



For Immediate Release
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FORMER ISRAELI AMBASSADOR SPEAKS ABOUT LOST TRIBE

Learn the Fascinating Story of the Rescue and Redemption of Ethiopian Jews

Asher Naim, former ambassador from Israel to Ethiopia, will discuss his recent book, *Saving the Lost Tribe, The Rescue and Redemption of the Ethiopian Jews*, on Thursday May 15, 2003 at 7 PM at the Center for Jewish History. Ambassador Naim will be joined in a dialogue by Professor Ephraim Isaac. Born in Ethiopia, Dr. Isaac is Director of the Institute of Semitic Study, Princeton, N.J. and President of the Yemenite Jewish Federation of America. The discussion will be followed by a book signing and opportunity to meet the author.

In his book, Ambassador Naim tells the story of "Operation Solomon," the incredible twenty-five hour rescue of nearly twenty thousand Ethiopian Jews in 1991, in which he played a key role. The operation cost 35 million dollars, secured from 100 American donors in less than three days. Mr. Naim speaks of "redemption" in the ancient sense, a literal "buying back" of the freedom of another person. "The operation," he says in his introduction, "was a tribute to this original concept of redemption, an inspiration and reminder of the sacredness of human life that is at the core of Judaism and Western consciousness." For nearly three thousand years the black Jews of Ethiopia, sometimes known as the Falashas, maintained their faith and their identity in the face of drought, famine, and tribal war.

Ambassador Naim's story of Israel's and American's struggle to reunite the Jews of Ethiopia with the rest of Judaism and deliver them to the Holy Land reads like a fast-paced adventure novel that the reader will not want to put down. In his introduction, the author explains that the Jews of Ethiopia, had been removed from the other Jews for thousands of years. "None of them had traveled more than a few miles from their village. Yet they had held on to the prospect of one day returning to Jerusalem; it was the idea that burned in their hearts and had been passed down from generation to generation." The author also feels that the ancient land of Ethiopia must be understood in order to comprehend this story. "The emperors of Ethiopia, including the last emperor, Haile-Selassie, who died in 1974, claimed to be the direct descendants of the apocryphal union between King Solomon and the Queen of Sheba," he explains.

We hope you will join us to learn more of this fascinating story directly from the man who helped make it happen. A suggested \$10 contribution at the door will enable The American Sephardi Federation/ Sephardic House to continue to bring you more wonderful programs like this. The Center for Jewish History is located at 15 West 16th Street, between 5th & 6th Avenues, New York.