

# Ethiopian Jews Following 35 years in Israel:

## The 2013 perspective

International Conference of the Association for the Study of  
Ethiopian Jews

*1-3 of October 2013 / 2<sup>nd</sup> call*

Under the auspices of:

The College of Management Academic Studies  
& The Inter-University Program of African Studies

Will take place at: The College of Management, Rishon Letzion (1-2 October)

And Tel Aviv University (3 October).

**Conference proposals should be submitted by 5.8.13**



photo: pnina evental

Thirty-five years have passed since the beginning of the massive migration waves of Ethiopian Jews to Israel yet the academic interest in this group is increasing constantly. Over the past years researchers - including from the immigrant community - have touched upon a wide range of topics. These include their origin, history, complex relations with neighboring communities in Ethiopia, traumatic journey to Israel via Sudan or their long stay in waiting in Addis Ababa/Gondar later on, and finally - the social, economic, political, cultural and psychological challenges they faced once they arrived in Israel.

While this conference offers an open floor for research carried out in a variety of methodological traditions/approaches we are particularly interested in research which relates to one or more of the following three aspects:

1. **Socially Committed Research:** In tandem with current protest movements for social justice, we are particularly interested in presentations of "engaged research" which besides being scientifically innovative are socially committed. That is, strive to be of relevance to the lives of people of the researched community.
2. **Relatively Neglected Research Topics:** We invite researchers who focus on relatively neglected issues to present their papers. This relates, for instance, to questions about multiple religious identities and various religious manifestations among the Ethiopian immigrants. To the Jews of Ethiopia within the digital era, including their efforts at positioning within, and influence through, the World Wide Web, as is the case of 'talkbacks' on the internet and the blogosphere. Or issues that, as far as we know, have not been researched at all, such as the Ethiopian Jews in film/cinema.

In the same spirit, we solicit papers that **challenge the Intellectual and Ethical Comfort Zones** relating to people of Ethiopian origin. We therefore invite papers that critically examine issues of exclusion and inclusion of Ethiopian Jews in Israel, in particular those analyzing cases of explicit and implicit marginalization, segregation and racism. For instance, in education, including admission policies of academic institutions, as well as discriminatory mechanisms in employment.

We wish to include presentations of research which deal with **'areas of strength'** of the Ethiopian immigrant community and what is considered 'successful encounters' of these immigrants and other parts of Israeli society, whether at the local or national level.

We are also calling researchers who are studying Ethiopian Jews **from the urban point of view** to present their work. We believe that different urban settings offer different life experiences to Ethiopian Jews and there is a lot to learn out of these points of view. Works presenting what is considered a "successful encounter" between the Ethiopian Jews and the wider Israeli society are welcomed as well.

3. **The African Perspective:** A unique aspect of this conference is that it takes place with the collaboration of **African Studies** in Israel. Thus, we are interested in research dealing with "Black Identity/identities" of Ethiopian Jews and the influence of Afro-American communities, and African migrant workers and asylum seekers (e.g. Eritreans) in Israel, on the condition of Ethiopian Jews in Israel. Another focus here is on other "African" aspects of the Ethiopian Jewish migration such as studies relating to the effects of migration of this population on Ethiopian society/region where they lived, or Ethiopian immigrant Jews as "business bridges" to Ethiopia, to name but two such topics.

These are some of the **major themes of our conference:**

1. **Identities** - Jewish and other identities of the immigrants. Including issues related to conversion in retrospect; the way different groups within the Jewish community (e.g. from Tigray, Gonder, Kwara) relate/d to conversion; the return to Judaism of the FalasMura; The Baria issue; other religious identities amongst the migrants - in particular the Pentes (pentacostal), and those Ethiopian Christians who risked their lives to save Ethiopian Jews and were given an opportunity to arrive in Israel.
2. **Ethiopian Jews within Information Society:** for example, the different modalities developed to engage with, and use of online social networks; engaging in online debates including talkbacks, blogs and other specific sites; barriers of elders in entering the WWW; use of the web in education and professional training; and so forth.
3. **Ethiopian Jews in the media:** their representation on TV in particular.
4. **Accessibility of social and professional services and of education and professional mobility:** socio-cultural translation services within the IDF and within various governmental departments such as health, education and legal departments. Accessibility to higher education (academic) and to the work market, through culturally adapted/fare entry examinations.
5. **Ethiopian Jews within the education system (formal and informal):** education is perceived as a central factor in determining the future fate of the Ethiopian Jewish community. We therefore are highly interested in researchers presenting their recent/updated findings in this area.
6. **The "Third Sector" Organizations:** Research projects that evaluate the activities done by local and international NGO's working with/in the community at various organizational levels (e.g. nationally, municipal, neighborhood); including those established and/or run by members of the immigrant community; Bottom up \ Top down initiations.
7. **The urban perspective of absorption.**
8. **Inter-cultural training programs:** within the state services, and/or non-governmental organizations. Research about the existence/non-existence of such programs, and its implications, including about the efficacy of such training projects, is most welcomed. These could address various fields, such as the education system (or sub-systems within it), health/mental health professionals, the police, the welfare system, and municipal/other local services, etc.
9. **Learning from successes.**
10. **Ethiopian Jews in Film/Cinema.**
11. **Diasporas of Ethiopian Jews:** such as in Canada and the USA.

**And also topics related to the more general part of the conference, dealing with the relation of Ethiopian Jews to Africa and to African Studies, such as:**

- 1. Black identities**
- 2. The effect of Jewish migration on Ethiopia?**
- 3. Ethiopian Jews within the wider realm of Ethiopia Israel relations, business relationships in particular.**

In addition to the above topics we are [open to any other topic / suggestion](#) for a full panel, individual papers, and ethnographic films with discussion.

Within this conference we shall experiment in organizing, for the first time, a **TED style panel/presentations**. That is, **shorter/quick presentations** which put forward the 'gist' of the research findings/argument, as in TED conferences around the world. These kind of lectures have an advantage of **higher accessibility**, sometimes to the general public as well (some could be selected for upload on the internet/YouTube. We shall then be grateful if you could specify, while sending your proposal/abstract whether you are applying for a TED or regular (20 minutes) presentation.

**The conference languages are Hebrew and English (depending on number of applications in both languages).**

**We hope to see you at the conference:**

**Dr. Gadi BenEzer and Prof. Galia Sabar**

**Abstracts:** up to 300 words for paper (and 500 words for a full panel, are invited (in font Times New Roman, size 12).

**Pls. send abstracts via email to:** [nivagrinzvige@gmail.com](mailto:nivagrinzvige@gmail.com) (Niva). **Conference proposals should be submitted by 5.8.13**

**Registration:** see below.

**Further questions** could be addressed to:

Gadi BenEzer [gbenezer@gmail.com](mailto:gbenezer@gmail.com) or Galia Sabar [gsafrica@post.tau.ac.il](mailto:gsafrica@post.tau.ac.il)

## Conference Registration and Tariff 2013

		Early Registration until 31.8.13		Late registration after 1.9.13	
		Three days	One day	Three days	One day
<b>Members of the association</b>	Full Price	50 \$	23 \$	80 \$	43 \$
	Student Price	30 \$	15 \$	40 \$	25 \$
<b>Guests</b>  (Non Members)	Full Price	65 \$	30 \$	99 \$	53 \$
	Student Price	30 \$	20 \$	50 \$	33 \$

- **Single Session Price** subject to availability 7 \$.
- **Membership** Fee is 60 dollars US (200 shekels) per two years (students 30 US dollars, 100 shekels for two years). **Entitlements:** Apart from reduced prices for this conference members are entitled to reduced prices for other events of the association, as well as publication-updates of research and related issues on Ethiopian Jews. We also hope to initiate scientific forums on the new blog of the Association (soon on air) for members who are researchers and advanced studies students who study the Ethiopian Jews.
- **Conference fee includes** participation in panels/lectures, refreshments during conference breaks (coffee/tea, soft drinks and fruits/cakes), and a set of the abstracts of conference papers.
- **Registration Form:** please open link and choose the way of payment.
- **Payment Arrangement (for Conference and for Association Membership):**

**By Bank Transfers:** transfers should be directed to: Hapoalim Bank, Ramat Aviv Branch, 17 Brodezki Street, bank number 12, branch number 606, account number 380922, name of account number: Association for the Study of Ethiopian Jews (or: Amuta Le'Mada'ey Yahadut Ethiopia).

**By Cheques/Checks:** should be written to: Association for the Study of Ethiopian Jews (or: Amuta Le'Mada'ey Yahadut Ethiopia).

**Via Internet by PayPal:** please contact Niva via mail [nivagrinzvige@gmail.com](mailto:nivagrinzvige@gmail.com) for further details.

- **Cancellation of Registration:** A written notice must be sent by post To Dr. Gadi Ben-Ezer, The Association for the Study of Ethiopian Jews, Until Aug.15th 2013. Registration fees will be refunded less handling fees of 15\$. After this date the registration fee will not be refunded.
- **Conference Sites:** Rishon Le'Tzion is a town near Tel Aviv (15-20 minutes car ride) the forth biggest city in Israel. Accommodation should be sought in Tel Aviv area. We shall try to arrange shared-rides to the conference each morning for participants from abroad but cannot guarantee that in advance. Easy taxis and some buses to the conference site (College of Management) are available. The third day is within Tel Aviv area (T.A. University) which is at the north of Tel Aviv.
- **Any Further Questions:** please email Niva at: [nivagrinzvige@gmail.com](mailto:nivagrinzvige@gmail.com)