

B4GX

Thoughts From THE HEART

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1750 HRS:

PART III
"FINDING MY PLACE"

MY Cousin began to TEAR up - NOT TAKING HER FEELINGS IN CONSIDERATION I TOOK HER IN MY ARMS AND TOLD HER I WAS SORRY IF I HURT HER - I DIDN'T MEAN TOO. WE HELD ONE ANOTHER THEN OUR ETHIOPIAN HOST TOOK BOTH OUR HANDS AND SAID SIT: I WILL TELL YOU MY STORY; "I IMAGINE YOU ARE ME. YOU ARE A LITTLE ETHIOPIAN JEWISH GIRL. EVERY MORNING DRINKING FRESH GOATS MILK AND FOOD EVERY MORNING MADE OUT OF THE GARDEN YOU TEND. BUT THE REAL FOOD IN YOUR LIFE AS YOU GROW UP IS THE DREAM OF JERUSALEM. THIS DREAM IS IN EVERYTHING YOU DO - THE WAY YOU PRAY, THE BLESSINGS, ALL THE JEWISH CEREMONIES. IN EVERY SENTENCE THE WORD JERUSALEM COMES UP." "THEN ONE DAY, AT THE AGE OF SIXTEEN, YOUR FATHER SAYS TO YOU, 'WE'RE GOING TO JERUSALEM.' I IMAGINE YOUR SURPRISE. YOU DIDN'T KNOW IT WAS A REAL PLACE. YOU THOUGHT IT WAS A DREAM. YOUR FATHER HAS SOLD EVERYTHING BUT THE DONKEY TO CARRY THE FOOD. YOU BEGIN WALKING WITH EVERYONE

Else from your village. You're doing what Moses did to get to Israel. There would be sacrifice, somebody was going to die along the way. The Government Regime did not allow emigration. They arrested us along the way and sent us back to the village. So we began again. We walked at night and hid in the day. My sister and I was arrested five times along with our mother & father. But we still walked. Imagine you are walking, you walk from Ethiopia to Sudan, the weak and old don't make it - you stop to bury the dead. Then you start walking again. You live in a refugee camp, and it's "HELL". Israel finally hears about you, but they don't think you're a Jew because you are black. You yourself didn't know there were white Jews. You have never seen a white person before. "America is putting pressure on "Israel" to save you. A big truck comes for you one day, put you and your family on a big plane with those who made it. When you touch down - you're in the land that flows with milk and honey, you're in the land of your dreams. You step off the plane and everyone is bestowed a Hebrew name. I and my family was put in harm's way for this dream. I don't need permission from anyone to prove I'm Jewish. No one needs to give me a name, I don't need permission, I was Jewish before I was born. Israel doesn't

NEED TOO, OR FEEL THE NEED TOO, TO TURN ME INTO AN ORTHODOX JEW. SHE WHEELED^{ON} WITH TEARS IN HER EYES, ADDISO MESSELE WAS THE LONG ETHIOPIAN-BORN MEMBER OF THE ONE-HUNDRED AND TWENTY WHO MADE UP THE KNESSET. COMING HERE ON ALIYAH-[THE LAW OF RETURN] [GIVEN TO ANY JEWISH PERSON TO RETURN TO ISRAEL], THIS PROMISED, AND BEING PHYSICALLY HERE; FULFILLED HALF OF THE DREAM, THE INTOLERANCE TOWARDS OUR LANGUAGE, CULTURE AND COLOR, WHICH WE HAVE ENCOUNTERED IN EVERY ASPECT OF LIFE SINCE OUR ARRIVAL HERE, HAS BURIED THE OTHER HALF OF ETHIOPIAN JEWRY'S DREAM. BUT BE IT AS SUCH, THIS PLACE IS HOME. THE PROMISED LAND THAT GOD GAVE TO HIS PEOPLE. OUR COLOR MAY NOT BE THE COLOR OF THEIRS; BUT, WE ARE ONE NATION UNDER GOD; "JEWS"; WHOM GOD HAS BROUGHT HOME," SO NEVER LET ANYONE DEFINE YOU, BECAUSE THE COLOR OF YOUR SKIN. NOT HERE, NOR IN THE UNITED STATES, NOT EVEN YOUR FAMILY. THERE IS NO REAL WORD IN THE HEBREW LANGUAGE FOR HOME. YET SHE HAD CHOSEN TO EXPATRIATE AND MAKE THIS PLACE HER'S; AS PROBLEMATIC AS THATA CHOICE WAS, NO MATTER AT WHAT EXPENSE; SHE HAD FOUND-~~HER~~^{HER} PLACE. "HOME" AND UNDER THE, LAW OF RETURN!!! MAYBE I'LL FIND MY PLACE IN THIS WORLD, AMONG THE "FALASHAS" "BETH ISRAEL" THE "ETHIOPIAN JEWS".....