

## JEWISH LITURGICAL FORMS IN THE FALASHA LITURGY? A COMPARATIVE STUDY\*

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The Falashas of Ethiopia have attracted considerable attention because of their Judaic religious practice, yet the relationship of their liturgy to normative Judaism remains underdetermined. This article is a first step in the direction of comparative studies.<sup>1</sup> In any society, a Jewish influence may be manifested in certain aspects of cultural life and religious practice, but all Jewish traditions share basic liturgical forms. By defining forms common to Jewish liturgies and determining their presence or absence within Falasha rituals, we can better relate the Falasha tradition to Jewish liturgical precedents.

Until recently, the inaccessibility of Falasha villages sheltered their religious tradition from direct observation.<sup>2</sup> The transmission and performance of the liturgy as an oral tradition discouraged most early investigators.<sup>3</sup> Linguistic barriers hindered scholars in Jewish studies since the Falasha liturgy is in Ge'ez, an ancient Semitic language shared by the Ethiopian Church. Furthermore, the

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- 1 The article is based upon data gathered in Ethiopia during 1973-1975. The Falasha liturgical examples quoted here are drawn from the prayerhouse liturgy performed in the village of Ambober during the Fall of 1973, by Falasha priests (*qesoc'*). Prayer texts and music are transcribed directly from field tapes. A key to the system of textual transliteration and musical symbols is found in Appendix 1.
- 2 Although rumors about Jews in northeastern Africa intrigued Europeans from medieval times, the first detailed accounts of Falasha religious life were provided by missionaries who began to proselytize among the Falashas in the nineteenth-century. See Flad 1869, and Stern 1862. Apart from information published from a questionnaire by Luzzatto 1851-54, the earliest Jewish observers were Joseph Halévy in 1868, followed by his student Jacques Faitlovitch in 1905. See Halévy 1877 and Faitlovitch 1910.
- 3 A. Z. Idelsohn made the first recording of Falasha liturgical music with a Falasha informant in Jerusalem during 1911. The recording is no. 1175 in the Phon. Arch. of Vienna. See Appendix 2 for further discussion of Falasha examples gathered by Idelsohn.

liturgy contains passages in the Agau dialect formerly spoken by the Falashas.<sup>4</sup> Although many Falashas have learned Hebrew in the last quarter-century, there is no evidence that they knew the language in the past.<sup>5</sup>

Considerable controversy has surrounded the discussion of Falasha history. After long debate, the Falashas were recognized as Jews in the last decade and a number have immigrated to Israel.<sup>6</sup> Yet scholars have been unable to identify the source of their Jewish traditions:

Very few of the western scholars who have dealt with the problem of the Falashas are of the opinion that they are ethnically Jews. Most of them think that they are a segment of the indigenous Agau population which was converted to Judaism. How and when they were converted is a problem for which historical evidence is lacking. It has been argued that the Jews of Egypt — we know of the existence of a Jewish community in Elephantine in the fifth century B.C. — or the Jews of Yemen may have sent forth missionaries who converted these African tribes to Judaism. . . . It must be conceded, however, that nearly all the proofs in favor of this view are indirect rather than direct. The problem still awaits final solution. (Leslau 1969:xliv.)

I have elsewhere entered into this debate and suggested that existing theories of Falasha history neglect their Ethiopian context, in particular, their relationship to other Judaized elements within Ethiopia. (See Shelemay 1980:233-258.) We shall return to a discussion of possible Ethiopian precedents later.

This comparative study presents serious methodological problems. Our goal is to begin to define the relationship between the Falasha and Jewish liturgies. Two considerations must inform our procedures. First, since we cannot establish direct contact between the Falashas and a single Jewish community at any point in history before the nineteenth century, our initial inquiry must investigate Jewish liturgical elements that transcend cultural boundaries. Secondly, it is usually agreed that any direct contact between Jews and Ethiopians must have predated the establishment of Christianity as the Ethiopian state religion in the fourth century (Ullendorff 1960:105-107). Thus, we must consider only those liturgical elements established to have been part of Jewish liturgical practice not later than the first centuries of the Common Era.

4 See Halévy 1873. Today the Falashas speak the language of the region in which they live. Falashas of Ambober and other areas of central Ethiopia speak Amharic, the national language, while those to the northeast speak Tigrinya.

5 For further discussion of this point, see Leslau 1947. Jacques Faitlovitch started a school for Falasha children in Addis Ababa in 1924, and later sponsored other Falashas in Jewish studies abroad. By 1956, thirty-three schools sponsored by Jewish organizations had opened in Falasha villages. Bogale n.d.

6 A recent discussion of Falasha recognition by the Israeli Rabbinate and Falasha immigration to Israel is found in Rapoport 1980.

In seeking areas of possible liturgical comparison, we can eliminate the reading of the Pentateuch. This important element in Jewish liturgy, established at a very early period is absent in the Falasha liturgical cycle.<sup>7</sup> The only readings of scriptural texts in contemporary Falasha worship occur on the fast days *seged* and *'astarēyo*.<sup>8</sup> On both occasions, the Decalogue (Exodus 20) is read aloud; on *seged*, additional texts are included.<sup>9</sup> Falasha priests, exposed to Jewish traditions during the twentieth century,<sup>10</sup> are self-conscious about the absence of scriptural readings they now know to be an important part of Jewish practice. Priests explain that they do not read or cantillate Biblical portions because they incorporate these texts within their prayers.<sup>11</sup> There is no evidence that biblical lessons were read regularly in the past. A nineteenth-century observer, the missionary Flad, wrote that Falasha worship consisted of “reciting various prayers, and the singing of psalms and hymns, accompanied by music and dancing.” The only reading he mentions took place optionally after a communal meal held in the prayer house following rituals. (Flad 1869:44-45).

Other liturgical elements of possible Jewish origin, such as the grace after meals or prayers connected to life-cycle traditions, are said to have been modified during the twentieth century under Jewish influence. These elements are also problematic because they exist as oral traditions outside the strict constraints of the Falasha prayerhouse.

Our inquiry must therefore focus upon several statutory prayers of the Jewish liturgy: 1) the *šema*; 2) the eighteen blessings (*‘amīdah*); 3) the *qeduššah* and 4) the *qaddiš*.<sup>12</sup> In evaluating the relationship of the Falasha liturgy to these common

- 7 I refer to the reading of the Torah lesson, not the codification of these readings throughout the liturgical cycle. Werner 1959.
- 8 *Seged* is a pilgrimage festival and partial fast held on the twenty-ninth day of the eighth month. The day has multiple significances, including commemorating Ezra’s proclamation against the Babylonian wives, marking the most important new moon of the year, and initiating a period of monastic retreat. See Shelemay 1980-81:43-62. *'Astarēyo* is a penitential fast held on the tenth day of the seventh month, paralleling the Jewish *yom kippur*. Apart from the readings on these days, and homilies at the end of rituals, the Falasha liturgy is completely sung.
- 9 The additional texts include Exodus 23:2-17 and 22-33; Leviticus 20 and 26:3-46; and Nehemiah 9:3-18. Although the Falasha liturgy is an oral tradition, they do possess a small written literature. The Falasha Pentateuch (*‘orfi*), in Ge’ez, was obtained from Ethiopian Christians along with most of their other writings. See Leslau 1969 for a summary of Falasha literature and translations of selected texts.
- 10 In 1954, the Jewish Agency Department for Torah Education and Culture opened a school in Asmara, Ethiopia for thirty-three Falashas, including seven Falasha priests. Bogale n.d.
- 11 Conversation with Priest Berhaya, 28 November 1973; Conversation with Priest Berhan, 2 December 1973.
- 12 The custom of reciting eighteen benedictions crystallized no later than the century before the destruction of the Second Temple, although the exact content and order was not yet uniform.

Jewish liturgical elements, we must do more than identify textual parallels. Since biblical sources provide portions of these prayer texts, occasional textual parallels are not enough to establish common liturgical models. Rather, comparability must exist in textual content, order, placement, and function within the Falasha and Jewish liturgies. Since the Falasha liturgy is almost entirely sung, musical data can be used to provide yet another perspective in our definition of form and function of liturgical texts within the liturgy. The method of comparison outlined here draws upon the findings of scholars who worked within the historical-philological method (Werner 1959:xvii) and the procedures of the form-critical method, which take into account liturgical patterning and function (Heinemann 1977:1-3). Thus we can test for comparability according to the following criteria: 1) presence of common textual elements; 2) similar text order, placement, and function of these elements within rituals; and 3) affirmation or contradiction of the first two criteria in the musical setting.

#### THE *šema*<sup>c</sup>

The *šema*<sup>c</sup>, a vital part of every Jewish liturgical order, is comprised of three biblical passages: Deut. 6: 4-9; Deut. 11: 13-21; and Num. 15: 37-41. Although the Falasha liturgy contains many references to belief in one God (*'ahadu 'amlāk*) and concludes prayers with the formula "there is no other God" (*'albo bā'ed 'amlāk*), the *šema*<sup>c</sup> does not occur in Falasha rituals taped in 1973. The exception is a partial text found in one Sabbath morning ritual.<sup>13</sup> (Appendix 1, Example A) This prayer contains a phrase of Deut. 6 within which a lengthy chanted passage of approximately thirty-two beats is interpolated. Although the missing text is chanted too quickly to transcribe, comparison indicates that it is not drawn from any portion of the *šema*<sup>c</sup>.

Since this prayer does not contain the complete *šema*<sup>c</sup> text in standard order, nor does it recur in other Falasha rituals, we cannot classify it as a *šema*<sup>c</sup>. Indeed,

The *šema*<sup>c</sup> and its benedictions date from the Temple period. The development of different forms of the *qeduṣṣah* is controversial, although Heinemann concludes its appearance in ancient Christian sources indicates it was customarily performed during the early Common Era centuries. The *qaddiṣ* is not technically a statutory prayer, but was a text of Beit Midrash origin that became a fixed and regular part of the liturgy. See Heinemann 1977: 224, 230, 231-233, 266-267.

- 13 This text is found in Aescoly 1951:242 and in Halévy 1911:97. The Halévy source contains a more elaborate and complete text than that found in the liturgy: "Hear, Israel, the commandment of the Lord Adonay, our God, Adonay, one is his name alone." Subsequent portions of the manuscript begin with the phrase "Hear, Israel," similar to the refrain in the Sabbath liturgy discussed above. Halévy's text is taken from a Falasha "Sabbath of Sabbaths" manuscript, although Halévy does not provide this information in his article. I thank Monica Devens for pointing out the source of the Halévy text.

the musical setting indicates that the first section serves as an introduction to a short responsorial prayer incorporating the text “*semā'e 'esrā'ēl'*” as a refrain. The text may be drawn directly from the Pentateuch or from other Ethiopic sources,<sup>14</sup> rather than directly from a Jewish liturgical model.

#### THE *amīdah*

The “eighteen benedictions”, called the *amīdah* because of the custom of standing during their recitation, are a mandatory part of every Jewish ritual. The form of the *amīdah* varies, depending upon its occurrence on weekdays, Sabbaths, or festivals.<sup>15</sup> Although scholars have attempted to date the individual benedictions and to reconstruct an Ur-text (Finkelstein 1925/26), more recent research postulates the *amīdah*'s development through an organic process in which one of many forms became normative.<sup>16</sup>

Since the Falasha relationship to any specific Jewish community is both uncertain and undated, and parallels to the *amīdah* have been found in sources as diverse as the Psalms of Solomon, the Dead Sea Scrolls and Greek prayers,<sup>17</sup> our task is complicated. However, we can seek parallels to the three basic subdivisions of the *amīdah*: 1) three introductory benedictions, with the *qeduššah* inserted between the second and third; 2) intermediary benedictions of petition; and 3) three final benedictions which give thanks to God (Idelsohn 1932:92-109).

When approaching the *amīdah* from this more general level, we can locate some parallels in one Falasha liturgical form, the *yetbāarak*. The Falasha *yetbāarak* is a long prayer whose multi-part structure is underscored by the alternation of different melodies (see Table 1). The Falashas say the *yetbāarak* is an evening prayer, one performed at the beginning of their evening monastic Office.<sup>18</sup> The

14 A similar passage is also found within *Mashaḥfa Berhān*: “And [on such a person] is fulfilled the word of our Lord which he said in the Gospel of Matthew when a scribe of a [certain] city asked him saying [Mat. 22:36-40]: ‘Teacher, which is the great commandment in the law?’ And he said to him, ‘You shall love the Lord thy God with all your heart, with all your soul, [and with all your might], and with all your mind; this is the great and first commandment.’” See Isaac 1973:96. *Mashaḥfa Berhān* p. 27, contains regulations for Sabbath observance and is thought to have been a special reading used by a Sabbath-venerating community.

15 The *amīdah* is comprised of nineteen (originally eighteen) benedictions on weekdays, seven benedictions on Sabbath and festivals, and nine benedictions for the *musaf* New Year ritual. All versions share the three opening and three concluding benedictions; there is more variety in the nature and number of the intermediary benedictions, which are petitionary. The nineteenth benediction, for the restoration of the Davidic monarch, became fixed and statutory in Babylonian tradition. See Heinemann 1977: 24, 226.

16 Heinemann 1977: 218-219, 221.

17 *Ibid.*, pp. 220-221.

18 The Falashas adopted a monastic order from Ethiopian Christian monks during the fourteenth

*yetbāarak* occurs in different forms in various rituals, but the version found in the evening and morning liturgy of annual holidays contains the greatest similarities to the *ʿamidah*. Since two other prayers beginning with *yetbāarak* will be discussed subsequently, we shall term this one *yetbāarak* I.

TABLE I: The Falasha *yetbāarak* I

Textual incipit	Musical incipit
1) <i>yetbāarak 'egzi'abhēr</i> (Blessed be the Lord)	
2) <i>semeka 'egzi'o</i> (Your name, Lord)	
3) <i>qeddus qeddus</i> (Holy, holy)	
4) <i>'aquerer ma'ātaka</i> (Soothe Your anger)	
5) <i>wasaraya 'egzi'abhēr</i> (And the Lord forgave)	
6) <i>'ellu sab'e</i> (These are the men)	
7) <i>zi'aka 'egzi'o</i> (Yours, Lord)	

The *yetbāarak* is segmented here according to melodic changes which divide the form into seven sections. Each section contains parallel verses, sung either by solo priest alternating with a chorus of priests, or by two priestly choruses. The entire *yetbāarak* is accompanied by an ostinato in a drum (*nagārit*) and a gong (*qačel*), not transcribed here. This example is taken from the *berhān saraqā* evening ritual, an annual holiday commemorating Abraham and today celebrated as the New Year. A complete transcription and text are found in Shelemay 1977.

and fifteenth centuries. See Hess 1969b:112-113. Falasha priests with whom I worked were able to reconstruct prayers of the Falasha monastic Office, performed seven times daily until the death of the last Falasha monk in their area in the late 1960s. The beginning of each Falasha monastic Hour was performed by Gete Asras on 21 November 1973. Most prayers performed in the reconstruction of the Falasha monastic Office are found within the contemporary prayer-house liturgy. The implications of these shared materials are explored in Shelemay 1980.

TABLE II: Comparison of the Falasha *yetbāarak* I and the *ʿamīdah*

<i>ʿAmīdah</i> (after Idelsohn, 1932:92-109)	<i>Yetbāarak</i> ( <i>berhān saraqā</i> eve)
I. Benedictions 1-3 (praise)	I. Benedictions (praise)
1) <i>avoth</i> (fathers)	1-7* God of our fathers (names of Patriarchs in 4-23)
2) <i>gevuroth</i> (powers) <i>kedusha</i>	1-1 Who performed great miracles
3) <i>kedushath hashem</i>	2-5 <i>qeddus</i> (He alone is holy)
	2-1 Your name, Lord, forever
II. Intermediary Benedictions 4-16 (petitions)	II. Intermediary petitions
4) <i>bina</i> (wisdom)	
5) <i>teshuva</i> (repentance)	
6) <i>seliha</i> (forgiveness)	
7) <i>geulla</i> (redemption) (on fast days: <i>anenu</i> , hear us)	3-29 You hear us, our wailing, the captives
8) <i>refua</i> (prayer for the sick)	3-21 the strength of the weak
	3-19 the greatness of the despairing
9) <i>bircath hashanim</i> (blessing for agriculture; within Yemenite and Sephardic, “work of hands”)	4-9 Your hand is strong
10) <i>kibbutz galuyoth</i> (gathering of the exiles)	4-14 the power of His right hand is strong
11) <i>hashiva shofētenu</i> (prayer for righteous judgement)	3-31 sooth Your anger from upon us
12) <i>bircath hamminim</i> (malediction against sectarians)	
13) <i>bircath hatzaddikim</i> (benediction for the righteous)	
14) <i>bonē yerushalayim</i> (build Jerusalem) (mercy in Yemenite and Sephardic versions)	4-17 be merciful forever
15) <i>bircath dawid</i> (prayer for David) (not in Palestinian version)	
16) <i>shomea tefilla</i> (concluding benediction)	
III. Final benedictions 17-19 (Thanksgiving)	III. Benedictions (praise)
17) <i>avoda</i> (prayer for acceptance of service)	4-27 it is fit to praise You and let there be bowing
18) <i>hodaa</i> (thanksgiving)	5-1 and the Lord forgave that evil
	5-2 and the Lord gave up the punishment of His anger
19) <i>bircath cohanim</i> (priestly benediction) ( <i>sim shalom</i> give us peace)	6-2 these are Your priests, Lord

\* Numbered references are to section and verse numbers within the *berhān saraqā* evening ritual; section numbers correspond to those in Table I.

Table II compares salient texts of the Falasha *yetbārak* with a summary of the *‘amidah*. As the Table indicates, correspondence of texts is fragmentary and the sequence varies. For example, a reference to the Patriarchs occurs much later in the Falasha prayer than in the *‘amidah*. Although the *yetbārak* does contain petitions, primarily requests for God’s aid to the weak and helpless; only in a few instances do they resemble the intermediary *‘amidah* petitions. There are some similarities in the final three blessings, although these are again quite fragmentary and not direct equivalents. Perhaps the most striking parallel to the *‘amidah* is the presence of the Falasha *qeduṣṣah*, the *qeddus* (Holy), within the first section of *yetbārak* I.

Although there are similarities between *yetbārak* I and the *‘amidah*, they are not equivalents in textual content, order, placement, or liturgical function. Furthermore, this version of the *yetbārak* does not occur in either the daily or Sabbath liturgies. Heinemann’s research has shown that various “series” of benedictions and petitions similar to the *‘amidah* existed before the destruction of the Second Temple (1977:220-221). The Falasha *yetbārak* I may present yet another example of a series of prayers resembling the *‘amidah* in certain details, while not reflecting the normative form in a consistent manner.

#### THE *qeduṣṣah*

More similarities are found between the Jewish *qeduṣṣah* and the Falasha *qeddus*. The *qeduṣṣah* draws upon sections of Isaiah 6:3, Ezekiel 3:12, and Psalm 146: 10 (Idelsohn 1932:94). This doxology<sup>19</sup> occurs with different introductions in various parts of the synagogue ritual<sup>20</sup>. The Falasha *qeddus* shares the refrain from Isaiah 6:3 and refers to the fulfilment of the kingdom and glory of God, probably paraphrased from Ezekiel 3 and Psalm 146. The *qeddus* occurs both within larger forms, such as in the *yetbārak* cited above (Appendix 1, ex. B), and as a discrete prayer with parallel verses on occasions such as *sanbat* (Sabbath eve; see Appendix 1, ex. C). The *qeduṣṣah*’s function in the *yôzer* benediction to introduce the *šema*<sup>21</sup> is obviously not paralleled in Falasha prayer, but *qeduṣṣah* hymns common in early Jewish practice<sup>21</sup> may be reflected in Falasha prayers incorporating the word *qeddus* as a refrain.

The Falashas say the *qeddus* is a monastic prayer which begins the fifth Hour of their Office (Appendix 1, ex. D). Earlier researchers have reported the *qeddus* to

19 A doxology is a prayer containing praise of God along with an affirmation of His infinity in time. Werner 1959: 274.

20 The main types of *qeduṣṣah* are found in the early morning service (*yôzer*); within the *‘amidah*; and at the end of weekday morning rituals (*qeduṣṣah di sidra*). Werner 1959: 282.

21 Heinemann 1977: 230, 233.



be the fifth monastic Hour<sup>22</sup> and an afternoon prayer said daily.<sup>23</sup> All data, including my own, place the most important rendition of the *qeddus* during the afternoon.

A particularly colorful version of the *qeddus* is found within all Falasha morning rituals around dawn. The *kalhu kwellu malā'ekt* does not correspond to Jewish *qeduṣṣah* models, containing only the phrase praising "the Holy Lord of Hosts."<sup>24</sup> However, the Falasha prayer continues to describe praise of God sung by angels inhabiting "the seven heavens", a text also found within Ethiopian Christian liturgy.<sup>25</sup> We find the *kalhu* listed by earlier sources as a prayer to be sung at dawn, and in one source, said to be part of the Falasha monastic Office<sup>26</sup> (Appendix 1, ex. E).

The musical settings confirm the close relationships between different versions of the Falasha *qeddus*; those within *yetbārak* 1, the *kalhu*, and the Falasha monastic Office share similar melodic content. The pitch content of the *sanbat* version varies from the others, with flexible fifth and second scale degrees which may be characteristic of the Falasha evening liturgy.<sup>27</sup> However, the Falasha monastic *qeddus* and the *sanbat* version share the response *wayemlā'e* at the end of verses.

We cannot conclude a discussion of similarities between the Falasha *qeddus* and the Jewish *qeduṣṣah* without mentioning the prominent rôle of the "thrice-holy" within Christian liturgy. It is well established that the early Church incorporated a version of the *qeduṣṣah* into its liturgy. (Werner 1959:286). However, the official Christian text was changed sometime between the first and fourth centuries C.E. to deviate from the Biblical model "Holy, holy, holy is the Lord Sabaot, full is the whole earth of His glory" (*ibid.*: 284). Although some sources indicate the Jewish and Christian wordings may not have been divergent at the earliest Christian dates, the versions which came to be normative within the

- 22 Luzzatto 1853:526. Luzzatto reports nine monastic Hours named by their textual incipits.
- 23 Leslau 1969:113. Leslau divides his list into "day and night prayers."
- 24 The usual second phrase referring to God's glory is omitted.
- 25 Danielou reports this text to be of Syriac Jewish-Christian heritage. See Danielou 1973: 174, 178, 179, 204. This information is of great interest because of the heavy Syriac influence upon Ethiopian Christianity: Syriac missionaries are said to have converted Ethiopia to Christianity and Syriac monks heavily influenced Ethiopian monasticism. See Heyer 1971:155, 217.
- 26 Luzzatto 1853:526 recorded that the "Kallhu," the first monastic Hour, was to be said "before the cry of the cock." Leslau 1969:113 describes the *kalhu* as a night prayer said before dawn "when the hens cry."
- 27 Falashas say their liturgical music varies according to the liturgical occasion and the time of day, but are unable to define these differences. My forthcoming book, *Music, Ritual, and Falasha History*, will discuss this issue in detail.

respective liturgies differ substantially.<sup>28</sup> Thus, the Jewish *qeduṣṣah* uses the phrase “The whole earth is full of His glory,” referring to God in the third person, while the Christian version contains the phrase “heaven and earth” and refers to God in the second person.<sup>29</sup> The Falasha version of the *qeddus* is therefore closer to normative Christian models with its reference to “heaven and earth” in the *sanbat* ritual, and references only to “heaven” in the monastic liturgy. The *qeddus* for the Sabbath and monastic Office also refer to God in the second person, as does the *kalhu*. The *qeddus* within *yetbārak* I is closest to Jewish models with its reference to “all the world” and address in the third person.<sup>30</sup>

### THE *qaddiṣ*

The Jewish *qaddiṣ*, called the “doxology *par excellence* of the synagogue liturgy” (Graubard 1978:59), probably originated as a response to a homiletical discourse (Pool 1964:8). Although it eventually came to be used in different forms in varying contexts, including the relatively late usage as a mourner’s prayer, we are here concerned only with its function to mark the conclusion of sections of the liturgy (Idelsohn 1932:84-85). One Falasha prayer, here termed *yetbārak* II to differentiate it from the *yetbārak* discussed above, resembles portions of the half-*qaddiṣ*, as seen in Table III<sup>31</sup> (Appendix 1, ex F).

More strikingly, the Falasha prayer also parallels the *qaddiṣ* in liturgical function to demark sections of the liturgy. For example, *yetbārak* II occurs four times within the *berhān saraqā* morning ritual at critical junctures<sup>32</sup> (Appendix 1, ex. F). The final appearance before the closing prayer is a full version, while the

28 The relationship between Jewish and early Christian versions of the *qeduṣṣah* may be more complex than the normative forms indicate. See Werner 1959: 284-286 for a discussion of this complicated issue.

29 *Ibid.*, pp. 283-284.

30 The comparable verse within Ethiopian Christian monastic liturgy reads: *qeddus qeddus qeddus 'egzi'abhēr ṣabā'ot feṣum mel'ē samāyāta wamedra qedduṣāta sebhātika*. Translation: Holy, holy, holy, Lord of Hosts, full are all the heavens and earth with Your holiness and glory. *Sa'ātāt* n.d.: 7-8.

31 Both prayers are included under the rubric *yetbārak*, according to the explanations of Falasha priests. The Falasha *yetbārak* II contains a series of praise similar to those in the half-*qaddiṣ*. However the Falasha text omits reference to the name of God considered by some to be the nucleus of the *qaddiṣ*. See Werner 1959:291. Pool suggests that the origin of the series of praise within the *qaddiṣ* may have been among followers of the Essenes; see Pool 1964: 57. Elsewhere, Falasha religious practice has been characterized as “Essenic Judaism”: Isaac 1974.

32 The equivalence of *yetbārak* I and *yetbārak* II may be indicated by use of the *yetbārak* after two other important prayers in the *berhān saraqā* morning ritual. Thus we find four *yetbārak* II and two *yetbārak* I within the liturgy for that morning.

TABLE III: Comparison of the Jewish *qaddiṣ* and the Falasha *yetbārak* II

Jewish <i>qaddiṣ</i> * (half- <i>qaddiṣ</i> ):	Falasha <i>yetbārak</i> II (full and short):
Exalted and hallowed be His great name in the world which He created according to His will. May He establish His kingdom in your lifetime and in your days and in the lifetime of the whole household of Israel, speedily, and at a near time. And say: Amen. May His great Name be praised forever and unto all eternity. Blessed and praised, glorified and exalted, extolled and honoured, magnified and lauded be the Name of the Holy One, praised be He — although He is beyond all blessings and hymns, praises and consolations which may be uttered in the world. And say: Amen.	<i>Full:</i> And blessed be the Lord, and sanctified, and elevated, and trusted, and honoured, and extolled, Adonay.** Because the glory of the Lord is great, holy, powerful, and blessed. Forever, and ever, and evermore, let it be forever, and let the praise of the Lord be full.  <i>Short:</i> Let him be blessed and sanctified because the praise of the Lord is great. Holy, powerful, and blessed forever.

\* Quoted from Petuchowski 1978:37.

\*\* The word *adonay* is taken from the Ge'ez translation of the Pentateuch.

three earlier occurrences are a shorter version. Therefore we find a half and full version of the Falasha *yetbārak* II delimiting liturgical divisions in annual holiday rituals in a manner remarkably similar to the Jewish *qaddiṣ*. The musical setting further underscores the distinctive identity of this prayer: although most of the Falasha liturgy is performed in antiphonal or responsorial style by opposing choirs of Falasha priests, this text is chanted in psalmodic style.

The *yetbārak* II maintains its function as sectional marker in other Falasha rituals. It is also found embedded within other prayers. Within the *seged* and *sanbat* liturgies, one finds a portion of the *yetbārak* II at the beginning of renditions of the Cantic of the Three Youths, drawn from the Apocryphal Daniel (Appendix I, ex. G). This prayer occurs at the beginning of the *seged* ritual and at a major division within the *sanbat* liturgy.<sup>33</sup> Musical settings of the

33 Since the Cantic also begins with *yetbārak*, its full renditions will here be termed *yetbārak* III. This cantic was read in the early synagogue, but was not accepted into Jewish canon, and was excluded from Jewish liturgy because of Christological interpretations. Werner 1959: 140. The cantic is very important in Ethiopian Christian monastic practice, where it is supposed to be recited seven times a day. Wondmagegnehu 1970:88. The Falasha version of the cantic

*yetbāarak* II in these contexts are the same as those of the canticle in which they occur.

*Yetbāarak* II was performed within the reconstruction of the Falasha monastic liturgy (Appendix 1, ex. H). A text resembling the Falasha prayer is also found at the beginning of the Ethiopian Christian night Office (Velat 1966:47):

*yetbāarak 'egzi' abhēr 'amlāka 'esrā' ēl zagabra 'abiya  
wamankera bāhetitu  
wayetbāarak sema sebhatihu qeddus  
waymelā'e sebhatihu kwellu medera layekun layekun*

*Blessed be the Lord, God of Israel, who performed wonders alone  
And blessed be the name, His glory is holy  
And let His glory fill all the earth, let it be, let it be.*<sup>34</sup>

The Christian monastic text: parallels the Falasha *yetbāarak* II as well as including praise of God's name found in the Jewish *qaddiš*, but not in the Falasha prayer. Whether this correspondence relates to the well-documented relationship between the *qaddiš* and the Christian *paternoster* (Lord's Prayer), cannot be determined at this time.<sup>35</sup>

#### CONCLUSIONS

We have explored the relationship of important components of Falasha liturgical practice with the aspects of Jewish liturgy they most closely resemble. There is no regular, cyclical reading of the Pentateuch and we see that there are only occasional or fragmentary similarities to the *šema'* and *'amidah*. The Falasha *qeddus* clearly emerges from a category of prayers derived from the Jewish *qeduššah*, but in textual content apparently stands closer to models in normative Christian liturgy. Although the Falasha *yetbāarak* II most clearly parallels a Jewish liturgical form, resembling both the text and the liturgical

contains additional text; indeed, the presence of *yetbāarak* I may derive from its close relationship to the opening lines of the canticle. (Blessed art thou, O Lord, God of our fathers, and to be praised and highly exalted forever; And blessed is Thy glorious, holy name and to be highly praised and exalted forever.) Daniel 3: 28-30, *The Apocrypha of the Old Testament*, ed. Bruce M. Metzger (rev. standard ed. New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 1977), p. 210.

34 *Saf'āwī* n.d.: 7. Once again we find a parallel text in the *Maṣḥafa Berhān*: "Blessed be the Lord, the God of Israel, who did wonders by himself. Let the name of his glory be blessed, forever and ever and ever. Let his glory fill the whole earth. Amen, Amen." Isaac 1973:115.

35 On this question, see Pool 1964:111-112; Heinemann 1978:81-92. Dr. David Weiss Halivni has also suggested that except for the response, the Jewish *qaddiš* may not have been fixed at early enough dates to have been transmitted to pre-Christian Ethiopia. We have seen above that the Falasha *yetbāarak* II, does not refer to God's name as does the *qaddiš* response.

function of the half-*qaddiś*, it also has a direct parallel in the Ethiopian Christian liturgy. Thus we confront a seemingly anomalous liturgical situation in which strong monotheistic statements and some liturgical elements testify to a Judaic theology and heritage, while other liturgical forms are simply absent or at variance with normative Jewish models.

Where did the Falashas acquire their Ge'ez liturgy replete with Judaic elements? We cannot solve this problem on liturgical evidence alone. In the introduction to his landmark study in comparative liturgy, *The Sacred Bridge*, Eric Werner cautions that conclusions must rest upon the coincidence of historical, liturgical, and musical findings (1959:xx). Taking these factors into consideration, we must weigh alternatives. Many have suggested that the Falasha religious tradition, and by extension their liturgy, reflect Jewish forms acquired directly in the pre-Rabbinic period. From this framework emerge theories of Falasha conversion by Egyptian or Southern Arabian Jews before the Christianization of Ethiopia. We have seen that there is no firm evidence for these theories.<sup>36</sup> In addition, if Falashas had been directly contacted or converted by Jews, even at early dates, we would anticipate finding some liturgical elements such as the *šema*<sup>c</sup> or a remnant of Hebrew.

Another alternative deserves consideration. It is possible that the Falashas acquired Jewish elements indirectly, receiving them from an intermediary source. This hypothesis could provide an explanation for early Jewish forms without restricting our search to direct Jewish contact or to early dates. Several factors, in addition to the liturgical elements cited above, suggest this alternative deserves greater attention: 1) Falasha traditions about the origin of their liturgy; 2) the well-documented Judaization of other Ethiopian peoples; and 3) the impact of Jewish forms such as the *qeduśśah* and *qaddiś* upon Christian liturgies.

We have until now abstracted Falasha liturgical forms from their context within Falasha religious practice and Ethiopian history. Falasha priests who today transmit and perform their liturgy are remnants of an active clergy which until the last decades included monks. The Falasha monastic order is remembered in Falasha oral traditions as the guiding force in their religious life. Falashas credit a fifteenth-century monk named Abba Sabra with founding their monastic order, organizing their religious laws and liturgical cycle, and compos-

36 See Leslau 1969:xlili. Maxime Rodinson has also questioned the theory of possible Southern Arabian Jewish influence upon the Falasha. He points out that Judaism was not well established in Southern Arabia until around 373 C.E., leaving little time for a profound impact before Ethiopia's Christianization. Unable to trace Ethiopian contact with any Jewish source, he suggests that a revival of Biblical traditions within the Ethiopian Church may explain many Judaic aspects of Ethiopian culture. See Rodinson 1964a,b.

ing their prayers.<sup>37</sup> In addition, monks are said to have instituted the Falasha laws of isolation and rite of confession,<sup>38</sup> as well as to have initiated the structure of the Falasha prayerhouse (Halévy 1877:203).

I have elsewhere suggested that liturgical and historical evidence indicate that Falasha monks played a critical role in shaping the Falasha liturgical tradition.<sup>39</sup> Several groups of monks left the Ethiopian Church during doctrinal disputes in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, and while in exile, established communities among Ethiopian peoples in outlying areas.<sup>40</sup> These monks were themselves carriers of Judaic traditions who left the Church rather than forfeit their Saturday Sabbath observance.<sup>41</sup> Ethiopian historical sources record that members of at least one of these communities introduced monasticism to the Falashas.<sup>42</sup> We have seen that the forms of Judaic cast within Falasha liturgy – the *yetbārak I qeddus, kalhu*, and *yetbārak II* are all said by Falasha priests to have been part of the Falasha monastic Office. Although there are still large gaps in our knowledge of the history and beliefs of the Judaized sects once active within the Ethiopian Church,<sup>43</sup> we have firm records of their commitment to biblical precepts and to their status as *'ayhud* (Jews) within Ethiopian society.<sup>44</sup> Thus the attribution of

37 I was told these traditions by priests of Falasha villages in the Gondar area during 1973. See Leslau 1969:xxv and Quirin 1977:62.

38 Leslau 1974: 623-7.

39 Shelemay 1980.

40 These monks included the followers of Ēwoṣṭatēwos, who left Ethiopia in self-exile around 1337 and visited Egypt and the Holy Land before dying in Armenia fourteen years later. Ēwoṣṭatēwos' disciples returned to Ethiopia and dispersed to found monasteries throughout northern Ethiopia. See Tamrat 1972:206-220. Other dissenting groups included the Stephanites, discussed in Tamrat 1966:103-115, and the Za-Michaelians, treated in Isaac 1973:54-62.

41 In addition to their observance of the Saturday Sabbath, for which they were excommunicated, they did not receive Holy Orders nor enter into the residence of the king or the metropolitans. Tamrat 1972:210. These various Judaized factions (termed Jewish Christians by Ephraim Isaac) were anti-Trinitarians, refused to worship Mary or prostrate themselves to the Cross, and insisted upon adhering to Biblical precepts and worshipping one God. Isaac 1973:69.

42 An early disciple of Ēwoṣṭatēwos, Gabra-Iyesus, proselytized in Falasha country after his return from Armenia in 1352. During the same period, a Christian monk named Qozimos joined a Falasha community, copied the Pentateuch for them, and served as a political leader. Tamrat 1972:198-199.

43 Manuscripts microfilmed for the Hill Monastic Manuscript Library located at Saint John's University may provide additional insights into these traditions. Kaplan 1982, a dissertation completed at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem sheds considerable light on the Ethiopian monastic movements of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. A sizeable literature exists concerning Judaic elements within the Ethiopian Church. See Hammerschmidt 1965. Also, Ullendorff 1959, 1973.

44 Members of sects who rejected the concept of the Trinity and adhered to worship of one God were called *'ayhud* (Jews) by their fellow Ethiopians. Isaac 1973:54.

Falasha prayers with Judaic content to Falasha monks is compatible with the historical evidence.

Thus several strands of evidence come together: 1) the presence within Falasha liturgy of Jewish elements which survive in Jewish *and* Christian traditions; 2) the absence of universal Jewish elements such as the *šemāc* and the reading of biblical pericopes; and 3) the ascribing of prayers with obvious Jewish content to the Falasha monastic liturgy.

I cannot yet provide all the answers to this provocative liturgical puzzle. There are still many lacunae in our knowledge of Ethiopian Christianity before fifteenth- and sixteenth-century liturgical reforms. Yet all the evidence to date – liturgical, historical, and musical<sup>45</sup> – locates the Falasha liturgy at the crossroads of the Judaeo-Christian tradition in Ethiopia. There is no question that the Falashas – and their Ethiopian compatriots – have been influenced by Jewish custom and liturgical practice. Our task is to define these Jewish elements better, and then to determine their source.

The perspective offered here has been anticipated in the work of others. Historian Robert Hess has suggested that we have to rethink our understanding of Falasha history in the context of a more broadly conceived Judaeo-Christian tradition:

The Judaeo-Christian tradition is more than the ethical ideals of the West and the Solomonic ideas and institutions of Ethiopian tradition. Judaism, Judaizing influences in Christianity and elsewhere, and Christianity form a set of elements which have survived — historically — in different proportions and combinations in the West. Perhaps a larger view of the Judaeo-Christian tradition should be constructed on the basis of its surviving elements in several cultures. . . . In this sense, both Ethiopia and the West share parts of a common heritage. And in this sense, too, that segment of Ethiopian history dealing with the Falasha must be considered both as part of Ethiopia's Judaeo-Christian tradition and as part of a larger tradition of which only scattered remnants have survived in combination with the other elements forming their distinctive civilizations (Hess 1969a: 112).

The tenacious Falasha commitment to their existence as the “House of Israel” (*beta 'esrā'ēl*) has been reaffirmed and refreshed through the last century of

45 The Falashas share liturgical and musical terminology and concepts with Ethiopian Christians. Falasha liturgical music is primarily pentatonic in pitch content, as is much of Ethiopian music. The performance of the Falasha liturgy, almost entirely sung, is accompanied by an ostinato rhythm played by a small kettledrum (*nagārit*) and a flat gong (*qačēl*). Instruments are not played on the Sabbath or fast days. Performance style is largely antiphonal, with the alternation of two choruses of priests or a solo priest and a chorus. Comparative studies of Falasha and Ethiopian Christian liturgical music await completion of my study of the Christian musical tradition, now in progress. Christian elements within Falasha liturgy will also be discussed in my forthcoming book.

contact with the Jewish mainstream. We must seek a broader comparative framework that will enable us to move beyond normative Jewish (or Christian) practice better to understand rituals within this rare and fascinating liturgical tradition. In doing so, we must realize that a Jewish identity can transcend normative Jewish practice. We have an opportunity to explore a unique stream of Jewish tradition maintained by the Falashas, and, whatever its source, guarded for centuries against all odds.

## APPENDIX 1: EXAMPLES

### Key to Text Transcriptions

In the absence of any universally accepted transliteration system for Ge'ez, I have modified those suggested by Lambdin 1978 and Leslau 1976 to minimize the number of diacritical markings.

Differences between spoken pronunciation and Ge'ez orthography are exacerbated by sung performance. Falasha Ge'ez syntax sometimes deviates from standard usage as well. Falasha texts are transcribed as sung and those irregularities clearly audible are allowed to stand.

Several consonants are today very similar or identical in pronunciation; in these instances, words are spelled according to lexical norms. The distinctions between ḥ= ሀ, ḥ= ገ, and ḥ= ሐ, as well as ś= ሄ and s= ስ, are noted in the texts, but usage of ገ and ሀ is so arbitrary in Ge'ez orthography that both are represented by ḡ. Gemination of consonants, although not indicated in Ethiopic script, is frequently present in spoken Ge'ez. Since it is often impossible to distinguish geminated consonants from those simply sustained in the musical setting, only the most standard geminations are reflected in the transliterations.

The seven Ge'ez vowels are rendered as follows:

<i>Ge'ez</i>	<i>Roman</i>
ሰ	(b)a
ሱ	u
ሲ	i
ሳ	ā
ሴ	ē
ሶ	e
ሸ	o

Transliteration is complicated by phonological rules which alter vowel inflection or stress under certain conditions; pronunciations of final syllables can be particularly



inconsistent. Words are therefore spelled according to orthographic norms except for syllabification, which reflects sung performance. Inconsistencies in syllabification follow the varied pronunciations of a single word often present within a text.

In the examples, the terms and texts (derived from Amharic, Ge'ez, and Hebrew) are transliterated according to the following system. Many consonants have approximately the same pronunciation as in English. The diacritical marks should be interpreted in the following way:

č as in *church*

š as in *shoe*

ǰ as in *joke*

ž as in *pleasure*

ň as in *onion*

t, ç, p, q, and š are glottalized or ejective sounds not found in English.

Ge'ez and Amharic vowels are pronounced as follows:

i as in *feet*

ē as in *state*

ā as in *ah*

o as in *nor*

u as in *boot*

a as in *uh* (sound made when hesitating when speaking)

e as in *roses*

Agau text is indicated by *Agau*

Text incomprehensible because of group performance or background noise is marked by ?.

#### Key to Music Transcriptions

> slight pause

- approximately a quarter-tone lower than written

+ approximately a quarter-tone higher than written

∞ trill

/ slide

C chorus

S solo

All examples are transcribed with fundamental on A to facilitate comparison. Division of portions between soloist and chorus are indicated by S and C, respectively. The unpitched percussion parts accompanying Examples B and E are indicated below the vocal line, with the gong (*qāčel*) part appearing above that of the drum (*nagarit*).

#### Source Data

The music examples were both recorded and transcribed by the author. All recordings were made in the Falasha village Ambober, located about forty kilometers east of

Gondar, the capital of Begemder and Semien Province. Liturgical examples were performed by Falasha priests (*kahēnāt* or *qesocē*) during rituals within the Ambober prayer-house. Portions of Falasha rituals for Sabbath and *berhān saraqā* (literally, "the light appeared," but today celebrated as *rosh hashana*) are included here. Examples D and H were performed during an interview by Geṭe 'Asrās, an Ambober priest considered the most knowledgeable by his peers. These two portions are part of Geṭe's reconstruction of the Falasha monastic Office, and also occur in similar or identical form in various prayer-house rituals. All recordings are deposited at the Archives of Traditional Music of the University of Indiana, Bloomington, Indiana.

Example	Function at which recorded	Locality	Data	Deposit number
A	Sabbath morning	Ambober	29.9.73	Tape 6B
B	<i>berhān saraqā</i> eve	Ambober	26.9.73	Tape 1A
C	Sabbath eve	Ambober	28.9.73	Tape 5A
D	--	Ambober	21.11.73	Tape 29B
E	<i>berhān saraqā</i> morning	Ambober	22.9.73	Tape 1B
F	<i>berhān saraqā</i> morning	Ambober	22.9.73	Tapes 1B,3A
G	Sabbath morning	Ambober	29.9.73	Tape 6B
H	--	Ambober	21.11.73	Tape 29B

Example A: *wayebē semā'e 'esrā'ēl* (And he said, Hear Israel) *sanbat* morning (Complete)

*wayebē semā'e 'esrā'ēl 'egzi'abhēr* [? incomprehensible for 32 beats, ♩ = 138]

And he said, Hear Israel, the Lord [?]

*wa'afqero la'egzi'abhēr 'amlākeka bakwellu lebeka wabakwellu nafsaka wabakwellu hayleka*

And love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your might

*wayemlā'e westa lebeka*

And let it fill your heart

wa-ye-be se-mā'e es-rā-ēl 'eg-zi-'ab-hēr ??? wa-af-qe-ro la-'eg-zi-'ab-hēr

am-lā-ke-ka ba-kwe-llu le-be-ka wa-ba-kwe-llu naf-sa-ka wa-ba-kwe-llu hay-le-ka

wa-yem-lā'e wes-to le-be-ka (PAUSE)

se-mā'e es-rā-zi'el se-mā'e es-rā-zi'el wa-ye-bē se-mā'e wa-ye-bē se-mā'e

eg-zib-hēr-sa eg-zib-hēr-sa eg-zib-hēr-sa eg-zib-hēr-sa

? ? ? eg-zib-hēr ? ? ? eg-zib-hēr ba-kwe-llu naf-sa-ka

Example B: *qeddus* (Holy) within *yebārak* I, *berhān saraqā eve*

bāhetitu qeddus qeddus bāhetitu 'aman qedduse  
 He alone is holy, he alone is truly holy  
 'aman qedduse 'egzi'abhēre ṣabā'ote  
 Truly holy is the Lord of Hosts  
 qeddus ḥāyāle 'egzi'abhēre ṣabā'ote  
 Holy and powerful is the Lord of Hosts  
 qeddus qedduse 'egzi'abhēr ṣabā'ote  
 Holy, holy Lord of Hosts  
 qeddus yekune 'egzi'abhēr ṣabā'ote  
 Holy will be the Lord of Hosts  
 \*qeddus qedduse 'egzi zahāllō wayhēllu hāllēluyā  
 Holy, holy. Lord who exists and will exist, halleluya  
 'adonāye qedduse zalakwellu 'ālame  
 Adonay, who is holy to all the world  
 qeddus [?] 'ahāze kwellu 'ālame  
 Holy [?] the one who holds [in his power] the whole world  
 'abba 'ahāze 'ahāze kwellu 'ālame  
 Father, the one who holds [in his power] the whole world

\* Melodic change. See remark in transcription.

$\text{♩} = 69$  C S

bā-he- - ti-tu qe-ddus qe-ddu. - se

C  
 bā-he- - - ti-tu 10- mān qe-ddu- se  
 \* C  
 qe-ddus qe-ddu- se 'eq-zi zo-  
 - - hā-llō way- - - hZ-llu hā-llē-lu-  
 - ya

- \* Within the *yetbārak* (and other Falasha prayers), textual and melodic changes do not usually coincide. The *qeddus* text spans a melodic change, marked with \* above. The relationship between performers also changes.

Example C: *qeddus* (Holy), *sanbat* evening

qeddus qedduse 'egzi'abhēr šabā'ote 'adonāye  
 Holy, holy Lord of Hosts, Adonay  
 qedduse manglestu zala<sup>c</sup>ālame wayemlā'e  
 His kingdom is holy forever, and let it be full  
 qeddus nese'elaka 'egzi'o zala'amlāka samāy wamedre wayemlā'e  
 Holy, we ask you, Lord, who is God of heaven and earth, and let it be full  
 qeddus zatehubomu lamelā'ekteka qedema ser<sup>c</sup>āteka yesēbhuka wayemlā'e  
 Holy, who let your angels praise you in front of your law, and let it be full  
 qeddus [?] 'egzi'o berhāna sebhātika wayemlā'e  
 Holy [?] Lord, the light of your praise, and let it be full  
 qeddus [?] šer<sup>c</sup>āte wašedeqeda wayemlā'e

Holy [?] rule and your righteousness, and let it be full  
 qeddus zaqedasekanna bate'ezāza 'oriteka yet'akwot semeka waye'ebaye  
 manglesteka eska 'ālam wayemlā'e

Holy, who blessed us in the commandments of your Mosaic Law, your name be  
 blessed, and let your kingdom be great forever, and let it be full

qeddus 'Aheyā Šarāheyā 'Alšaday bamasegaba kwellu 'ālam wayemlā'e

Holy Aheya, Sharaheya, Alshaday, in the treasury of the world, and let it be full

qeddus zasera'ā la'abrehām wamaḥala layešhaq seme'e layā'eqob wala'eśrā'ēl  
 kidano zala'ālam wayemlā'e

Holy, who made law for Abraham and swore to Isaac, a testimony to Isaac, and  
 for Israel his covenant is forever, and let it be full

qeddus 'amlāku ladāwit 'abuka samā'eku šalotaka ware'iku anbe'aka 'o 'amlāka

Holy God of David, your father, I heard your prayer and I saw your tear, Oh,  
 God

qeddus [?], 'albo bā'ede 'amlāke za'enbalēka 'albo kāle'e 'amlāke za'enbalēka

Holy [?] there is no God except you, there is no other God except you

qe- ddu-s                      qe-ddu-se                      eg-zi-a-be-her

ša-bā-to-te a-do-nā-ye                      qe-ddu-                      se manges-tu

la- a-                      - la-me                      wa-                      - - - yem-lā'e

Example D: *qeddus* (Holy), *Falasha Monastic Office*

qeddus qeddus semeka 'anta wayemlā'e sebḥatika samāyāt

Holy, holy is your name and let your praise fill the heavens

qeddus qeddus waḥayāl semeka 'anta wayemlā'e sebḥatika

Holy, holy and powerful is your name and let your praise be full

qeddus qeddus šerḥeka wamanker bašedaq wayemlā'e

Holy, holy is your palace and wonderful in righteousness, and let it be full

qeddus 'abbābbā 'amān qeddus wayemlā'e sebḥatika

Holy Father, truly holy, and let your praise be full

qeddus ba'afuhomu za'iyārammu wabalebomu zayenabu

Holy in their mouths which are not silent and in their hearts which speak

'amān qeddus wayemlā'e sebḥatika samāyāt

Truly holy and let your praise fill the heavens

qeddus 'esma 'albo qeddus kama 'egzi'abhēr

Holy because there is no holy like the Lord

wa'albo šādeq kama 'amlākena ḥeyāwe wayemlā'e sebḥatika

And there is no righteous one like our living God, and let your praise be full

qeddus 'esma tazakara qālo qeddus wayemlā'e sebḥatika samāyāt

Holy because he remembered his holy words and let your praise fill the heavens  
 qedduṣ waqabā'ekewo qebe'a qedduṣ 'esma 'edēya terade'a wamazrā'etya tāšan<sup>o</sup>  
 wayemlā'e subḥatika samāyāt

Holy and I anointed him with the holy ointment because my hand helps him and  
 my arm strengthens him and let your praise fill the heavens

qedduṣ la'aron qedduṣ 'egzi'abḥēr wayemlā'e sebḥatika

Holy to Aaron, holy Lord, and let your praise be full

qedduṣ kama šelāt ba'ašebā'etu 'amān qedduṣ wayemlā'e sebḥatika

Holy like the tablets of the covenant from his fingers, truly holy, and let your  
 praise be full

ḥarya ḥarya manbaru ba'aryām wayemlā'e sebḥatika samāyāt

He chose, he chose his throne in the firmament, and let your praise fill the  
 heavens

manbaru manbaru ha'esāt kelul qetur wayemlā'e sebḥatika

His throne, his throne is crowned by a closed curtain of fire, and let your praise  
 be full

manbaru za'iyānqalaqel 'eska la'ālam

His throne which is unshaken forever

manbaru manbaru ba'esāt kebub māye tafara šarḥu šēma

His throne, his throne surrounded by fire and he put water as the roof of his  
 palace

manbaru šenu'e manbaru za'esāt wašaltāna qālu ta'agāsi gerum

His throne is strong, his throne is of fire, and the power of his word is patient and  
 wonderful

♩ = 120

qedduṣe qe-dduṣe-se-me-ka an-ta wa-yem-lā'e seb-ḥa-ti-ka sa-mā-yāt

qe-dduṣe qe-dduṣ wa-ḥa-yāl seme-ka an-ta wa-yem-lā'e seb-ḥa-ti-ka

qe-ddu-se qe-dduṣ se-ḥa-ka wa-man-ker ba-ša-da-ge wa-yem-lā'e

qe-ddu-se wa-tā-tā-tā wa-mān qe-ddu se wa-yem-lā'e seb-ḥa-ti-ka

qe-ddu-se ha-wa-fu-ho-mu za-i-yā-ra-mmu wa-ba-le-bo-mu za-ye-na-bu wa-mān

qe-ddu-se wa-yem-lā'e

Example E: *kalḥu kwellu malā'ekt* (All the angels cried), *berhān saraqā* morning (Complete)

kalḥu kwellu malā'ekte wayebļu qedduse 'egzi'abhēre šābā'ot

All the angels cried and said, holy Lord of Hosts

kalḥu kwellu malā'ekte bakāl'e sumāye qedduse 'egzi'abhēre šābā'ot

All the angels in the second heaven cried, holy Lord of Hosts

kalḥu kwellu malā'ekte bakāl'e samāy 'ekut 'egzi'abhēr 'ekute ba'akwatētū

All the angels in the second heaven cried, the Lord is praised, praised, in his praise

kalḥu kwellu malā'ekte bašāles samāy gerume 'egzi'abhēre bagermā

All the angels in the third heaven cried, wonderful is the Lord in the splendor of his praise

kalḥu kwellu malā''ekte barāb'e samāye masta'ageš 'egzi'abhēr zabotu ḥāyel

All the angels in the fourth heaven cried, the Lord is patient, who has power

kalḥu kwellu malā'ekte baḥāmse samāy qeddus qedduse 'egzi'abhēre waḥeyāwe 'adonāye

All the angels in the fifth heaven cried out, holy, holy is the Lord and living, Adonay

kalḥu kwellu malā'ekte basādes samāy manbareka 'esāt kelule hāllēluyā

All the angels in the sixth heaven cried out, your throne is crowned by fire, halleluya

kalḥu kwellu malā'ekta 'areyām basāb'e samāye ba'ahadu qāle nesēbhaka wanā'akwetaka

All the angels of the firmament in the seventh heaven cried out in one voice, We praise you and we extoll you

'anta tāḥayu kwellu zanafse 'amāne laka yesegedu kwellu malā'ekta samāyāt

You make everything live, truly all the angels of heaven bow to you

*J: 72 5*

ka- - - le- ḥu kwe- lu ma- lā- - - ek- te

wa- - - yeb- lu qe- ddu- - se 'eg-

zi- b- - be- ḥē- - - re sa- ba- rat

Example F: *yetbārak* II, (Blessed ... who performed), *berhān saraqā* morning (short version). Notations #1,2,3

yetbārak 'egzi'abhēr 'amlākēna 'amlāka 'esrā'ēl  
 Blessed be the Lord our God, God of Israel  
 zagabra 'abiyye wamankera madmema bāhetitu qeddus  
 Who performed great miracles and wonders, he alone is holy  
 wayetbārak wayetqaddas 'esma 'abiyye sebhatihu la'egzi'abhēr qeddus hāyāl  
 waburuke la'ālam 'ālam  
 Let him be blessed and sanctified because the praise of the Lord is great, holy,  
 powerful, and blessed forever

*yetbārak* II (Blessed ... who performed), *berhān saraqā* morning (long version).  
 Notation #4

yetbārak 'egzi'abhēr 'amlākēna 'amlāka 'esrā'ēl  
 Blessed be the Lord our God, God of Israel  
 zagabra 'abiyye wamankera madmema bāhetitu qeddus  
 Who performed great miracles and wonders, he alone is holy  
 wayetbārak wayetqaddas wayetlē'al wayet'aman wayet'akwat wayesēbah 'adonāy  
 And blessed be the Lord, and sanctified, and elevated, and trusted, and honored,  
 and extolled, Adonay  
 'esma 'abiyye sebhatihu la'egzi'abhēr qeddus hāyāl waburuk  
 Because the glory of the Lord is great, holy, powerful, and blessed  
 la'ālam wala'ālama 'ālam la'ālam layekun  
 Forever, and ever and evermore, let it be forever  
 wayemlā'e sebhatihu la'egzi'abhēr  
 And let the praise of the Lord be full

#1  
 za-ga-bra 'a-bi-ya wa-man-ka-ra mad-mem ba-heti-tu qe-ddu-  
 se wa-yet-bā-ra-ke wa-yet-qaddase... (continued)

#2  
 bu-ruk yet-bā - - - rak eg-zib-her 'am-la-ka 'am-la-ka 'es-ra-ēl  
 (continued)

#3  
 za-ga-bra 'a-bi-ya wa-man-ka-ra mad-mem ba-heti-tu qed-rus...  
 bu-ruk yet-bā - rak eg-zib- her re 'am-la-ke-na 'am-la-ka 'es-ra-ēl



za-qa-bro 'a-bi-ya wa-man-ka-ra mad-mem ha-he-ti-tu qed-dus... (continued)

wa-yet-bā-ra- - ke wa-yet-qa-d-das wa-yet-le-tal wa-yet-'a-man

wa-yet-'a-kuat wa-se-bāh 'a-do-nāy 'es-ma 'a-bi-ya seb-ḥa-ti-hu la-eg-zi-'ab-ḥer

qe-d-das bā-yāl wa-bu-ru-ke (continued)

Example G: *yetbārak* III (Canticle of the Three Youths in the fire, Daniel 3), *sanbat* morning

yetbārak 'egzi'abhēr 'amlāka 'abawina 'anta sebbuḥni we'etu wale'elni we'etu la'ālam  
Blessed be the Lord, you are the God of Israel, God of our fathers. he is to be  
praised and exalted forever

wayetbārak wayetqaddas wayetlē'al wayet'aman wayet'akwat wayesēbah 'adonāy  
And he is blessed, and sanctified, and elevated, and trusted, and honored,  
and extolled, Adonay

'esma 'abiyye sebḥatihu la'egzi'abhēr qed-dus ḥāyāl waburuke  
Because the glory of the holy, powerful, and blessed Lord is great  
sebbuḥni we'etu wale'elni we'etu la'ālam

He is to be praised and exalted forever

buruk 'anta 'egzi'o baṣerḥa qeddesāta sebḥatika sebḥatihu la'amlāka samāye  
wamedr

Blessed are you in the Temple of the holiness of your glory, the glory  
to the God of heaven and earth

'anta 'adonāy sebbuḥ waburuka sebbuḥni 'anta wale'ul 'anta la'ālam

You, Adonay, are glorified and blessed, you are to be praised and exalted forever

buruk 'anta 'egzi'o zaterē'i qalāyāta nabiraka lā'ela kirubēl sebḥeni we'etu wale'elni  
we'etu la'ālam

Blessed are you, Lord, who sees the depths sitting upon cherubim, he is to  
be praised and exalted forever

buruk 'anta badiba manbara sebḥata mangelteka [? entire phrase unintelligible]

You are blessed upon the throne of the glory of your kingdom ?

sebbuḥni we'etu wale'elni we'etu la'ālam

He is to be praised and exalted forever

buruk 'anta 'egzi'o bamale'elta samāyāt [? unintelligible phrase] 'amlāka 'abawina

'amlāka 'abreḥām 'amlāka yeshāq 'amlāka yā'eqob 'amlāka musē wa'aron

Blessed are you Lord, above the heaven ? God of our fathers, God of

Abraham, God of Isaac, God of Jacob, God of Moses and Aaron

'eśrā'ēle qeduseka [?] unintelligible phrase] sebbuḥni we'etu wale'elni we'etu la'ālam  
 your holy Israel ? he is to be praised and exalted forever  
 'anānyā wa'azāryā wamiśā'ēle  
 Ananiah, and Azariah, and Mishael  
 yebārrkewwo 'esma 'ālam [?] egzi'abhēr [?] hāllēluyā [?] 'egzi'abhēr  
 They bless him forever [?] the Lord [?] halleluya [?] the Lord  
 la'amlāka ḥāyālan neḡuśa sebhāt neḡuśena sebbuḥni we'etu basalāmekā[?]  
 wabamaheretu [?]  
 The God of the powerful, king of praise, our king, he is to be praised in your  
 peace [?] and in your mercy [?]

*J=126 S*

yet-bā- - - - - rak eg-zi-tib-her 'am-lak 'eś-rā-ēl  
 'am-lak-ni ba-wi-nan-ta seb-e- ḥe-ni we'e-tu wa-le-se-ni  
 we-e-tu la-ō-lam wa-yet-bā-rak wa-yet-qā-ddeś wa-yet-le-'al  
 wa-yet-bā-man wa-yet-bā-kwet wa-ye-ṣe-bāh to-do-nāy 'es-mā a-bi-ya  
 seb-ḥa-ti-hu la-eg-zib-ḥēr qe-dus ḥā-yāl wa-bū-ru-ke seb-e-  
 [continued]  
 - ḥe-ni we-e-tu wa-le-e-le-ni we-e-tu la-ō-lam...

Example H: *yetbā'arak II* (Blessed ... who performed), Falasha Monastic Office

yetbā'arak 'egzi'abhēr 'amlāka 'eśrā'ēl 'amlāka 'abawina  
 Blessed be the Lord, God of Israel, God of our fathers  
 'amlāka 'abrehām 'amlāka yeshāq 'amlāka yā'eqob 'amlāka musē wa'aron 'amlāka  
 dāwit wasalomon  
 God of Abraham, God of Isaac, God of Jacob, God of Moses and Aaron, God  
 of David and Solomon  
 baśark zanagh bakwellu gizē sebhāt la'egzi'abhēr  
 At sunset, at dawn, at all times praise the Lord  
 zagabra 'abiyye wamankera madmema  
 Who performed great miracles and wonders

wayetbārak 'egzi'abhēr wayetqaddas wayetlē'al wayet'aman wayet'akwat wayesēbah  
'adonāy

And blessed be the Lord, and sanctified, and elevated, and trusted, and honored,  
and extolled, Adonay

'esma 'abiyye sebḥatihu la'egzi'abhēr qeddus ḥāyāl waburuk la'ālam wala'ālama  
'ālam la'ālam layekun

Because the glory of the Lord is great, holy, powerful and blessed, forever, and  
ever and evermore, let it be forever

wayemlā'e sebḥatihu la'egzi'abhēr

And let the praise of the Lord be full

sebḥata ṣagāhu sebḥata ma'azahu sebḥata barakatu

Praise of his grace, praise of his fragrance, praise of his blessing

genayu zēna ṣedequ tefeṣeḥetu wameḥeratu

Submit to the news of his righteousness, his joy and his mercy

wayemlā'e sebḥatika samāy wamedra

Let your glory fill the heaven and earth

bawesta kwellu 'ālam fetrate layekun 'amān sebḥatihu la'egzi' abhēr yenager 'afeya

In all the world and creation let it be truly the praise of the Lord, my mouth tells

'albo zayemaselaka 'egzi'o 'emmena 'amālekt 'adonāy

There is no one like you, Lord, among the Gods, Adonay

wa'albo zakama megabārika

And there is no work like yours

kwelomu 'aḥezāb 'ella gabaraka yemṣe'u wayesegedu qedemēka wayessēbbaḥu  
lasemeka

Let all the peoples whom you created come and bow before you and they will  
praise your name

'esma 'abiyye 'anta'egzi'abhēr zategaber mankera A [?]

Because you are great Lord, who performed miracles *Agau* [?]

*J=120*

yet-bā-rak 'eg-zi-'ab-hēr 'am-la-ka 'eš-ra-el 'am-lā-ka 'a-ba-wi-ra  
am-lā-ka ab-re-hām 'am-lā-ka yes-haq 'am-lā-ka yā-'e-qob 'am-lā-ka mu-sē wa-'a-ran  
'am-lā-ka dā-wit wa-sa-lo-mon ba-ṣar-ke za-nag-he ba-kwe-llu qī-zē  
sebḥat la-'eg-zi-'ab-hēr za-qa-bra 'a-bi-ya wa-man-ke-ra  
me-de-me-ma wa-yet-bā-rak 'eg-zi-'ab-hēr wa-yet-qa-das

wa-yet-ī-ʾal wa-yet-ʾa-man wa-yet-ʾa-kwoʾ wa-ye-sē-bah ʾa-do-nāy  
 ʾes-ma ʾa-bi-ya seb-ḥa-ti-hu laḡ-zib-ḥēr qe-dḏus ḥā-yāl wa-bu-ruk  
 la-ʾā-la-me wa-la-ʾā-la-ma ʾā-lam la-ʾā-lam la-ye-kun

APPENDIX 2: NOTE ON IDELSOHN'S RECORDING OF GETE JEREMIAH (Vienna Phonogramm-Archiv, no. 1175)<sup>46</sup>

As part of his untiring efforts to catalogue and preserve the music of different Jewish communities, A. Z. Idelsohn took advantage of a rare opportunity to record Falasha music in Jerusalem during September, 1911. Idelsohn names his informant as Jirmeja Gete, who left Ethiopia in 1906, lived in Florence, Italy until 1909, and then moved to Jerusalem. Jirmeja Gete was twenty-eight years old in 1911 and listed his occupation as a seminary student.

Additional information enables us better to evaluate this performance. Jirmeja Gete was one of two young Falashas who returned with Jacques Faitlovitch to Europe after his first visit to Ethiopia during 1904-1905.<sup>47</sup> Faitlovitch agreed to take young Jirmeja and another Falasha, Taamrat Emmanuel, to Europe because of his distress concerning activity of Christian missionaries seeking to convert the Falashas. Faitlovitch wrote:

Ces mêmes Falachas m'ont confié un jeune homme nommé Ghétié Jérémie, de Fendja, localité située à quelques heures de Gondar. Son père désire le voir perfectionner son instruction dans la religion juive et s'initier aux sciences européennes; c'est pourquoi il l'a autorisé à m'accompagner en Europe (Faitlovitch 1905:17).

These two young men were not the first Falashas to visit Europe and Palestine. Eli of Ferrara met a Falasha in Jerusalem in 1438 (Hess 1969a:99), and Joseph Halévy took a Falasha to France with him after his Ethiopian journey of 1868-1869.<sup>48</sup>

46 The information on this recording is based on Idelsohn's manuscript documentation preserved at the Phonogramm-Archiv in Vienna (photostatic copy at the JNUL, Music Department, JMB 2239). See also Exner 1922:55, no. 1175.

47 Idelsohn's notes say that Jirmeja Gete left Ethiopia in 1906, while Faitlovitch's writings indicate 1905. Faitlovitch 1905:17.

48 Halévy 1877: 71-75. Halévy took a young Falasha with him to France for an "education in Hebrew language and science." One of my elderly informants was a nephew of this young man, and knew the story of his departure with Halévy. Halévy's charge later died in Egypt; I am unsure of the fate of Jirmeja Gete.

Idelsohn recorded a single musical example by the young man. Gete Jeremiah,<sup>49</sup> evidently not a member of the Falasha clergy, performed three textually incomplete verses of the *'egzi'o sarāḥku*, a prayer appealing for God's attention to entreaties.<sup>50</sup> Although Idelsohn's notes identify the excerpt as a Sabbath prayer, the *'egzi'o sarāḥku* is found in many Falasha rituals, performed both at dawn and at the conclusion of the daytime liturgy. This prayer is also part of the Falasha monastic Office.<sup>51</sup>

In addition to the musical example, Gete Jeremiah spoke two sentences in Ge'ez:

qeddus qeddus qeddus 'egzi'abhēr ṣabā'ot male'ā kwellu meder sebḥatika  
[Holy, holy, holy, Lord of Hosts, full is the whole earth of his glory.]

seme'ā 'esrā'el 'egzi'abhēr 'amlākena 'egzi'abhēr 'aḥadu we'etu  
[Hear oh Israel, the Lord our God, the Lord is one.]

The absence of melodic settings, as well as the direct correspondence to Hebrew models, indicate that these are not excerpts from the Falasha liturgy. Both are probably translations of Hebrew liturgical texts Gete Jeremiah acquired during his years of Jewish studies.

Idelsohn was not able to gather enough data to include Falasha musical examples in his *Thesaurus of Hebrew Oriental Melodies* (1914). However, his brief exposure to Falasha music led him to comment about the relationship of Falasha and Yemenite music in the introduction to Volume I of the *Thesaurus*. After mentioning similarity in appearance between Ethiopians and Yemenites, he concludes:

Auch der Gesang der sogenannten Felaschas in Abessinien, welch sich Juden nennen, ist dem jemenischen Gesange in keiner Beziehung ähnlich . . . Hierin unterscheiden sich die jemenischen Juden von den Felaschas in Abessinien, welche, obwohl sie einem jüdischen Zentrum, wie dem in Ägypten, ziemlich nahe waren, doch nie Mittel und Wege ergriffen, mit letzteren in Berührung zu kommen und so ihr jüdisches Bewusstsein neu zu beleben (Idelsohn 1914: I, 1, notes 1 & 6.)

Although he did not have materials to carry out comparative studies in this area, A. Z. Idelsohn was among the first to suggest approaching the Falasha liturgical and musical tradition from a comparative perspective.

49 The English version of his name is Gete Jeremiah, although it is difficult to ascertain the proper order of the names given the discrepancy between Faitlovitch and Idelsohn.

50 The Falasha liturgical tradition is transmitted solely by the Falasha clergy. Other members of the community do not learn Ge'ez and do not participate in performance of the liturgy. Gete Jeremiah's incomplete rendition of the *'egzi'o sarāḥku* is probably attributable to his unfamiliarity with the traditional Falasha liturgy. However, he evidently knew enough Ge'ez to translate brief portions.

51 Luzzatto 1853:526, and Geta Asras, 21 November 1973.

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