

## **Israeli Rabbis Call to Action**

**March, 2020**

Shevat, 5768

*Translation of letter from Rabbinical Committee for the Rescue of Jews Remaining in Ethiopia:*

### **Declaration of Rabbis and Kessim in Israel for the rest of our brothers in Ethiopia.**

In our generation – the generation of the ingathering of exiles- we have been blessed by God with the immigration of our Ethiopian Jewish brethren. However, many have been waiting years, even decades, to make aliyah and reunite with their families and the Jewish people. These internally displaced refugees are direct descendants of the Beta Israel community, and most have first degree family ties with Israeli citizens.

In the 1980s, through Operation Solomon in 1991, thousands immigrated to the State of Israel. Those left behind –brothers and sisters, parents and children of those who have already immigrated – await heroically and resolutely, members of religious Jewish communities in the cities of Addis Ababa and Gonder, hoping and with undiminished faith that they will be allowed to rejoin their families in Israel. Many of them are already halachically Jewish and others are children of a Jewish father. All have returned to the Jewish faith and embraced halakhah of Israel. All of them wish to immigrate to Israel to fully realize their Jewish identity, and like their brethren before them, welcome the opportunity to undergo an halachically rigorous conversion as required by their situation.

**We appeal to the Israeli government to allow – at long last – all members of the Jewish communities in Addis Ababa and Gonder to make aliyah.** They are the last communal group in Ethiopia, seeking to emigrate to Israel and their aliyah will end the need for collective aliyah. .

We call on the Government of Israel and Jewish organizations that provide humanitarian aid, including the Jewish Agency and the Joint Distribution Committee, to provide whatever is needed by the communities while they await aliyah (e.g. for educational, medical and nutritional assistance), just like

assistance has been provided for all other Jewish Diaspora communities in need.

**The matter is urgent;** our Ethiopian brothers suffer from poverty and hunger. Thousands have died while awaiting aliyah; and young members of the community are afraid to marry for fear of being split from their nuclear family. We are responsible for reuniting them with their families from whom they have been callously separated.

**The State of Israel must enable them to immigrate as soon as possible.**

The signatories:

Rabbi Ya'akov Madan, Head of Yeshivat Har Etzion

Rabbi Avraham Gisser, Head of Hemed and Rabbi of Ofra

Rabbi Ram Hacoheh, Head of the Otniel yeshiva and Rabbi of the yishuv

Kess Samai Elias, Rishon Le Zion community, and head of the Kess Spiritual Council

Rabbi Yoel Ben Nun, Alon Shvut

Rabbi Menachem Waldman, Rabbi of Ethiopian communities

Committee Members: Rabbi Yehuda Gilad, Rabbi Shai Piron, Rabbi Yuval Cherlow, Rabbi Shlomo Wilk, Rabbi Gidon Perl, Rabbi Elad Pentago, Rabbi Eliyahu Birnbaum, Rabbi Avraham Inberm, Rabbi Chaim Ashto Tagania, Rabbi Zohar Ghaton, Rabbi Chaim Retig, Rabbi Kapala Bogle, Rabbi Yehuda Sahele, Rabbi Michael Mehrt, Rabbi Moshe Baruch, Kes Rachamim Tsagai, Adv. Joseph Feit.