



The Jewish Education Center Of Cleveland

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The Jewish Education Center of Cleveland's **Response Curriculum** *The Jews of Quara - Coming Home*

Few people are aware that since June 1999, the Israeli government has been bringing out the last 2,500 Jews from the Quara Region of Ethiopia. This exodus, contrary to the past exoduses of Operation Moses (1984) and Operation Solomon (1991), has been kept low-key in an effort to maintain positive relations with the Ethiopian government. While this mass immigration has not been the focus of media attention, it is just as important as the past immigrations. These historic events provide an opportunity for Jews around the world to engage in the important *mitzvah* (commandment) of *pidyon sh'vuyim* (redemption of captives) and strengthen our connection to *Klal Yisrael* (the community of Israel).

The Jewish Community Federation of Cleveland has taken an active role in supporting this and other important resettlement projects. Nine million dollars of community *tzedakah* (charity) from the 1999 Jewish Welfare Fund Appeal was allocated to United Jewish Communities to aid in the rescue and resettlement of Jews around the world. Federation made an additional \$837,000 emergency allocation in November 1999 to help meet the needs of the Jews of Quara and Russia; this allocation includes \$400,000 from donor contributions to the 2000 Jewish Welfare Fund Appeal, which is under way now through May 18, 2000.

The Curriculum Resources Department of the Jewish Education Center of Cleveland (JECC) has developed the attached Response Curriculum as a resource for K-12 teachers to help place this honorable humanitarian effort into a Jewish context. The Judaic texts and activities found within will help stimulate student discussion . . . and hopefully action.

In this resource packet you will find:

- Background Information
- Text Study & Classroom Activities
- Resources

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Background Information



(Quara is the northeastern region of Ethiopian)

(Available on line at <http://www.graphicmaps.com/aatlas/africa/maps/ethiopia.htm>)

To date, approximately 70,000 Ethiopians Jews have immigrated to Israel. Saving the Quara Jews, who were left behind during Operation Solomon in 1991, became urgent to the Israeli government because anti-Semitism, disease, and poverty were all factors working against this group.

The *mitzvah* (commandment) of *pidyon sh'vuyim* (redemption of captives) focused Israel and world Jewry's attention on their immigration. As the world celebrated the change of century, the last of the Quara Jews were brought to Israel. The focus now shifts to successful absorption into Israeli life.

In Israel, the new Ethiopian *olim* (immigrants) are faced with the challenge of acculturating into Israeli society. For most Ethiopians, when they arrive in Israel they see electricity, or cross a busy street for the first time. Approximately 75% of adult Ethiopian immigrants are illiterate, even in their own language.

In 1999, more than 15,000 members of our community contributed a record \$27.8 million to the Jewish Welfare Fund Appeal. The Jewish Community Federation earmarked \$9 million of that total to support operations of the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee and the Jewish Agency for Israel, the two primary international relief organizations involved in resettlement issues. Cleveland also allocated \$1 million to the Parents and Children Together (PACT) program in Be'er Sheva, which helps more than 700 Ethiopian pre-school-age children in that Israeli city get a "head start" in school and life; the program will be expanding to other cities in Israel this year.

Key to Terms Used in this Curriculum:

- **Beta Israel** - Jews of Ethiopia
"Beta Israel" will refer to the Jews of Ethiopia and not "Falashas." Falasha is a derogatory word used by Beta Israel's neighbors meaning "someone without rights" or "outsider".
- **Falash Mura** - Ethiopians who claim to have Jewish ancestry, but converted to Christianity

The distinction between the two groups is significant because Israel's laws clearly state who is eligible for immigration. According to Israel's Law of Return, only a Jew is permitted to go to Israel as an *oleh* (immigrant). According to Israel's Law of Entry, which governs general admission to Israel, "a minor who is the great grandchild of a Jew can make *aliyah* (immigration to Israel) with his parents." [*Note: this law gives the government flexibility in admitting people for humanitarian reasons.] Presently, there are approximately 14,000 Falash Mura waiting to go to Israel. Israeli Government officials are debating whether or not to allow them to immigrate under the law of return.

History of the Ethiopian Jews

(Adapted from The National Council for Ethiopian Jews in Israel "Ethiopian Jews at a Glance.")

There are several theories regarding the origin of the Ethiopian Jews. The first dates back to 1000 B.C.E., and states that Beta Israel were descendants of Menelik, the son of King Solomon and the Queen of Sheba. The second theory says that they were the tribe of Dan, one of the ten lost tribes (eighth century B.C.E.). Another theory says that in the fifth century B.C.E., Beta Israel were forced out of upper Egypt and traveled to Ethiopia. Finally, others believe this group of Jews were from Saudi Arabia and Yemen who either went to Ethiopia as part of a conquering army or were brought there as prisoners of war (fifth - sixth century C.E.)

Timeline of Beta Yisrael

Ninth Century C.E. - Earliest reference to Beta Israel appears in the diary of Elhad ha-Dani, a merchant and traveler claiming to have been a citizen in the Jewish state in eastern Africa, inhabited by the tribes of Dan, Naphtali, Gad and Asher.

1541 - Portuguese Jesuits begin missionary work among Beta Israel.

1632 - Christians conquer the Beta Israel Kingdom. The Ethiopian Jews are sold as slaves, forced into baptism and denied the right to own land.

1804 - Scottish Explorer, James Bruce, informs the western world of Beta Israel, their customs and beliefs. He estimates the Beta Israel population at 100,000.

1830's - Protestant missionaries from England begin to convert the remaining Beta Israel to Christianity.

1955 - Israel and Ethiopia establish diplomatic relations and interest in Beta Israel; *äëì ò* (*aliyah* - immigration to Israel) is initiated.

1968 - Ten Beta Israel live in Israel.

1973 - Ovadiah Yosef, Israel's Sephardic rabbi, declares Beta Israel as "Jews whom it is our duty to redeem from assimilation, to hasten their immigration to Israel, to educate them in the spirit of the Holy *Torah*, and to make them partners in the building of our sacred land." Ethiopia breaks diplomatic relations with Israel.

1974 - The American Association for Ethiopian Jews (AAEJ) is formed. Haile Selassie, who ruled Ethiopia since 1916, is overthrown in a revolution. In the aftermath of the revolution, an estimated 2,500 Beta Israel are killed in crossfire, 7,000 are left homeless.

1975 - Israel says Ethiopian Jews are eligible for *äëì ò* (*aliyah* - immigration to Israel) under the Law of Return.

1976 - ORT (Organization for Rehabilitation through Training) begins a development program in Ethiopia to educate Jews and non-Jews.

1979 - The first few hundred Beta Israel leave Ethiopia for Israel. In the years ensuing, many more leave.

December 1984 - Operation Moses airlifts 6,000-8,000 Beta Israel to Israel.

1990-1991 - The numbers of those allowed to immigrate increases to 8,000-10,000 when Ethiopia allows Israel to reopen its Israeli embassy.

May 1991 - Operation Solomon airlifts 12,000 Beta Israel and 2,000 Falash Mura in a 36 hour period.

June 1998 - The Israeli government decides to end immigration from Ethiopia under the Law of Entry. Only those who are determined to be of recent Jewish lineage may enter under the Law of Return.

March 30, 1999 - Martin J. Raffel, Associate Executive Vice Chairman of Jewish Council for Public Affairs (JCPA), sends a memorandum to the member agencies of the JCPA, stating that the number of Quara Jews immigrating to Israel is small. He noted that the living conditions for the Quara Jews remaining in Ethiopia were quite bad and their immigration should be "top priority." He also requested that the *aliyah* process for the Quara Jews proceed more rapidly.

June 1999 - The process to bring out the remaining 2,500 Beta Israel begins.

December 1999 - Final group of Beta Israel immigrate to Israel.

Religious Practices of the Beta Yisrael

Living in isolation from any other Jewish Community for over 2,000 years, Beta Israel follow the written *Torah*. They were unaware of the oral tradition (what we know as the *Talmud*). Following are highlights of the Judaism they had been observing in Ethiopia.

- They observe ህሳቢ (*Shabbat*), ቅርጽ (*Pesah*), ህልልሳቢ (*Shavuot*) and ህልጃሽ (*Sukkot*). Until they made contact with Jews outside of Ethiopia they do not know about ልዩሳቢ ህርገሱ (*Simhat Torah*), ገሰጃሽ (*Purim*), and ልጃሽ (*Hanukkah*) because they are not part of the ልዩሳቢ (*Torah*).
- Beta Israel have two additional holidays. Sigid, which is celebrated about a month after ህልጃሽ (*Sukkot*), commemorates the return of the Jews to ስግዳት ግዛት (*Eretz Yisrael* - the Land of Israel) after the exile in Babylonia. The other holiday, recalls the religious efforts of Ezra, who inspired people to return to Judaism through ልዩሳቢ (*Torah*). On this holiday, they climb a mountain, read ልዩሳቢ (*Torah*) and pray.
- The Beta Israel build their villages near water so they may live by the laws of family purity. As a result, their non-Jewish neighbors refer to them as "the people who smell of water".
- The center of their religious life is the synagogue. The building is divided into two main halls, one of which is called "the holy of holies." Only the priest may enter the holy of holies.
- Beta Israel, do not have rabbis. The priest serves as the spiritual leader as well as the ጃሽ (*shohet* - ritual slaughterer).
- Their prayers mention blowing a ጃሽ (*shofar*). However, Beta Israel have forgotten how to create the ጃሽ (*shofar*) and how to sound it. Drums and symbols are used in its place.

The following is an Ethiopian prayer translated into English:

Do not separate me, O Lord, from the chosen,
From the joy, from the light, from the splendor.
Let me see, O Lord, the light of Israel,
And let me listen to the words of the just
While they speak about the law.
To teach fear of thee, O Lord, King forever.

Thou are blessed, O Lord, be merciful to me.
By day be thou my shepherd, and my
guardian at night.
When I call Thee, keep Thou not silent.
I love Thee, hate me not;
I have confidence in Thee,
Abandon me not.

(reprinted from 1990 Curriculum Guide on Beta Israel, by Lenore Levin, American Rabbinic Network for Ethiopian Jewry)

Religious Observances of Ethiopians in Israel**Disclaimer**

**The information found in this e-mail represents the views of the author.
This is not formally approved JDC material.**

From: Eliot Goldstein (JDC- Jewish Joint Distribution Committee)
Sent: Thursday, December 30, 1999 6:02 AM
To: Melissa
Subject: Answers to questions about the Ethiopian community

Dec 30, 1999

Melissa,

I will do my best to give you some short answers to the questions you asked my colleague Becky Caspi about the Ethiopian community in Israel. I will offer you some insight but please remember these are general, brief and non-academic observations.

Religious Practices in Israel - Most of the Ethiopian Jewish community was "traditionally observant" in Ethiopia, following certain laws of *shabbat*, holidays, *kashrut*, and certain aspects of relations between men and women. They observed major holidays, although *Chanukah* and *Purim* were only introduced to their community at a much later date due to their following of the Written Tradition (*Torah Sh'bihtav*) and not having the same connection to the development of modern Jewish rabbinic traditions developed over centuries in the Diaspora. They also have certain holidays of their own like the "Sigd" holiday, coming 7 weeks after *Yom Kippur*. As you know, the religious Jewish language they used in Ethiopia was Gez.

In Israel, the community's religious practices have changed somewhat.

Much of the older generation has remained traditionally observant of Jewish ritual and tradition, often adapting to be a little more stringent so as to meet with the religious culture of the observant community in Israel. Keeping *kashrut*, *Shabbat*, Holidays, wearing a *kippah*, traditional dress and other rituals is very common. Many in the younger generations have become less observant of religious tradition, although they remain more closely connected to religion and observance than do many non-observant native born Israelis. Certain traditions like the women separating themselves from the community during menstruation and after child birth have not been continued, often due to practical considerations rather than a fundamental change in religious perspective.

Most of the Ethiopian-Israeli Children attend school in the "National Religious Stream" and when they attend a boarding school it is usually a religious one. Many Ethiopian girls, like other religious women, choose to volunteer for national service instead of serve in the Israel Defense Forces.

There have been a number of Ethiopians who have trained and are now official rabbis in Israel (JDC once coordinated a course for them at *Machon Meir* in Jerusalem). The traditional role of the "kes" has changed somewhat from the role in the village community, although they are still considered to be important leaders of the Ethiopian community in Israel.

Falash Mura - This is a complicated question. In order to receive all the rights of a Jewish immigrant to Israel, the Falash Mura, agree to participate in an intensive Jewish "Ulpan" to learn/relearn about basic Jewish traditions, customs, history and values. Once this course is completed they can then receive all the rights and privileges of a new Jewish immigrant. Many choose to integrate this new knowledge into their lifestyles. In some cases the Falash Mura do not connect so closely with Judaism and their actual level of observance or Jewish connection is unknown.

Most of the Falash Mura are not taken into the army due mainly to cutbacks in the Israel Defense Forces and they, like other new immigrants over age 21, are not conscripted unless they fit the specific criterion that the army is looking for. Their children will eventually serve in the army once they are officially accepted as citizens.

Here are some web pages that will give you some additional information on the Ethiopian community and their religious practices:

<http://www.circus.org/nacoej.htm>

<http://www.ahava.com/iaej/>

<http://www.geocities.com/CollegePark/7139/relig.htm>

If you have additional questions please let me know and I will be happy to help.

Have a happy new year,

Eliot Goldstein
JDC in Jerusalem

(Find out more about the Joint Distribution Committees efforts to aid Jews in distress.

<http://www.jdc.org>)

Background Activities

1. Offer students a packet of pictures of Ethiopian Jews. You might use several pictures from children's picture books, authentic Ethiopian embroidery (The North American Conference on Ethiopian Jewry offered these to people who designated a certain level of *tzedakah* - charity) to their organization; the embroideries offer scenes of historical Ethiopian Jewish life), and/or photographs from the Jewish Agency for Israel web site (<http://www.jafi.org.il/gallery/index.htm>). Ask students to look at these and deduce information about the life of Beta Israel, either in Ethiopia or now in Israel. Offer additional information, as needed.
 2. Show the video on Quara Jews, available from the Ratner Media & Technology Center. Check the list of videos from the bibliography if you wish to give your students a historical view of Ethiopian Jewry.
 3. Choose one of the books on Ethiopian life to read to students. If a picture book, you could read the entire volume. If a book such as Levitin's The Return, choose one chapter. Discuss the realities of life for the Beta Israel when they lived in Ethiopia. Compare to the students' realities in the United States.
 4. Ask students to read the e-mail from Eliot to Melissa and clarify points as is necessary. In pairs have them write a letter from an Ethiopian who has been in Israel for some time to a recent arrival from Quara. What information would help an Ethiopian Jew new to Israeli society? How is life in Israel different than life in Quara? What was most amazing?
 5. Offer students an opportunity to explore the various web sites offered throughout this curriculum. Ask students to think about life from the perspective of an Ethiopian Jew their own age. What would be the most challenging part of making *aliyah* - immigration to Israel)? Share with the class.
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Focus #1: Pidyon Sh'vuyim (í ééááù ìäéãô)**TEXT STUDY & CLASS ACTIVITIES**

8 í ééðò úáðúî :ãé , í "áî ø [Maimonides, Laws of Gifts for the Poor]

10) í ééááù ìäéãô (*pidyon sh'vuyim*, ransoming captives) has priority over supporting the poor, or clothing them. There is no greater commandment than í ééááù ìäéãô for the problems of the captive include the problems of

the hungry,
the thirsty,
the unclothed,
and one in mortal danger.

One who ignores the need to redeem captives breaks the following commandments:

Do not harden your heart or shut your hand against your needy relative. (Deuteronomy 15:7)

Do not stand idly by the blood of your neighbor! (Leviticus 19:16)

Another shall not rule over him through hard labor in your sight. (Leviticus 25:53)

You shall surely open your hand to the person (Deuteronomy 15:8)

Love your neighbor as yourself (Leviticus 19:18)

Rescue those who are drawn to death. (Proverbs 14:11)

and there are many other laws like this. But there is no greater commandment than í ééááù ìäéãô.

11) The people of a town who have raised money to build a synagogue, but who see that another commandment requires the money they have collected, should donate the money toward that commandment.

If they purchased stones and beams (for building the synagogue) they should not sell them in order to perform another commandment except í ééááù ìäéãô.

Even if they have brought the stones to the building site
and laid their foundation,
and if they have carved the beams and prepared everything for the
building,
they may sell all the materials for í ééááù ìäéãô.

But if they have completed the building,
they need not sell the synagogue,
but must raise more money (for í ééááù ìäéãô) from the community.

8b - 8a אַוּוּוּוּ אַאָאָ עִי אָאָ אַאָאָ אִי אִי [Babylonian *Talmud Bava Batra*]

Rava asked Rabba bar Mari:

How do we know . . . that the redemption of captives is a great commandment?

[Rabba bar Mari] answered from the verse . . .

So says G-d:

Whomever [is destined] for death, to death,
 Whomever for the sword, to the sword,
 Whomever for famine, to the famine,
 Whomever for captivity, to captivity." (Jeremiah 15:2)

Rabbi Yohanan said (commenting on the verse):

Each punishment mentioned in this verse is more severe than the one before:
 The sword is worse than death . . .
 Famine is harder than the sword . . .
 Captivity is harder than all, because it includes the sufferings of all.

2:21 אַאָאָאָ עִי אִי [Pirke Avot]

You are not required to complete the work,
 but you are also NOT free to ignore it.

.אִי אִי אַעֵאִי אִי אִי אִי אִי
 .אִי אִי אִי אִי אִי אִי אִי אִי אִי

1:14 אַאָאָאָ עִי אִי [Pirke Avot]

Hillel used to say:

If I am not for myself, who will be for me?
 And if I am for myself alone, then what am I?
 And, if not now, when?

:אִי אִי אִי אִי [אִי אִי]
 ?אִי אִי אִי אִי אִי אִי אִי אִי
 ?אִי אִי אִי אִי אִי אִי אִי אִי
 ?אִי אִי אִי אִי אִי אִי אִי אִי

אִי אִי אִי אִי [Haggadah]

In every generation, every person must see him or herself as if s/he had gone out of
 Egypt.

אִי אִי אִי אִי אִי אִי אִי אִי אִי אִי
 .אִי אִי אִי אִי אִי אִי אִי אִי אִי

Activities: פִּדְיוֹן שְׁבֻיִּים (*pidyon sh'vuyim* - redemption of captives)

1. The *mitzvah* of פִּדְיוֹן שְׁבֻיִּים literally refers to the payment of money to ransom those held captive. However, in recent historical times, the term has also been used to refer to the rescue of Jews kept in poor economic or dangerous political conditions. Ask students to work in pairs to read the *mitzvah* of פִּדְיוֹן שְׁבֻיִּים, as developed by Maimonides (see page 9, #10). Allow the pairs time to discuss: How did the problems of the Quara Jews match the problems of those held captive? What, according to Maimonides, are our obligations to those held captive?
2. The commandments Maimonides offers (see page 9, #10) to support the *mitzvah* of פִּדְיוֹן שְׁבֻיִּים lend themselves nicely to an art project. Ask students to illustrate the *mitzvah*, and include quotations or reference to the texts they highlight in their work. Consider a quilt square, crayon resist, ceramic tiles (painted & fired), or embroidery (an art form valued by the Ethiopians).
3. Recreate a meeting of the Jewish Community Federation Board of Trustees. Assign students to play roles of people who
 - a) feel that rescuing the Quara Jews should be a priority, with the caveat that the community should begin a special campaign to raise funds to help them leave Ethiopia and settle successfully in Israel.
 - b) feel that rescuing the Quara Jews should not be a priority.

Students on both sides should offer historical/current event perspectives, as well as Jewish textual ones.

4. Invite in a member of your congregation or person active in your school who was part of the Federation discussions regarding the rescue of Quara Jews. What were the points of the debate? How easy or hard was it to agree as a community to make this a priority?
5. Middle or high school students could research other times in Jewish history when the community has been involved in פִּדְיוֹן שְׁבֻיִּים. Texts of Jewish history, the Internet, and Jewish encyclopedias are all resources.
6. High school students could compare the various rescue operations for Ethiopian Jews: Operation Moses and Operation Solomon. Ask them to also research the reason for the various names given to each. Are there members of the community who were involved in various ways in either rescue effort who could offer a first-person accounting?

Focus #2: Tzedakah (ä÷ãö)

TEXT STUDY & CLASS ACTIVITIES

4 àèàæ õøà êøã [Dereh Eretz Zuta]

If you have done the commandment of תְּצַדַּק (tzedakah)
you will be privileged to be wealthy.

And if you are privileged to be wealthy,
do the *mitzvah* of תְּצַדַּק with your wealth.

2:7 וָאֵלֶּיךָ יָשׁוּבָה [Pirke Avot]

The more תְּצַדַּק the more peace.

.í àì ù äáøî ä÷ãö äáøî

8:7 äàò äðùî [Mishneh Torah]

A public fund needs to be collected by no less than two people,
And distributed by no less than three people.

.í éðùá úéáãð äòá÷ä
:äùì ùá ú÷ì çúî á

.æ ìúð éáøã úááà [Avot d'Rabbi Natan]

Let your house be opened wide.

How?

This teaches that a person's house should have a wide door
on the north, south, east, and west,
like *Job*, who made four doors to his house.

And why did *Job* make four doors to his house?

So that the poor would not have to walk all around the house.

Someone coming from the north could enter from that path.

Someone coming from the south could enter from that path.

And so on from all directions.

For that reason *Job* made four doors to his house.

.äçáøì çáúò éúéá éäé
?äöéé

äçáøì çáúò í äà ì ù áúéá ääéù äî ì î
áøðî ì á çøæî ì á í áøäî á ìäòòì
.áúéáì í éçúò 'ä äùòù ááéà ìäæé

?áúéáì í éçúò 'ä ááéà äùò äî ì á
.úéáä ì è úà óé÷äì í éøðèèî í ééðò áéäé àì ù éäé
.äèøäé ñðéé ìäòòä ì î äáá

.äëðäë ñðëé í äðää ïî àää
 .çåø ìèì ìèà
 .áúéáì í éçúô äðáðà ááèà àùò èèì

31.14 äáø úâî ù

There is nothing in the world worse than poverty --
 it is the most terrible of all sufferings.

A person who is crushed by poverty is like one to whom all the troubles of the world
 cling
 and upon whom all the curses mentioned in the Bible come.

Our rabbis said,

"If all the sufferings and pain in the world were gathered on one side of a scale,
 and poverty was on the other,
 poverty would outweigh them all."

úáéððà ïî àù÷ äâî èì ìèà
 úáéððá ÷ä÷äâî àääù éî ìèù
 í ìðáù í éðáñé ìè áá ìé÷ää äì àè
 .äðáú äðùî áù úâì ì÷ä ìè áéì ò ááá äâì àèä

,äðéúääø äøî àä
 āçà äöì ìéðáñé ìè äðá÷úð äì à
 āçà äöì úáéððää
 .ïî äèì úðøéî úáéððà

61a ìèèèà èì áá äâî ì ú

Our rabbis have taught:

We support the poor of the non-Jews,
 along with the poor of Israel,
 and visit the sick of the non-Jews,
 along with the sick of Israel,
 and bury the poor of the non-Jews,
 along with the dead of Israel . . .
 in the interests of peace.

íðáð äðú
 í éðèð ééðò í éñðøðî
 ,ì àøùé ééðò í ò
 í éðèð èì äç ìéð÷áî ä
 ,ì àøùé èì äç í ò
 í éðèð éúî ìéðáá÷ä
 ,ì àøùé éúî í ò
 .í äì ù èèðä éððî

ACTIVITIES: אַדַּוָּה (tzedakah - charity)

1. The top rung of Maimonides' ladder of אַדַּוָּה is helping others to help themselves. Ask students to analyze the work of the Cleveland Jewish community in Be'er Sheva against Maimonides' view of the highest form of giving to others. How is the Cleveland project helping the Ethiopian Jews help themselves? What other ideas could students brainstorm? [*Note: For background information on Maimonides' ladder of אַדַּוָּה, refer to Tzekakah, Gemilut Chasadim and Ahava: A Manual For World Repair by Joel Lurie Grishaver and Beth Huppin, (Denver, ARE, 1983) available in the Ratner Media & Technology Center. Students can gain quick access to Maimonides' ladder of אַדַּוָּה on line at the Ahavat Israel web site <http://www.ahavat-israel.com/am/charity.html>]
2. There is a political and religious debate whether or not to help the Falash Mura, along with Beta Israel. How does the Talmudic quote from Gitin 61a (see page 13 of this curriculum) support Israel's assistance of the Falash Mura?
3. Develop a school-wide appropriate effort to support the Jewish Community Federation annual campaign. The theme of Cleveland's 1999-2000 campaign is "The Way We Connect." For curricular ideas you can refer to the Curriculum Department's *Tzedakah* Curriculum available on line at <http://www.jecc.org/edres/curric/tzedakah.htm>.

Focus #3: Klal Yisrael (יְאֹוֹהַּ יִיֶּה)**TEXT STUDY & CLASS ACTIVITIES**

39 וְאִתְּמַר עֵי אִתְּמַר אִתְּמַר יְאֹוֹהַּ [Babylonian *Talmud Shavuot*]

All Jews are responsible for one another.

.אַתְּמַר אִתְּמַר יְאֹוֹהַּ יִיֶּה

יְאֹוֹהַּ יִיֶּה עָאֹוּ אַדַּוָּה [Mehilta d'Rabbi Yisma-e]

This was Israel's excellence:

when they all stood at Mount Sinai to receive the *Torah*,

they were in agreement in accepting joyfully G-d.

In addition, they pledged themselves to one another.

יְאֹוֹהַּ יִיֶּה יְאֹוֹהַּ יִיֶּה יְאֹוֹהַּ יִיֶּה
 אִתְּמַר אִתְּמַר יְאֹוֹהַּ יִיֶּה יְאֹוֹהַּ יִיֶּה
 אִתְּמַר אִתְּמַר יְאֹוֹהַּ יִיֶּה יְאֹוֹהַּ יִיֶּה
 אִתְּמַר אִתְּמַר יְאֹוֹהַּ יִיֶּה יְאֹוֹהַּ יִיֶּה

2:4 וָאָאֹוּ עֶ-עֹוּ [Pirke Avot]

Hillel said,

Do not separate yourself from the community.

וְיָאֵר לְיָאֵר
וְיָאֵר לְיָאֵר

1 אֵוּוּ וְיָוּוּוּ ,אֵי אֵוּוּוּ וְיָוּוּוּ [Midrash Tanhuma, Parshat Naso]

All Jews are relatives and friends.

:90 אֵי עֶ- אָאֹוּ עֵי אָאֹוּ אֵי אֵי וְיָוּ [Babylonian Talmud Bava Kama]

Rabbi Akiva said,

Even the poorest of poor Jews

. . . are descendants of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.

:אָאֹוּ עֵי אֵי אֵי
. . . וְיָוּוּוּוּ וְיָוּוּוּוּ
.אֵי עֵי עֵי אֵי אֵי

30:12 אָאֹוּ אֵי עֵי [Vayikra Rabah]

G-d is praised in heaven

when they (the Jews) are one band on earth.

.וְיָוּוּוּוּ וְיָוּוּוּוּ וְיָוּוּוּוּ וְיָוּוּוּוּ

I. L. Peretz, Der Dichter

One G-d, one Law, one people, one land.

346 אֵוּוּוּ [Sifra]

Shimon bar Yoḥai

Only when Jews are united on earth is there a firm foundation for G-d's chambers on high.

:16 וָאֵי וְיָוּוּוּ [Zohar Sh'mot]

As G-d is One,

though G-d's name has 70 meanings,

so is Israel one,

though living among the 70 nations.

Activities: יִשְׂרָאֵל (Klal Yisrael - the community of Israel)

1. For Jews from Ashkenazic or even Sephardic backgrounds, discovering that a group of people from Africa were Jewish was quite a surprise. Ask students to travel back in time forty years to create a speech by a person who had visited the Beta Israel in Ethiopia. This person wants to convince the members of the *úñðë* (*Knesset* - Israel's parliament), to reach out to these Jews of different skin color. Ask students to include at least three of the texts listed in the יִשְׂרָאֵל section of the curriculum.
2. Ask students to create posters (or full bulletin board designs) that could be used in Israeli schools that are integrating the Ethiopian Jews into their society. Ask them to use at least one of the quotes from the curriculum guide (in Hebrew, if possible).

Focus #4: Yisrael (יִשְׂרָאֵל)

TEXT STUDY & CLASS ACTIVITIES

26:2-5 וָעֵשָׂא

Adonai appeared to *Avraham's* son (*Yitzhak*) and said,

"Do not go down to Egypt.

Stay in the land that I point out to you.

Live in this land and I will be with you and bless you.

I will give all this land to you and your descendants,

and I shall fulfill My promise that I swore to *Avraham*, your father.

I shall increase your descendants like the stars of Heaven,

and I shall give them all this land. . .

וְיִשְׂרָאֵל אָמַר אֵלָיו
 אֵלָיו וַיֹּאמֶר אֵלָיו
 אֵלָיו וַיֹּאמֶר אֵלָיו
 אֵלָיו וַיֹּאמֶר אֵלָיו
 אֵלָיו וַיֹּאמֶר אֵלָיו
 אֵלָיו וַיֹּאמֶר אֵלָיו
 אֵלָיו וַיֹּאמֶר אֵלָיו

וְיִשְׂרָאֵל אָמַר אֵלָיו
 אֵלָיו וַיֹּאמֶר אֵלָיו

**Declaration of Israel's Independence Issued at Tel Aviv on May 14, 1948
(5th of Iyyar, 5708)**

THE STATE OF ISRAEL

will be open to the immigration of Jews from all countries in which they live in the world;

will promote the development of the country for the benefit of all those who live there;

will be based on the ideas of

liberty,

justice

and peace

taught by the Hebrew Prophets;

will uphold the full social and political equality of all its citizens, without distinction of

race,

creed

or sex;

will guarantee full freedom of

conscience,

worship,

education

and culture;

will safeguard the specialness and sacredness of the shrines and Holy Places of all religions;

and will dedicate itself to the principles of the Charter of the United Nations . . .

We offer peace and unity to all the neighboring states and their peoples, and invite them to cooperate with the independent Jewish nation for the common good of all.

Our call goes out to the Jewish people all over the world to rally to our side in the task of immigration and development and to stand by us in the great struggle for the fulfillment of the dream of generations -- the redemption of Israel.

אַל־זָאֹוּ

As long as in our inner hearts
a Jewish spirit sings,
As long as the eye looks to the East,
gazing toward Zion.

אַיִ עֵוֹו אָאִי אַ אַאֵו־יֵע
אַעִי אַאֵ עַאֵאֵעֵ וֵוֹו
אַיִ עַאֵ÷ Çøæיִ עֵוֹאֵוִי אַ
.אַעֵוֹאֵוִי יֵאֵעֵוִי יֵעֵוֵ

Our hope is not lost,
the hope of 2000 years:
To be a free people in our own land,
the Land of Zion and יֵ עִי וֵאֵאֵעֵ.

אַוֵוֹאֵ÷וֵ אַאֵאֵאֵ אֵי אַאֵוֵ
יֵ עֵוִי אֵ וֵאֵוֵוֵ וֵאֵ אַאֵ÷וֵאֵ
אַוֵוֵוֵאֵ עֵוֵוֵç יֵוֵ וֵאֵאֵעֵי
.יֵ עִי וֵאֵאֵעֵאֵ יֵאֵעֵוֵ וֵוֵאֵ

Law of Return

Every Jew has the right to go to Israel as an *oleh* (immigrant).

An *Oleh's* visa shall be granted to every Jew who has expressed his desire to settle in Israel, unless the person is engaged in activity directed against the Jewish people or is likely to endanger public health or security of the state.

For the purpose of this law, a "Jew" means a person who was born of a Jewish mother or has become converted to Judaism and who is not a member of another religion.

David Wolpe, *Why Be Jewish* (NY: Henry Holt and Company, 1995), page 45.

In the mid-1980s, when the first Ethiopian Jews were brought to Israel, I was in Jerusalem. Like many in Israel at the time, I was riveted by the news. One day I was listening to a broadcast on the British Broadcasting Corporation foreign service. The first planeloads of Ethiopian Jews had just arrived. I shall never forget the commentator's words. "I have never been too sympathetic to the policies and ideologies of Israel," he said. "But I must say this. No other nation on the globe -- or in history -- would have sent its soldiers halfway across the world to rescue people of another race and a different culture because they said, 'We are your brothers and sisters.'"

Activities: ገገና (Yisrael - Israel)

1. Study both the Ethiopian prayer (see Background Information, page 5) and the selection from Genesis 26:2-5 (see above, page 16). As a Beta Israel child, still living in Ethiopia, what would your dreams be? Students could create a picture of an Ethiopian child, with cartoon-like dream bubbles filled with their dreams.
2. Divide students into pairs to read Israel's Declaration of Independence and *Hatikvah*, Israel's national anthem. Ask them to find the section(s) that they feel explain why Israel has opened herself to the immigration of the Beta Israel. Which section(s) explain why Israel has helped the Falash Mura?
3. Ask students to read the e-mail from Eliot to Melissa and clarify points as is necessary. Instruct students to write an e-mail from Melissa to Eliot praising the Israeli government and Federations around the world for their efforts to integrate Ethiopian Jews into Israeli society. Encourage students to integrate quotations from the Declaration of Independence to demonstrate how the Declaration continues to play an active role in the life of Jews in Israel and around the world.

RESOURCES

All items are available from the
Ratner Media & Technology Center of the Jewish Education Center of Cleveland.

LITERATURE ON ETHIOPIAN JEWRY

Levitin, Sonia. The Return. MacMillan Publishing. Company, 1987

The first airlift of Ethiopian Jews, called Operation Moses, took place in late 1984 and early 1985 when 8,000 were secretly flown from refugee camps in Sudan to freedom in Israel. This novel, about a young Ethiopian girl's harrowing journey to Sudan and ultimate rescue, is vividly realized and an excellent way of humanizing historical events.

Schrier, Jeffrey. On The Wings of Eagles: An Ethiopian Boy's Story. Millbrook Press, 1998.

Sophisticated mixed media illustrations resonate with the culture of the Beta Israel and the emotions of an Ethiopian Jewish boy telling the story of his family's hazardous yet wondrous journey to Israel.

Schur, Maxine Rose. Day of Delight: A Jewish Sabbath in Ethiopia. Dial Books, 1994.

Learn the traditional ways of twentieth century Ethiopian Jews as they prepare for and celebrate Shabbat.

VIDEOS ON ETHIOPIAN JEWRY

Quara Jews: The Last Journey. Dept. of Marketing & Public Affairs Media for the United Jewish Communities, 1999, 4:15 minutes, color.

This is a stirring overview of the Quara Jews, Ethiopians from the primitive Quara region, who are currently being airlifted to Israel. They are part of the 3,800 Jews left behind when their fellow Jews emigrated to Israel during the last decade. With the help of several agencies including the Jewish Community Federation of Cleveland and the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee rescue efforts as well as resettlement aid is being made available.

Gesho. National Film Board of Canada, 1995, Children of Jerusalem series, 28 minutes, color.

Gesho is one of 14,000 Ethiopian Jews who left Northeast Africa during a massive Israeli rescue operation in 1991 for a new life in Israel. Thirteen-year old Gesho lives in a temporary community for new immigrants on the outskirts of Jerusalem. His older brother, Benjamin, who arrived seven years before, tells Gesho of his hardships and loneliness during those years of separation from the family. Now that Benjamin is fully integrated into Israeli society he is able to help Gesho pursue his dream of becoming a professional soccer player.

Ethiopian Jews. Jerusalem on Line, 1991, 30 minutes.

This magazine type program devoted entirely to Operation Solomon, covers the dramatic airlift of 14,000 Ethiopian Jews to Israel over a 24- hour period and details the efforts made to realize such a mission. It shows the emotional welcome of the Ethiopian Jews by Israelis and evokes the emotions of the viewer in witnessing this miraculous event.

Surviving Salvation: Ethiopian Jewry in Israel. American Committee for Ethiopian Jewry, 1992, 40 minutes

Surviving Salvation explores the Ethiopian Jewish experience during modern times. The difficulties of surviving the Ethiopian civil war and adapting to late 20th century Israeli society are discussed. The video offers a positive example of how Israel acts as a refuge and defender of world Jewry and how the immigrant absorption process works in Israel.

Journey to The Promised Land. Joint Authority for Jewish Zionist Education, 1992, color. This multimedia kit includes a video, games, fact sheets and photos focusing on Operation Solomon, the Ethiopian immigration to Israel. A well designed kit that will enhance any lesson on immigration to Israel.

Operation Solomon. Israel Foreign Ministry, 1991, 10 minutes, color.

This video contains live footage from the historic airlift of thousands of Ethiopian Jews from Addis Ababa in 1991. The brief, fast paced film offers a look into the magnitude of the operation and includes several short comments from Israeli political figures including Yitzhak Shamir and David Levy.

ON-LINE INFORMATION ON ETHIOPIAN JEWRY

Information on ገጽ 20 ገጽ 20 (pidyon sh'vuyim - redemption of captives)

- The Giving Page: A Tzedakah and Tikkun Olam Resource
- <http://www.jtsa.edu/melton/tzedakah/prison.html>

Information on Ethiopia

CIA -The World Factbook - 1999

- <http://www.odci.gov/cia/publications/factbook/et.html>

- WorldAtlas.com

- <http://www.graphicmaps.com/aatlas/africa/facts/ethiopia.htm>

Information on Quara Jews

Israel Association for Ethiopian Jews

- <http://www.ahava.com/iaej/>

- The Jewish Agency for Israel

- <http://www.jafi.org.il/quara/index.htm>

- <http://www.jafi.org.il/quara2/index.htm>

- <http://www.jafi.org.il/ethiopia/arrive.htm>

- <http://www.jafi.org.il/gallery/index.htm>

- <http://www.jafi.org.il/ethiopia/ob.htm>

- Ethiopian Jewry Home Page

- <http://www.circus.org/nacoej.htm>

- Israel Report

- <http://www.cdn-friends-icej.ca/isreport/julaug99/quara.html>