red Sea to the Indian Ocean. This would have meant stopovers at ports in Eritrea and all along the Horn of Africa.

Again, there is historical evidence that the ancient Jews knew how to work iron. If they went inland seeking iron ore, they would have followed the Rift Valley into the land where the Beta Israel lived until recent times. Throughout their history in the land of Ethiopia, the Beta Israel were known as smiths, particularly gifted in the working of iron at a time when iron working was rare. Although valued on one hand, the ability to work with iron was also considered a form of “black magic” and the practitioners were considered evil sorcerers. In Ethiopian superstition, iron workers including “Falasha” craftsmen engineered the crucifixion of Jesus. Even in modern times, village smiths have been accused of sorcery and killed.

In 722 BCE, the Assyrian empire, under Sargon the Second, conquered the land of Israel and deported the Ten Tribes, including the tribe of Dan. The tribes were believed to have been deported back to the Assyrian homeland, but the Assyrian Empire extended south as far as the borders of Ethiopia. Again, it is not unreasonable that some of the Lost Tribes may have been sent to the southern boundary of the Assyrian kingdom.

It may have been due to the Assyrian conquest the Jewish colonies of India, the B’nei Israel sometimes called the B’nei Menashe, came into being. Like the Beta Israel, they claim descent from the Lost Tribes. They have an ancient song which seems directly drawn from the Exodus story:

While we are preparing for the Sikpui Feast,
The big red sea becomes divided;
As we march along fighting our foes,
We are being led by pillar of cloud by day,
And pillar of fire by night.
Our enemies, O ye folks, are thick with fury,
Come out with your shields and arrows.
Fighting our enemies all day long,
We march forward as cloud-fire goes before us.
The enemies we fought all day long,
The big sea swallowed them like wild beast.
Collect the quails,
And draw the water that springs out of the rock.

We have several logical hypotheses to explain how a Jewish presence, usually attributed to the tribe of Dan, came to be in Ethiopia.

The Middle Ages

There are whole periods in history that are not covered in conventional studies. Even among Jews, we tend to skip from the destruction of the Second Temple right to the Medieval European Jewish experience, ignoring the roles that Jews played in both Middle Eastern and African events. For example, the Himyarite Kingdom ruled the southern end of the Arabian Peninsula from about 110 BCE until 525 CE, when it was ended by Dhu Nuwas, who became the Jewish king of Yemen. Depending on which story you choose to believe, he was either a convert to Judaism or the son of a Jewish woman taken as a slave. He practiced a particularly aggressive form of Judaism and led the Yemenite Jews against the Christians in the region. There had been a substantial Jewish population in Yemen even before the Second Diaspora and the Jewish population increased after the destruction of the Second Temple.

Dhu Nuwas brought together a confederacy of pagan Arabs and Jews and made himself king of the region. It was not long before the Christian forces in the region, including Ethiopian soldiers from across the waters, put an end to him. Legend has it that, seeing the defeat was inevitable, he rode his horse into the ocean. Christian historians, on the other hand, say that he was first beheaded and then cut into pieces. The Ethiopians then pursued the Jewish forces and slew anyone they found that did not have a cross tattooed on their hands. That ended the spread of Judaism in the region. I would argue that this conflict between Christians and Jews with pagan Arabs as their allies sets the stage for Islam to emerge in the region a century and a half later.

Back in Ethiopia, a similar conflict took place in 975 CE. The greatest queen of the Beta Israel was a warrior woman named Yehudit. She gathered a great army and led them against the Christian king, killing the entire royal family and capturing the city of Axum, where the Ark of the Covenant was supposedly kept. Just before she captured the city, however, the Ark was smuggled out to an unknown location. There is historical support

for the existence of Queen Yehudit from sources such as Sawrius' History of the Patriarchs of Alexandria and in the histories of Ibn Hankal. Yehudit banned the practice of Christianity and destroyed many churches.

According to the Beta Israel version, Queen Yehudit's actions came in response to Christian missionaries' attempts to convert the Beta Israel. Again, according to their version, she was eventually defeated when the Christians made alliance with the Moslem tribes of Eritrea against her.

The Christians viewed Yehudit as the incarnation of evil and carried out acts of retribution even into modern times. In 1972, a band of mercenaries killed 29 Beta Israel Jews in retribution.

The Yehudit period and the years that followed marked the high point for the Beta Israel in Ethiopia. After she was overthrown, the old Amhara dynasty would be replaced by the Zagwe dynasty, who would allow the Beta Israel relative autonomy for the next three hundred years, although they never again be a national power. During this time, Ethiopia would welcome Jewish settlers from Yemen and Aden. But in the 14th Century, the Amhara dynasty would be restored and four hundred years of persecution would begin. While persecuting the Jews of the region, the Amhara monarchs would intermarry with the Beta Israel.

At this same time, Islam would begin to make inroads into Ethiopia and the Beta Israel would survive by siding with first one group, then the other. In 1559, they would again revolt and claim their mountainous homeland, called the Land of the Jews, as an independent state. They would rename two of the mountains as Sinai and Tabor. Fighting for independence would continue for years, until in 1616 the revolt was finally smashed. The children of the Beta Israel were taken from them and sold into slavery. At the pinnacle of their success, there were more than a million Beta Israel Jews in Ethiopia. By the 19th Century, there were less than 200,000. From that point on, they would be an impoverished and downtrodden people.

The Modern Era

Tafari Makonnen, whose title "Ras" literally means "head" and is equivalent to the European title of Duke or Prince, was Ethiopia's regent from 1916 to 1930 and Emperor of Ethiopia from 1930 to 1974. Upon ascending to the throne, he would assume the name Haile Selassie, which means "Power of the Trinity." He claimed ancestry from the line of King Solomon and his great uncle was named Menelik the Second. Never mind that the people with a more legitimate claim to Solomon's legacy were living in poverty in the hills of Ethiopia. The Emperor's standard was the Lion of Judah.

In 1936, the Italians under Mussolini, invaded Ethiopia and declared it a part of the Italian Empire. They would use poison gas against the population, killing thousands indiscriminately.

Haile Selassie would go into exile in England, but not before addressing the League of Nations, giving what is considered one of the most stirring speeches of all time. He also, like many other Ethiopian exiles, spends considerable time among the Jews of Palestine, with whom he feels a kinship. In 1941, the British would defeat the Italians in Ethiopia and Haile Selassie would reclaim the throne. This event, the reclamation of an African throne from a European power, is seen by people as far away as Jamaica as a religious event. After all, Ras Tafari's ascent to the throne was an event of enormous importance to people like Marcus Garvey, founder of the Back to Africa movement. These people would be called Rastafarians and they too would adopt the Lion of Judah as their symbol.

When Israel was founded, Ethiopia would be seen as a critical ally for the new Jewish state. It was one of the few countries in increasingly Muslim Africa not openly in opposition to Israel. Ethiopia is located on the Horn of Africa and could block access if it chose. Moreover, it is located between Sudan and Somalia, both emerging as Muslim states. So Israel courted the good will of the Emperor.

The existence of a people living with Ethiopia's borders, who claimed Jewish descent and would, if such claims were acknowledged be eligible to come to Israel under the Law of the Return, was a matter best ignored.

In all fairness, Haile Selassie was a good monarch as we can measure such things. In 1931, he introduced a constitution for Ethiopia. He was a staunch ally of the West against communism, while at the same time aiding the decolonization of Africa. He helped create the Organization for African Unity. He was a force for peace on a troubled continent.

But he adamantly opposed the exit of the Beta Israel, fearing that letting one people go would begin a mass exodus that would destabilize Ethiopia.

From 1972 to 1974, a massive famine took place in the Wollo region of Ethiopia. The official death toll is somewhere between 40,000 to 80,000, but some accounts suggest that it was much higher. The Emperor seemed unaware of the extent of the disaster. In 1973, vast amounts of foreign aid began pouring in, which served to destabilize the regime. In 1974, Haile Selassie was deposed in a military coup and replaced by a communist regime. On August 28th, 1975, it was reported that Haile Selassie had died of complications following prostate surgery. His doctor, Asrat Woldeyes, denied that complications had occurred and rejected the government version of his death. Some imperial loyalists believed that the Emperor had been killed, and this belief remains widely held. One western correspondent in Ethiopia at the time commented, "While it is not known what actually happened, there are strong indications that no efforts were made to save him. It is unlikely that he was actually killed. Such rumors were bound to arise no matter what happened, given the atmosphere of suspicion and distrust prevailing in Addis Ababa at the time."

After the death of Haile Selassie and with a communist regime in power, Israel began to treat the issue of the Beta Israel more seriously. The Israeli government officially accepted the Beta Israel as Jews in 1975, for the purpose of the Law of Return. Israeli

Prime Minister Menachem Begin obtained a clear ruling from Chief Sephardi Rabbi Ovadia Yosef that they were descendants of the Ten Lost Tribes. They would be required to undergo pro forma Jewish conversions, to remove any doubt as to their Jewish status, but otherwise they would be treated the same as the Marranos, a people who were cut off from the larger Jewish community, but remained true to their faith.

The Chief Ashkenazi Rabbi, Shlomo Goren, continued to equivocate. As the head of the National Religious Party he exercised not only religious, but political power as well. Further, Religious Foreign Affairs Minister Yitzhak Raphael was quoted (although he would later deny it) as saying "Israel doesn't need any schvartzes." The quote is attributed to him by former Cabinet Minister Shulamit Aloni. Israel was divided on the issue at the highest levels.

By 1977, Shlomo Goren would decide that the Jews of Ethiopia were indeed legitimate and entitled to return to their ancestral homeland.

Menachem Begin himself would journey to Ethiopia in 1977 to meet with the Beta Israel. He promised them aid, but asked for their patience and silence. He needed time and a free hand, unencumbered by media hysteria, to work with Ethiopia's government to secure their release. Apparently not everyone "got the memo." In February, 1978, Foreign Minister Moshe Dayan announced to the media that Israel was helping to arm Ethiopia against its enemies. The result of this premature leak was two years of atrocities. First the Beta Israel were attacked by the right-wing Ethiopian Democratic Union, who went on a murderous rampage destroying whole villages. Babies were bludgeoned to death, children hacked limb from limb, men killed or castrated, women raped and mutilated, old people tied to thorn bushes and left out in the African sun. Captives were sold into slavery, one blacksmith fetching about \$350. Then the leftist Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Party attacked the Beta Israel for being Zionists and refusing to join their party.

In 1978 a Messianic prophecy was spread that Israeli planes were waiting at Gondar, the former capital of Ethiopia and the ancestral home of the Beta Israel. Hundreds, perhaps thousands of desperate people left their homes to walk to Gondar. When they arrived, they were greeted with beatings from the soldiers stationed there.

For many Beta Israel, this was the end. Some accepted conversion, becoming what is known as the Falasha Mura. Others began to flee on foot to Sudan, leaving their ancestral homelands and communities. Large refugee camps sprang up in a Muslim country, too impoverished to feed its own people. Perhaps as a result of this humanitarian disaster Israel finally began to move.

In 1977, Begin was able to trade two airplanes worth of weapons to Ethiopia's military dictator Colonel Mengitsu in exchange for allowing as many Ethiopian Jews as could fit into the now empty planes to leave. This was the beginning of a series of rescue operations. In 1982, 2500 Ethiopian Jews were airlifted out. Another 1800 were rescued from refugee camps in the Sudan.

Under the codename Operation Moses, 7,800 Ethiopian Jews were rescued and brought to Israel. The operation began on November 18, 1984, ended six weeks later on January 5, 1985.

When news of Operation Moses leaked, it was abruptly halted by the Sudanese. Almost immediately plans were made to resume the rescue, but the Sudanese president would agree only to a quick, one-shot operation carried out secretly by the United States. The US government, under President Reagan and with the direct supervision of Vice-President Bush, agreed. The CIA then planned the operation codenamed "Sheba" (also called Joshua), which began on March 28, 1985, with Ethiopian Jews from Israel working for the Mossad identifying the Ethiopian Jews in the camps and taking them by truck to an airstrip. Planes designed to hold ninety passengers each were prepared at the American base near Frankfurt, West Germany. These camouflaged U.S. Hercules transports landed at twenty-minute intervals to pick up their passengers. Instead of going to an intermediate destination, the planes flew directly to an Israeli air force base outside Eilat. The organizers had prepared to airlift as many as two thousand Ethiopian Jews from the camps, but they found only 494, so three planes returned from Sudan empty.

Between January 1990 and May 1991, 8,500 Ethiopian Jews were brought to Israel. In 1991, rebel forces overthrew the government of Colonel Mengitsu and the situation took a turn for the worse. Israel had to act and act quickly.

The codename given to the project was Operation Solomon. Beginning on Friday May 24th, El Al, Israel's national airline, flew 36 jumbo jets and Hercules military transport planes for 36 hours straight. All of the interior seats were removed to accommodate the maximum number of passengers. A special rabbinic dispensation was given allowing the planes to fly on the Sabbath. In three days, 14,500 Ethiopian Jews were transported to Israel.

Approximately 30,000 Ethiopian Jews were saved through these efforts. Subsequently, immigration restrictions relaxed. Between 1980 and 1999, more than 70,000 Ethiopian Jews immigrated to Israel.

Years	Ethiopian-born Immigrants	Total Immigration	%
1948–51	10	687,624	0.00%
1952–60	59	297,138	0.02%
1961–71	98	427,828	0.02%
1972–79	306	267,580	0.11%
1980–89	16,965	153,833	11.03%
1990–99	39,651	956,319	4.15%
2000–04	14,859	181,505	8.19%
2005	3,573	21,180	16.87%
2006	3,595	19,269	18.66%
	79,116	3,012,276	2.63%

Unlike Russian immigrants, many of whom arrive with job skills, Ethiopians came from a subsistence economy and were ill-prepared to work in an industrialized society. According to a November 17th, 1999 BBC article, a report commissioned by Israel's Ministry of Immigrant Absorption stated that 75% of the 70,000 Ethiopian Jews living in Israel in 1999 could not read or write Hebrew. More than half the population could not hold a simple conversation in the Hebrew language. Since that time, a great deal of progress has been made to assimilate the Ethiopian immigrants.

Currently, Israel restricts the number of Ethiopian Jews allowed to enter the country. Immigration is capped at 600 per month. In 2006, there was a proposal to reduce the cap to 150 per month, but on the eve of the vote, the Prime Minister's office withdrew the proposal.

The Falasha Mura, racially and culturally the same as the Ethiopian Jews but converts to Christianity, represent a different challenge. Under both Rabbinic law and historical precedent, Jews who were forced to convert, like the Marranos during the Inquisition, are still considered to be Jewish. But how do you distinguish forced converts from true Christians in a country with poor if not non-existent record keeping? Israel has naturally been reluctant to accept people who might be looking to immigrate for purely economic reasons. In 1997, the Netanyahu administration decided to stop immigration of Falasha Mura after a final group of 4,000 immigrants. It is estimated that between 18,000 and 26,000 Falasha Mura remain in Ethiopia today.

Since we discussed the Jews of Yemen, we should conclude their story as well. Operation Magic Carpet is a widely-known nickname for "Operation On Wings of Eagles," an operation between June 1949 and September 1950 that brought 49,000 Yemenite Jews to the new state of Israel. British and American transport planes made some 380 flights from Aden, in a secret operation that was not made public until several months after it was over.

Jewish populations are still endangered in places like Iran (between 20,000 to 35,000.)

Summary

There should be no doubt that the efforts of the Israeli government were heroic. Flying from Ethiopia to Israel meant crossing over hostile airspace. The risks were enormous.

On the other hand, prior to the 1980s, Israel basically ignored a situation of which they were well aware. There was an enormous cost in terms of suffering and loss of life.

It was not just Israel either. American Jewry also turned a deaf ear to the situation in Ethiopia.

The inaction of the worldwide Jewish community to the crisis in Ethiopia stands in marked contrast to our response to Soviet Jewry. If you measure humanitarian aid in terms of budgets and effort it is clear that there was a very great difference.

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