



FOLKWAYS ETHNIC RECORDS FE 4355

ETHIOPIA: THE FALASHA & THE ADJURAN TRIBE

Recorded and Edited by Lin Lerner & Chad Wollner



SIDE 1

THE FALASHA:
THE COMPLETE CEREMONY OF SHABBAT SHALOM
(FRIDAY NIGHT CEREMONY), Ambover, Ethiopia.
(24:15)

SIDE 2

THE ADJURAN TRIBE, Moyale, Ethiopia.
Band 1. Camel Song
Band 2. Song of the King
Band 3. Cow Song
Band 4. Baby Song
Band 5. Introduction of a Man to a Woman
The Adjuran: Jella Madi-Leader, Hussien Hassen,
Hurene Kyah, Abdi Ebrahim, Abdula Kenteno,
Addulahe Aden, Gado Abdi, Aden Berra

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DESCRIPTIVE NOTES ARE INSIDE POCKET

COVER DESIGN BY RONALD CLYNE

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Introduction.....

The tribal cultures of Eastern Africa, and in fact, the world, are fast disappearing. Within twenty years, Kenya will reach the take-off point of economic development, and by the turn of the century, foreign industrialization will transform the pastoral nomadic way of life in Northern Kenya and Southern Ethiopia into a 19th-Century midwestern town. The ties of the people with the land will be broken. A major highway will run through Central Ethiopia bringing tourists and money to a country which does not have enough water for its own people, whose lakes are polluted and infested by lethal worms which produce incurable intestinal disorders.

As the world reaches the 21st-Century, the Ethiopians may not have enough water to drink, much less to wash their clothes. Men in Addis now wear socks and shoes, the children wear paisley shirts, yet in the South, in the semi-desert conditions, life is still survival; the people live from one day to the next trading goods, bartering, and praying for rain for the harvest. The legends of the past are only preserved in song, and the wandering bards are rarely seen, as they work in the fields as much as fifteen hours a day. A medicine man is rare, because the spirit of the old religions and customs are not permitted to continue in a culture which is fast breaking its way into the Twentieth Century. Mythology is song in Ethiopia, and the song is the experience of life. As the animals die, the songs of the water-hole and the market disappear; the deeds of the warriors who fought the Turks and the Egyptians are silenced forever.

SIDE 1

The Falasha: Ceremony of Shabbat Shalom (Friday Night ceremony), recorded in Ambover, Ethiopia.

SIDE 2

The Adjuran Tribe, Moyale, Ethiopia: Songs of Nomads of the Desert.
Jella Madi (leader), Hussien Hassen, Hurene Kyah, Abdi Ebrahim, Abdula Kenteno, Addulahe Aden, Gado Abdi, Aden Berra.

- Band 1. Camel Song
- Band 2. Song of Praise of the King
- Band 3. Cow Song
- Band 4. Baby Song
- Band 5. Introduction of a Man to a Woman

Engineer: Lawrence Voelker
Musical transcriptions:
Toni Marcus

THE FALASHIM PEOPLE

One of the last traditionally Hebraic tribes of Ethiopia, the Falashim live in Ambover, in a village about ten miles from Gondar. In order to reach the village, one must either walk seven miles from where the bus stops, or take a Landrover over cow pastures and farming lands, through small valleys and over small hills. Quiet people, the Falashim still worship in the same traditions as their ancestors did 2,000 years ago. Speaking Geez, the ancient language from which Amhara, the national language of Ethiopia developed, the Falasha worship in a small hut without an altar.

The Kohnian, or prayers, are conducted by the leader, while the other members chant and sing. Geez is also the language used by the Coptic Church for prayer, but at times Hebrew words are interspersed. The Falasha people used to conduct the service entirely in Hebrew, but since the time of the Sudanese War in 1892, when the Hebrew books were burned, they have been praying in Geez.

The Falashim believe that in 586 the first exiles from Babylon came through Egypt to Ethiopia. There are still other conclaves or groups of isolated Falasha who live around Gondar, in the Gojjam Province, but their numbers are steadily decreasing because of intermarriages.

The Falashim or Falasha people migrated from a very substantial community in Jerusalem, during the 17th-, 18th-, and 19th-Centuries. The combination of the Turkish seizure of the Ethiopian seaboard, the plague which ravaged Jerusalem in 1838, and the unacceptance of the Armenians who persecuted the new Turkish subjects, forced the Falashim to flee to their present location.

In Ambover, one of the centers of the Falasha, the people live around the school, which was built in 1970, yet it is not uncommon for a villager to live on an adjoining hilltop. The Falashim children learn three languages in school: English, Amharic, and Hebrew. After they reach the age of fifteen, they must either be accepted by the university in Addis, or go to work in the fields. Extremely poor people, the Falasha depend on the land to survive, yet farming is difficult without machines.

The chanting of the Falasha is the celebration of life, and was recorded 8/11/72. The ceremony has rarely been heard.

THE ADJURAN TRIBE

The Adjuran are a semi-nomadic group of wandering cattle herders who live north of Isiolo, Kenya, and south of Dilla, Ethiopia, approximately a distance of 500 miles. The small, pastoral agricultural villages are along a road of tar, clay and dirt, which is sometimes non-existent in the mountains of the Maji Province. Part of the Garris Tribe, which is Berber, these people make temporary shelters, trade, barter, and raise cattle. Their music is traditional: singers, dancers, religious nomads, Moslems, who raise their hands in trance-like dances, undulate their bodies, inhale/exhale short audible modulations of poly-rhythmic chanting. With their raised arms, the Adjuran hop together, lifting one foot, jumping three or four feet into the air, imitating their camels which graze a short distance away, licking a white powder from their hands.

Like the Garris, the Burgia, the Borana, the Adjuran also sing of the camel, the King, the cow and the baby. The love of man for man is instinctual; it is revealed in the actions of the dance - the ritual play of the animal or man, even before there was speech. The King, Emperor Haile Selassie, is praised as a hero, for letting the people be free (not for letting them live in destitution). Although the tribes are rounded up by the local police and ushered into the villages for the ceremonial festivities of the Emperor's eightieth birthday, they do not regret coming because they are permitted to eat all the raw meat they can during the two-day celebration. Tedj, honey-mead beer, is abundant, and this is the event when camel herders arrive in Moyak to talk, love, reminisce, and barter their goods. The Borana come across the border from Kenya, and the Rindilla sing on the water barrels.....