

Tisch Center, ANU Museum,  
Tel Aviv University Campus  
27-28.3.2023

# International Conference Beta Israel - A History of Coping and Struggle

The third conference of the Ethiopian Jewry Heritage Center, in collaboration with the Goldstein-Goren Diaspora Research Center at Tel Aviv University; the Africa Unit, S. Daniel Abraham Center for International and Regional Studies, Tel Aviv University; the Azrieli Center for Israel Studies (MALI), Ben Gurion Institute for the Study of Israel and Zionism, Ben Gurion University of the Negev; ANU Museum of the Jewish People; the Baron De Hirsch Fund; The Zvi Yavetz School of Historical Studies, Tel Aviv University



## Monday, 27.3.2023 – Opening Evening

**16:00 – 17:00** Conference participants are invited to a guided tour at the ANU Museum of the Jewish People, and to experience the new tour on the topic of the Beta Israel community.

**17:00 – 17:30** Gathering and refreshments

**17:30 – 18:00** Greetings

Moderator: Ziona Desta Nega

Dr. Simcha Getahun, chairwoman of the Ethiopian Jewry Heritage Center

Prof. Avi Barelli, director of the Ben-Gurion Institute for the Study of Israel and Zionism, Ben Gurion University

Prof. Roni Stauber, head of the Goldstein-Goren Diaspora Research Center, Tel Aviv University

Steven Friedman, representing the Baron De Hirsch Fund Dan Tadmor, CEO of ANU – the Museum of the Jewish People

**18:00 – 18:30** Keynote lecture

Danny Admasu, MALI, Ben Gurion University of the Negev  
A Narrative of Glorification and Exclusion in the Aliyah of the Ethiopian Jews in the 80s: 'Operation Moses' as a Test Case

**18:30 – 19:45** Round table, activists in the struggle for aliyah

Participants: Abraham Yerday, Addisu Masala, Belaynesh Ayeh, Rahamim Elazar, Babu Moshe Babu Yakov

**19:45 – 20:00** Concluding remarks

Naphtali Avraham, CEO, Ethiopian Jewry Heritage Center

## Tuesday, 28.3.2023

**9:00-10:30** First Session: Coping with Challenges in Ethiopia – Part 1 (in English)

Chair: Prof. Bat-Zion Eraqi Klorman, The Open University of Israel

Matteo D'Avanzo, Scuola Normale Superiore in Pisa and INALCO, Paris

From Italian Fascist Rule to Jewish Internationalism through the Experience of Ethiopian Jews

Dr. Alemayehu Erkihun Engida, Wollo University, Dessie, Ethiopia

Ramifications of Boundary Disputes on the Beta-Israel Community: Evidence from Metema and West Armachiho

Dr. Desalegn Amsalu, Addis Ababa University

Legal Treatment of the Beta Israel Community in Ethiopia: A Historical Overview

**10:30 – 11:00** Coffee break

**11:00 – 12:00** Second Session: Challenges of Survival (in English)

Chair: Prof. Irit Back, Tel Aviv University

Dr. Marcia Kupfer, Independent scholar

The Representation of Jews and Judaism in Solomonian Ethiopia

Dr. Tirsit Sahledingie, Addis Ababa University

A Jewish Community of Kechene in Addis Ababa

**12:00 – 13:30** Lunch break

**13:30 – 15:00** Third Session: Coping with Challenges in Ethiopia – Part 2 (in Hebrew)

Chair: Prof. Esther Meir, Ben Gurion University of the Negev

Dr. Wovite Worku-Mengisto, Hebrew University of Jerusalem and David Yellin College and Dr. Bar Kribus, Tel Aviv University

The Impact of the Ethos of the Struggles in the Smen Mountains in the Days of the Gideonite Dynasty on the Life

of the Beta Israel Community in this Region in Later Times

Mauricio Lapchik Minski, Ben Gurion University of the Negev

Jews and Judaism in Ethiopia in the Eyes of the Jesuits – Resistance and Struggles

Dr. Shula Mola, Brandeis University

In the First Person: The Story of the Beta Israel Community from the Village of Enkash – Beyond the Myth of Persecution and Rescue

**15:00-15:30** Coffee break

**15:30 – 16:30** Fourth Session: The Struggle for Aliyah (in Hebrew)

Chair: Dr. Aviad Moreno, Ben Gurion University of the Negev

Mordechai Baruch, Ariel University

The Ways in Which the Religious Leader Qes Berhan Baruch Coped in His Twofold Struggle: Vis-à-vis the Christian Mission in Ethiopia and the Zionist and Rabbinical Institutions in Israel

Dr. Louise Fischer and Michal Saft, Israel State Archives

'If the Rescue Activities Will Not Increase in Momentum... There Will Be No One To Save': The Israeli Government and the Beta Israel Activists in the Struggle for Aliyah from Ethiopia.

**16:30 – 17:30** Round table, activists in social struggles

Moderator: Dr. Shula Mola

Participants: Avi Yalou, Ziva Mekonen-Degu, Itzhak Tayeb, Banchi Meshesha

**17:30 – 18:00** Coffee Break

**18:00 – 19:30** Fifth Session: Social and Political Struggles in Israel (in Hebrew)

Chair: Dr. Simcha Getahun, Kibbutzim College

Dr. Elad Wexler, Ethiopian Jewry Heritage Center

The Struggle of the Ethiopian Jews Against the Chief Rabbinate and Against the Giyur le-Chumra

Uri Perednik, Bar Ilan University

Israel Even Though He Has Sinned? A Critical View on the Media Coverage of the Struggle for the Aliyah of the Ethiopian Jews between the Years 2015-2020

Dr. Ravit Talmi-Cohn, Ruppinn Academic Center

A Vague Aliyah Policy – Its Expressions and Consequences

**19:30 – 19:45** Concluding Remarks

Prof. Galia Sabar, Tel Aviv University

The conference can be viewed live through the website of the Ethiopian Jewry Heritage Center:  
<https://ethiopianjhc.org.il/en>

תמונה: א. ארנון, דניאל האופק, עמנואל לוי, שם משפחה, תמונה, תמונה