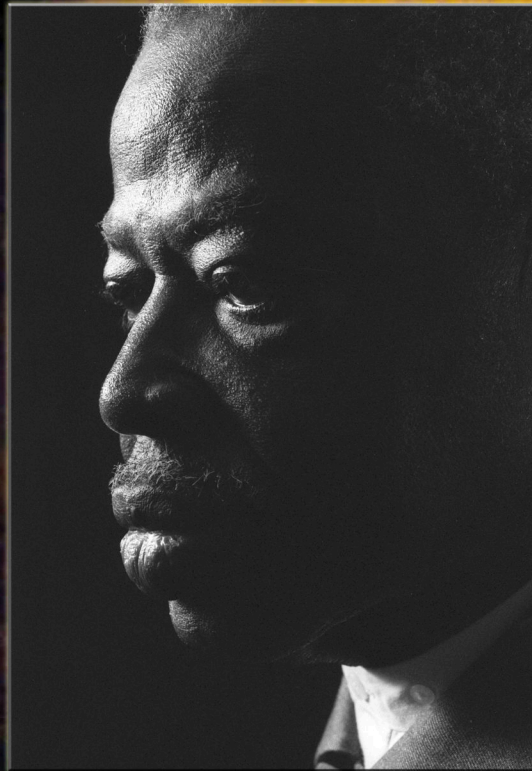


*Celebrating the Life of*

# **DR. YOSEF BEN - JOCHANNAN**

**ORDER OF THE MYSTERIES SYSTEM  
(O.M.S.)**

**HIGH PRIEST: PLUMBED-LEVEL-SQUARE 360°**



**1918 — 2015**

**SERVICE OF COMMEMORATION  
AND THE**

**INITIATION INTO THE DUWAT**

**FRIDAY, APRIL 10TH, 2015 10:00 AM**

**THE ABYSSINIAN BAPTIST CHURCH  
REVEREND CALVIN O. BUTTS, III - SENIOR PASTOR**





## Obituary

Dr. Yosef A. A. (Johannes) ben-Jochannan

Dr. Yosef A. A. ben-Jochannan, husband, father, brother, friend, engineer, linguist, anthropologist, and historian transitioned on March 19, 2015, at the age of 96. "Dr. Ben," as he was affectionately called, was born on December 31, 1918 to a Puerto Rican mother and an Ethiopian father, in the Beta Israel Hebrew community in Gondar, Ethiopia.

His formal education commenced in Puerto Rico and continued in The Virgin Islands and Brazil, where he attended elementary and secondary school. He earned degrees in several disciplines. Throughout his life, he was honored with numerous awards and honors—all well earned—proclaiming his genius and mastery in his transferal of knowledge to his people. Among the schools that bestowed honorary doctoral degrees to Dr. Ben were Sojourner-Douglass College (Baltimore), Medgar Evers College (Brooklyn), and Marymount College (New York.)

He began his educational teaching in Harlem at HARYOU-ACT in 1967. Dr. ben-Jochannan was an adjunct professor (1973-1987) at Cornell University in the Africana Studies and Research Center which at the time was under the direction of Dr. James Turner. He also taught at a number of schools including Malcolm-King College and Rutgers University. In 1977, Dr. Ben accepted an honorary faculty position with the Israelite Rabbinical Academy at Beth Shalom Ethiopian Hebrew Congregation in Brooklyn.

Dr. Ben was a prolific author, writing and publishing 49 books and papers that documented his findings and challenged popular, and often derogatory, notions of Africa and its people. He was a world traveler and his frequent trips to Egypt and the Nile Valley provided him direct access to people, monuments, sacred texts, and primary documents that he used to challenge those derogatory notions. His better-known works are **Black Man of the Nile**, **African Origins of the Major Western Religions**, and **Africa Mother of Western Civilization**.

He was a welcomed lecturer nationally and throughout the world. Central themes in all of his lectures were the majesty of the Black woman through ancient and modern times, and the primary contributions of Nile Valley civilizations to the history of the world.



In the early 1970s, Gil Noble and Dr. Ben became partners in the search for truth. Mr. Noble made a point to report news from the Black perspective and often invited Dr. Ben to the longest-running African American produced television program "Like It Is." He gave Dr. Ben the platform to share this knowledge and this gave birth to his pilgrimages to Egypt where he led thousands of students, teachers, scholars, homemakers and young children.

Dr. Ben is recognized as the last of a distinguished list of Black scholars who devoted their lives to the study of ancient African history; including Ancestors Cheikh Anta Diop, Chancellor Williams, John Henrik Clarke, Ivan Van Sertima, John G. Jackson, Edward Scobie, Asa Hilliard, and Jake Carruthers.

Dr. Ben collaborated and worked closely with Minister Louis Farrakhan, the Rev. Al Sharpton, and attorney Alton Maddox on many national and international concerns of the Black community. He was supported in his efforts by Sister Kefa, Brother Bill Jones (of the First World Alliance), Drs. Arthur and Mary Lewis, and a host of others.

Dr. Ben-Jochannan founded/co-founded and inspired the creation of several organizations which included the Africana Studies Department at City College in New York City, African Nationalist in America (ANIA), The Blue Nile, The Craft, and the Association for the Study of Classical African Civilizations (ASCAC). He held various executive and pertinent positions in several premiere organizations, schools, boards and artistic programs. With Professor George Simmonds he established the Alkebu-lan Foundation, in Harlem. Through that foundation, the two published many of Dr. Ben's early works.

He will be remembered as a brilliant historian, committed to the uplift and enlightenment of the global African community. He will also be remembered as charismatic with an enormous sense of humor. And at the same time, as being straight, forthright, and even confrontational if he detected lies, deceit, or falsehoods.

"Of all our greats, Dr. Ben was accessible, and he took countless scholars, activists, and students to the Nile Valley to make the pages of his books more authentic," shared his colleague, Brother Reggie Mabry. "We saw our own experiences in what he wrote. For that, the Black world is indebted to this Black man of the Nile and his family."

Dr. Ben was receiving specialized care at the Bay Park Nursing Home in the Bronx when he made his transition. A family man, he leaves his children Maria, Selvin, Alfredo, Ruth, Naomi, Collette, Wanda, Dawn, Kwame, Dorathia and Ozema, 40 grandchildren, 48 great-grandchildren and four great-great-grandchildren, to mourn him. Two children, Eleanor and Nnandi, his three wives Jenny, Rosina and Gertrude preceded him in death.



Celebrating The Life of  
**Dr. Yosef ben-Jochannan**

Friday, April 10, 2014  
The Abyssinian Baptist Church  
Reverend Dr. Calvin O. Butts, III – Pastor  
James Davis, Jr. – Director of Music Ministries & Fine Arts

The Shrine of Hunefer

*The Service*

Call of the Drums

Processional Summoning of The Ancestors and Community

Seating of Family

Seating of Elders

Seating of Dignitaries

Welcome and Greetings ..... Reverend Dr. Calvin O. Butts, III

Professor James Small, Officiating

Libation ..... Sister Camille Yarborough

Old Testament Reading ..... Ecclesiastes 11:1-8

Reading from Book of Vindication ..... Professor James Small

**Silent Reading: Obituary of Dr. Yosef ben-Jochannan**

*The Black Man of the Nile and his Family*

Musical Tribute ..... Randy Weston and T.K. Blue - African Rhythms - The Healers

Come to Order

Initiation into the Duat Ritual

The Shrine of Hunefer

Introduction by Kheri Heb and Sem Priest

Purification

Opening of the Mouth

Book of Breathing

The Hall of the Double Maat



Musical Tribute ..... Bobbi Humphrey - Flutist

### Reflections and Tributes

Johannes Family

Dr. Adelaide Sanford

Rudyard Whyte, Legal Guardian

Imam Rashid (Islamic Brotherhood)

Drs. Rosalind and Leonard Jefferies, Jr.

Dr. Georgina Falu

Dr. Molefi Kete Asante

Nation of Islam

Drs. Vera and Wade Nobles

Ashre Kwesi

Dr. James Turner

Anthony T. Browder

ASCAC

Harlem Elected Officials and Diplomats

Reverend Al Sharpton

Proclamations

Solo ..... "His Eye is on the Sparrow" ..... Eunice Newkirk

New Testament Reading ..... Revelations 21:3-4

Eulogy ..... Reverend Dr. Calvin O. Butts, III

### Cavalcade of Cars

Journey Back to the Beginning (138<sup>th</sup> Street to 125<sup>th</sup> Street)

Instruction for Interment *from* Eternity Funeral Services, LLC, Bronx, NY

Interment: Ferncliff Cemetery - Ardsley, NY

### Procession to the Duat

Pallbearers

The Shrine of Hunefer

Sons of Africa (Honorary)





## Johannes Family Statement

Yosef Alfredo Antonio Johannes ben-Jochannan affectionately known as "Dr. Ben," was born on December 31, 1918. He was the son of an Ethiopian father, Kristen ben-Jochannan and Jewish Puerto Rican mother, Julia Matta. As the only child of his mother, he was precocious and gregarious; those attributes remained with him forever. Dr. Ben had an inherent thirst for knowledge and truth, which he sought after and fought for his entire life.

People around the world knew him as Dr. Ben, scholar, lecturer, author, professor, Pan Africanist, and yes, even a Black Jew. They were introduced to him, often, through his many books, including *We the Black Jews*, and *Black Man of the Nile and His family*. Others became acquainted with him through television programs such as Gil Noble's "Like It Is." And some came to know him through YouTube. Eventually, he became known, worldwide, as a respected prominent Egyptologist and cultural anthropologist. Pan Africanists sat at his feet at the First World Alliance lectures and ASCAC conferences. Academic institutions such as Cornell University, City College of New York, Malcolm-King College and others, absorbed his teachings. Yet, in all these capacities and diverse communities, no one knew him like us—Daddy.



That's who he is—Daddy, Granddaddy, Great-Granddaddy, and Great-Great-Granddaddy. He is irreplaceable and noble. We see our Daddy through a different lens than the global community. While we had to share him (most times reluctantly) with the community, we treasured golden moments of family life. What was family life like for his children? Oh well. Here are a few examples. One Thanksgiving, the elders were conversing about something and they kept referring to themselves as Colored and Negro. Daddy couldn't take it anymore; he stopped eating and said "You're Black, Black, Black." We all started laughing. He was always reminding us of who we were. We recall the many days we were forced to listen to the Harlem soap box or street corner speakers, when Daddy and a few of his contemporaries, such as Dr. Carlos Cooks, lectured about the plight of the Black man. While many in the audience would stand listening for hours, shouting waves of support, yelling "that's right," or "tell it," we often thought Daddy was loquacious and taking too long because all we wanted to do was sit down or go home and eat.

As Daddy became more sought after, we had to snatch dining opportunities, often at local Harlem restaurants such as Pan Pans, Teddy Shanty, or Chock Full o'Nuts. Even during those times, we still shared him with those who would interrupt our meal saying, "Oh, excuse me, Dr. Ben, I just wanted to ask you about..." and from there, we knew a conversation of wisdom and knowledge would flow like a river of many waters. Not only did episodes such as these become a way of life, they became our pleasure. Throughout the years, we learned to humbly share him and we knew we were blessed. We also knew others would never see him as we did, and that they could never love him as we do.

It is a great honor to have Dr. Ben as our father, grandfather, great-grandfather, and great-great-grandfather. It is a privilege for us to stand here today, and say, Daddy, you gave all that you had, and what you gave revealed great truths of ancient African civilization, and it changed world history. You connected ancient Egypt and people of African descent and did it in a way that had never been done before. You taught the world the significance and contributions of our ancestors in ancient African civilizations such as the Nile Valley. You gave birth to African minded scholars, intellectuals, and activists who are dedicated to the Cause. And because of you, we have a stronger historical foundation to stand on. You birthed hundreds of spiritual sons and daughters such as Drs. Leonard and Rosalind Jeffries and Dr. James Smalls, but most of all, you birthed us, your children, grandchildren, great-grand children, and great-great-grand children. Daddy, your legacy and contributions are not only universal, they are also eternal. We love and miss you.

Lovingly,

The Family





## **Dr. Yosef Ben Jochannan** **Black Jewish Historian Of His People**

by Rabbi Sholomo B. Levy

The Israelite community mourns the passing of our beloved elder Dr. Yosef Ben Jochannan (1918-2015). He was born in Ethiopia and raised in the village of Gondar according to the customs of the African Jews in that region who are known as Beta Israel. His father was a member of this community and he was named after his grandfather Jochannan. In fact, his name is Hebrew and means Joseph the son of Jonathan. He received a Bar Mitzvah and during his adolescence moved to the Virgin Islands and Puerto Rico before immigrating to the United States. His magnum opus, **We The Black Jews**, was the first major historical work written by us, about us, and primarily for us. As such, Dr. Ben, as he was affectionately known, was our scholar and our champion. Long before his reputation commanded attention on the international stage, he was embraced by Chief Rabbi W.A. Matthew, leader of the Commandment Keepers Ethiopian Hebrew Congregation in Harlem. As a Jew of Ethiopian birth, Dr. Ben dedicated the second volume of **We The Black Jews** to Rabbi Matthew. He was a frequent visitor to many Black synagogues. In 1977, Dr. Ben accepted an honorary faculty position with the Israelite Rabbinical Academy at Beth Shalom Ethiopian Hebrew Congregation in Brooklyn, New York. In that photograph you see him flanked by most of the Black rabbis in New York City including Chief Rabbi Levi Ben Levy and his dear friend from Ethiopia, Rabbi Hailu Paris, who was the leader of Mt. Horeb Congregation in the Bronx. (see photo above) Dr. Ben maintain a close relationship with the Black Jewish community throughout his life.

Dr. Ben's work expanded to explore the Egyptian origins of Judaism, Christianity, and Islam. When asked about this shift in academic focus, Dr. Ben explained that he was attempting to put our identity as Black Jews into its proper historical context as a people and religion that literally came out of Africa. He demonstrated that the Torah and archaeological evidence both supported the claim that All the Hebrews who settled the biblical land of Israel—including Moses, Aaron, Miriam, and Joshua—were born in Africa and raised in Egypt. Zipporah, the wife of Moses, was born in Ethiopia, like Dr. Ben. As Black Jews we have always been comfortable with acknowledging our ancient and modern connections with Africa. The greatest criticism and opposition that Dr. Ben faced came from those who attempted to deny this connection and to remake Judaism into a White European creation. It is important to remember—as Dr Ben so frequently emphasized—"Judaism is not a race." He expressed a pride in the fact that the first Jews would be considered Black if they lived in our radicalized world. Dr. Ben never asserted that all Jews are Black—in fact on many occasions and in much of his writings he refers to Jewish communities all over the world. (continued next page) In latter years, Dr. Ben startled many of his supporters when he began to distinguish his ancestry as a Jew with his skepticism about the existence of God. At one point, he reached the conclusion in his own mind that "God is not a reality." We do not know whether this view grew out of the frustration of fighting religious battles for so many decades or from an academic position that demands logic according to human understanding and does not allow for faith, mystery, or the divine. What we do know is that through all of his transitions he remained a man with a keen intellect and a loving heart.

As millions of Jews around the world prepare to celebrate the Passover, a commemoration of our Exodus from Egypt, we celebrate the life and work of Dr. Ben who meticulously and courageously made two irrefutable points: Egypt is in Africa and African people are Black. Therefore, we who call our Jews must trace our ancestry back to these Black Africans.





Rabbi Levy, Alma John, Dr. Ben, Percy Sutton  
Beth Shalom Ethiopian Hebrew Congregation, 1977

**יזכר אלהים נשמות של עבדיו**

*May God remember the souls of His servants*



# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

## Major Donors

David West of the Indiana Pacers

The Reverend Al Sharpton of the National Action Network

The Association for the Study of Classical African Civilizations (ASCAC)

Black Classic Press/BCP Digital Printing (Printed Programs)

Chester Higgins, Jr (Cover Portrait)

The Shrine of Hunefer "The Craft"

Eternity Funeral Services, LLC

## Honorary Chairs

Ancestor Mr. Gil Noble

Ancestor Prof. George Simonds

Ancestor Bill Jones and Widow Sister Kefa (First World Alliance)

Ancestor John Henrik Clarke and Widow Sister Sybil Clarke

Jarvis Butler, Most Worshipper Master – Shrine of Hunefer

ASCAC, Dr. Mario Beatty-International President

Rudyard Whyte, Esq.





# SPECIAL THANKS

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Dr. Calvin O. Butts, III and The Abyssinian Baptist Church Staff

Michael Hardy, Esq.

The National Action Network

Minister Abdul Hafeez Muhammad, Mosque No. 7 & FOI

Dr. Greg Carr, Chair, Afro American Studies, Howard University

Alton Maddox and the United African Movement Family

Mfundishi Jhutyms Ka n Heru Hassan K Saliim

Heru Ankh Ra Semahj Se Ptah & Shrine of Ptah

The Amsterdam News

Nayaba Arinde, Herb Boyd, Autodidact17

Bay Park Nursing Home (Admin, Staff and Residents)

Sister Camille Yarbrough

Sister LaTrella Thornton

Adisa Makalani

Reverend Clemson Brown

Sister Ayaakofena

Brother Gregory Hardy "M Kahamu"

Queennasira Sekou

Brother Sekou Fortune

Prof. Patrick Delices

Shakka Ahmose

Sister Oforiwa Idawa and Family

SaNeter Studios and Brother Polight

Janie Medina and Robert Garcia Donato

Kemetite Institute of Chicago

Dr. Maulana Karenga and Family

Tyrone Newton

Dr. Georgina Fahu

Shadeesha Sweet Catering

Nabi Faison

The National Black Theater

Anthony T. Browder

Sala Damali, Kumba Collectibles

Duat Proceeding Co-Chairs

Dr. Leonard Jeffries, Jr. • Professor James Small • Brother Reggie Mabry



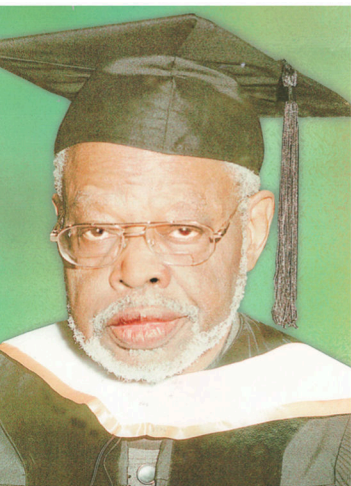
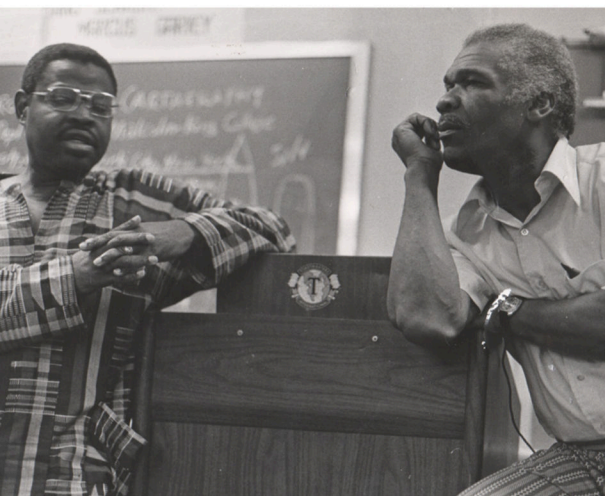
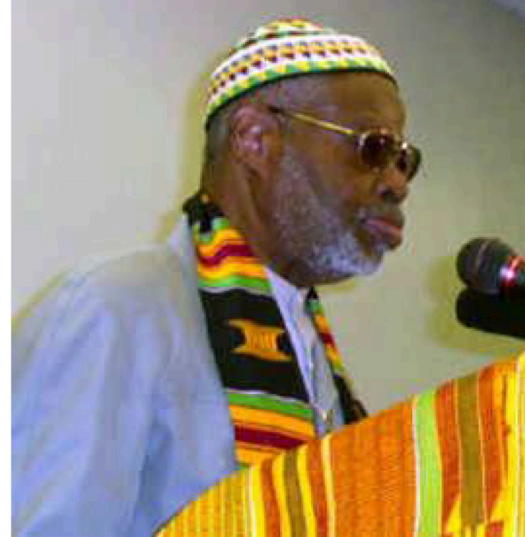








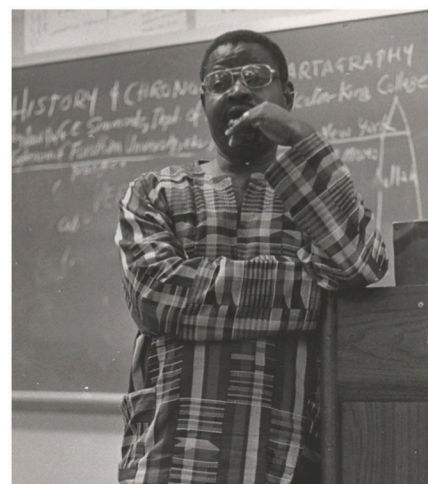
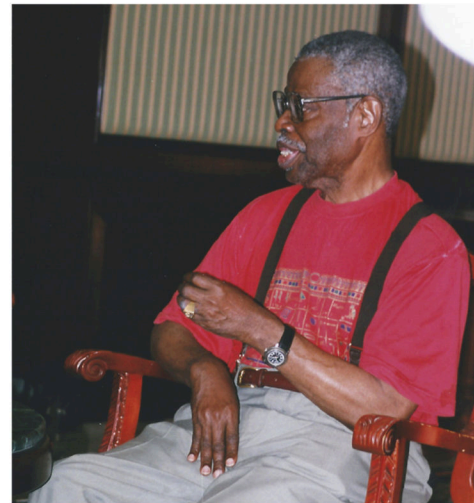
















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“...when you leave this world, if you have done nothing that your children's children will speak about, then you will have died. But if your children must tell their children what you have done, and they must tell their children's children, you shall never die.

I hope I will never die.”

Dr. Yosef ben-Jochannan

