



Jad' al-Nar

Other names: **Ki Qadeera** (موطانا), **Moutaga** (كي قديرا), **Sai Bonj** (ساي بونج), **Karimba** (كارمبا)



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Domain

SOCIAL PRACTICES, RITUALS & FESTIVE EVENTS
Ritual

COMMUNITY GROUPS AND LOCATION

Community groups

The Qamaz groups of the historical Kingdom of Keili in the Ora region southwest of Karmak, the Buwak group, the Ajama group, Fasengi Karmak and Qaysan, the Adouk group, Shali southwest of Karmak, the Hamaj in the Qari region, the Kulak group, three pillars from the Anqasna, Baw, Tayqo, and Famifadmia, the Berta Al-Watawita, Bani Shakou Al-Dawla – Blue Nile Region.

Practitioners

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Purpose / Use

Harvest festivals are popular beliefs associated with combating hunger and disease, social solidarity linked to heritage.

These celebrations have interpretations that have become an integral part of the beliefs, customs, and traditions of the groups that practice them, so they have become a habit that tribes in the Blue Nile region cannot abandon at all.

Knowledge / Skills

Each group of these groups has its own organization for the arrangements of the celebration and individuals responsible for specific tasks and specific timings. There are slight differences in this organization, but it generally exists and is adhered to meticulously.

Transmission

Practice and the continuity of the annual celebration.

Tools, Equipment, Services

Many tools are used in this diverse grand celebration, starting from costumes, accessories, swords, scabbards, masks, rattles, shoes designed for this purpose, headbands, crowns, and some animals that are slaughtered such as chickens, young camels, bull horns, seeds from the old harvest, alcoholic beverages, meals, musical instruments like the rababa and flutes. Even the mountains and specific rocks in known places play a role in completing the rituals of this majestic celebration.

HISTORY

A historical celebration with ancient roots among the Blue Nile region groups that does not have a specific beginning, but has been present since the existence of the indigenous populations.

INTRODUCTION

The "Gadaa al-Nar" ritual is one of the distinctive rituals of the Blue Nile region, with its various ethnic and tribal components, differing slightly in names, dances, and customs among these same groups. For example, in the Keili region, part of these celebrations involves burying the symbol of the ritual, referred to as "Abmumbum," with the timing of the burial determined by a person called Khudia. As for the dances, there are many dances practiced by each ethnic group during this grand celebration that lasts a whole month. The most prominent are two dances: the first is called Kishli, performed by men only as they gather in a wide circular formation bare-chested, wearing shoes made of sequined or embroidered tree bark. Inside the circle is the singer who chants his songs with a special rababa that plays a known role in this celebration, along with rituals of descent known as Singa Qadeera, and the holders of inherited titles including those from that region. The second dance is specific to women and is called lbumbum, with the woman's head uncovered during the dance; if she covers her head, she is punished according to the prevailing custom, which includes many fines. This celebration takes place on a wide ground where a large number of the region's residents gather, with men carrying swords and sticks while women cheer loudly to ignite enthusiasm and joy among the attendees, many of whom have traveled long distances to participate in these rituals, which represent the most important event throughout the year. It is one of the most important rituals practiced by the inhabitants, involving rain, harvest, and blessing of agricultural production. Although these celebrations take place in all regions of the region, each area has its own unique style of dance, arrangement of celebration segments, and naming conventions. Some tribes call it "Hawki," while others call it "Abmumbum," "Abunbunq," "Manqa," "Abaru," and other dances.

The rituals of this annual tradition begin in October and last a full month, filled with songs and dances, culminating in throwing stones into the blazing fire to drive away evil spirits from the area according to the beliefs of these communities. The Gadaa al-Nar rituals last for a full month, and it is mandatory for the absentees to attend, or their relatives must perform the Gadaa al-Nar ritual on their behalf. Each Gadaa al-Nar ritual has a responsible elder overseeing it, with male and female followers, as well as guards protecting them throughout the period of the ritual and its ceremonies. This position of the ritual elder is hereditary, so if the elder passes away, their eldest sons or daughters inherit the position, and a seven-day coronation ceremony is held for the new elder, guarded by seven individuals, wearing green shawls and elaborately decorated attire in green and red colors, seated on a wooden chair holding a staff and spear, with guards behind them protecting the elder's house for seven days. After the coronation ceremony, people come to the new elder, chanting "Mangal, Mangal," meaning king or beloved. As they recite the greeting words, they place their hands on their chests and do not shake hands with the elder, but instead remove their shoes as a sign of respect. At the end of the ritual month, men gather at the elder's house to perform the ritual known as "Fak al-Ada," where they collect all the tools used during the rituals in one place and burn them. When these tools are burned, it marks the end of the ritual month, and the elder relinquishes all their authority, as do their seven followers, and power is restored. The elder and their followers then carry torches and the elder starts counting from 1 to 7, throwing a lit torch towards the east, followed by the others. In this case, the singing style known as "Haythali" is performed with the dance, consisting of enthusiastic war songs that men perform while holding their swords and sticks, moving around as if fighting an enemy. They then return to where the women are gathered, welcoming them with cheers and songs. At the end of the Gadaa al-Nar ritual, everyone returns to the area in front of the elder's house, singing. Here, a new style of singing called "Abutu Onq Gouri" is introduced, with people wearing new clothes, women adorning their hair, and staying up all night in this manner. On the final night, participants dance until dawn, then head to the edge of the village to throw fire, signaling the end of the festivals after casting away evil spirits with fire. This action is accompanied by everyone shouting and women cheering, running as if chasing something frightening to the outskirts of the village and throwing stones to drive it away, believing they are warding off hunger, poverty, disease, and anything harmful to the tribe.

Cultural Value:

It contains a vast heritage of various cultural groups, based on dance, singing, supplication, and invocation to ancestors, thanking the heavens for the new harvest, combating hunger and disease. It also preserves identity from erasure, culture from assimilation, and language from extinction, alongside religious and spiritual expression characterized by gratitude to the provider Lord, the giver of goodness, rain, and prosperity. It also involves renewing the social contract between tribes, offering opportunities for forgiveness, reconciliation, and tolerance among all adversaries, and opening a new chapter characterized by brotherhood and advocacy.

Associated Practices:

The harvest festivals include dancing, singing, coronation rituals, whipping with a whip, beating of brass, social visits, sermons, and weddings. During the harvest festival or "Jid' al-Nar," visits are made to the families in the village to offer condolences to those who have lost loved ones, bless weddings, and pray for the recovery of the sick. The day after "Jid' al-Nar," people gather to discuss important matters, announced by the beating of brass to gather everyone. All the tools used during the festival are collected and some are kept while others are disposed of.

Cultural Expressions

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VIABILITY

Threats:

Forced population displacement wars through dams.

Natural Resources used

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