

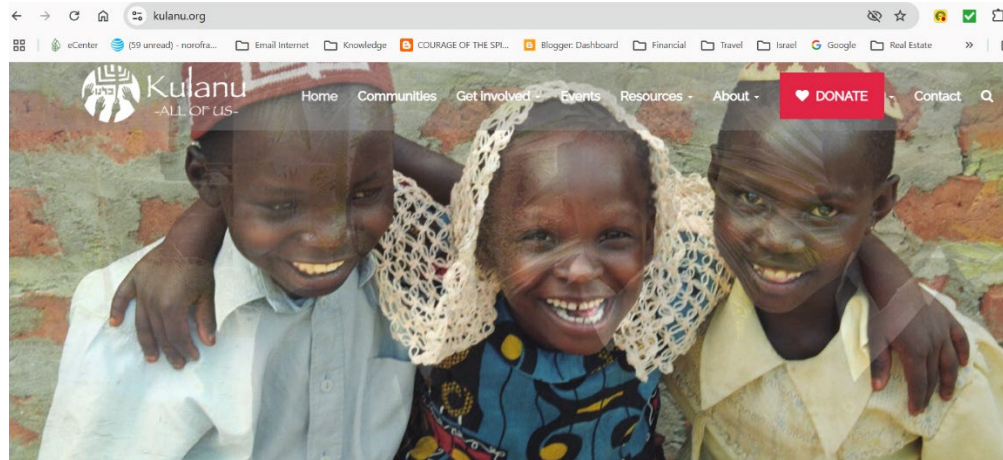
## **The Jews of Sub-Saharan Africa- a glimpse into Uganda and other places**

**Rabbi Norbert Weinberg**

Jews have had a presence in sub-Saharan Africa well before modern times.

Josephus, who wrote the first comprehensive history of the Jews nearly 2000 years ago, records Moses conquering Ethiopia, and the Bible itself recounts Moses taking an Ethiopian wife. Centuries later, the ancient Israelites, in coordination with their neighbors, the Phoenicians, sailed down the Red Sea to and through the Horn of Africa, and some 2500 years ago there was a Jewish military outpost on the Nile at the edge of modern day Sudan. In the Middle Ages, a wandering preacher, by the name of Eldad Hadani brought tales of Israelite tribes in Africa, living a protected life behind a sacred river, Sambatyon.

Whatever the actual history, throughout Africa, we find communities that identify themselves as Jews or Israelites. The largest and best documented such group is the Beta Israel of Ethiopia, sometime referred to as “Falasha”. ( See background referenced , “A vanished Community Reappears in the 20th century-The Story of the Beta Israel of Ethiopia” , under the tab <https://pastfuturememory.org/beyond-yiddish-and-ladino> )



## Kulanu Supports Isolated, Emerging, And Returning Jewish

There are others!

### The Amazing Work of Kulanu.org

One organization which has been involved in outreach to diverse communities around the world that identify themselves as Jews is Kulanu. This backgrounder is from their website:

*Kulanu means “all of us” in Hebrew. We seek to create an inclusive Jewish world. Founded in 1994, we support isolated, emerging, and returning Jewish communities around the world. Some are discovering Judaism for the first time, others reinvigorating a forgotten practice, but all have experienced some kind of disconnection from global Jewry.*

*We raise awareness and support to assist these groups with their desire to learn more about Judaism and connect with Jews beyond their community. The connections we forge – through education, research, networking, fundraising, sustainable development, and publications – help “all of us” to enrich our Jewish lives.*

*Our backgrounds are diverse in terms of location and denomination, but we are bound by a common commitment to developing Judaism and Jewish life for all who seek this for themselves. You can [meet our team](https://kulanu.org/about/staff-and-board/)( <https://kulanu.org/about/staff-and-board/>) here and learn about [our partner communities](https://kulanu.org/communities/) ( <https://kulanu.org/communities/> ) here. We encourage you to join “all of us” by [getting involved with Kulanu!](https://kulanu.org/get-involved/)( <https://kulanu.org/get-involved/>)*

*Kulanu communities are found in 33 countries, on five continents, North and South America, Asia, Africa, and Europe. Kulanu provides Jewish resources to groups such as prayer books, mezuzot, and Torah scrolls. It has helped with the construction of synagogues and mikvaot (ritual baths) and has taught kosher slaughtering when possible. Kulanu serves as a teaching resource, connecting rabbis, cantors, and Jewish educators of all denominations with Kulanu communities*

*If you are excited about their projects, you can donate to them:*

*<https://kulanu.org/donate/> .( For more information, contact: Molly Levine, Executive Director Email: [molly@kulanu.org](mailto:molly@kulanu.org) Phone: (646) 285-8815)*

## **Discover the Abayudaya Jews of Uganda :**

When Theodore Herzl began planning a Jewish homeland, the British made him an offer of settling Jews in Uganda. Although he toyed with the idea, as a temporary measure, the Zionist Movement rejected the idea, as Jews had a historical claim to only one land, the Land of Israel. No one could then imagine that there would be a full blown State of Israel within a half century after Herzl founded the Zionist movement, but also, no one could have imagined that shortly afterwards, a major leader in Uganda would look to the Torah and Judaism for guidance.

### **The Genesis of the Abayudaya Community**

By JJ Keki (August 2001)

The Abayudaya Community was founded in 1917 by Semei Kakungulu, a Muganda military general who had distinguished himself as a talented and committed soldier.

After his close reading of the Bible, Kakungulu developed a religious belief that would be similar to that of the children of Israel. A close study of the Bible revealed to them that God's love is great for gentiles who choose to observe the Torah (Isaiah 56:2, Zacharia 8:23). Encouraged with this revelation, Kakungulu, his sons and the entire community circumcised themselves and promised to circumcise their new baby boys at the age of eight days as God commanded Abraham. This prompted the neighbouring communities to name Kakungulu and the members of his new faith "the Jews, Christ killers," a derogatory statement aimed at discouraging Kakungulu and his followers, but instead he made a famous announcement( in the Luganda language): "From today onwards, we are Jews (Abayudaya)"; henceforth they proclaimed Saturday as a day of rest (Shabbat) and they started to observe the festivals as outlined in the Torah.

Joseph, a Jew from Jerusalem, stayed with the community for 6 months in the 1920's, teaching about observance. The community had slightly more than 3000 followers by then.[ For the rest of the story , go to

<https://kulanu.org/communities/uganda/genesis-abayudaya-community/> ]

Here are some background links:

<https://kulanu.org/communities/uganda/>

Slide show about community

<https://kulanu.smugmug.com/Timeless/Kulanu-Abayudaya-Slideshow/i-VJVHJCH>

History:

<https://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/a-history-of-the-abuyudaya-jews-of-uganda>

In the process of writing this article, I had the pleasure of coming into online contact with some of the members.

### **This community is known as Abayudaya:**

Here is their account, as sent to me by one of the members of the community,

#### **Isaac Mosh Sharutovu**

We are Abayudaya. The word Abayudaya is a Luganda word meaning the People of Judah Son of Jacob. In Uganda, Judaism was founded by Semei Kakungulu. He was a Ugandan from Central Uganda. Since he was an agent of the missionaries, he was given miles of land in Eastern Uganda. He was also given the Christian Bible to spread Christianity. However, when he dug deeper into the Old Testament (Torah, Ketuvim and Nevi'im), he diverted from the way of Christianity and followed the Jewish culture. He circumcised himself. He had a great influence and taught Judaism to many people around him, including our grandparents. And by the end of 1919, over 8000 Abayudaya existed in Uganda. There's much about him that I cannot exhaust now.

Unfortunately, he died in 1928. This led to a very great decline in the population of Abayudaya. Many people diverted to other religious sectors. But before his death, he served a very big piece of land to the Nabugoye Jewish community since it was the only Jewish center then.

On seeing that the community was declining at a high speed, Samson Mugombe ( one of the students of Semei) took on the leadership of the community in 1936. He worked hand in hand with my grand father together with other elders of the community. He reorganized the community which helped to stabilize the community. One of the major

factors that was decreasing the Jewish population was intermarriage. So they all decided to marry only Jewish women. These grandparents held strong friendships among themselves. On Shabbat, my grandfather could prepare food and call the whole congregation to dine with him freely. By then my grandfather was the chairman of the community.

In 1971, Idi Amin Dada became the president of Uganda. He was too rude. He outlawed all small populated religions labelling them as cult religions. Only Christianity and Islam were the accepted religions in his regime. This was a generation of our mothers and fathers who were young then. All people prayed incognito and it was an offence to be found in prayer. The Abayudaya kids who went to school were forced into Christian services and many people this time round changed to other religions. Some of the most conservative parents never took their children to school. At school, Jewish kids were mocked by others as people who killed Jesus.[ Editors note: This was the same notorious dictator who enabled the hijacking of an Air France plane by Palestinian terrorists to Entebbe, which resulted in the daring rescue led by Israeli forces in 1978.]

On 11th, April 1979 (First day of Passover by then). Idi Amin Dada was overthrown and a new government that provided freedom of worship came up. However at this moment, the land that Kakungulu had given to the Abayudaya had been taken over by the Christians and it's here that the new generation then led by Jonadav Keki fought hard to claim back the land. This was the same generation of my father. Jonadav was the master planner. He formed a youth team that fought to bring back the land. This team suffered the beating from Christians and never ending arrests. They persisted until they got back the land although some of it still remained for the Christians. They made bricks and built the synagogue and all made sure they marry fellow Jewish people so as to maintain the Jewish culture in families. With time they became known to outside Jewish communities who helped much in building a secondary school (Semei Kakungulu High

School and Hadassah Primary School). These schools have done great in providing Jewish education to the Abayudaya kids in the community. Also the community was chanced to get someone to study and become a Rabbi. Rabbi Gershom Sizomu was chosen and he became the ordained Rabbi of the Jewish communities in Uganda. Many Jewish communities were set up in Uganda with time however some others were setup during the hard times of Amin. Currently we have many Abayudaya communities in Uganda ,over 13 and my father is the chairman of Nabugoye Jewish community.



Isaac is trying to help feed needy people and also construct a building for the children's Hebrew classes: Here is his project page on FB

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/1497910757320330/permalink/2045024055942328/>

This is his FB profile <https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=100084497266628>



He is also organizing the sale of hand crafted kippot at \$20 each \$20 plus shipping by mail. He uses the Wave payment system. I suggest contacting him directly at [moshisaac12@gmail.com](mailto:moshisaac12@gmail.com) for details. If anyone has a marketing expertise to help him bring these and other crafts to a wider audience, please contact him.



**Meet Wambi Joel:**



Here is his story as told on You Tube

<https://youtu.be/HbUh4jP68WM?si=ijmjXHtnx4-nvA6>

Chanukah



## Outdoor synagogue



I'm Wambi Joel from Uganda Africa, I and my wife Gonza Hellen suggested to start an orphanage organization since we grew up in an orphanage life. We feel happy to care for orphans, we are based on Jewish basis because we are Jewish from Ahavat Yisrael Jewish community Uganda and I, Wambi Joel, work as the Hazan in the Synagogue. Gonza Hellen is the matron and most especially cares for girls but we work together as a group to help our children. The orphanage Name is SHALOM CHILDREN'S CARE CENTER ORPHANAGE ORGANIZATION UGANDA .Dduring covid 19 in 2020 and 2021 we were participating in" We Sing ,We Stay Together" program of singing Shabbat morning services, which we recorded and posted on YouTube for subscriptions [ Here is a playlist of chants by the members of the community. Enjoy the voices and the vibes

[https://youtube.com/playlist?list=PLNHeBWV6MpDSp-YI1zhS7VLJhBRtJ\\_jTw&si=zSb2Zoa\\_X\\_iJ4tqi](https://youtube.com/playlist?list=PLNHeBWV6MpDSp-YI1zhS7VLJhBRtJ_jTw&si=zSb2Zoa_X_iJ4tqi) ]

. We practice Judaism whenever we are at home with children when they leave school. We rent the houses children sleep in, we have 52 children and all are at school but things are not moving well since we have no sources of funds to get all basic needs for these children. Uncle John from Kansas city helped us to open up a Go fund me page where we try to share to different people who can donate a little support and we buy some little food for these children to eat daily since we receive little donations, we always find much difficulty in feeding, paying rent per month, paying for school tuition and requirements for all children to go to school, medical bills for sick children and clothes. We always pray to Hashem to help us get some donors and sponsors for our orphanage so that we can raise these children in a healthy condition and provide them with every basic need. We would like to start farming this coming season if we get funds where by we shall decrease on shortage of food if we start growing crops.

How to help:

I spoke to John Atherton, of Kansas City, who is himself a Gospel and Folk Music singer, and has been helping out various charities in Uganda. One of his representatives went to the Shalom Children's Care Center and was impressed by the efforts they are making for the children.

He has set up a Go-Fund Me page for **Shalom Children's Care Center in Magada village, Namutumba district, Uganda, East Africa.**

**“Hellen needs a way to have a sustainable source of income to feed, house, and otherwise care for over 50 children, most of whom are orphans.** The orphans here have needs like school fees, food, clothes and mattresses and medical treatments for the orphans. She will start a ladies' hair salon for income to pay rent, provide tuition, school supplies, medicine, and food.”

[https://www.gofundme.com/f/shalom-childrens-care-center?fbclid=IwY2xjawla\\_CEBHdqTa3VkHFikJutwzFtmBdptFs4PClkuTEyeYOlpPP9ri7XxkEO\\_LrUjbQ](https://www.gofundme.com/f/shalom-childrens-care-center?fbclid=IwY2xjawla_CEBHdqTa3VkHFikJutwzFtmBdptFs4PClkuTEyeYOlpPP9ri7XxkEO_LrUjbQ).



His great hope is to raise about US\$ 33,000 for the materials needed to create a chicken farm. Given the current loss of poultry in the US due to Avian flu, this could be a valuable and self-sustaining source of support for these children. Anyone with connections to agribusiness could be a huge help here!

For more information, contact Wambi Joel at [wambijoel83@gmail.com](mailto:wambijoel83@gmail.com)

**Kahal Kadosh Abayudaya**

# KAHAL KADOSH ABAYUDAYA TRAINING CENTRE

**MOTTO: LIFE SKILLS FOR A LIFE TIME**



**2024  
ADMISSION  
IN  
PROGRESS**

- TAILORING
- HAIR DRESSING
- ELECTRICAL ENG
- DRIVING AND MECHANICS
- METAL FABRICATION
- ELECTRONIC REPAIRING
- CARPENTRY
- COMPUTER STUDIES
- CAKE MAKING AND BAKERY MANAGEMENT
- POULTRY KEEPING
- FISHERIES
- CROP MANAGEMENT
- DETERGENT MAKING

**Location: Nakigalo cell, Aisa ward Northern city division Mbale**  
**Tel: 0707983679 | 0775217964 | Email: kahalkadosh1@gmail.com**

The continent of Africa is poised to become the greatest source of skilled labor for the next generation—worldwide. This project, by David Kabala , is set to put the Abayudaya community on the right footing fro the future:



Kahal Kadosh Abayudaya Training Centre is dedicated to empowering women, young mothers, and youths in our community by equipping them with essential vocational skills. Our mission is to foster personal and professional growth through hands-on training in various fields, ensuring that our participants gain the knowledge and confidence to thrive in today's competitive environment.

Kahal Kadosh Abayudaya Training Center was established on 17th July, 2023, with the objective of providing hand skills /trainings to widows, orphans and young adults in order to enhance their home income to reduce poverty among them.

However, Kahal Kadosh Abayudaya Training Center is limited with the training space. It is on that background that we are seeking **\$27,550** to enable us construct the training center because where we are now operating, we just rent and the cost of renting is high. Check our website: <https://kahalkadosh.com/>

Posted by **David Kabala ( on FB )**

<https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=100086872118446>

**Here is the Go Fund Me Page**

<https://www.gofundme.com/f/construction-of-kahal-kadosh-abayudaya-training-center>

Here are some of their projects:

A Fisheries Program:



**Tailoring Crafts for Women**





**Here are some finished products ready for market: Contact Kahal Kadosh for orders.**





Training Programs:

- **Tailoring.** Our program equips participants with essential tailoring skills such as product development, pattern drafting, and garment construction, fostering their employability and entrepreneurial spirit.
- **Hair Dressing.** This initiative equips participants with hands-on proficiency in hairdressing techniques tailored to local community needs and preferences.
- **Electrical Engineering.** This diploma program prepares students to become knowledgeable and skilled technicians capable of installing, operating, maintaining, and repairing
- **Driving and Mechanics.** This training is offered for those applicants who want to train drivers of the various license grades. The course is conducted in both theoretical and practical
- **Metal Fabrication.** This program equips students with the practical expertise and technical understanding required to join, shape, and fabricate metal components using various
- **Electronic.** This program equips students with the knowledge and skills required for the installation, operation, and maintenance of communication systems and electronic
- **Repairing.** Learners of this course are able to diagnose problems and repair common Electronic Devices like Radio, TV, Phones, Computers, woofers etc. Electronics mechanics
- **Carpentry.** The course will give students a hands on experience in all processes involved in producing specified furniture items
- **Computer studies.** The program covers various fields such as computer systems design, network analysis, database administration, and mobile computing.
- **Cake making and Bakery Management.** The Baking and Pastry program prepares students for career opportunities in bakeries, restaurants, catering, hotels, and other foodservice businesses.

- **Poultry Keeping.** The overall objective of this course is to equip students with knowledge and skills required for poultry production as a business.
- **Fisheries.** Learn the skills to manage and sustainably develop the fisheries industry with **KKA**
- **Crop Management.** The program encompasses a key course of Farm practices and special Projects designed to provide students with daily hands-on practical experience on the farm.
- **Detergent Making.** Making liquid soap and detergent is one of the more lucrative skills in Uganda. Let's get you started! Attend our classes or book a one on one

## Contact

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