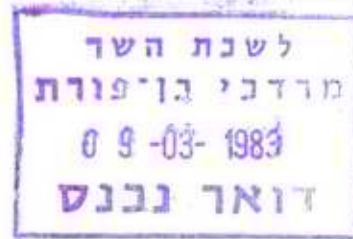


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25th February 1983

Mr. Nate Shapiro,
President, AAEJ,
135 S. La Salle Street, Suite 3707,
Chicago, Ill. 60603,
U.S.A.



Dear Sir,

I am in possession of the "Second List of Ethiopian Jews ..." who allegedly died in the Horn of Africa from starvation, disease, etc. This list was published by the American Association for Ethiopian Jewry and was distributed throughout the U.S. to explain what is happening to the Ethiopian Jews.

When I reviewed and clarified the names on the list, I was outraged. It continues to be difficult for me to understand what purpose is to be served by listing the names of those who have perished. What is to be achieved by listing names of the dead, when in some cases they died of natural causes and old age as many as twelve, seven, four or three years ago? Some of those listed had been slaughtered by the Ethiopian authorities for various reasons - for example: the late Takele Achenafe and Kasus Chole, of blessed memory. Some were students who opposed the current regime in Ethiopia and some fell in the line of duty while serving in the Ethiopian armed forces. One was the late Yizhak Abera, who had been conscripted into the Ethiopian army and fell in battle in the Armatcho region. He was buried with a full military ceremony. Yizhak Abera, of blessed memory, was the father of Hanna David, the wife of Yosef David of Lod, Israel. How can it be claimed that Yizhak Abera died of starvation or disease in a refugee camp in Sudan? Why was it necessary to mention his name at all? The list also refers to "two sons of Yizhak Abera", as if they too had died in Sudan. This is an unmitigated lie! Is the aim of the American Association for Ethiopian Jewry to pour salt on the wounds of the family of Yosef David - or is it an attempt to obtain "blood money" reparations for the hideous tragedy which befell this family and other families as well?

What audacity must people have to approach Hanna David via the newspapers and declare a day of public mourning for her two brothers, as if they had died of hunger or disease in Sudan, when in fact there is no basis to this claim.

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Another glaring inaccuracy I noted is the case of Balayneh Kaleb. He died in a traffic accident some seven years ago, before his sister Yaffa Hadaneh (the wife of Rabbi Yosef Hadaneh) immigrated to Israel in 1977. Yaffa attended her brother's funeral. It is unclear to me how the late Balayneh Kaleb could have gotten to Sudan, when in fact he had died and been buried in Ethiopia. In addition, I was more surprised to find the names of Ananya Kaleb and Metiku Kaleb (two of Yaffa's brothers) who supposedly died in Sudan. What kind of deceitfulness is this?

Some of those listed as dead are, in fact, alive and well, thank God. How dare a day of mourning for them be declared in a newspaper announcement! Among those listed erroneously as dead are: Ganetu Simani, Abera Melesse and Kasawmar Asnakew (may they be granted long life).

Sir, I can provide detailed information on every one whose name appears on the list. Take, for example, Eyasu Zemru - an elderly man over 88 years old, with great-grandchildren. In discussions with new immigrants who arrived here in November 1982, I verified that he is still living in his village in Ethiopia. On the other hand, Eyasu Mamu (of blessed memory) died some twelve (12) years ago from a lingering illness, in Ethiopia.

Other matters which I did not understand and are unclear to me from the list: (A) several names are included twice or even three times such as Takale Achenafe. (B) some names are recorded twice, but reversed, such as "Eyasu Mamu" - "Mamu Eyasu". Why and what for? Are there any reasons or explanations?

I turn to you and asked that you respond to these questions:

1. Who provided this list to the American Association for Ethiopian Jewry?
2. What is the defined goal of publishing this list?
3. Is its purpose to arouse the Ethiopian community in Israel or to create an environment of diminished morale in the light of the uncertainty of the conditions of their brethren abroad?

You must understand that the members of the Ethiopian community in Israel are, by and large, unaware of the fate of their parents, brothers and sisters and other relatives abroad. Knowing this, how is it possible, in this climate of worry, concern and uncertainty, to declare a day of mourning for those who had died, including those who perished many years ago. Moreover, how is it possible to declare a day of mourning for those still living and looking forward to Aliyah?

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Although I could continue to detail the inaccuracies in the list, I am spiritually and emotionally reluctant to continue to do so. The memory of each of the sainted who perished is holy, and ought not be tainted by this communication. And as to those who are still living, and have been falsely recorded as dead - the matter speaks for itself. This libel is reprehensible.

Yours faithfully,



B. Zimna,
P.O.Box 151,
Lod, Israel

cc: ✓ Minister Mordechai Ben-Porat
Dr. Graenum Berger
Mr. Yehuda Dominitz
Mr. Moshe Gilboa
Mr. Chaim Halachmi
Mr. Barry Weiss