

## Drought and Famine in Ethiopia/Ethiopian Jews - 1984

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The current drought and famine in Ethiopia and Africa demands response from Sisterhoods. We are deeply concerned with the horrendous and deplorable conditions that exist in Ethiopia as a result of the long drought and civil war. Thousands of Ethiopians are suffering from famine; disease is rampant. The death toll is climbing daily. In view of the urgency of the situation the following statement is presented for approval of the Board. One of the most penetrating questions of the Bible is expressed in the cry, "Am I my brother's keeper?" Judaism answers to all men and women with an unequivocal affirmative. Yes, we are responsible for others, for men, women and children. Therefore we, members of the Board of Directors of the National Federation of Temple Sisterhoods in annual meeting assembled in New York, November 11-13, 1983, declare:

- 1) The awesome tragedy of starvation, death or enduring disability stemming, for millions, from drought in Ethiopia and many parts of Africa, demands immediate and continuing remedial action.
- 2) Such action must be undertaken in swift and generous proportions both by governmental and inter-governmental agencies as well as through the continuation of the efforts and support for private agencies dedicated to relief and related projects.
- 3) Sisterhoods and their members must constantly be alerted to this massive human need and should bring maximum pressure on their governments and appropriate United Nations and other agencies to enlarge the quantity of food to be transported to the starving and the very prompt distribution of it.
- 4) Those who live in countries of vast food surplus, as do members in the United States, have a special responsibility to see that food inadequacies are overcome, for those in need at home as well as for those so deeply suffering in Africa.

Through these and other actions we shall be serving and fulfilling an important religious commitment of Judaism.

There are almost 7,000 Ethiopian Jews who have been rescued by Israel and are currently living there. Thousands more are still languishing in refugee camps. To respond to the special needs of Ethiopian Jews the following are possible actions:

- 1) Personal contributions to agencies that send doctors and medical teams to Ethiopia.
- 2) Collect warm blankets and clothing in sizes appropriate for very thin people. Send the clothing to the Religious Action Center, 2027 Massachusetts Avenue, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20036.
- 3) Collect English-language books, dictionaries, high school and college texts in the subjects of math, science and English.
- 4) Collect toys, dolls, stuffed animals, playing cards, chess and checkers.