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[Ancient History of Ethiopian Orthodox
Tewahedo Church]

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History of Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahedo Church (EOTC) I

===== =====**The Pre-Christian Religious Situation of Ethiopia** **(Religion before the Law and Polytheism)**

Many scholars in our Church teach that, there are three stages of religious developments in the history of Ethiopia. These are:-Religion before the Law (ሕገ ልቡና), Religion of the Law (ሕገ ኦሪት) and Christianity (ሕገ ወንጌል). On the other hand there is a tradition which tells us about a polytheistic practices. So, this discussion aims at reconciliation between the two ways of narrating the ancient History of Ethiopia.

Readings of the week

ክብረ ነገሥት (ፆህና ቀጣዮቹ የትምህርት ክፍል ጊዜያት የተመሠረተበት ስለኾነ በተቻለ መጠን መጽሐፉን ደጋግሞ ማንበብና በመጽሐፉ ብሎም በርእዮት ዓለሙ ዙሪያ የተሠሩ የተለያዩ የጥናት ውጤቶችን ማንበብ ጠቃሚ ነው።)

መ/ር ደሴ ቀለብ፣ ታሪክ ነገሥት፣ 2007፣ (79 እስከ 91 ገጽ)

EOTC, The Church of Ethiopia: A Panorama of History and Spiritual Life, 1970.

Chapter One

The pre-Christian history of Ethiopia

Polytheism

As stated by Sergew Hable Sellassie, the Sabaeen migrants who crossed the red sea in the first millennium B.C. and settled in Ethiopia brought with them their own religions. They were polytheists who worship different gods of heaven, the earth and the sea.¹ In south Arabia, religion entered into every aspect of life. Because of the concept that divine protection was necessary for the success of every being and act, not only tribes and families but also states and agricultural and commercial groups all had their tutelary deities. This concept was assimilated and practiced by ancient Ethiopians.

¹ The church of Ethiopia, 1970, 1.

The pantheon of south Arabia consisted of many gods. One of the main gods was Astaror Astater, (Astaror Astarte- in the male god of heaven.² These gods match with Aphrodite and Venus of Greek and roman world, Sin the moon god, and Shams the sun god and were widely worshiped in Ethiopia. In the well- known Greek inscription, left at Adulis by an anonymous Ethiopian emperor, mention is made of Zeus, Poseidon and Ares. On the reverse of the monument appear engravings of another Greek god, Hermes and Heracles. Ares was in fact the personal god of the Ethiopian emperors of the pre-Christian era.³

Another important god for the Arabia was Ilmouqah or Almouqah, the god of moon or heaven. It is believed that at an early stage of Ethiopian history, the worship of the serpent was widespread and the Ethiopians offered sacrifices to it. Archeological evidences witness that on one of the Stelae at Aksum an engraving of a serpent is still visible today. This cult was introduced directly to Ethiopia from Persia. The description in *Avesta*, the sacred book of Persia, concerning the worship of the serpent, is identical with the tradition found in Ethiopia. (The Church of Ethiopia, 1970) Later, Ethiopic names evolved as Mahrem for Ares, Baher to Poseidon, and Semay to the Sabaeen god Almouqah. In Yeha, a temple dedicated to Almouqah was found and it is believed that it was erected before the fifth century. Also at Hawlti-Melazo, near Aksum, a similar temple was found but, it is now in ruins. A temple dedicated to Ares found at Aksum, and to the god Sin at Kaskasse, about eight kilometers north-east of Matara. Emperor Ezana erected statues in gold, silver and bronze to the god of Ares after his victory over the Bejjas.

In connection with the above, Lule Melaku (Asst. Pro.) said that there is a legend of a serpent (dragon) believed to be an Ethiopian king and god. As stated by him, *he was a python (dragon) and his mother a certain woman. When his parents died he became dangerous to the inhabitants. But fortunately through his sister, they made an agreement with him to offer many goats, sheep, milk, girls, etc. for food at regular interval. And this agreement continued for forty years. Then a warrior called "Gebegabo"*

² Sergew, 1972, 31.

³ Ibid.

(Angabo) arose and by means of poisoning his food (the mutton of a sheep) killed Arwe, and he himself became king after he had married the sister of Arwe.⁴

The above story is unacceptable for some scholars of EOTC since they classify the religious history of Ethiopia in to three major phases: -

- Religion before the law (ሕግ ልቡና)
- Religion by the law (Judaism)
- Christianity

It is also mentioned by Asst. Pro. Lule Melaku as there were people worshipping nature such as the sun, moon, trees, rivers, dragons, and the like. For him, the practice is quite similar to those Israelites, who trespassed the law of Moses and worshipped other gods.⁵ To conclude, as all historians agree the practices were results of contact with Middle Eastern countries through commercial channels and it is normal among human beings, even among Israelites.

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Monotheism in Ethiopia

(The introduction of Judaism to Ethiopia)

This session aims at exploring the early existence of Old Testament Tradition since 1000 BC in Ethiopia. The reason is, there are some people who think that practices were later imitation when Christianity was introduced to the people of Ethiopia. Based on the early signs that found in different parts of Ethiopia and the cultural setting in the church and the country, we argue for the existence of Old Testament Tradition in Ethiopia since early pre-Christianity period.

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History of Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahedo Church, 2008, 15.

⁵ Lule Melaku, History of EOTC, 2008, 15.

Readings of the fourth Week

- ክብረ ነገሥት፣ ግእዝና አማርኛ፣የኢትዮጵያ ቋንቋዎች ዋናትና ምርምር ማእከል፣አዲስ አበባ ዩኒቨርሲቲ (ተርጓሚ ሥርዓው ገለፀ)
- **Lule Melaku, History of Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahedo Church, 2008, pp. 16-26.**
- **Jean Doresse, Ethiopia, 1959, pp. 13-32.**
- **Edward Ullendorff, Ethiopia and the Bible, 1967, pp. 1-30.**

According to the “Kebra Nagast”, Ethiopia had early relations with Israel. The relation began through commerce and then developed into the political sphere. This relationship was at a pick in the time of King Solomon and Queen of Sheba. The Holy Bible made the story beyond doubt saying: -

“When Queen of Sheba heard about Solomon, she came to challenge him with difficult question. ...she visited Solomon and discussed with him everything that was on her mind. ...” (1Kings 10; 2Chronicles 9)

“The Queen of the south will rise up at the judgment with this generation and condemn it, because she came from the ends of the earth to hear the Wisdom of Solomon ...” (Matt. 12:42)

The story is also available in the Jewish sources but it was interpreted in a quite different way.⁶ The main Ethiopian source for the story of the Queen of Sheba is the *kibre-Negest* (Glory of the kings). It says,

“And there was a certain wise man, the leader of a merchant’s caravan, whose name was Tamrin, and he used to load five hundred and twenty camels, and he possessed about three and seventy ships.

Now, at that time king Solomon wished to build the House of God, and he sent out messages among all the merchants in the east and in the west, and in the north and south, bidding the merchants come and take gold and silver from him, so that he might take from them whatsoever was necessary for the work. And certain men reported to him concerning this rich Ethiopian merchant, and Solomon sent to him a message and told him

⁶ Sergew Hable Sellassie, *Ancient and Medieval Ethiopian History*, 1972, pp 34-44.

to bring whatsoever he wished from the country of Arabia, red gold and black wood that could not be eaten by worms and sapphires (deep blue jewel). And that merchant whose name was Tamrin, the merchant of the queen of Ethiopia, went to Solomon the king; and Solomon took whatsoever he wished for in great abundance. Now, that merchant was a man of great understanding, and he saw and comprehended the Wisdom of Solomon.”⁷

According to this story, it is Tamrin who told about the Wisdom of Solomon, to the Queen of Sheba and initiated her to go to King Solomon. To wrap up the whole story, Queen of Sheba returned to Ethiopia after six months' stay in Jerusalem and bore him a son, whom she named Menilek. When the son grew up he visited his father in Jerusalem, and came home accompanied by many Israelites, the sons of the Levites, and brought with him the arc of the covenant. From then on, Judaism was practiced in Ethiopia. Some historians say that the Falashas of the northern Ethiopia, who practice a form of Judaism to this day, are descendants of the Israelites.⁸

There are also some thoughts about the practice of Judaism in Ethiopia even before the visit of Queen of Sheba.

- The Queen's discussion with king Solomon is another point of departure.
- Migration of small groups of Jews from South Arabia to the Ethiopian highlands; the exposure to Jewish traditions, communication through trade routes, etc. were considerable.

But, conventionally the history of Judaism in Ethiopia starts with the visit of Queen of Sheba.⁹

" Ethiopia's inherited ideology was a Zionist one, embodied in a book called the KebraNegast" "Glory of the Kings" (14)

" ... The Kebra Negest received its definitive form in the 14th century although it may have been written as early as the 6th the Solomonic ideology derived from it had five hundred years of practical expression.

⁷ Wallis Budge, *the queen of Sheba*, pp17-18.

⁸ EOTC, *The church of Ethiopia: A Panorama of History and Spiritual Life*, 1970, 3.

⁹ Donald Crummy, *Neo-Solomonic Ideology*, 1988.

These laps of time produced another stock of precedents and examples upon which the founders of the modern Ethiopian state could draw." (15)

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- **Signs for the early practices of Judaism in Ethiopia**

This discussion gives some evidences for the previous stand providing signs for the Judaistic culture in the pre-Christian history of Ethiopia.

Readings of the Week

Lule Melaku, History of Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahedo Church, 2008, pp. 27-41.

Stuart Munro Hay, The Quest For the Ark of the Covenant, 2005, pp. 27-49.

Bernard Leeman, The Ark of the Covenant: Evidence Supporting the Ethiopian Traditions, 2010. (www.queen-of-sheba-university.org)

<https://youtu.be/mTSDoevgQ8I> (Library of Congress, The Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahedo Church, By Ephraim Isaak, Prof.)

The Ark of the Covenant

As we have seen above Menelik I brought with him the Arc of the covenant including first born of Israelites, the Sons of the Levites to assist him in every aspects of the Ethiopian Kingdom.

"... Azarias was told by the Archangel Michael in a dream that he should take the Arc of the Covenant to Ethiopia. Thus, by the will of God they took the original with them..."¹⁰

Discuss the "Sign and the seal, by Graham Hancock" (ታሰተ ጽዮንን ፍለጋ)

- What about the replicas?

¹⁰ Asst. Lule, History of EOTC, 2008, 23.

- No country is claiming to have the Ark in our time.
- Its theological, cultural, and political influence in the history of the country.

● **Structures of Church Buildings**

The most common structure /shape/of Church building in Ethiopia is the circular one. Later, square (basilica) or cross-shaped churches like Egziabher-Ab at Amba Gishen, Bete Girogis of Lalibela etc. became widely known.

The internal department of the Church as Qine Mahlet, Kidist/Qidst and Mekdes seen to follow the pattern of the three fold of the temple in Jerusalem.¹¹

● **The Observance of the Sabbath**

Observing the Seventh day/Sabbath/ is typically a Jewish Tradition. Not only in the pre-Christian era of Ethiopia but also in the Middle of 15th Century, even today the issue is among the Major concerns of some Christians. Some justifications like "Abiy and Neus Sanbet" are also known to all.¹²

• **Circumcision**

According to some Scholars of EOTC, also in the official teaching of the Church, Circumcision was a type-replaced by the NT baptism. But, still there are some people who consider it as a religious duty of the Church members.

◆ **The Dietary Laws**

- See purity and Danger, Mary Douglas

The laws, which are recorded in the Leviticus concerning the issue of foods to be eaten or not, were exactly copied and practiced in pre-Christian Ethiopia, even today.

¹¹ Ibid, 28-34)

¹² Lule Melaku, History of EOTC, 2008, P. 37.

- **Ceremonial vestments and Musical Instruments**

- o Edward Ullendorff has many things to say concerning the above issues. (Ethiopia and the Bible)
- o Sergew preferred to say that the coming of the Nine Saints inaugurated a new era in the Liturgical life of the Ethiopian Church. Yared was a disciple of the Nine Saints, probably of Aragawi... (The Church of Ethiopia, PP 8-9)

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This session brings many and different arguments into discussion. Starting from the time , when Christianity was introduced to Ethiopia, by whom, and Ezana's so called conversion need curious discussion. As we have discussed in previous sessions, Ethiopias religious background before christianity, doesn't go with people who say Ezana became Monotheist in the 4th Century. Further our Tradition tells us that Ezana's conversion must be from Judaism to Christianity. A visible connection can be observed between this and the coming two sessions. So, try to read more and follow the method how to construct an EOTC historical Tradition.

Readings for the Sixth Week

- **Lule Melaku, History of Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahedo Church, 2008, pp. 42-72.**
- **Sergew Hable Sellasie, Ancient and Medieval Ethiopian History to 1270, 1972, pp. 97-113.**

Sergew Hable Sellasie, The Establishment of Ethiopian Church, The Expansion and Consolidation of Christianity, (In "The Church of Ethiopia: A Panorama of History and Spiritual Life" 1970, pp. 1-10.

Chapter II

History of Christianity in Ethiopia

Introduction of Christianity

Christianity was implanted in Ethiopia as early as the first century (34 A.D), with the conversion of the Ethiopian Eunuch by Phillip the Apostle. (Acts 8)

He was a treasurer of Queen Candace of Ethiopia, who went to Jerusalem to worship the God of Israel.

"From beyond the rivers of Ethiopia, those who pray to me will bring me tribute." Zephaniah 3:10

According to the Acts of the Apostles (8:26-40), the Ethiopian Eunuch was **reading the Old Testament**, the prophecy of Isaiah, and it shows us the familiarity of Ethiopians to scriptures. But, people like Shauf, Scott (2009 "Locating the eunuch: characterization and narrative context in Acts 8:26) believe that the Eunuch is Gentile in the story, by both his ethnic and possibly physical description.

The man, locally known as "Bacos" on his way **back to his country**, Met with Philip and was baptized, then returned home in 34 AD for many EOTC believers this is the crucial and significant period for the birth and establishment of Christianity.

Ethiopian Traditional sources claim that Bacos evangelized his people and brought the good tiding of Christianity to Ethiopia. To support this view point, Eusebius, the Church historian (4th C.) singles out Candace's treasurer as the first gentile convert to Christianity. But his consideration of the Eunuch as gentile contradicts with the Ethiopian background of Christianity.

There is also another story about the introduction of Christianity to Ethiopia. It is said that St. Matthew preached Gospel in Ethiopia and became a martyr. According to Ruffinus, when the Apostles drew lots to preach the Gospel to the pagans, Matthias drew Persia and Matthew Ethiopia.

It is also possible to have an idea that the good news arrived prior to Bacos by one of the three wise men who traveled from Ethiopia to present a gift for the child Christ. Some stories tell us that the person was an

Ethiopian king Bazen.¹³ In his homily on Pentecost, St. John Chrysostom mentioned that the Ethiopians were present in the holy city on the day of Pentecost. It seems that St. Luke did not mention them only because they were few in number. Those few people might have introduced Christianity is the very crucial point.

Moreover, from the early period, Ethiopian pilgrims went annually to Jerusalem where there is an Ethiopian Monastery built a long time ago on the land which was presented by king Solomon to the Queen of Sheba- "Deir Sultan", means a fief of a ruler. (An article by Fr. Jose Thomas)

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This discussion is about the advancement of christianity or its second stage of development in Ethiopia. For many outsiders, this phase is the first in evangelization since they believe that Abba Selama is the first one to introduce Christianity to Ethiopia. But, taking the previous discussions into consideration we say that it is a second evangelization, next to Bacos'

Readings

- ገድለ አባ ሰላማንክሣቱ ብርሃን
- ብፁዕ አቡነ ገርገርዮስ (ሊቀ ጳጳስ) የኢትዮጵያ ኦርቶዶክስ ተዋሕዶ ቤተ ክርስቲያን ታሪክ፣ 1991፣ገጽ 13 እስከ 25።
- Taddesse Tamrat, Church and State in Ethiopia, 1972, pp. 21-30.

Consolidation of Christianity: St. Frumentius (Abba Selama) (330 A.D.)

As we have seen above, Christianity had been known in Ethiopia since a much earlier time before the conversion of Ezana. The same is true with Frumentius. He is not the first Evangelist to introduce Christianity to the people of Ethiopia.

¹³ Lule Melaku, History of EOTC, 2008, 42.

The story of the so called conversion of the Axumites has come down to us in the work of the contemporary Church historian, Rufinus (d. 410 A.D.)

Meropius, a philosopher from Tyre, set out to visit India accompanied by two young relatives, Frumentius and Aedesius. In the course of their Journey they ran short of provisions and put in at a port on the African coast (Adulis). The local inhabitants were hostile to Roman citizens, as they had recently broken of their alliance with Rome. For this reason they Masacred Meropius and all aboard the ship, sparing only the two boys, who were taken to the king. They soon gained the king's interest and confidence. The younger Aedesius became the king's cup-bearer and the elder Frumentius, who showed signs of wisdom and maturity became the king's treasurer and secretary.

Then the king was about to die and had given the two boys a chance to return to their country, but the Queen (the Mother of an infant boy) begged them to stay with her helping her administration. Both Frumentius and Aedesius agreed and stayed to carry out the task faithfully.

Frumentius started his mission with some Christians among the Roman merchants settled at Aksum and encouraged them to establish meeting places for prayer.

It was a way to spread Christianity, to convert the indigenous people and finally the young king himself became a convert, the story says. * According to the EOTC's Tradition this conversion was from judaism/Old Testament religious position to Christianity.

The story continues, when the young king was old enough to rule the country alone, Frumentius and Aedesius asked him a permission to leave Aksum. Aedesius returned home to Tyre, but Frumentius went to Alexandria and laid the whole affair before the newly appointed patriarch, Athanasius, begging him to appoint a bishop for Ethiopia. But Athanasius consecrated Frumentius himself to be the first bishop of Aksum.

Although Rufinus does not specify the name of the country of which Frumentius went, other sources are more specific in this respect. For

instance a letter from the Emperor Constantius, written in 365 A.D. to his "precious brother", Aezana and Saezana, rulers of Aksum, concerns the Bishop Frumentius.

Furthermore, the inscriptions and coins of the Emperor Ezana testify to his adoption of Christianity. In his early inscriptions, he styles himself "Son of unconquered Mahrem" But, Inscriptions after his victory over Nubia show new terminologies "the Lord of heaven and earth" and describes how he destroyed the images in their temples, affirming his dissociation from paganism.

A recently discovered Greek inscription belonging to Ezana leaves no doubt on this matter. "... It begins: - In the faith of God and the power of the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost".¹⁴ According to Hansberry, by 331 A.D. Frumentius returned to Ethiopia, and was welcomed with open arms of the rulers, who were not Christians at the time. Ten years later, through the support of the king, the majority of the Royal family /kingdom/ was converted and Christianity was declared the official state religion.¹⁵

The introduction of Christianity and its development to "State Religion" marked a turning point in Ethiopian history. Christianity does not constitute a purely Religious phenomenon in the country, but plays an Integral role in all aspects of national life. The Church is not only a religious Institution, but has for many centuries been the repository of the cultural, political and social life of the people.

The true feelings of the people who first received Christianity seem to have been expressed in the names they bestowed upon Frumentius, which are Abba Selama, Kассate Berhan, and Father of peace and Revealer of Light".

¹⁴ The Church of Ethiopia, 1970, 5.

¹⁵ Hansberry, William Leo, pillars in Ethiopian history, Howard university press, 1974.

It is interesting to note that Ezana and Saezana baptized with names signifying illumination - Abreha (He illuminated) and Atsbeha (he brought the down). (Ibid)

According to the chronological lists of the Ethiopian bishops, Frumentius was succeeded by the bishop Minas. He was apparently of Egyptian origin. From this time onward began the peculiar Alexandrian jurisdiction over the Ethiopian church, which was to last for sixteen hundred years. Throughout this period Ethiopians were not considered to be eligible for consecration as bishops.

Minas left some literary works concerning his missionary activities, but the major contribution in the missionary field was that of the Nine Saints.

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This discussion is about the coming of the Nine Saints and their contributions to the EOTC. Their contributions were so immense and mainly expanded Christianity throughout all Ethiopia Either directly by their own evangelical activities or through their disciples. Most of the external historians used to say they came from Rome, but no one is from Rome but from the then Roman Empire. The usage Rome is sometimes deliberate and aimed at claiming the EOTC was an adherent of the two natures Christological tradition. When we found ሮም/Rome in our indigenous documents, it is none other than the Roman Empire, and Ethiopian Church never adhered the two natures traditions.

Readings of the Week

ገደለ አቡነ አረጋዊ

Sergew Hable Selasie, Ancient and Medieval Ethiopian History, 1972, 115-121.

Expansion of Christianity: The Coming of the Nine Saints

Third Evangelization

“ በፊት በኢትዮጵያዊው ጃንደረባ የተሰበከችልን፣ በኋላም በፍሬምናጦስ አባ ሰላማ ከሳቴ ብርሃንና በእነዚህ ዘጠኝ ቅዱሳን የጸናችልን ሃይማኖታችን ኦርቶዶክስ ተዋሕዶ ትባላለች።”¹⁶

This important quote from his grace, shows clearly the historical development of Christianity in Ethiopia from the Ethiopian Eunuch to the Nine Saints.

The Nine Saints were monks who came to Ethiopia in the early history of the Ethiopian church. That means they came to Axum about 480, and were well received by the emperor and people of the surrounding area. The Ethiopian ruler at that time was Al'ameda, son of Sa'aldobba, who was succeeded by Tazena, father of Kaleb. When Kaleb, the Ethiopian king, set out to campaign in Arabia in 527 to rescue the Christians there from the persecution of their Jewish ruler, he solicited the prayer of Abba Pantalewon, one of the Nine Saints.

It is known that the arrival of the Nine Saints in Ethiopia was related to the schism and disturbance in the universal church over the nature of divinity and humanity in Christ at and after the Council of Chalcedon in 451. The truth is that they are non-Chalcedonian monks who rushed to Ethiopia to protect the local church from the teaching of those who accepted the decision of Chalcedon. Even though some of the sources insist that these monks arrived at Ethiopia as a group via the monastery of Aba Pachomius in Egypt, it is reasonable that at least some of them came separately at different times.

The most outstanding figures among the Nine Saints were Ze-Michael (Aregawi), Pantelewon, Aftse, and Gerima or Isaac (Yeshaq) as their names indicate, they came from different parts of the Eastern Roman Empire, such as Constantinople and Syria. They were adherents of the same doctrine-Mia-physis. In Axum, (ቤተ ቀጢን) they studied the language and became familiar with the people and customs. After this preparation they set out in

¹⁶ ብፁዕ አቡነ ገርገርዮስ፣ የኢትዮጵያ ቤተ ክርስቲያን ታሪክ፣ **1991**፣ገ. **24**።

different directions to preach christianity and to introduce monastic institutions. Only two of them, Abba Liqanos and Abba Pentelewon, remained in Axum, the others went further East of the capital and founded hermitages in the old pagan centers.

* The Nine Saints, country of origin, Monastery founded by them, and days of commemoration.

Name	Country of origin	Monastery founded by himself	የዕለታትቸው ቀን (ክብሩ ለቦን ኅርኅርዮሲ. . . ገጽ 24
Abba Aregawi	Constantinople	Debre Damo	ጥቅምት 14
Abba Gerima	Constantinople	Debre Medera	ሰኔ 17
Abba Penetelewon	Constantinople	DebrePenteleon -Axum	ግንቦት 12
Abba Liqanos	Constantinople	Debre Qonatsil, Axum	ኅዳር 21
Abba Aftsie	Asia Minor	Debre Aftse, Yeha	ግንቦት 12
Abba Goba	Cilicia	Ger'alta	
Abba Alef	Caesarea	Debre Bihza	መጋቢት 11
Abba Yimata	Cosia	Ger'alata	ጥቅምት 23
Abba Tshehma	Antioch	Debre Tsedenia	ጥር 16

The Nine saints contributed much in eradicating cults and pagan shrines and founded many churches and monasteries. They also contributed greatly to the **development of the Ge'ez liturgy** and literature. The introduced new terms and vocabulary in to Ge'ez such as Haymanot, qasis, ta'ot, qurban, Tsom, Orit, Tselot, Mekdes etc.

Among their great contributions **Bible Translation** is so immense. Such commitment was started by Fremnatos like the book of psalms. Here, with the Nine Saints the very important thing is that they were familiar with both Greek and Syriac. It seems that each father translated one portion of the Bible that is why we see some considerable differences in style from one book to another in the Ethiopic version. The Ethiopic version is one of the earliest versions in the world. They also **translated a number of basic religious works in to Ge'ez - both doctrinal and literary content.**

Among these, Qerlos, (translation of dogmatic treatises of Cyril) Homilies of Church Fathers, the ascetic rules of St. Pachumis , the life of Saint Anthony by St. Athanasius, ...

Their influence is extended also to art and architecture. The ruins of basilicas found in the ancient cities of Axum, adulis and Hawlti may show a resemblance to Syriac churches. Example, the church of Aregawi at Debre Damo has some unique features.

Another contribution of the Nine Saints can be seen in producing Ethiopian Church scholars. Among this the most notable one is St. Yared, the disciple of Abba Aregawi.

Individual contribution of the Nine Saints

Aba Aragawi or Zamika'el

His names are Ge'ez, the first meaning "The Elder" and the second "of Michael," an indication that his native name has not been preserved. According to tradition, Aragawi was the leader of the group during the journey from Egypt to Ethiopia, a position that suits his name. The founding of the celebrated Dabra Damo is attributed to this saint. It was at this monastery that Iyasus Mo'a of Hayq Estifanos in Amhara and Abuna Takla

Haymanot of Dabra Libanos in Shewa were clothed with monastic habits at the hands of Yohanni, a spiritual descendant of Aragawi.

The saint was said to have used a long serpent to ascend the impregnable summit of Mount Damo, where he built his monastery. Today people use rope to reach it. It is also reported that the saint's mother, Edna, followed the group to Ethiopia and established there a nunnery for virgins. Aragawi is commemorated on Teqemt14.

Aba Pantalewon (Pantaleon).

Pantalewon is most remembered for the role of his prayers in the success of Kaleb's campaign in Arabia. Before leaving his African realm for the campaign, Kaleb visited the saint at his cell and received his blessing and encouragement to fight ZuNuas (or Finnehas, according to local tradition), the Jewish ruler of Arabia who had inflicted serious persecution on his Christian subjects.

Aba Pantalewon is also famous for the ascetic life he led. It is reported that the cell with which he is identified—he is sometimes known as Pantalewon of the Cell—was so narrow that he never slept or sat in it, even though he never left it after he entered it forty-five years before his death. His cell, which was north of Axum and was known first by the name of Dabra Asbo, later developed into a famous monastery carrying his name, Dabra Pantalewon. Pantalewon is commemorated on Teqemt6.

Abba Yeshaq (Isaac) or Abba Garima

Both names are non-Ethiopian, even though his hagiographer attempted to derive Garima from an Ethiopic word meaning wonderful. Yeshaq joined the group only after it had arrived in Ethiopia. It is reported that he left his parents' royal palace in response to an invitation by Pantalewon. When the group decided to leave their center at the king's palace in Axum, Yeshaq moved to Madara, not far from Adwa.

He was famed for performing many astounding miracles. A monastery bearing the name Abba Garima still exists today at another place in Tigre and is an important religious center. His feast is celebrated on 17 Sene.

Aba Aftse.

The *gadl* of this saint offers very little historical information about him, except that he made Yeha, an important archaeological site for pre-Christian Ethiopia, his center of activities. The name is clearly non-Ethiopian. The monk is believed to have ascended to heaven like Elijah. The feast of Afse is celebrated on 29 Genbot.

Abba Gubba

His *gadl* reportedly exists but has not been studied by scholars, nor is his name listed in an important fifteenth-century calendar. According to tradition, he founded his hermitage west of Madara, not far from the original hermitage of Abba Garima. The fact that neither of these two hermitages survived may indicate resentment and resistance to Christianity at the heart of Axumite paganism.

It is interesting to note that most of the places where these saints established their evangelical activities were centers of pagan worship. The feast of Gubba is celebrated with that of Aftse on Genbot 29. .

Abba Alef

His *gadl* repeats what has been written about the rest of his colleagues—that they came together to Ethiopia, settled temporarily in the palace, and dispersed to establish centers of religious activities. Like that of Abba Gubba, Abba Alef's name is not found listed with those of his colleagues in the fifteenth-century palace calendar of saints. However, the famous monastery Dabra Halle Luya is believed to have been founded by him. His name may be related to the name of the first letter in the alphabet. The feast of Alef is celebrated on 11th of Meggabit.

Abba Yem'ata

Some scholars, including Dillmann (1880, pp. 1-51), state that he is also called Mata. This could be confusion with another saint, Abba Matta', who flourished in Hawzen many years before the coming of the Nine Saints. The feast of Yem'ata is celebrated on 28th of Teqemt.

Abba Liqanos

This saint's *gadl*, though known to exist, has not reached the hands of scholars. At the time of the dispersion of the saints, Liqanos moved to north of Axum and founded a monastery, Dabra Qonasil, known by its founder's name to this day. His feast is celebrated on 28 Hedar and 4 Terr.

Abba Tsehma

Abba Sehma is believed to have settled southeast of Adwa. Like many of his colleagues, no *gadl* for him has yet come to light. Nor is there any religious center carrying his name. There is, however, a region of Tigre named Enda Abba Sehma. The feast of Abba Tsehma is celebrated on 16 Terr.

This discussion deals with personality, life, and contribution of Atse Caleb. During his reign, Ethiopia was at its peak and was a loyal son of the church as a devoted christian. He contributed for the EOTC in many ways including his personal exemplary life. His contribution is not restricted in Ethiopia, especially with his march to Yemen, he protected orthodox christianity and christians of the area.

Readings

ብፁዕ አቡነ ጎርጎርዮስ፣ የኢትዮጵያ ቤተ ክርስቲያን ታሪክ፣ **1991፣ (ከካሌብ እስከ ዮሴፍ) ገጽ 26 -31.**

Sergew Hable Selasie, Ancient and Medieval Ethiopian History, 1972, pp. 123-143.

Chapter III

3.1. Some Important Figures in Ethiopian Church History

3.1.1. Life and reign of King Caleb

Caleb was the last major Aksumite king of Ethiopia, during whose reign the kingdom reached the apex of its glory. (Ruled circa 514-543) Ethiopian and Syrian sources refer to him as Kaleb, but Greek sources call him

Hellesthaeeus, Ella Atsbeha, or Ellesbas. Legend makes King Tazena his father.¹⁷

Very little is known of his earlier life. He was educated at an Ethiopian Church school, but realized the importance of Greek culture. He ordered the governor of Adulis, the famous Red Sea port of the Aksumite period through which Greek trade came to Ethiopia, to copy the Greek inscriptions of Ptolemy IV (Macedonian king of Egypt from 221-205 BC), and of an unknown Ethiopian emperor.

The 6th-century theologian and geographer Cosmas Indicopleustes preserved the only exact copy, which he later included in his book *Topographia Christiana* ("Christian Topography").

Aksum reached its last period of glory during Caleb's reign.

Legends were inscribed in the Ge'ez language on coins, and art and architecture flourished. Aksum controlled traffic on the Red Sea, as well as much of the Far Eastern trade. Only Aksumites were permitted to sail ships to the Far East. The Byzantine emperor Justin I (ruled 518-527) encouraged Aksum to engage in the silk trade with China, in competition with the Persians.

Caleb is especially remembered for his military expedition in to South Arabia, which had long been under Ethiopian control. About A.D. 523, Dhu Nuwas, a local prince of the Najran area, led a revolt, after first having secured the support of the large Jewish community in South Arabia by converting to Judaism. Moving during the winter, when the weather would not permit Aksumite intervention he attacked the Ethiopian military base, conquered the whole of South Arabia, persecuted the Christians, and forced Judaism on them. The following summer, however, Kaleb heard of his exploits and prepared a punitive expedition against him. Kaleb himself set out with his naval force, defeated Dhu Nuwas restoring Ethiopian sovereignty over South Arabia in A.D. 525.

This victory won Caleb fame as the defender of the Christian faith and increased his prestige and power. Axumite Ethiopia became the third power in the Middle Eastern region as a whole after the rival Byzantine and

¹⁷ Taddese Tamerat, *Church and State in Ethiopia*, 1972: 123.

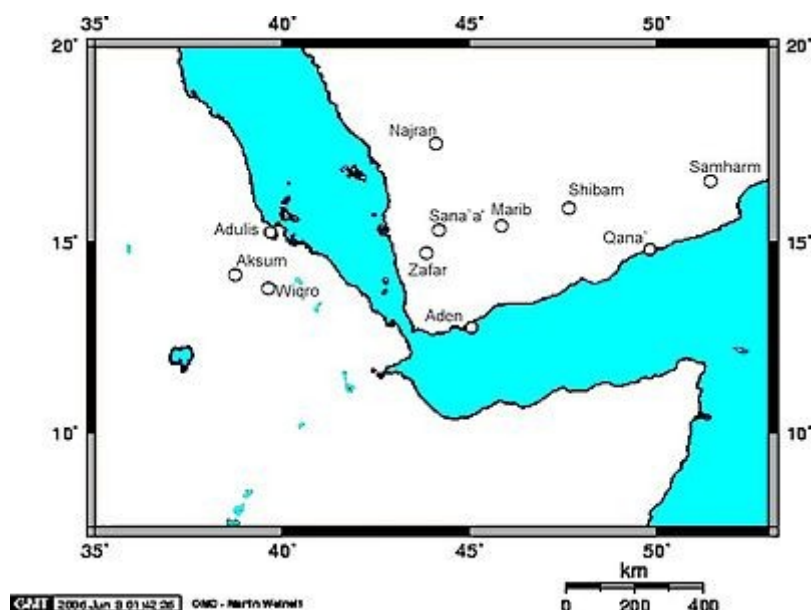
Persian empires. The Byzantine Empire frequently sent ambassadors to Caleb to conclude commercial or military treaties.

Ethiopian and Greek traditional stories state that Caleb abdicated after his return from South Arabia. Dedicating his crown to the Holy Sepulcher, he entered the monastery of Abba Pantaleon, where he spent the rest of his life. He was canonized by the Ethiopian church, and was the first Ethiopian to be recognized by the Greek and Roman Catholic churches as saint.

Information is available on the period from both external and internal sources. The former deals mainly with the external achievements of Kaleb, especially his expedition to Southern Arabiya. The later includes coins and epigraphic sources which have recently come to light.

3.1.2. Caleb and the persecution of Christians in southern Arabiya

Caleb is known in world history for his expedition to Arabiya. During his time the Axumite territory of south Arabiya, under his authority was greater than ever. The inhabitants of southern Arabia were originally polytheists. Later, with the coming of a number of Jews to Arabiya especially after the roman invasion, they began to accept Judaism. However their conversion had political motives: they thought in this way to get help from the Jews whose number was increasing day by day.



A reference map of the Empire of Kaleb of Axum

At the same time Christianity had been introduced in Arabia. According to some historical sources, the persecution, which happened, in southern Arabia was mainly directed against the Ethiopians who inhabited various places in south Arabia in the first quarter of the sixth century. This is why Caleb's expedition was undertaken.

The rivalry between these two religions, Christianity and Judaism became acute when the local prince, Dhu Nuwas was converted to Judaism and took the name of Josef. With the help of his co-religionists he began to be more and more aggressive towards the Axumites and the Christian religion. In the first stages of his persecution, he became successful and went further to Nagran in the north of south Arabiya. Dhu Nuwas ordered the people of Nagran to change their Christian religion to Judaism and when they refused to change he ordered his army to execute them on the spot. Then he captured the city of Nagran and burnt all churches there.

We are told in the book of the Himyarites that a Christian lady, whose name was Hammayya, came to Ethiopia and informed the Bishop, Eutropius, and Emperor Caleb. According to Arabian sources, the king of Ethiopia was informed by a certain inhabitant of Nagran, who had escaped the massacre. He brought to Caleb the news about the destruction of the city, carrying with half-burnt copy of the Gospel as a witness. He begged Caleb and the Abyssinian bishop to wage war against Dhu Nuwas.

Caleb agreed and landed his army on the eastern front and began an offensive war against Dhu Nuwas. Caleb became victorious and restored the churches which had been destroyed by Dhu Nuwas and he gave encouragement to the Christian population.

This victory won Kaleb fame as the defender of the Christian faith and increased his prestige and power. Aksumite Ethiopia became the third power in the Middle Eastern region as a whole after the rival Byzantine and Persian empires. The Byzantine Empire frequently sent ambassadors to Kaleb to conclude commercial or military treaties. Ethiopian and Greek traditional stories state that Caleb abdicated his power

after his return from South Arabia. Dedicating his crown to the Holy Sepulcher, he entered the monastery of Abba Pantaleon, where he spent the rest of his life. He was canonized by the Ethiopian church, and was the first Ethiopian to be recognized by the Greek and Roman Catholic churches as a saint.¹⁸

ካሌብ ንጉሠ ኢትዮጵያ ኅላየ በልቡ ወይቤ ምንተ ገቢርየ አስተፋሥሐ ለእግዚአብሔር ረዳኢየ ወመድኃኒየ ፀወንየ ወኃይልየ ወመነነ መንግሥተ ዝንቱ ዓለም ወገደፈ ልብሰ መንግሥቱ ወኢነሥኦ ካልኦ ንዋየ ዘእንበለ ልብሰ ምንኩስናሁ ወለኦሐቲ ልሕኩተ ማይ ወለኦሐቲ መንጻፍ ወቦኦ ገዳመ ኅብ ሀለወ ጳንጠሌዎን . . .

ወሶበ ኅደገ ቤተ መንግሥቱ ዘተቀጸለ በጊዜ ንግሡ ኦክሊለ ዘወርቅ ዘዕጹብ ሤቡ ፈነወ ዘምስለ ጦማረ መልእክት ኅብ ኦባ ዮሐንስ ሊቀ ጳጳሳት ዘኢየሩሳሌም ከመ ይሰቅል ሎቱ በዴጄ መቃብረ እግዚእን ኢየሱስ ክርስቶስ።¹⁹

ሰላም ለካሌብ ትእምርተ ኅድገታ ለብኦሉ

እንተ ፈነወ ኦክሊሎ በኢየሩሳሌም ይሰቅሉ

ዝንቱ ኃይል ኢይትመካህ በኃይሉ

ኦመ በእዴሁ ሠራዊተ ሳባ ተቀትሉ

ዘእንበለ (ያ) ይትርፍ ኦሐደ እምኦሉ²⁰

በረከቱ ለዝንቱ ጳድቅ ካሌብ፣ ወሣሕለ አምላኩ ትኩን ምስሌን ለዓለመ ዓለም ዓሜን!

Atse Gebre Meskel and His Contributions to EOTC

Based on Geez and Greek literary sources, Sergew Haile Selasie said that Caleb abdicated his throne voluntarily, without designating a successor. As it is already known he joined the monastery of Abba Pentelewon, one of the Nine Saints. So, this rift created a problem of succession between his sons: Gebre Meskel, Israel, and Gebre Krestos. The situation affected the overall well being of Ethiopia.²¹

¹⁸ ገድለ አቡነ አረጋዊ፣ ወገድለ ገብረ ክርስቶስ መርዓዊ፣ 1978፣92

¹⁹ ገድለ አቡነ አረጋዊ፣ ወገድለ ገብረ ክርስቶስ መርዓዊ፣ 1978፣ ገ. 88 -89

²⁰ ብፁዕ አቡነ ጎርጎርዮስ፣ ዩኢትዮጵያ ቤተ ክርስቲያን ታሪክ፣1991፣ 28

²¹ Sergew, Ancient and ..., 159.

After many difficulties Gebre Meskel ascended to the throne and contributed much for EOTC and Ethiopia. ወንግሠ ገብረ መስቀል በጽድቅ ወበርቅ ወተሰምኦ መንግሥቱ ኩሎ ምድረ ኦሴብ ወአልቦ ዘተቃወማ ለመንግሥቱ። ዘኅብ ኢያወጽዕ ለጽብኢ ዘእንበለ ለሐኒያ ኦብያተ ክርስቲያናት እስመ ነግሠ በዘመነ ሰላም።²²

ወበዓመተ ነግሠ ገብረ መስቀል ንጉሠ ኢትዮጵያ ተንሥኦ ይሑር ኅቤቡ ለአቡነ አረጋዊ ከመ ይባርክ መንግሥቶ ወከመ ይፈጽም ዳሕቆ በእንተ ሕንጻ መቅደስ። ወሶበ የሐውር በጽሐ ፍቡነ ደብረ ዳሞ ወኃደገ ሠራዊቶ ታሕተ ደብር ወዐርገ ውስተ ውክቱ ደብር ምስለ ኅዳጣን ሰብኢ . . . (101)

This situation of the time is well documented in his chronicle, the Hagiography of St. Yared and Hagiography of Abba Aregawi. Three of them traveled to many parts of Ethiopia and built churches, traditional schools and expanded Christianity. In response to Abuna Aregawi's request Atse Gebre Meskel constructed a church at Debre Damo and St. Yared presented the following symbolic praise for the church. “ ይሑውጽዋ መላእክት እንተ በሰማያት፣ ይሑውጽዋ መላእክት እስመ ማኅደረ መለኮት ያድከዋ ያድከዋ ያድከዋ ወርኢኩ ሥነ ሕንጻሃ ለቅድስት ቤተ ክርስቲያን ምስክሩ ወምስጋድ ወምስተሥራዬ ኃጢአት ይእቲ ቅድስት ደብተራ”²³

According to Ethiopian Hagiographical sources, Atse Gebre Meskel ruled the country for 14 years (534-548). As it is indicated his reign was peaceful, and devoted his time and power for building churches. As Gedle Aftse (Hagiography of Abba Aftse) says he is attributed for the construction of St. Mary Church in Yeha. Atse Gebre Meskel also founded the church in Our Amba in Gaynt Begemdir. Mention must be done also about his religious-cultural contributions like that of Teketsel Tsige/ተቀጸል ጽጌ። Prior to his reign, there was one a secular ceremony of coronation. Now, from his time onwards, it was decided that coronation must be performed in the courtyard of the Churches. It is to be accompanied by lengthy prayer, after then the people acclaimed the Emperor. This is the origin of the feast of ተቀጸል ጽጌ observed on the tenth of Meskerem. On this occasion the priests go to the palace and offer flowers to the Emperor to commemorate the fact that Yared crowned Gebre Meskel with flowers. They sing “ተቀጸል ጽጌ ገብረ መስቀል

²² Ibid, 162፣ገድለ አቡነ አረጋዊ፣ ወገድለ ገብረ ክርስቶስ መርዓዊ፣ 1978፣98።

²³ ሊቀ ካህናት ጥዑመ ልሳን ካሣ፣ ያሬድና ዜማው፣ 30።

ሐዓሌ”²⁴ Another important religious ceremony, which is believed to be started during Gebre Mesqel’s reign is the festival of Hosanna/ሆሳና. St.Yared and the Emperor instituted the ceremony to commemorate the advent of Jesus Christ into Jerusalem. On this occasion someone rides on the back of a donkey round the courtyard of the church, while the people go forward holding palm branches in their hands and chant hosanna in the highest/ሆሳና በእርም! The priests go in procession, bearing their crosses and censers.

Atse Gebre Meskel also built Churches in Jerusalem, Syria, and other places that are not to be found today due to the next Islamic expansion. His feast day is observed on 30 Hidar.

3.3. St. YARED

This is first part of a discussion on St. Yared’s life and the next session will be about his contributions to the EOTC.

Readings

* ገድለ ቅዱስ ያሬድ

* ጥቡመ ልሳን ካሣ፣ ያሬድና ዜማው

* ልሳን ወርቅ ገብረ ጊዮርጊስ፣ ማኅሌተ ያሬድ፣ ጥንታዊ ሥርዓተ ማኅሌት ዘአቡነ ያሬድ ሊቅ

* Sergew Hable Sellassie, Ancient ..., 164-179

St. Yared is one of the very few early Ethiopian saints known to history. His second hagiographer lived most probably in the fifteenth century. However, the traditions firm that the Ethiopian church owes the composition of Degua, its music as well as the great part of its hymns, to this great saint.

²⁴ Sergew, Ancient ... 162; E. A. Wallis Budge, The Saints of the Ethiopian Church, (Cambridge 1928) Vol. III, p. 876)

Yared flourished during the reign of Gabra Masqal. St. Yared was born in Axum in the first half of sixth century. He was a son of an Axumite priestly family of Abiyud or Yeshaq and Krestina (Isaac and Christina). When his father died while the son was still a child, his mother took him to Gedewon (Gideon), a famous biblical scholar of the time who also happened to be a relative. It soon became clear to the child and the teacher that Yared did not have the talent for learning. Frustrated after several trials and unable to further endure his master's beatings, Yared considered abandoning school. He left his master and ran away from the town and crawled under a tree near the tomb of Menelik I, called ማያ ኪራሕ.²⁵

While sitting there resting, he watched a caterpillar trying to climb a tree. When he saw that it succeeded after very many attempts, he went back to his teacher to try further. With persistence and prayers, Yared succeeded in becoming a great scholar. The situation is summarized in a poem form (አርኬ) which is found in the Synaxarium of Genbot 11.

ሰላም ለያሬድ ስብሐተ መለአክት ለሕዋዬ
 ዘአእረገ በልቡ ሕሊና መንፈስ ረዋዬ
 ለትምሕርተ መጽሐፍ ገብኦ እምነብ ኮነ ነፋዬ
 በብዙሕ ዳማ ዘአልቦ ትዳዬ
 መልአልተ ጉንደ ኦም ነጺሮ እንዘ የዓርግ ዕዋ

Since this time onwards, Yared's life is completely changed. As Sergew Haile Selassie said, his memory is improved miraculously. He learned Old Testament and New Testament books in a single day.²⁶

Yared grew up serving as a deacon at the church of Axum, site of the "Ark of Zion," the *Tabot* (Ark) that was believed to be house of Moses' tablets of the Ten Commandments. In a very argumentative way some sources say that when he reached the age of maturity, he married and became both a father and an accomplished priest. His marriage was, however, not without problems. When he discovered that his wife had a lover, he planned to ambush and to kill him. He abandoned the plan only when the messenger

²⁵ ሊቀ ካህናት ጥዑመ ልሣን ካሣ፣ ያሬድና ዜማው፣ገ. 20።

²⁶ Sergew, Ancient ... 165.

of God came to him in the form of three birds and reminded him that he should rather value his priesthood. Then, st. Yared succeeded to the position of his uncle, i.e. teaching.²⁷

The above historical view is not simply acceptable, even by the official teaching of the church. Merigeta Lesanework Gebre Giorgis writes, St. Yared Led a celibate life throughout his time. He strongly rejects Yared's marriage for the reason that there is no any information or evidence about his wife and children. He also presented an alternative narration:-

ቅዱስ ያሬድ ንጹሕ ድንግል እንደነበረና ዜማውንም የደረሰበት ምክንያት ማስረጃውን ከዚህ በታች አቀርባለሁ።

እውነተኛ ማስረጃ

በትግራይ ክልል፣ በሹለት አውላዕሎ አውራጃ፣ በደስኦ ወረዳ ማርያም ዓውዳ በተባለ ቤተ ክርስቲያን የሚገኝ ምልክት የሌለው በብራና ላይ የተጻፈ ጥንታዊ መዝሙር (ድገ) በመቅድሙ ላይ የጻፈውን በአማርኛ የተረጎምኩት እንዲህ ይላል። ከሐዘ ካሌብ ዘመነ መንግሥት እስከ ልጃቸው ሐዘ ገብረ መስቀል ዘመን ድረስ በመላ ኢትዮጵያ ሰላምና ጽጋብ በዝቶ ሕዝቡ ጠግቦ ሁልጊዜ ቀንና ሌሊት እየዘፈነ እግዚአብሔርን ያስቀያመው ነበር። . . . በዚህ ጊዜ [ቅዱስ ያሬድ] በዘፈኑ ሲያዝን ሲናደድ ሁሉን የሚያውቅ እግዚአብሔር በጣዕመ ዜማው ዘፈኑን እንዲመልሰውና በሰጠው የመላእክት ዜማ ለዘለዓለም መታሰቢያ እንዲያቆምለት በወደደ ጊዜ ኅዳር 5 ቀን 534 ዓ.ም. ጊዜ ነግሠ ከገነተ ኤዶም አሮድኖን የሚባሉ ሦስት ነጭ ወፎች ልኮ ወደ ጽርሐ አርያም ነጠቀውና በዚያው የሚመሰክንበትን የመላእክት ዜማ ገለጸለት። . . .”

It seems that at this time Yared left Axum (or even Ethiopia) and probably went to the Holy Land and the neighboring countries where Christian worship had developed. According to his hagiographer, singing in church in a loud voice was not known in the Ethiopian church at that time. But in Jerusalem he heard songs of praise to God in a loud voice. One of the birds appeared again and taught him the three types or modes of melodies that are still in use in the Ethiopian church.

As noted, tradition ascribes to Yared the composition of the voluminous composition for the year, the *Deggwa*. There is no reason to doubt that Yared was responsible for the composition of the nucleus of the *Deggwa*, the text as well as the melody. But the *Deggwa* was greatly enlarged by the inclusion of hymns for the saints who lived after the death of Yared. It includes, for example, hymns of the majority of saints who flourished from the fifteenth to seventeenth centuries.

After serving at the church in Axum for several years, Yared decided to abandon his homeland and go west to Semen. The reason is not clear, but

²⁷ ሊቀ ካህናት ጥዑመ ልሣን ካሣ፣ ያሬድና ዜማው፣ገ. 20።

he spent the rest of his life teaching there. His concealed tomb is believed to be there. Yared is commemorated on 11 Genbot.

St. Yared and His Contributions to the EOTC and Ethiopia

By a specific reason, this session will be presented and discussed in Geez and Amharic. Most of the sources on the Saint are written with these two languages and then some were translated to English and other languages. so, to have a direct access to the message we preferred to do so.

* ገድለ ቅዱስ ያሬድ

* ጥዑመ ልሳን ካሣ፣ ያሬድና ዜማው

* ልሳን ወርቅ ገብረ ጊዮርጊስ፣ ማኅሌት ያሬድ፣ ጥንታዊ ሥርዓተ ማኅሌት ዘአቡነ ያሬድ ሊቅ

Sergew Hable Sellassie, Ancient ..., 164-179

ያሬድ ስለሚለው ስም

ያሬድ በሚለው ስም በብሉይ ኪዳን ዘመን የኢዳም ስድስተኛ ትውልድ የሆነው የሄኖክ አባት ያሬድ ተብሎ ተጠርቶበታል።

ትርጉሙም፦ በዕብራይስጥ ወረድ፣ርደት ማለት ነው።

ምሥጢሩ፦ በእርሱ ዘመን የደቂቀ ሴት ከደቂቀ ቃየል ጋር መጋባትና መዋለድ እንዲሁም ከደብር ቅዱስ ወደ ምድረ ፋይድ መውረድ ተጀምሮ ስለነበር ነው።

“ወለደት ሎቱ ዲና ወልደ ወጸውዎ ስሞ ያሬድሃ እስመ በመዋዕሊሁ ወረዱ መላእክተ እግዚአብሔር ውስተ ምድር እለ ተሰምዩ ትጉሃነ። በእማንቱ መዋዕል ተወልዳ ሎሙ አዋልድ ሠናያት ወልሁያት፣ ወርእዩ ኪያሆን መላእክት ወሉደ ሰማያት ወፈተውዎን ወይቤሉበበያናቲሆሙ ንዑ ንኅረቦ ለነ አንስተ እምውሉደ ሰብእ ወንለድ ለነ ውሉደ” (ኩፋሌ 5፥21 ሐናክ 4፥69)

ይህ ከቅዱስ ያሬድ አንጻር ሲገለጽ ፦ ከዜማው ማማርና ልብን የሚመስጥ ከመኾኑ አንጻር በዚህ ስም ተጠርቷል፤ ሰውኛ ያልኾነ ከሰማይ መላእክት የወረደ ለማለት።²⁸ “ዋይ ዜማ ዘሰማዕኩ በሰማይ እመላእክት ቅዱሳን” እንዲል። ባለቅኔው “አእመርነሂ ከመ ሀሎ በቀራንዮ ገነት፣ ያሬድ ዘወለዶ ሐናክ ማኅሌት” እንዳለው።

(ያሬድ የወለደው ሐናክ ማኅሌት በቀራንዮ ገነት እንዳለ ዐወቅን ተረዳን።)

²⁸ የኢኦተቤክ፣ የኢትዮጵያ ኦርቶዶክስ ተዋሕዶ ቤተ ክርስቲያን ታሪክ ክልደተ ክርስቶስ እስከ 2000 ዓ.ም. ገ. 97)።

ሔዋክ እንደ ኤልያስ በሥጋ ወደ ሰማይ ዐርጎ እንደሚኖር ሁሉ ማኅሌትም የተገኘው ከሰማያዊውን መላእክት ዘንድ መኾኑን ለማነጻጸር ነው።

* ያሬድ የሚለው ስም “አሮድዮን” ከሚባለው ወፍ የተወሰደ እንደሆነም ይነገራል። አሮድዮን የሚባል ወፍ ለቅዱስ ያሬድ በአምሳሌ ያፍ ታይቶት ዜማ ያስተማረው፣ ምስጢር ያናገረው መልእክ ነው። በአሮድዮን ያሬድ መባሉ ሌላ ምክንያትም አለው።

“ ያፍ ዘይብልዎ አሮድዮን ከመ ቃለ ጠቢባን ይትፌሣህ ወይትሐሠይ ሶበ ይትፈለጥ እምክበ የኃድሩ ሰብእ ዓለም። ወየኃውር ኅብ መካነ በድው ወይነብር ውስቴ። ወተብህለ በእንተ ውእቱ ያፍ ዘእመር በክልኤ ሐረታት። ከመ ኩሉ ዘሰምዐ ቃናሁ ፻ ወንቃው ዜማሁ ይረስዕ ሕይወቶ ።”²⁹

የግንቦት 11 ሰንክሣር ሦስት ወፎች ለቅዱስ ያሬድ ዜማ እንዳስተማሩት ይህም ግዕዝ፣ እዝልና ዐራራይ እንደሆነ ይናገራል።

* ሌላው ያሬድ የሚለው ስም የተተረጎመበት ከግብሩም የተነሣ የተገለጸበት መንገድ ንህብ/ንብ የሚለው ነው። ምክንያቱ ደግሞ በቅዱስ ያሬድ ሥራዎች ውስጥ የሚገኙት እጅግ በርካታ ምንጮችን የተጠቀመባቸው ምስጋናዎች ናቸው። ቅዱስ ያሬድ ከቅዱሳት መጻሕፍት የማይጠቅሰው የለም።

* “ንብ የቀሰመውን አበባ አጣፍጦ ማር አድርጎ ያቀርባል። ከዚያ ማሩን የሰው ልጅ ተመግቦት ከመጣፈቡና ከመጠቀሙ መድሐኒት ከመኾኑ በላይ ሠሙ መብራት ኾኖ ጨለማን አርቆ ብርሃን በማሳየት ደስ እንዲያሰኝ ቅዱስ ያሬድም ከመጻሕፍት የቀሰማቸውን ቃላት በምስጢር አዋሕዶ በዜማው አጣፍጦ ያቀረበውን መዝሙር በአንቃእድዎ ምእመናኑ ሲሰሙት በተመስጦ ካህናቱ ሲዘምሩት ደስ ከማሰኘቱ በላይ በሰውነታቸው የነበረውን ትክክልና ብስጭት ክፋውን ሐሳብ ሁሉ አስወግዶ ወደ መልካም ሐሳብ ይመልሳል። የደከሙትንና የታከቱትን ያበረታል። ልባቸው በኃዘን የተሰበረውን ያጽናናል።”³⁰

ነጻፊ ኅቡዓት፣እንዚራ፣በገና፣መሰንቆ፣ በሚሉት ስሞችም በምክንያት ይጠራል።

ሰማያዊ ምሥጢራት ከተገለቡለት በኋላ “ሃሌ ሉያ ለኣብ፣ ሃሌ ሉያ ለወልድ፣ ሃሌ ሉያ ለመንፈስ ቅዱስ ቀዳሚሃ ለጽዮን ሰማየ ሣረረ ወበዳግም አርአዮ ለሙሴ ዘከመ ይገብር ግብራ ለደብተራ” እያለ አዚሚል (ዘጸ 25፥8)። ይህን ለመጀመሪያ ጊዜ ያዜመበትና ምሥጢሩ የተገለጠበት ቦታ ሙራደ ቃል ይባላል። ይህ አዲስ ክስተት በወቅቱ እጅግ አነጋጋሪ ኾኖ ነበር። አዲስና የማያውቁት ከመኾኑ የተነሣ ካህናትና ምእመናኑ ምንነቱን ለመረዳት፣ለመቀበልም ተቸግረው ነበር። ከብርቱ ውይይት በኋላ ከታኅሣስ 1 ቀን እስከ ሰባተኛው ቀን ምህላና ሱባኤ እንዲኾን በአዲስ ገብረ መስቀል ታወጀ። በዚሁ ሱባኤ ላይ ጌታችን በዕለተ ዓርብ እንደተሰቀለ ኾኖ ለሕዝቡ ስለታየ ፣ ቅዱስ ያሬድ “ዘበመስቀሉ ተቀነወ ዘበነቢያት ተሰብክ መላእክት ወሊቃነ መላእክት ሰብሕዎ ኪያሁ ንሰብክ መድኅነ” የሚለውን ምስጋናውን በእዝል ዜማ አዜመ። እንዲሁም ምልጣኑን “ ኪያሁ ንሰብክ መድኅነ ዘበመስቀሉ ቤዘወ ኪያነ” እያለ ሲያመሰግን፣ መላእክትም በኅብረት ጌታን ሲያመሰግኑት በማየቱ “ መላእክት ወሊቃነ መላእክት ሰብሕዎ፣ መላእክት ሰብሕዎ ወሊቃነ መላእክት ወደስዎ ኪያሁ ንሰብክ መድኅነ” እያለ አመለጠነ። ቀኑም ዜማ ማስተማር የጀመረበት የነቢያት ትንቢት ፍፃሜ የታየበት ስለኾነ ስብከት ተብሎ ተሰየመ።³¹

²⁹ መሪጌታ ልሳነ ወርቅ፣ ማር ይስሐቅን ጠቅሰው “ጥንታዊ ሥርዓተ ማኅሌት ዘአቡነ ያሬድ ሊቅ” በሚል መጽሐፋቸው እንዳቀረቡት።

³⁰ መሪጌታ ልሳነ ወርቅ፣ ጥንታዊ . . . 28 -29።

³¹ መሪጌታ ልሳነ ወርቅ፣ 40።

ከዚህ ጊዜ ጀምሮ አዲስ ጉብረ መስቀል በፍጹም ተመስጦ ቅዱስ ያሬድን ሲሰማ ይውል ነበር። ከተመስጦው ጥልቅነትም የተነሣ በቅዱስ ስእል ላይ እንደሚታየው፣ በያዘው ጦር የቅዱስ ያሬድን እግር ወግቶት ሁለቱም ሳይታወቃቸው ቆይተው ኋላ ነገሩን በተረዳ ጊዜ ንጉሡ ይህን ቅዱስ በምን ልክሥህ ብሎ ጠየቀው። ቅዱስ ያሬድም እንደመንን ፍቀድልኝ አለው። ነገሩ ቢያሳዝንውም ስለቃሉ ብሎ ፈቀደለት። ቅዱስ ያሬድም ያንኑ ጊዜ ወደ ጽዮን መቅደስ ገብቶ፣ በታቦቱ ላይ እጁን ዘርግቶ “ቅድስት ወብጽዕት ስብሐት ወቡርክት ክብርት ወልዕልት አንቀጸ ብርሃን፣ መዓርገ ሕይወት . . . ” የሚለውን አንቀጽ ብርሃን ዘሩንና ዜማውን እስከመጨረሻው ደርሷል፤ አድርሷል።

ይህን በፈጸመ ጊዜ ከቤተ ክርስቲያኑ ወጥቶ ሲሄድ ካህናቱ እስከ ተከዜ ወንዝ ድረስ ሸኝት። በዚህ ጊዜ ድምጹን ከፍ በማድረግ ሰላም ነሣለን ወሰላም ሀደግን ለክሙ፣ ሰላም እግዚአብሔር ምስለ ኩልክሙ።” እያለ ዘምሮ ተሰናበታቸው። ይህም ከአስተምህሮ ድን ይገኛል።

ታሪክ ነገሥትና ገድለ አቡነ አረጋዊ ቅዱስ ያሬድ፣ አቡነ አረጋዊና አዲስ ጉብረ መስቀል በአንድነት ያገለግሉ እንደነበር ይናገራሉ።³² እኒህ ሦስቱ ሹነው ወደ ጎንደርም ተገዘው ነበር። በጣናም አንድ ደሴት ላይ ደርሰው የቅዱስ ቂርቆስን ቤተ ክርስቲያን አሳንጸዋል። ቅዱስ ያሬድ ለሁለት ዓመታት ያስተማረበትና ምልክት የሌለው ጥንታዊ ድን የሚገኝበት ሥፍራም ይህ ገዳም ነው። በመቀጠልም ከጣና ቂርቆስ ተነሥተው ወደጋይንት ሲጓዙ አንድ ትልቅ ተራራ አገኙ። ይህ ሥፍራ ቀደም ሲል አቡነ አረጋዊ በራእይ የተመለከቱት ስለነበር ወደላይ ለመውጣት ፈልገው፣ መንገድ ጠፍቷቸው ሲጨነቁ፣ ከእግዚአብሔር የታዘዘ አንድ መልአክ “ ዙር አባ መንገል ምሥራቅ” ብሎ ስለመለከታቸው ወደላይ ወጡ። በተራራው አናት ላይም የእመቤታችንን ቤተ መቅደስ ሠሩ። እስከአሁንም ዙር አባ ወይም ዙር አምባ ተብሎ ይጠራል። ቅዱስ ያሬድ በዚህ ቦታ ሦስት ዓመታት ዝማሬ መዋሥእት አስተምሮአል። እስከአሁንም የዝማሬ መዋሥእት ማስመስከሪያ ሹና ቀጥሏል።

ወደ አክሱም በተመለሰ ጊዜም የቅዱሴያትን ዜማ አዘጋጅቷል። ይህን ዜማ ያዘጋጀበት ቦታ “መደባይ ታብር” ይባላል። በመቀጠል ወደ ሰሜን ተራሮች ወደ ጸለምት ሄዶ ምእራፍ የተባለውን ድርሠት ደረሠ። (የቅዱስ ያሬድ ታሪክና የዜማዎቹ ምልክቶች የተሰኘውን መጽሐፍ ቅዱስ ያሬድ ያዘጋጃቸውን መጻሕፍት፣ አስተምህሮውንና ማናቸውንም አበርክቶ በምን ምንጭ ተጠቅሞ እንዳዘጋጃቸው ለመረዳት በዝርዝር ማንበብ ጠቃሚ ነው። አንዳንድ ጸሐፊዎች ድርሰቶቹ በሰሜን የተዘጋጁና ፋይዳ የሌላቸው እንደገኙ አለማወቅ በወለደው ድፍረት ይናገራሉ። እውነታው ግን ከቃላት ጀምሮ፣ ትምህርቶቹና ምሥጢራቱ ሹሉ በቅዱሳት መጻሕፍት የታዘዙ በመንፈስ ቅዱስ መሪነት በረቂቅ መሠናዶ የቀረቡ ውድ የቤተ ክርስቲያን ሀብታት ናቸው። ጸሐፊው ይህን ለማስረዳት ብዙ ደክመውበታልና በትኩረት ይመልከቱት።)

የቅዱስ ያሬድ ድርሰቶችና አከፋፈላቸው

አንድ ድን

ሹሉት ጸመ ድን

ሦስት ዝማሬ

አራት መዋሥዕት

አምስት ምዕራፍ.³³

³² ሊቀ ካህናት ጥዑመ ልሳን ካሣ፣ ያሬድና ዜማው፣ 28።

³³ ሊቀ ካህናት ጥዑመ ልሳን ካሣ፣ ያሬድና ዜማው፣ 44።

“የኢትዮጵያ ኦርቶዶክስ ተዋሕዶ ቤተ ክርስቲያን ታሪክ ክልደተ ክርስቶስ እስከ 2000 ዓ.ም.” በሚል ርእስ በቤተ ክርስቲያናችን በተዘጋጀው መጽሐፍና በሌሎችም ምንጮች ደግሞ የሚከተለው አከፋፈል ይገኛል።

ሀ. ድን

ለ. ምዕራፍ

ሐ. ዝማሬ

መ. መዋሥዕት

ሠ. የቅዳሴ ዜማ (ድርሱቱ የሌሎች መንፈሳውያን ሊቃውንት ኾኖ ዜማው ግን የእርሱ ነው) ገ. 110 -111።

ቅዱስ ያሬድ ያበረከተልን እነዚህ ሥራዎች በመጠን የሰፋና የዝቅጅበምሥጢር እጅግ የጠለቁ፣ በባህልና ትውፊት ፍጹም ኢትዮጵያዊ የኾኑ ናቸው። እስከ ዛሬ ድረስ ያለመቋረጥ አገልግሎት እየሰጡ የሚገኙት እነዚህ ሥራዎች ሥርዓተ አምልኮአዊ ለኾነው የነገረ መለኮት ዘያቤአችን ያላቸው የምሳሌነት ጠቀሜታ የላቀ ነው።