

AFRICUS ERITREA



N. 16

Periodico Culturale dell'Associazione Onlus Italia Eritrea

dicembre 2013





PERIODICO CULTURALE DELL'ASSOCIAZIONE
ITALIA ERITREA ONLUS
Trimestrale - Reg. Trib. di Roma 87/2005 del 9/03/2005
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di Eritrea**



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Istituto di Cultura Eritrea



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Archivio fotografico: Antioco Lusci

Progetto grafico e Stampa: Arti Grafiche San Marcello S.r.l.
Viale Regina Margherita, 176 - 00198 Roma

Abbonamento annuale euro 25,00

Ass.Iter Onlus c/c postale n. 84275023

Finito di stampare: dicembre 2013

In copertina: monaci di Debresina (foto Lusci)

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EDITORIALE

di Lidia Corbezzolo

Carissimi Amici e Carissime Amiche

Nel 2013, anche se a piccoli passi, siamo andati avanti: il Cammino del Nostro Volontariato è sempre in salita. Ma noi siamo fiduciosi nella Provvidenza, nel Vostro Aiuto e nel Nostro Impegno.

Il Progetto Asmara Benefiting Sport Activities procede bene, abbiamo potuto anche, grazie all'aiuto economico della Dott.ssa Gargano far

partecipare l'Eritrea al corso culturale a Nairobi-Kenya.

SIATE SEMPRE CON NOI, "I BAMBINI ED I GIOVANI CI ASPETTANO, NON DELUDIAMOLI, NON FACCIAMO MANCARE LORO IL NOSTRO SOSTEGNO".

Nel segno della Solidarietà e dell'Amicizia Vi auguro Buon Natale e Felice Anno 2014.

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EXPERIENCING DEBRESINA

by *Daniel Semere*



Eritrean Religion History: Eritrea is endowed with several and different historical and cultural monuments that stand witness to the historical wealth of the nation and its people.

Every patch of land has a profound history to narrate and tell; every corner of the country embraces histories within its belly. Eritrea's population is diverse, reflecting many languages, cultures, religions yet living together with harmony under the umbrella of unity. This unity makes the people even stronger with each passing day. Eritreans are also known for their friendly and generous nature, not to mention their unique trait of hospitality, which has been a trademark characteristic for years.

Eritrea is also endowed with natural and cultural heritages that are appealing and attractive to tourists. Beautiful landscapes in the highlands and lowlands, valleys, mountains, hills, and ridges are awe inspiring to anyone who happened to visit those places. The picturesque landscapes, which are seasonally blanketed by green carpets of grass, flowers and bushes, are indeed breathtaking to the viewers and a soothing sight to the sore eyes.

The cultural relics including remains of houses and household utensils to architectural ruins, tracing their times to ancient human civilizations are found in this very land, spreading in every corner of the country. There are different historical places: the Steles of Metera and Qohaito; the monasteries of Debre Sina, Ham and Debre Bizen; Mariam Dearit; the Liberation Struggle trenches in Nakfa; rock paintings in Karura; ancient ports of Zula and Adulis... the list goes on.

The Anseba Region is home to some of the most

prominent historical sites in the country, one of them being the Monastery of Debra Sina.

Situated in the Eritrean highlands, just around 18 kilometers east of the town of Elabered, on the Asmara-Keren road, the Monastery of Debre Sina is a site of pilgrimage by Eritrean Orthodox Tewahdo believers each year in the month of June.

The Debre Sina pilgrimage includes thousands of ordinary Eritrean believers camping for one night in the village of Debra Sina, singing, drumming, chanting and celebrating the Virgin Mary.

The journey from Elabered to Debre Sina is quite an arduous one. One has to climb to the monastery through a steep slope dry weather road; very challenging for buses to go through. During the celebration in which it is common to see more than 300 buses and countless smaller cars making their way to the monastery.

Many more pilgrims also go on foot all the 18 kilometers, climbing the hill and carrying their food and drink. Even though the journey is exhausting, they manage to reach their destination safely. The pilgrims do not only come from inside the country many Eritrean from Diaspora also come here to join the pilgrimage.





I also witnessed the generosity of Eritreans. People, I think they were inhabitants of the area, were offering free water and food to those who were climbing on foot. They welcomed these complete strangers to their house for shelter. Some of the inhabitants were also offering Siwa (traditional drink) to anyone who passed by their doors.

When we reached the monastery, everybody was so relieved to reach at the top of the mountain. Finding a parking lot was another difficult mission. After getting off the buses and cars, everyone starts packing and arranging their things, then walk for about a kilometer to the church, call the time carrying our belongings.

Once again, I observed the kindness of the youth and children of that area. They ask you if you need any help and offer their hands to support to carry your belongings. You feel so proud to be part of this harmonious and loving people. When we reached to our final destination, we could see down to where the buses were parked. There you can't help but notice how all those buses made out that almost triangular shape of Eritrea. Everybody was happy and cheered with amazement.

The pilgrims were singing praising song all the way the 83 kilometer starting from Asmara. The themes of their songs were God to bless Eritrea, peace to prevail, to have peace and love with

one another, the safely to their respective homes and to have a good rainy season. What the mothers were asking St. Mary through their songs all the way were really heart touching and astonishing. Both Muslims and Christians make the pilgrimage to Debre Sina.

The landscape inside the monastery is unbelievable. Every rock you see seems to be carved out by a great architect. The pilgrims continue praying all the way into the night and the net day. Despite the freezing night air, the pilgrims were kept praying and chanting praise hymns. The older, inner part of the church (which unlike many monasteries in Eritrea is open to both men and women) is hewn from rock and, according to local tradition, is 2100 years old. The troglodyte dwellings of the 60 nuns and priests who live there can be visited.

One of the oldest religious sites in Africa, thought to date from the 6th Century AD, Debre Sina could play a great role in reviving the tourism industry in Eritrea. And for that to happen, we have to work hard towards developing the basic infrastructure and especially the road that leads to the monastery. The Ministry of Tourism has to work relentlessly to guarantee easier and more comfortable accessibility to the place, so as to make it a tourist-luring site.



Daniel Semere, is a researcher at Research and Documentation Center, he is also a columnist in Eritrean profile.

ERITREA: A GLANCE AT TRADITIONAL WICKERWORK

by *Yosief Abraham*

Imagine what possibilities the highlanders in Eritrea could have had, if such numerous wickerwork products had not been part of their daily lifestyles?

As it is commonly known, most of the Eritrean families households feature utensils made of the leaves of *arkobkobay* (doum tree), highly prevalent in the Eritrean lowlands. And assuredly, during your first pace to a traditional home in the Eritrean highlands, take for granted the fact that your eyes will witness the existence of *Mesob*, conical shaped wickerwork with platform for holding *injera*, a typical food staple among Eritreans. What really takes me by storm of interest about *Mesob* is the fact that it consummates a lot of time and skill to make.

Meanwhile, the skills to prepare such traditional wickerwork are not easy and are truly laborious. In the initial stage, you expect to take leaves of the doum tree and allow a time till it became fully dried. And this is what you can see in the undiscovered

open markets of Agordat and Keren abundantly. After buying it from the market at affordable price, our mothers take it home. After thinking cautiously, they start to exert their skills in accomplishing such eye-capturing traditional wickerwork.

Therefore, when ready to start the tedious work of crafting, the women soak the *lakba* in water to make it flexible. And some well skilled women use a colored powder which needs to be mixed in hot water. And as a result of this, the leaves get good looking colors known as *kibe tslmi*, certainly.



Another interested researcher, Marcel Claxton, has also detailed about this in his article entitled "Eritrea: The Other New Horizon for Tourists (The Chronicle of Travelers', p.21, 2009). He elaborated clearly that the spiral structure on which the *lakba* is wound is called *eɗni*. One uses an awl to pierce holes in the *eɗni* to make the *lakba* which lastly describe as a complete revolution for producing beautiful patterns.

In addition to this, women skilled in wickerwork also use a tall and slender grass with shining surface, *argebe*, to decorate their products attractively.

Mesbrefet, which we use for fanning a brazier, *agelgl*, another traditional utensil which used to be carried by women to marriage ceremonies to take injera, *mekhombia*, conical lid, sometimes used as a ceremonial hat for dancing by women, are therefore among the products of the laboring skills.

Similarly, in the lowlands, lakha is used to make everything from mat prayers to wall paper, mattresses, carpets...etc. Besides, the fiber is used to make ropes for making cots, sacks, and soft chairs among others.

However, from all products of the wickerwork, *Zembil* is the most common (famous) among Eritrean mothers and it is easy to hear many

patriotic nationals and 1960s youngsters to shower their witnesses about *Zembil*. As the opportunity of education was severe despairing at that time, students had to leave their villages and go studying sheltered in large cities. And surely, the only option they had to answer their food demands of their food is from the contents of what the parents were sending. Whatever the food stable it is, *Zembil* was the handling basketry product.

Besides, *Zembil* played a significant role in the harvesting of Beles, a picky and seasonal wild fruit. Industrious Beles-vendors walk along the steep mountains of the eastern escarpments, starting from Arbe-Rebue till Segheneiti and other surrounding areas, carrying large *zembils* full of this wild fruit hanging from both bends of a wooden pole. By selling this fruit, they earn a lot of money which helps them to cover range expenditures account.



MATEA: THE ANCHOR OF MODERN ERITREAN MUSIC

by *Mewail Weldemichael*

The development of music in Eritrea has its own historical and traditional roots that date back thousands of years with churches and mosques teaching students hymns and chants in choirs from an early age. But one of the most innovative periods in the development of modern Eritrean music took place in the early 60s with the formation of Mahber Theater Asmara (Asmara Theatre Association), famously known as MaTeA.

Had it not been, in part, for MaTeA, Eritrean music would not be where it is today.

One of MaTeA's many goals was to push for an Eritrean cultural and national renaissance. Though many of its stated goals were hindered by excessive censorship by the Ethiopian authorities at the time, it still went ahead and met the challenges head-on and accomplished some incredible feats.

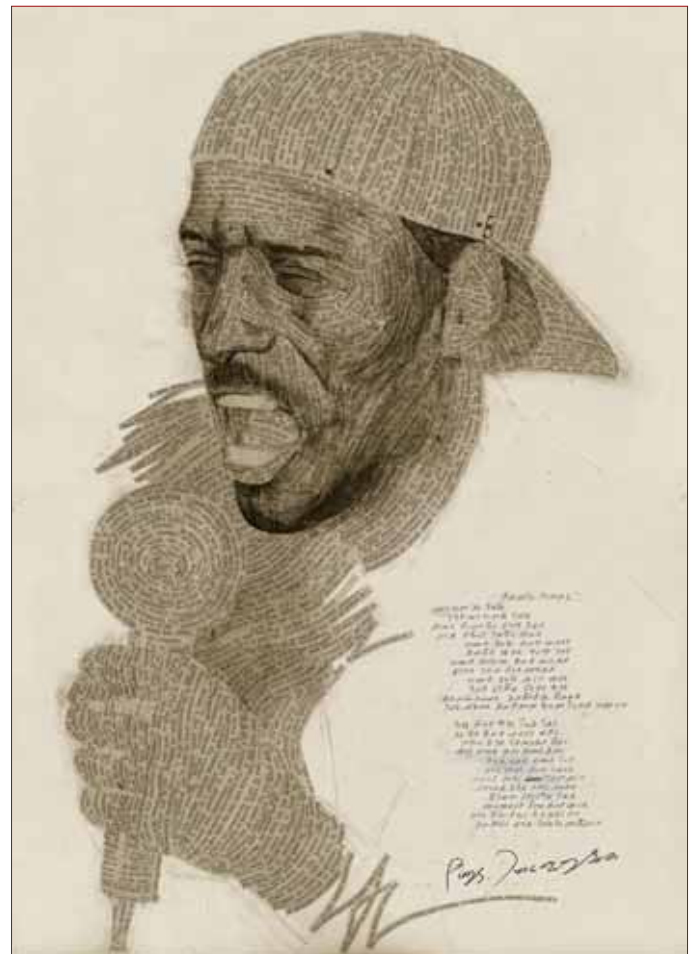
Subsequently, for 15 years following its formation, the association contributed immensely to the sustenance of some of the Eritrean traditional music. At the same time, MaTeA introduced modern musical instruments, particularly to the Tigrigna and Tigre songs, giving rise to some brilliant and timeless musical arrangements. The blending of modern instruments and traditional Eritrean musical instruments in many Eritrean songs meant the arrival of a new trend in the development of Eritrean music.

The association's aim was not limited to playing a role in the revival of Eritrean music. The ultimate goal was to also covertly strengthen the national identity and instill in the youth of the time a sense of duty and responsibility. While embarking on this risky task in what was a highly precarious political climate of those days, the association faced several hurdles

along the way and in spite of the difficult circumstances it realized most of its objectives.

Another milestone in Ma.T.A's history was the empowerment of women artists. The inclusion of women artists in the 60s, in what was otherwise a mainly men dominated field, was another high note of the association that cannot be overlooked. By bringing women artists to its line-up, the association was able to fling the door wide open for Eritrean women in the world of art. In fact, it can be argued that MaTeA managed to mobilize Eritrean women to contribute to the growth of Eritrean arts in general and Eritrean music in particular.

The association's policy of inclusion was not restricted only to Eritreans, but also to Ethiopians, Eritrean-Italians, Sudanese and





Egyptians as well. This certainly is further proof of MaTeA's farsightedness in bringing people together and fostering lasting friendship with other cultures through music.

Moreover, prior to the formation of MaTeA, many of the bands and orchestras were entirely made up of Italians. However, with the formation of MaTeA, Eritreans found a way to showcase their artistic skills and were invigorated to be more and more creative.

Up to that point, many of the songs, plays and other stage performances were exclusively Italian and for Italian-only audiences. As a result, the natives were left with no option of exercising their right to be creative and advance their artistic talents. But with the inception of MaTeA, all that changed when it began staging plays and performances in Tigrigna and Tigre languages.

Having been long deprived of an opportunity to enjoy songs and plays in their own languages, the youth of Asmara were very enthusiastic about MaTeA. They supported the association and that very support from the Asmarini in turn meant more and more was expected from this home-grown association which eventually encouraged the various artists to come up with their own original sound.

Throughout its existence, MaTeA has also produced many talented singers and musicians who eventually became legends in their own right. Giants such as the indomitable Ato Ateweberhan Segid, Yemane Gebremichael (Barya), Alamin Abdeletif, Teberh Tesfahuney, Tewolde Redda, Osman Abdelrehim and many more have left an indeli-

ble mark on the Eritrean musical landscape. Some talented MaTeA bred musicians also played at international venues as they quickly caught up with the 60s and 70s American psychedelic rock and Motown soul music styles. Some of the great MaTeA musicians who soared to fame include the acclaimed guitar virtuoso Tekle Adhanom (Huwket) and keyboard maestro Abdella Abubeker.

This was very evident in the fact that there were several other Eritrean musicians who hailed from MaTeA and in varying degrees contributed to the development of Ethiopian music of the 60s and 70s. Most of the bands in Ethiopia at that time had many Eritrean members.

As an independent association, MaTeA also played a significant role in giving back to the community by taking part in various humanitarian activities, which suggests it also lived up to its social responsibility. For instance, MaTeA contributed a big portion of the proceeds it was collecting by staging shows to charitable organizations such as local orphanages, the school for the blind as well as adult literacy programs.



Given the long history and creative nature of Eritrean artists, the task now for today's budding singers, songwriters and musicians is to strive even higher and advance Eritrean music so it reaches audiences far beyond its borders and in the process, emulate the ideals of MaTeA. And with that, just like what the late Abraham Afeworki always sought to do, they can take Eritrean music to a whole new level.

THE ANCIENT ADULIS

by Daniel Semere



Adulis is situated on the Red Sea coast of Eritrea, 50 km south of the city of Massawa. One of the most important trading center of the classical world, material exported through Adulis has

been recovered from archaeological contexts from Egypt to India. Clearly it was of great importance, yet Adulis remains relatively poorly understood by modern standards. Adulis has mostly been seen as an extension of Aksum, rather than as an integral point in a communications network that stretched from the Nile to the Indian Ocean.

Despite the references to adulis in classical sources, relatively little is known of its origins. In the *Periplus of the Eritrean Sea* Adulis was described as a “a fair sized village”. The author suggests that ships with cargo bound for Adulis had previously moored at “Diodorus Island,” connected to the mainland by a causeway, but that attacks on the port from local *barbaroi* had forced ships to seek an alternative anchorage offshore at “Oreine”. Adulis is referred to as “a legally limited port,” although there has been considerable debate about what this means. Strangely, only three of the ports mentioned in the *periplus* are designated in this way, so trade could clearly take place elsewhere.

The *periplus* refers to adulis as a place where most of the trade took place at some distance away, around the harbours. It sees that large quantities of cloth, fabric, brass, glass, copper and coinage were imported, along with smaller quantities of wine, olive oil, and jewellery as some scholars state. It is generally accepted that

adulis exported tortoise shell, ivory horn, obsidian, and others.

Aksum began to assert a growing influence on the region by the middle of the 1st century CE. Aksum needed access to the sea to ensure its continued success, both politically and economically, and Adulis was doubtless as vital to aksum as Aksum was to Adulis. Whenever Adulis became absorbed into the Aksumite Empire, the city had, by the 4th and 5th centuries CE, become the pre-eminent port of northeast Africa, its harbor filled with ships from Egypt, India, Ceylon, and the Arabian Peninsula. It also features prominently in the 6th century *Christian topography*, written anonymously by an Alexandrian monk.

If the origins of Adulis are difficult to determine, then the decline of the great port is equally problematic. The complete destruction of the site is undeniable, because, unlike many towns of the ancient world there are no upstanding remains, just mounds of debris marking the location of destroyed buildings. It has been postulated that the city was razed by the Arab naval expedition of 640. yet the expedition was described by the caliph as a failure, which is unlikely if the chief port of Aksum had been destroyed. Furthermore, coinage recovered from the site seems to suggest continued occupation until ca. 700 AD. It is true that an episode of fierce burning is visible in the archaeological record, although whether this can be attributed to a single event is unclear. It is possible that political shifts in the southern Red Sea associated with the rise of Islam, combined with the corresponding decline in Byzantine trade networks, forced Aksum to look inward; the fierce fires that burned across the site signaling the death of knell of one of antiquity’s most important ports.

Daniel Semere, is a researcher at Research and Documentation Center, he is also a columnist in Eritrean profile.

MARRIAGE CUSTOMS IN ERITREA

by *Daniel Semere*



In most Eritrean ethnic groups, the head of the family and its breadwinner is the father, who also retains the right to choose future husbands for his daughters. This is not however the case with the

Kunama and Nara communities which give their youngsters their own marriage partners.

In highland Eritrea, where the people mostly live by farming, a girl once married, lives in the village of her husband and cannot own land. In many Muslim dominated regions, polygamy is practiced generally by the rich, who can afford such marriage arrangements.

In almost all Eritrean ethnic groups, it is customary for the families of both the bride and bridegroom to exchange gifts and money. Among the Christians, the dowry given by the father of the bride should surpass the gifts offered by the father of the bridegroom. In other ethnic groups, however, it is the other way around: the father of the bridegroom pays more.

In Eritrea religious institutions play a big role in the preservation of the sacrament of marriage, often seeing to it that the wedded pairs remain faithful to each other. Furthermore, the churches also intervene in social events such as betrothal, divorce, baptism, and giving of birth.

In most Eritrean ethnic groups, the pledge of marriage reveals a lot about the moral principle of the people who look upon mar-



riage as eternally binding and sacred. Nevertheless, Eritrean traditional practice has a custom of marriage by abduction, which most probably is a vestige of past matrimonial communities. The matrilineal system is still prevalent in some communities like the Kunamas and the Naras. In such groups the maternal uncle of the bride has a privileged status in the family. In addition, the bride and the bridegroom live in the bride's village starting from the day they get married.

At present, due to the emergence of internal changes and various external influences as well as the subsequent urbanization and standardization of life patterns, the difference in wedding feasts and marriage customs which were quite discernible in the past are fading away; and so is the spirit of cooperation which had for long existed among various clans.

Youngsters are now free to choose their mates as they please, for at present, they are economically more independent than their older brothers and sisters, who because of lack of proper education were not able to get attractive jobs. The girl, whose sentiments were completely neglected before, is now relatively well placed to voice her concern about her future.



Daniel Semere, is a researcher at Research and Documentation Center, he is also a columnist in Eritrean profile.

A GLANCE INTO THE HOLY MONTH OF RAMADAN ...

by *Meron Abraba*



We are already past halfway into the holy month of Ramadan. Ramadan Kareem to all the Muslim faithful!

Ramadan may imply nothing more than the name of

the holy month of fasting for all Muslims. But, as is the case with all Arabic names, month names have a special meaning and significance. Names usually refer to stories or specific incidents: some are historically documented, while others come from traditions and legacies handed down from generation to generation, but cannot be verified.

Most resources agree that the name Ramadan is derived from the source *ramad*, meaning heat or, more specifically, the intense heat of the sun. This most probably relates to the daytime fasting that Muslims are expected to perform during Ramadan.

Ramadan is a Muslim religious observance that takes place during the ninth month of the Islamic calendar, believed to be the month in which the Qur'an began to be revealed.

Prayers, *tsawm* (fasting), which is one of the Five Pillars of Islam, charity, and self-accountability are especially stressed at this time; religious observances associated with Ramadan are kept throughout the month.

In Islamic belief, the Prophet Mohammed was spoken to by Allah on a date known as Laylat al-Qadr, or the Night of Power. Allah gave Mohammed the teachings of the Qur'an and set

him on his path to becoming a prophet and the founder of the Islamic faith.

All Muslim sects believe that the Night of Power occurred during the month of Ramadan, although there is some disagreement as to the specific date. Still, the event is so much a cornerstone of Islam that the entire month is given over to its remembrance.

Muslims also believe that the Qur'an was sent down to the lowest heaven during this month, thus being prepared for gradual revelation by Jibraeel to the Islamic prophet Muhammad, who supposedly told his followers that the gates of Heaven would be open all the month and the gates of Hell (*Jahannam*) would be closed.

Ramadan is also a time when Muslims are to slow down from worldly affairs and focus on self reformation, spiritual cleansing and enlightenment, establishing a link between God Almighty and themselves by prayer, supplication, charity, good deeds, kindness and helping others.

Since it is a festival of giving and sharing, Muslims prepare special foods and buy gifts for their family and friends and for giving to the poor and needy who cannot afford it, this can involve buying new clothes, shoes and other items of need. There is also a social aspect involved - the preparing of special foods and inviting people for the Iftar meal (the meal to break the Fast).

In many Muslim and non Muslim countries with large Muslim populations, markets close down in the evening to enable people to perform prayers





and consume the Iftar meal - these markets then re-open and stay open for a good part of the night. Muslims can be seen shopping, eating,

spending time with their friends and family during the evening hours.

One of the puzzling things about the month of Ramadan is its migrating calendar.

The fact is that the old Arabic calendar was based on lunar months and solar years. This meant that the year was composed of 12 lunar months, but the Arabs of old times would allow for the shift of the months within the seasons by adding an extra month every three years. This was known as 'postponement', the aim of which was to ensure that the months conformed to both the seasons and the solar year. Most historians give several reasons for 'postponement'. One reason was the commercial and trade considerations of neighboring markets, with the Syrian calendar in use in the Levant and the Coptic calendar in Egypt. Another was to have definite dates for certain rituals, celebrations and festivals (like the yearly pilgrimage, Hajj, and the ancient open Okaz market, for example), allowing these events to take place during specific seasons and climates. Nowadays, however, Muslims observe an 11-day, annual shift of Ramadan within each solar year. This is because Islam forbade 'postponement', considering it to be a violation of the rules of the sacred months. A verse in



the Quran states:

"Postponement (of a sacred month) is only an excess of disbelief whereby those who disbelieve are misled; they allow it one year and forbid it (another) year, that they may make up the number of the months which Allah hath hallowed, so that they allow that which Allah hath forbidden. The evil of their deeds is made fair-seeming unto them. Allah guides not the disbelieving folk."

Many Muslims insist on the local physical sighting of the moon to mark the beginning of Ramadan, but others use the calculated time of the new moon or the Saudi Arabian declaration to determine the start of the month. Since the new moon is not in the same state at the same time globally, the beginning and ending dates of Ramadan depend on what lunar sightings are received in each respective location. As a result, Ramadan dates vary in different countries, but usually only by a day. This is due to the cycle of the moon. When one country sees the moon, mainly Saudi Arabia, the moon travels the same path all year round and that same moon seen in the east is then seen traveling

towards the west. All the countries around the world see the moon within a 24 hour period once spotted by one country in the east.

Each year, Ramadan begins about eleven days earlier than in the previous year.

Regardless of its history or timing, Ramadan remains the month for purifying the spirit, doing good and seeking forgiveness and blessings.

Again Ramadan Kareem!

(This article was compiled from a variety of resources)

Meron Abraha, is journalist and web chief editor for Shaebia.org.

AFAR TRADITIONAL WEDDING

by Meron Abraba



Eritrea is a nation endowed with multi ethnic groups, different languages and cultures living in peace and harmony, each practicing its own different traditional customs. Among these diverse practices is the traditional wed-

ding customs of the Afar ethnic group.

There are three ways of planning a wedding in Afar ethnic group which is mostly similar to different other ethnic groups in the country. Sometimes the parents agree for marriage when a child is born and the male's family chooses a bride and it grows solely by the choice of the man.

The first thing the groom does is after he chooses a bride is informing his father and ask for his approval. Because his father could not only decide his son's wedding, he calls his brothers and then the approval of the wedding is discussed within the group discussions. During these discussions, the father consults his son's choice and asks if the girl is suitable. The uncles also discuss where and which family the bride is from. *If the family is distant one of the groom's uncles suggest it'd be better if the groom would take his daughter.* After long and exhaustive discussions, the groom is asked again about the offer. But since a man can not be deprived of his choice in this culture, he gets his approval from his father and his uncles.

The men give their blessings and pray for the fulfillment of their thoughts. Since the groom's family has discussed in approving the wedding, what comes next is informing the bride's family. Then the family of the groom's father head to the bride's residence.

After welcoming the guests, the bride's father schedules the meeting between the two sides in order to discuss the issues with the uncles of the girl and his clan. In Afar, the clan is informed as a

tradition. But most of the time the decision of the wedding relies on the uncles of the girl.

More than the father, the uncles and the girl's family play a key role when it comes to the approval of the wedding. It is after the approval of the uncles that the mother of the girl goes and tells her daughter that she is going to get married. At this point of time, both the families gather and decide the schedules for the time of the wedding.

After the first step is done, both fathers of the bride and the groom proceed to the administrator of the village in Afar to the Derder or Sultan of the city. The wedding is then officially approved and both sides of the families finalize their legal duties.

It is after this that the exact timing of the wedding is being decided. The wedding could be after several months or even a year. The men then depart after praying for the success of the wedding.

Before three days from the wedding, there is a special ceremony prepared by women of the village known as 'Bookali.' Bookali is prepared on this occasion which is scented with butter, different perfume and leaves so that the bride could put it on her wedding day. Different programs are prepared for the ceremony the women prepare several days before the actual ceremony begins. They dig a small hole and put their container made of clay in the hole for three days. This specific norm has passed through six generations; it's believed to be a good omen for the wedding if the women who participate in the making of the perfume butter for the bride are still married. That way the smell of the perfume butter is believed to be stronger so that the bride could put it on her body on the wedding day. The women are dancing different songs praising the girl and her family.

During this ceremony the mother of the





girl breeds the girl in two or three corner and the girl hides in her friend's house. She hides there for four to five days before the wedding. The girl occasionally comes to her house covered in order to assist her mother with in the household. The reason why the girl hides is to avoid exposure to

different invitees for the different ceremonies even before the wedding day.

The girl returns to her bed room just two days before the wedding day along with her friends and her friends sing different songs for her. After this, a man comes to the girl and moves her to the left and right as a sign of testing the girl's endurance. This tradition is known as *Niksoow*.

The girl could not stand from where she fell the whole day until her friends come in the afternoon to help her prepare for the wedding.

The person who does her hair for the wedding should also be some one married.

The house for a honeymoon of the Afar wedding is prepared by the bride's family. It is chosen to be further a way from the main house of the bride. Therefore, the villagers gather to help build the house after a message is sent early in the morning through the Banda, already made of antelope's horn.

The eve of the wedding is then celebrated in the house of the Derder or the Sultan. The villagers then make for the beginning of signal of the Derder at dawn by the Banda to precede the wedding ceremony.

Everyone then goes and gathers in the house of the Sultan Abdelqadir Dawd which is beautifully decorated by the women in the village. This gathering is to handle occasions to the members of Feima. With in the Feima, all the members of the legislation above the age of 15 which serve as the main assistance of the Derder in the rules and regulations of the Sultanate.

It is mandatory that the Feima is informed about any wedding ceremony in the villages just a day before. The Feima then officially decides if the wedding is going to be held or not. They could ban the wedding if the father of the bride or groom has convicted any crime or not abide by the legislation of the Sultanate or see intact punishment can be imposed upon the families.

This wedding has already been approved by the Feima. So both the families are only waiting for the beginning of signal to begin the wedding ceremony. At this time the groom chooses two of his best men and the head of the Feima chooses two for the groom's best men during the wedding.

The Dekar, a traditional drum is played for the honor of the groom and elders are presented with different food provided by the groom's family.

The women wearing glittering cloths with their silvers, gold as well as other decorations on their hair, play and dance until dusk. Different traditional dances such as *Denkalit* and *Malebuwa* play during this time.

On the wedding day, the bride eats before she attends the wedding for there is no time for her well of being by the legal procedures of the wedding.

On the groom's side, one of the best men gives the groom a hair cut and prepares a head of washing his body. The groom also washes his hair with an egg after a hair cut. One of his trusted men encloses the groom and ties a stick on his hand, known as the *Ketel*, which is not allowed to put it on the ground. After this, the groom goes out to eat a special food prepared by his mother-in-law. The special food is known as *Ara-Iskwada*, which is made of milk, butter, rise and different spices.

It is said that this food is specially prepared for the strength of the groom and nobody starts to eat before he does. The groom is said to be even above his father forty days after he's washed with *Hanna*. Similarly, the bride prepares for the wedding while her hair is being breaded while different plays and dances are taking place.

The perfume butter prepared and buried in the hole for three days is opened and put in different containers on the wedding day. Then the bride makes for her groom large dawn covered after going through all the ceremonies prepared for her.

