



**Future Life
and
Occult Beings**

Mikael Hasama Raka

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CHAPTER ONE

SOCIETY AND CULTURE

SOCIETY

Before the Italian occupation, Eritrea was divided into several free districts maintaining different names. For the sake of unity, Italy gave it the name of Eritrea, after the Roman term for the Red Sea, *Mare erythraem*. Eritrea has an area of roughly 119,000 square kilometres. Its 800-kilometer-long coastline stretches from Ras Dumeira in the south to Ras Kassar in the north. Eritrea is divided into three main zones: (a) highland, (b) middleland, and (c) lowland, with over 220 large and small islands in the Red Sea.

Its peculiar geographical conformation favoured free mass migration into the region, from various directions, before the colonial era, and, consequently, different races of people have either passed through or settled here in the past. Its strategic position as a base for communication with the outside world attracted the attention of great powers at all periods, and the country has always been the victim of its geographic location.

The present population is the mixture of various ethnic groups of Semito-Hamatic origin that came from different parts over the centuries, settled in the country, and mingled together. They profess Christian and Muslim religions and have nine different languages, the mostly widely used of which are Tigre and Tigrigna, of Gheez origin, a Semitic language.

When the Sabeian ethnic group first came from Yemen to Ethiopia in about 600 B.C. they formed two separate groups, called Habashat and Agazian. According to scholar Luca dei Sabelli, the Habashat occupied the present Tigray territory. The region was called Axum from the name of its capital city. The Agazian settled in the region north of Semejana that is today's Eritrea. At the beginning, Eritrea's name was "Behere Agazit," country of the Agazian. The Agazian were intellectually gifted and gave the country script, literature, and culture. Both Eritrea and Tigray originally spoke Gheez, which is the language of the Agazian. The Ethiopian alphabet also is Gheez, and Ethiopia is the only country in Africa possessing its own script, consequently, Behere Agazit Eritrea is the cradle of the Ethiopian culture.

In about 750 A.D. the kingdom of Axum was invaded by barbarous Beja tribes from the Sudan and devastated. Eritrea and Tigray lost contact after the Beja invasion, except for the southern districts bordering with Tigray. They had religious and cultural ties and because of this had contact. In due time the two regions took the names of Tigre and Tigrigny. The Beja tribes went farther into the interior of Ethiopia and settled in Begemedir (Beja Medir), land of the Beja, giving the area their name.

Tigrigny remained united under the rule sometimes of a king, other times of a prince. Tigre (Eritrea) first split into five small states. Scholar El Yacobi, who visited Eritrea in A.D. 872, mentions the name of the following states in the country:

1. the state of Tankisk;
2. the state of Belgin;
3. the state of Bazen;
4. the state of Jarin;
5. the state of Kita's

The geographical location and short history of each state is described by A. Paul in his book, *History of the Beja Tribes of the Sudan* (Cambridge University Press).

This period was followed by the formation of Belew principalities in the territory. They established (a) the principality of Serae under the rule of Dejatch Debul; (b) the principality of Barca, ruled by Amir Kunno; (c) the principality of Tsadzaga (*Tsadzaga* means "white capital" in the Tigre language); and (d) a small kingdom extending from Swakin to Samhar known as the state of Tankish. The Belew appear to have been racist oppressors. They married women of other races, but refused to marry their own daughters to people other than their Belew brothers.

Many years later, new immigrants came from all directions and settled in the territory. Semites from Asia Minor, Aghew from Ethiopia, and Meroni and Jaalen from the Sudan entered the country. The Belew rulers of Serae were expelled by the Adcheme Melega toward the end of the thirteenth century. Jaalen from the Sudan conquered the Barka region and expelled the Belew leaders, who moved to Massawa and later became the Naibs of the Turks. The Tsadzaga principality resisted the conquest of new immigrants and annexed Serae under the leadership of Ras Andehaimanot of the Belew Ad Kullu Section.

The kingdom in the area between Swakin and Samhar disappeared, giving way to the formation of the state of Almada, which comprised most of the territory of Sahel and had Nacfa as its capital.

A further change took place, and a new system of governing the country came into being in about the thirteenth century. This time, the territory was split into small free districts that although tiny, were strong and, in comparison to their predecessor states, survived for many years.

Hamasien and Serae formed one district under the rule of the Bahar Negassi of Dubarua (Doba Ruba). This was, politically, the most important district in the territory. Akele-Guzai rejected the rule of the Bahr Negassi and remained independent, but was internally divided into several small free districts.

The pretenders of Tsadzaga fought over the title. A certain Habsullus, who belonged to one of the warring families, opposed the rule of the leader in office and went to the king of Gondar to seek help of the king to overthrow his opponent and take command. He got this help. But it was not as easy as he thought, and it took him several years before he could be received by the king.

By chance, the king needed an able man to entrust with some delicate tasks. Somebody suggested the name of Habsullus, whom the king interviewed, but, at first sight, the king was skeptical about Habsullus's ability. However, he tried him and found him to be very capable. The king bestowed on Habsullus the title of Abieto (Prince), gave him his daughter in marriage, and proclaimed him ruler of Tsadzaga.

Several free districts were established in the regions of Keren, Sahel, Barca, Gash, and Setit. These had no contact with Tigrigny; nor were they troubled by the Sudan. Consequently, they enjoyed freedom more than the other districts of the territory.

The Eritrean culture is essentially the same throughout the country, though differences have come about as a result of different religious influences. The Christian Bible and the Islamic Koran have certainly modified the original culture in significant ways.

Society is the way in which men live together, ordering their lives according to law and custom, helping each other, and working together for common alms. It is obvious that since the beginning men found it necessary to organize themselves in societies and defend each other against anything that endangered the bodily or moral welfare of the society.

Such organisation became more efficient with the advent of Christianity and Islam, which taught people to cooperate and work together in the interest of the human society, detesting intimidation, terror, and oppression and pursuing peace and love.

With time, selfishness prevailed and men forgot about altruism; the strong oppressed the weak and strived to accumulate wealth, often at the expense of the poor. These wealthy classes survive today in social and economic blocs that threaten to destroy the world.

Now the situation is such that both modern capitalism and communism are not in the interest of human society anymore. Capitalism, however, is preferable, if only because it contributes to relieve the hunger, misery, and torture of the millions of people in the world under the yoke of communism (through sending food and medicine and helping to improve health and education) and also because in capitalist countries people are free to defend their fundamental rights and can resort to the laws against abuse. Unfortunately, even capitalism is not a great help to modern life. The gap existing between rich and poor in some capitalist countries is too big to be neglected. This, naturally, creates political unrest, and capitalism gives way to propagation of Marxism and consequent trouble, followed by mass genocide and exodus everywhere in the world.

The two superpowers, the United States and the Soviet Union, are the principal exponents of two difficult and evolving ideological systems that are fundamentally antagonistic and show no sign of converging. Their competitive animosity for world leadership increases the danger of deterioration of peace in the world.

Leaders of developing countries could serve the interests of their people better by following a moderate, neutral political line. It would be wise for them to be non-aligned with friends among both NATO and WP (Warsaw Pact) countries and to follow moderate economic plans at home, with modifications and improvement in a gradual way, without seizure of private property or blanket nationalization. Now is the time to discard communism and

extreme capitalism and choose a form of socialism that molds the best of both to help and benefit everyone. Only then can harmony prevail and peace be achieved.

Eritrean social life is simple and straightforward. The land is common property of the people and is distributed equally among the members of the community. Also, building plots are equally allocated to the people concerned. There is no individual large land ownership in the country.

Eritrean society guarantees freedom of worship, assembly, and expression of opinion, the right to ownership, free enterprise, the right to elect leaders by popular suffrage, and the right of political opposition. Eritrean society is not an artificial, scientific form of society; it does not promulgate propaganda for its champions to achieve power, but is a natural society that serves the people. Mutual assistance is a matter of pride, and hospitality is a social duty. This society recognizes equal rights and duties, respects family honour, and discourages immorality. It offers a good foundation on which to build modern society in the interest of the community.

The provision of aid and assistance to needy people is, primarily, the responsibility of the next of kin. Anybody who abandons his parents or other relatives who need his help is disgraced in the eyes of the community and considered a bad element of society. Helping one's own next of kin, therefore, is not only a social duty but also a moral obligation, and refusal to fulfil it impairs the negligent relative's prestige and reputation within the society.

Assistance of next of kin does not absolve the community of its duty towards its members. Helping the poor, disabled, and old is a duty, as is hospitality. People eat and drink together, help one another financially in the celebrations of wedding and funerals, and share the joy and sadness of each occasion.

Giving the poor economic help is a matter of pride. Aid comes to needy people through various ways and means. They receive valuable assistance, consisting of ploughing, weeding, harvesting, and lending oxen. Handicapped and poor people that for some reason or another cannot work and earn a livelihood visit the farms at harvest time and ask for help while the cereal is still on the threshing floor. Thus they collect a certain quantity of cereal to support them. Pack animals are lent out for a short time and specific task, free of charge. Meals are eaten together, and members of family and guests, if there are any, eat from the same dish.

A wealthy family does not completely forget their poor neighbour. They try to help him within the limits of their means. The reason for this, in general, is religious--that is, to please God--and this is most important. But there are also social reasons, because the rich who do not help their poor relatives or neighbours that need their assistance are rejected by society and this affects the prestige and personal dignity of defaulters.

Custom requires the next of kin to take care of orphans and administer their property, if they have any, but if this fails to work out for any reason other than negligence or indifference on the part of the next of kin, the chief intervenes and tries to convince somebody from the community to take care of the orphan. Sometimes the next of kin marries the orphan's mother, and this makes it easier to solve the problem.

If a man other than the next of kin marries the woman, he automatically assumes the care of the children for the whole period of their childhood. So orphans, in one way or another, receive assistance from society and are never left to their fate.

Allocation of agricultural land and building plots is carried out by committees appointed for the purpose by the people concerned. They are called *Shumagalle*, or committee of elders, and are chosen by the people from amongst the most influential elders of the village. They are appointed for a number of years, though the length of the period of office varies according to local arrangements.

Distribution means an equal share for all, although the allocation system differs from district to district. In some districts, land is allocated for a fixed period of time; e.g., seven years. On expiration of the allocation period, farmers return the land to the land committee, which prepares a new list and redistributes it by lot, which means that land may often change hands. This is an unproductive system and should be changed. Because of the temporary nature of land ownership, farmers cannot, rationally, improve the soil.

Before marriage, a man is considered dependent and works on his father's farm. He acquires the right to a share of the land after marriage, when his father takes him to the committee of the village and pronounces the following formula: "This is my son, whom I brought up. He is now married and emancipated and becomes your son. I brought him to you so that you may provide him with land to cultivate and land to build a house on." The committee includes the son's name in the list for the next allocation, and, in due course, he receives the amount of land he deserves according to the system of the village.

In some districts, the land is divided according to *enda*, or sections of tribes. Each section then divides its share amongst the various individuals who possess the land permanently with right of inheritance. But individual ownership of the land is restricted to using the land for farming purposes only. After the crops have been gathered and the cereal removed, the grass, water, and wood remain at the disposal of the community. In other words, everything that grows spontaneously is considered common property of the people. In lands owned by the state, allocation is carried out by cultivation chiefs appointed for the purpose.

Before colonialism, in the areas where the population was predominantly nomadic, the land belonged to the local population. After the occupation, the Italian government declared all unoccupied land to be state domain, allowing the people occupying the land to retain it for their own use.

It is customary for the people to help one another in weeding and harvesting of crops. The farmer who needs help invites his neighbours to come on an appointed day and specifies the kind of work he wants them to do. They go in groups, each with his own tools, fitting the kind of work specified. They work the whole day together, and such assistance is free of charge. The host provides only food and drink for that day.

Dwellings also are built by collective efforts. The interested person announces his decision to build a house in the village and invites the neighbours to lend a hand. They come with their tools and carry out the work, after allocating the different tasks involved among the people according to their particular skills. The host serves them with food and drink.

EDUCATION

Education, as such, was unknown in yesteryears in the country, and people could not think of it and its benefit. Only the few children who had a religious vocation attended church and Mahad schools, and here they received a rudimentary education.

After the occupation, the Italian colonial government opened some schools in the urban areas, limiting the attendance for Eritreans to four years. The rural areas were neglected by the government. There were, however, mission schools in a few villages. When the Italians left the country in 1942, after about sixty years' occupation, there was not a single Eritrean graduate or skilled person in any sort of trade.

Proper education was started by the British administration which increased the number of urban schools and widely extended education in rural areas, elevating the classes to middle-school level. Evening schools were opened in Asmara, where young as well as adult people could attend classes and improve their knowledge.

After the British left Eritrea in 1952, most of the schools in the rural areas were closed down, but schools in the towns were improved and raised to secondary level. The Ethiopian government built secondary schools in Asmara, Keren, Agordat, Adi Ugri, Decamere, Adi Kaieh, and Massawa. Private institutions like Comboni, La Salle, Saint Mary, Santa Famiglia, the Evangelical Mission, and the Arab Community established secondary schools and facilitated mass education.

A university in Asmara was, apparently necessary, so Degiatch Hadgu Ghiliagabir, Degiatch Zerom Kifle, Degiatch Fessahaie Tesfamikael, and Fitawrary Mikael Hasama Raka submitted a petition to the Vatican for financial aid to build a university in Asmara. This was handed over to the "Nunzio Apostolico," who was on a visit to Asmara in 1959. The proposal was favourably considered and the Santa Famiglia Institution entrusted with the job of building the university, which was completed and started operating in the 1970s.

Although it received the approval of the emperor and the grant of \$40,000 aid per year, the Ministry of Education refused to recognize the university and it remained unrecognized until the fall of the former regime.

The Swedish Evangelical Mission established and ran a school for the deaf and dumb at Keren that took care of a number of young people. The Swedish government sponsored a program to partly finance the construction of elementary schools in Ethiopia in order to facilitate elementary education where such schools did not exist. A share of the money was allotted to Eritrea, but, for obvious reasons, only the southern districts of the country have benefitted from the program. For the last twenty years, education has been abandoned and progress set back in the western-province districts, except in a few urban centres.

An American association opened a school for orphan children under the name of Lalemba School and also built a small hospital in Keren town. A school for the blind was built and put into operation in Asmara. The Eritrean humanitarian Ato Abraha Bahta had left in his will enough money to finance the building of the school.

In 1954, at the time of federation, a British advisor to the Department of Education in Eritrea, having observed the behaviour of the students, predicted that if an adequate number of jobs was not created for students leaving school within five years, the country would be troubled by political agitation that could later develop into revolution. The advisor was not a prophet sent from God, but he spoke from experience, and what he said came true.

The government neglected the political importance of the young, as if to say, "Let them inherit the problem their fathers had" (poverty). No jobs have been provided, and, consequently, the young aware of the right to live a decent life started, in 1958, an underground political movement known as Group Seven.

During the last three decades, education has been expanding in the country, bringing along with it social, economic, and political problems. Young people leaving school hate peasant life and want to dwell in towns, find jobs, and improve their standard of living.

In developing countries where there are no industries and economic plans, it is impossible to find employment for so many graduates and dropouts and the result is trouble and law breaking, followed by political agitation and antigovernment activities. The problems young people face as they pass from adolescence to adulthood are intertwined with problems of overall national development, and the solution could be to invest capital and create the many jobs that are needed.

The government's primary duty is not and should not be to punish criminals, but to prevent crimes. This could be done by studying the problems deeply and creating jobs for the young. Acquainting the young with rural life and encouraging them to live in the countryside and take up farming could partly solve the problem. Skill-training programs for out-of-school youths are necessary to equip them with occupational skills as they move towards adulthood.

Preparing agricultural programs to teach the young modern farming techniques and to orientate them on farming can help them to become productive farmers. But training alone is not effective measure to relieve the young from economic distress. It must be accompanied by related support services, like government loans, technical aid, supplying raw materials and farming equipment, marketing, et cetera.

Most important is, however, to persuade the young to accept rural life, and, for this purpose, they must be given lessons on agriculture and its importance. Train them to get acquainted with rural life, found agricultural cooperatives and clubs, exchange reciprocal visits among different agricultural associations, and make tours of modern farms in the various development stages and give them persuasive lectures.

Visits to important places such as villages, rivers, irrigation schemes, forests, and other rural settings should be included. In other words, the purposes should be fostering love of the land among the young people and enabling them to understand the importance of the soil, plants, and animals, to grow the necessary food, and live a healthy life.

Arranging for frequent meetings among clubs to organize lectures, sport and farming products competitions, and a series of visits to important farms and agricultural research stations is another example of what can be done. In each case, the object would be to enlarge members' knowledge, especially of soil fertility and animal husbandry. The essential matter is

to link up knowledge with what can be seen and touched, so that they are educated without the boredom that has so often become associated with the essentially exciting learning process.

Education is systematic intellectual and moral training of the young in school with consequent development of character and mental power. It is the practice by which men nurture their children in the way of living that they consider best. The purpose is to inculcate truth as a habit, to lead children to the enjoyment of good things. Education sharpens men's morality and gives them the chance to be good thinkers.

To be a good thinker, a man must appreciate the power and value of thought. He must be prepared to think for himself and not to appropriate for himself the thought of other people. At the end of his thinking, he should have the courage to form his own opinion.

In olden times, providing educational activities in the country was the job of religious institutions where everything done in school was closely linked to belief in God and the development of a righteous life. But this does not mean that scientific attitudes are not necessary to education. On the contrary, they are helpful. Yet the function of public schools cannot be completely expressed by the educational values of evolutionary naturalism.

It is necessary for science to be supported by democratic educational institutions rooted in social traditions. This is to say that moral education is extremely important and necessary to create good citizens. Politeness and respect of men and their property are important factors in men's lives, and a democratic country wants clear-sighted citizens, because liberty is impossible without thinking men and freedom of expression. Moral education of children is important in order to solve basic social problems, because morality is considered to be the articulation of social principles necessary to living together with others, especially insofar as justice is concerned.

Morality must be used to suggest arguments and resolve differences of opinion, and the purpose of moral judgement should be to yield choices on which all reasonable men should agree.

Citizens bring out the best that is in them by working together for the common interest and progress under the guidance of a government, but development of a society is possible only in a democracy--that is, a state governed by the majority votes of its subjects.

Most of the states of the world today prefer and adapt one-party government, because they think that persistent opposition is a form of political sabotage detrimental to the efficient conduct of public affairs.

But "democracy" is an expression to imply rule for and by the people. Consequently, in a democracy the existence of organized opposition is essential to check government activities and curb possible abuse of the authorities.

Handicrafts and art are other important matters to teach the young--development of paintings, pottery, weaving, iron- and wood-work, gold- and silver-smithing, et cetera. Improvement of training in music and musical instruments and expanding of sports such as football, tennis, Ping-Pong, shaqui, alla, and all types of physical training are also vital. The

social environment is an influential agent in a child's development, and the need today is for order, unity and coherence in this intellectual life to develop a genuine culture, which is the ultimate goal of all human endeavours.

It is important for the educated to know that their knowledge ought to be shared by all, and with this in mind, they will contribute to the education of the society and not just keep their knowledge for themselves to improve their position in life. It is necessary to teach the people the essence of vital knowledge so they learn something useful. Ignorance is the enemy of mankind and cause of poverty and disease.

Real education starts in the home, community, and national schools, which are the basis for developing knowledge. How can one know and develop one's country if not by studying its past and present history? Educating a man means to develop his talent and render him capable of helping himself and his society.

The task of educators is to educate the people to be good citizens, altruistic and helpful to society. The object of education is to integrate and promote unity. The attainment of unity is human beings' highest goal, and in order to become unified and integrated persons, we must know what man truly is.

Conditions can be improved by making essential knowledge available for and applicable by the people through an effective political system in which the people themselves are enabled to participate.

Self-government, education, public health, and economic improvements are so related and interdependent that the success of one depends upon the success of the other. The foundation of a nation is its people, and a nation can enjoy peace and prosperity only if its foundation is firm.

To educate the masses, it is not necessary to write books in archaic prose. They must be written in a way that achieves simplicity of expression and directness of appeal so that they can be understood by the people.

Subjects to write about should include national history, the homeland, national heroes and other great men, social and political life, plays, poems, songs, paintings, and recording of culture and literature from the tongues of storytellers. Eritreans say, "Tarick zellewo aimewittin," which means, "He who made history does not die." Man is remembered forever through the history he made.

HEALTH

There were no state, communal, or private institutions dispensing social aid or medical services before colonialism. Such assistance was given by private individuals of goodwill who acted, on a religious basis, to please God. Medical assistance to the sick was limited to some primitive treatment with local medicine of a simple nature, mostly prepared from leaves of trees or from roots.

Provision of local medicine, the bandaging of wounds, treatment of broken bones, external surgical operations, and midwifery were offered to everyone free of charge. Some local medicine could give immediate good results.

Some kind of local disease can be cured by frequenting hot water springs and the shrines that are available in almost every district of Eritrea. Leprosy, other skin diseases, and some other tropical diseases are often difficult to treat. People say venereal disease was little known before colonialism.

After the occupation, the Italian government built hospitals in the main towns and started proper medical services. This was extended to the rural areas by the British administration, which opened medical dispensaries in all sub-districts, with provision of adequate medicine and medical orderlies. The British sanitation plan achieved its goal. Mosquitoes were eliminated and malaria fully eradicated throughout the territory.

ECWS (The Eritrean Children Welfare Society) was founded by the British administration in Asmara, and the people in other districts were encouraged to establish branches through local contributions. This was done, and health services functioned properly until the end of the federation. Health services in rural areas were interrupted and the clinics closed down almost immediately after the departure of the British.

The Ethiopian government took more interest in improving and modernizing health institutions in the towns by building large hospitals in the main cities and a modern clinic at Afabet.

One clinic for tuberculosis and another one of treatment of the mentally ill have been built in Asmara and a leprosarium has been constructed in Massawa Town. Important medical institutions like maternity and child welfare, antenatal and postnatal centres, infant nurseries, sanatoria, and convalescent homes are, as yet, not available to the public.

A nursing school was opened in Asmara with American "Point Four" aid that also trained orderlies. The Italian consulate general and several private institutions established and ran hospitals and clinics in Asmara that were too expensive and out of the reach of the ordinary people.

Health is so important to human beings that without health there can be no happiness in living and building a great nation. Only healthy people can be happy and build a healthy nation, because healthy brains can accept learning, develop new ideas, and create new things.

LAW AND JUSTICE

Eritreans have deep respect for law and its administration. The peaceful and orderly settlement of disputes is always preferable, in their minds, to the use of force and violence. The village chief is the natural judge of the people. Courts are held in the open, under the shade of trees not far from the village. Cases are heard in the presence of village elders, who act as advisors to the judge.

In the past, Eritrean judges preferred disputes to be settled out of court. They referred cases to committees of elders, who studied the details of each case and attempted to reach a solution to the satisfaction of all parties concerned. In this way, the administration of justice was entrusted to elders with experience and practical knowledge of local customs.

Eritreans are peace-loving people and endeavor to keeping harmony and order within their community. They detest wasting their free time and love to dedicate Sundays and other free days to the service of their society, pacifying people who quarrelled, or settling murder cases. The death penalty is not part of the customary Eritrean laws. The greatest crime is murder, and the penalty may either be retribution carried out by the relatives of the murdered person illegally or payment of blood money in compensation.

The community has the duty to appease the parties and, therefore, gets the people to agree to the peaceful settlement of the case, giving up all thoughts of revenge and accepting payment of the compensation according to customary laws.

ECONOMY

For its economy, Eritrea depends on agriculture and cattle breeding. Rainfall was once greater than it is nowadays, and there are traces of forests with large trees, which might have been produced by a heavier humidity and destroyed by the improvidence of man.

Eritrea's economic importance has always been neglected, and no comprehensive feasibility study has ever been carried out. Small-scale economic development was started during the British administration, and the progress at the beginning was so steady that one is left to speculate on what might have occurred in the country if there had been good administration and peace during the last twenty years. It is the responsibility of the government to expand national economy with a given plan to suit national peculiarities through various progressive reforms and lead the people into an advanced society that is economically self-supporting by firmly arming the people with the idea of progress.

The economic construction of a country should be carried out in the national fashion in conformity with the specific conditions of the country and people. However, knowledge of other country's peculiarities and way of living is useful, because it helps one to understand one's own methods better.

One of the many conditions for economic development is making the maximum use of the country's labour and other natural resources. But this demands peaceful conditions, without which progress may be hindered. The economic development of a society depends very much on the joint increase of its members' capacity for dealing with the environment, and it implies

increased skill capacity and responsibility at the level of the individual, depending on his personal knowledge of what is right and what is wrong.

Recent feasibility studies revealed the existence in the country of potential agricultural and mineral resources, the usage of which has been prevented by the present unsatisfactory security situation. Eritrean peasants in the rural areas have little knowledge of modern farming, and their preoccupation is having just enough food for the year. Their wants are so limited and the standard of living around them so low that the desire to accumulate manufactured products for sale seldom arises. This motivation may develop with time and as the peasants learn to imitate the materially more advanced standard of living with which they come into contact.

Eritrea has several factories, all but five of which were owned and managed by foreign capitalists during the former regime. Most of them are concentrated in Asmara, which is the capital and commercial centre of the country. The factories were useful because they manufactured goods for local consumption and, by exporting the surplus, brought hard currency into the country.

But in a way, they were also damaging, maybe due to lack of proper control, because the workers' wages were so low that there was almost no case where the worker was wholly dependent on the poor pay for his actual sustenance.

For economic and social reasons, it is necessary to locate each type of factory in an area where the specific agricultural or mineral products needed are available, because the concentration in one particular centre attracts people in the rural areas to move in and overcrowd such centres, entailing major security, economic, educational, and housing problems.

This could be avoided by making fair distribution of the factories between town and rural zones and, by so doing, helping people to work and live in their native districts. Unfortunately, this is not practiced in the case of Eritrea. It is also important that, in order to give satisfactory results, the establishment of factories must be preceded by feasibility studies and ensures the availability, in each area, of all necessary means such as abundant water, electricity, and labour, to run the industries. But such things were not in the development plan of the government, and not much attention was given to them.

In modern economy, communication is necessary to move products from the place they were grown or manufactured to where they are needed for consumption or export. Fortunately, this is not the problem in Eritrea, where good land, sea, and air communication networks are well maintained.

Art and handcrafts were considered the job of the humble man and rejected. However, some kind of handcraft existed. Examples of this are vases made of earth (terra cotta), wood, grass, and similar materials for use in domestic services. Beds, chairs and armchairs, horn cups, ploughs, sickles, lances, daggers, and all type of jewelry were produced by people who did not claim noble birth. Such low opinion and arrogant behaviour of the people hindered the way to knowledge and progress.

Eritrea is an attractive country and ideally suited for tourism. Historical places such as Adulls, Kohalto, Tocanda, Keskesse, Metara, Ham, Aratuck, Debir Baat, Rora Bakla, and Hagere Negeran, with traces of an old civilisation, invariably inspired curiosity among visitors.

Ruins of wonderful buildings, inscriptions, monoliths, steles, decorations, and broken relics left by the former inhabitants of these places are magnificent witness to an old civilisation. If the importance of this culture is carefully studied and tourism properly propagated through a purposely organized tourist office, no doubt the country can be turned into a busy tourist region.

The picturesque panorama of the country and its characteristic division into three distinct zones and weather patterns constitute the basis of variety and beauty. The balmy Eritrean islands of the Red Sea serve as a stimulant to people who have been suffering from either physical or mental exhaustion.

Such places full of natural beauty are capable of quenching the desire for rest of people who want to pass their free time enjoying good climate and a picturesque panorama in the dream of happiness. Some Ethiopian and foreign nationals intended to attract tourism into the country by constructing hotels and Motets on both the mainland and the Islands. They planned to develop sea, land, and air transport; fishing; swimming, yacht clubs, casinos, restaurants, and every sort of profitable sports and applied for licenses to substantiate their plans. There were also plans to organize small shops and rest stops on fit sites along the roads leading to the various tourist zones, which would have encouraged and attracted more tourists.

Developing tourism in the country would mean creating work and giving occupation to several thousand people as managers, drivers, pilots, interpreters, clerks, cooks, waiters, manual labourers, masons, shopkeepers, merchants, artisans, and healthcare professionals. Unfortunately, the plans have been suspended for security reasons. Of course, if there is no peace, there is no wealth.

The organisation and establishment of groceries and shops of local craft items could have taken place. Moreover, all transport companies and organisations such as taxi, bus, railway, airway, and boat corporations could benefit by working in connection with the tourist organisation. The existence of well-maintained and efficient land, sea, and air communications in the country favours development of tourism. Well-organized tourism could, no doubt, be a source of rich income for this poverty-stricken country. Eritrea is poor not because it lacks natural wealth, but because it lacks good administration.

The reason neighbouring East African countries have attracted tourists is the availability of plenty of wild animals, but Eritrea has something more interesting than that to satisfy the wishes of tourists. These are the historical sites, rich with archaeological materials, existing in the various zones, the variety of climate within everyone's reach, and the beautiful panorama and enviable Islands and beaches stretching along the coast of the Red Sea.

Tourists need guidance to choose a place to spend their vacations and enjoy life, seeing something they were not familiar with previously. Information about the sites, the variety of climate in the different seasons, and the characteristic beauty of the country in general and service facilities could reach prospective tourists through the media. On arrival, the tourists

should be given pamphlets containing photographs and full information concerning each place. Interpreters will be on the spot, to supply them with additional explanation.

Archaeological materials are attractive and good to see in their place of origin. They may lose their value if removed and put elsewhere, because the tourist is interested not only in the things but also the environment where they were created.

In Eritrea, and maybe in other parts of Africa, the people were more interested in the well-being of the society when they were uneducated and led simple lives than now with civilisation. Consequently, the society, as beneficial organisation, is losing its meaning.

CULTURE

CULTURAL LIFE

Life is happy in the countryside, where the people live a moderate life not contaminated by civilisation and enjoy tranquility and peace of mind. All that is the basis for malice and immorality, such as lies, trickery, theft, and greed for unlawful wealth, is detested, and anyone practicing them is despised, distrusted, and considered a bad element of society. Such people's activities will be controlled, and they will be looked upon with suspicion, until, in time, they become humiliated and depressed and feel compelled to avoid frequenting public meetings and ceremonies.

In Eritrea, people trusted one another in the past and when dealing with business and lending money they didn't need written documents or witnesses. A verbal agreement is enough to honour any kind of contractual undertaking.

Lying is strongly disapproved of, and the Eritrean people distrust liars. If a court witness gives false evidence and the perjury is proved against him, he is given the name "Wogi," which means "liar." He will not be accepted as a court witness anymore after this.

Stealing is a great shame, and a thief is very despised. He avoids meeting or mixing with people who know him to be a thief. Calling a person a thief is very humiliating and insulting and may cause great trouble, so people prefer to follow the path of honesty and integrity. (21)

The old are considered wise, their advice sought and their person respected and treated with dignity. The young fear their elders' curses, invoke their blessings, address them politely, and behave well in their presence, Because of their experience in life, the old were entrusted with important public duties by the people.

The people follow a good behaviour pattern. They are slow to anger, prefer moderation to violence, and love to hatred, and have the habit of trying to weaken with good manners those who disagree with them. The good sense the Eritrean people display shows their inclination to righteousness and courage. The Tigre-speaking people demonstrate this in their philosophy of peace, which says: "Din min sebir to wa sebir min eman," This means that belief in God is the result of moderation and moderation is the sign of courage. It is pure truth that violence is not a sign of strength and confidence. The Eritreans also say that he who respects is respected. In other words, those who infringe upon the rights of others cannot expect their own rights to be respected.

The job of the young is to help their parents in agriculture and household chores. Weeding, taking care of cattle, and bringing water and dry wood for domestic use are part of their job. When I was a youngster, my first important job was tending cattle. I lived, for some time, with the dry cattie (those which do not produce milk) in the grazing zone away from the main village, in the company of other young comrades.

We enjoyed the good life. There was enough milk to drink, and, from time to time, we received flour from our families to cook and eat. The country was covered with thick forest, having many species of trees and flowers that favoured the presence of tree, cave, and ground bees. These produced honey in abundance, which we used as food. The combination of milk,

honey, and burkutta (a local bread) was delicious. There were also thirteen species of edible wild fruits and roots in abundance in the country.

In those days, for the youth there could be nothing better than tending cattle in the wild jungle while enjoying peace of mind. Wealth and accumulation of riches were not his ambitions. The little he had satisfied him, and he did not even hear of money. In the open country, breathing fresh, healthy air, he felt as though he had everything he needed. He sang recited poems, and played the flute.

The young organized sports and folklore contests, where competitors sometimes consisted of village dwellers and the herders who lived outside the main village with the cattle.

Different types of sports, such as stickball, wrestling, high and broad jumping, horse and camel-, foot races were very popular. Sport competition between groups of different villages created a lot of enthusiasm and warm feeling.

Wrestling was, perhaps, the most practiced of all sports in Eritrea, because the people thought that it provided good bodybuilding for the Young. It was usually practiced on sandy ground after we had watered the cattle in the rivers.

Another kind of popular sport was the bullfight. This was very interesting. Each cattle owner had a bull. These are jealous of the females and, consequently, they fight when they meet in the river. The trouble increases and fighting becomes inevitable if some of the females are in heat. Most of the time, the fighting lasted for hours, and, in order to separate them, the cattlemen threw thorny branches on the bull's heads. The bulls separated thus remained enemies until one of them was defeated in a subsequent fight.

Young people danced almost every night in the Keren District. Boys and girls gathered outside the villages and danced to the beat of drums. They sang songs appropriate to the season of the year or to new events, such as weddings, wars, abundant crops, famine, big annual festivities, et cetera. The boys and girls gathered from different villages stay together and sing insulting songs to one another. This is a traditional joke and normally not taken seriously, though sometimes the most boisterous singing developed into quarrels and fighting followed.

Boys and girls danced and courted till dawn. Sometimes they would exchange gifts, maybe tobacco for the boy to chew and a silver bracelet, gold earrings, or perfume for the girl. A girl who was suspected to be in love with a boy was insulted in a series of poetic songs, and such insults increased as the news reached more people. Every boy of the girl's age added something to the songs during and after the dance or while working in the farms, rearing cattle, or travelling in the countryside. Sometimes the girl became so famous and the songs were so funny that older people joined the young in formulating new songs. This was mostly the result of jealousy and was, normally, started by an admirer whom she had rejected.

Insulting songs were usually applied to beautiful and sympathetic girls and most of the time increased their prestige by attracting the attention of more wooers and soon the situation would change in her favour. Instead of humiliating and insulting, praising and encouraging songs were formulated and she was the star of the year or years. Customary law

tolerated such insulting songs if the singers remained peaceful, but they are punishable if damage occurs as a result. In other parts of the territory, songs and dances occurred on such occasions as big annual feasts, weddings and the like.

Men tending their cattle or farmers working in their fields, admiring the beauty of nature in the solitude recited with feeling wonderful poems and sang songs. For music, they favoured the flute, which they played with great ability. Maseko, kerar, and the local version of the violin are other musical instruments that the people practice and like very much. The local version of the violin is played by very few people, because it is wrongly considered to be the job of humble people and rejected.

Music developed among the shepherds and the primitive people of Lebet. Music and love are their life and courage their motto. The nomad people in general and the Lebet in particular have absolute self-control and seldom try to vindicate insults. They meet trouble with a smile and never show cowardice, especially in the presence of women.

Although real pedagogues did not exist in the country before colonialism, there was some sort of cultural education concerning history of the country, customs, and the people's ways of life. The young were supposed to know their racial origin, the names of their ancestors in a direct line, relation and intermarriage with other races, and the names of the national heroes, the courageous leaders, of poems and proverbs. The most outstanding boys could recite their genealogy back several generations.

To try to know people and study the behaviour of men and their activities was, and still is, part of the people's culture, and the Tigre-speaking people say, "Amrakka kabrakka." The literally translation is "He who knows you buries you," which does not make much sense in English, but the meaning is that he who knows you helps you to solve your problems. He does not leave you alone, exposed to danger. An English writer, whose name I have forgotten, said, "I cannot hate the man I know." There is some analogy between this and the saying of the Eritreans.

Such cultural education attracted the young, who strived to learn it with interest. The best place to learn this by heart is the Mehaber (Baito) or the elders' assembly place.

In their free time, the elders sat in the assembly place, recounted histories, and recited poems and proverbs each according to their knowledge and experience. The young sat near their fathers, listening and learning, by doing so they kept the culture alive for centuries.

The Eritrean population, except the inhabitants of the Barca and Samhar Districts, professed the Christian religion and resisted the expansion of Muslim teachings up to the nineteenth century, when Muslim tribes infiltrated into the northern area from all directions and especially from the east, supported by the Turks, who held Massawa for about four centuries and encouraged the expansion of the Muslim religion. The continuous raids of Ethiopian princes and consequent damage to property and loss of life in the northern districts of the country has greatly contributed to the conversion of the people to Islam. A chief in the Keren District said, "If Christianity is the faith of Alula and his cruel predecessors, then the Muslim religion is better" and became Muslim with many of his people.

Pious sheikhs preached the Koran and converted part of the population to the new religion. The conversion sped up in Sahel and among the northern tribes of the Keren District and was, by the end of the century, completed, except for some isolated groups that hesitated.

The sheikhs were moderate and helpful. If they received gifts from the faithful, which, in turn, they gave to the needy people. The sheikhs followed a good life-style and displaced morality, Praying and fasting and their good behaviour and civilized manners convinced part of the people to embrace the faith of Islam.

But in southern Keren District and particularly among the Mensa, the feeling for the Christian religion was well rooted and not easy to eradicate. The Mensa, in order to preserve their faith, declared Christianity the religion of the noble and that they considered those who exchanged it for other religions to be second-class citizens.

This became an effective means to refrain the people from abandoning their fathers' faith for a long time. The declaration was the result of the prediction of two pious Christian and Muslim

religious leaders that spoke of the effects religious problems would have on the Mensa.

The first was Kashi Bidel, a priest of the Mensa, who predicted that the Mensa people would lose much of their prestige and dignity when their leader would "be entertained as guest of camel owners" (become Muslims) and advised them to remain Christians. The other was Habeddin Wa Sheik, a Muslim religious leader of considerable fame who lived at the time of Samra, leader of the Mensa.

Samra was a Christian and a very strong man. He was very feared by neighbouring Muslim tribes. Habeddin Wad Sheikh was his friend. The Muslim tribes begged Habeddin to convert Samra to Islam, so that the Spirit of God might descend upon him and calm him. Habeddin refused to take such responsibility, declaring that if the Mensa became Muslims they would lose their dignity, courage, and power and, consequently, it was in their interest to remain Christians.

Because of his courage and determination, Samra was nicknamed "Ganin" (the intrepid). Habeddin Wad Sheikh had observed the intrepidity of Samra and, as his true friend, advised him to be moderate and friendly to his neighbours, instead of being intolerant and aggressive.

In those days, the Tigre-speaking people used poetry to give advice or send messages, so Habeddin advised Samra to change his behaviour in the following short poem,

Mekuro wa yisemmi wagah
ligbaa baal ajel,
Samra motu ibb ghenenta
wa Tsaura mota ibb Shikker.

Samra fought and won several battles, but, because of his intrepidity and love for fighting, at the end he died in battle, as Habeddin had predicted.

The Tsaura are a small, courageous tribe of Sahel that fought for independence from the Bet Asghede. But, having been defeated by numerically superior forces they fled to Kassala

(Sudan), only to return when the Italians occupied Eritrea and restored peace in the country. The Tsaura are famous for their courage and love of freedom, and the colonial government recognized them as an independent tribe, administered by their own chief.

The Mensa's religious discrimination against Muslim ended when a man of the leading Mensa family, namely Hasama Hishal, was converted to Islam. He had been known as a fervent Christian, who spent the period of Lent every year at the Monastery of Debresina praying, fasting, and dedicating himself to spiritual activities, having only a handful of cooked grain and coffee as food once a day. His pious life had attracted the attention of Sheikh Mohamed of Emberemi who wanted to win him over to the Muslim religion. The sheikh invited Hasama to his village and told him, "I have seen your seat ready awaiting you in paradise, but you cannot gain it unless you embrace Islam. It is my duty to tell what I know, but it is for you to take advantage of this opportunity or otherwise."

Hasama was too old. His desire was to find the right way leading to God and Paradise, and he thought that the sheikh's words were meant as good wishes to realize his dreams. He was not educated in the Christian religion and could not know the difference between the two religions. He found Islam to be as good as Christianity.

Hasama was accompanied to be converted by a group of elders, who also asked the sheikh if they could be converted to Islam. But the sheikh's answer was that he has seen nothing from them in Paradise and could not be responsible for any decision they might take. So they remained Christians.

The news of Hasama's conversion to Islam amazed and terrorized the people who had thought he would not be the first to break the country's rules. However, they had no courage to declare him a second-class citizen, but considered him to be dead and started funeral ceremonies. A tent was erected in the square at the middle of his village. Women slaves rode horses and danced and galloped with unsheathed swords around the funeral tent.

People of the neighbourhood were informed of Hasama's death and came to attend the funeral ceremonies. Although bitterly criticised by the people, Hasama kept firm in his decision to remain Muslim. Thereafter, religious discrimination was lifted, and noble people could freely convert to adapt the religion of their choice. Now members of the two religions intermarry freely and live in perfect harmony.

Eritrea is racially united but culturally divided into two main groups: Tigre-speaking and Tigrigna-speaking areas. People of the south speak Tigrigna, while the inhabitants of the northern, eastern, and western districts have Tigre as their mother tongue. Tigre is the eldest sister of the Ethiopian languages of Gheez origin and the first Eritrean language after the separation of the Tigre- and Tigrigny regions. It is the nearest tongue to Gheez in both vocabulary and pronunciation.

Both Tigre and Tigrigna are of the same origin, both an extract of Gheez. There is not much difference between the two languages in the vocabulary, but there is in pronunciation.

After losing contact with each other, due to the Beja invasion, Eritrea and Tigray each took the name of the local language. So Eritrea's name became Tigre, from its Tigre tongue, and

what is now Tigray took the name of Tigrigny from the Tigrigna language the people spoke. The two regions are jointly called Tigre-Tigrigny.

Tigre is a very rich language and particularly adaptable for poems, proverbs, and songs. It is very suitable for expressing deep feelings or noble thoughts. Because of this, in the past Tigrigna- and Bilen-speaking people composed beautiful poems in Tigre with the desire to communicate experiences. Tigre poems are usually made by Tigre-speaking people, but also the Tigrigna- and Bilen-speaking do it because it is beautiful language. Of the several thousand known Tigre poems, only 757 have been written down. (See volumes I and 3 of Publications Of the Princeton Expedition to Abyssinia, by Enno Litmann [Leyden: E. J. Brill Ltd., 1910 and 1913].)

Tigre tales also have been written down, but only some of them. (See Volume I of Publications of the Princeton Expedition to Abyssinia.) None of the songs and proverbs has been written down. Due to the length of time that has passed, many of the unwritten poems, tales, and songs are only partly known. Tigre and Tigrigna are both written languages owing their own characters to the Gheez alphabet.

It was in the field of poetic expression that the Tigres especially excelled. The poet's love of poetry was his own cultural asset. In ancient times there were no schools in the country and people could not read or write. Messages were sent in the language, and people were encouraged to recite poems in the same manner as the demagogue in a modern political campaign. In the battle the poet's words created courage among the fighters. The poet was also agent of public opinion and expressed the feelings of the people. Listeners could learn the poems by heart, instantly, from the tongue of the poet and extend them.

The Rom, a people of giant stature, probably Caucasian, that inhabited the Eritrean region many centuries ago but are now completely extinct, also composed poems in the Tigre language. (See volume I of Publications of the Princeton Expedition to Abyssinia, p. 86.)

Tigrigna is the clerical language of the region. Christian prayers are said in Tigrigna, which fact favoured the language's spreading to a large part of the country. Tigray was the theological centre, and Eritreans who had a religious vocation studied in the monasteries of the Tigray region and, when they returned home, used Tigrigna to propagate the Christian faith.

People who immigrated into the highlands from the beginning of the first millennium A-D. accepted Christianity and found it easier to adapt to the Tigrigna language. These were the Muawya, Meroni, Assaurta, and Adcheme Melegga. The people of Sahel and Barca Districts were remote from Christian influence and remained attached to the Tigre language.

Although the inhabitants of the Keren District were entirely Christians at first, for some reason their language was not affected by Christian teachings till the beginning of the present century. Now their partial conversion to Islam and the introduction of Arab teachings and prayers have blocked further expansion of the Tigrigna language in the rural areas.

The Meroni ethnic group claims to be of Dembia origin. Kolmoddin, author of the book *Weledo Hezbi Hamasien*, says that the Meroni left Dembia and settled in the Kassala Province of the Sudan, where they lived for several generations before entering Eritrea.

They trace descent from a certain Negus Meroni, but, since there was no Ethiopian or Eritrean negus (king) of that name and because the people came from the Sudan, it is tempting to guess that they may be descendants of Beshir Ibn Marwan, the king of the "Naquis," whose kingdom extended from Aswan to Khor Baraka (the Barca River) and was inhabited by several Beja tribes.

Naquis was a vast and rich state and owned gold, emerald, and marble mines, which indicates an advanced civilisation. According to the scholar Masudi, the state was also militarily strong and possessed a large army. In A.D. 940, King Beshir Ibn Marwan had at his disposal a force of three thousand Arab cavalry and thirty thousand Hedareb camelman. (See *A History of the Beja Tribes of the Sudan*, by A. Paul [Cambridge University Press], pp. 12-13.)

An alternative theory is that the Meroni might have been under the rule of the Merewe, Kingdom of Nubia, and adapted the name to remember their connection with that kingdom. These hypotheses are, however, merely based on the suggestive similarity of their names. The language the Meroni spoke before entering Eritrea is not known, but circumstantial evidence suggests that they spoke either the Agau or the Beja language.

Power struggles in the Arab world brought new immigrants of Semitic people from the Middle East into the territory. They came at different periods of time, following different routes. Some of them landed in the ports of Dancalia and slowly reached Samhar and the highlands. Others entered the country via Swakin and Aquik, afterwards drifting to Sahel and Barca areas.

Among them were the Muawya and Assaurta, who first adopted Saho. Afterwards they adopted Tigrigna, as a result of their conversion to Christianity.

The Adcheme Melegga seem to have come from Lasta. It appears that they spoke Agau at the time of their arrival and in due course adapted Tigrigna to fit local peculiarities. The Saharti and Wokerti came from the Tigray region and spoke Tigrigna.

The Bet Tarke ethnic group, which also came from Lasta, resisted the pressure of the other languages. Not only did they successfully preserve their original custom and culture, but they also imposed their Bilen language and way of living on the people they found in the area.

In olden times, Tigrigna-speaking priests who had completed theological studies and wished to specialize in the Gheez language lived, for some time, among the Tigre-speaking people to learn Tigre words and pronunciation.

Both the Tigre and Tigrigna languages have a rich poetic culture and a good store of proverbs. Poems and proverbs are both important, because they remind people of social life and natural events and encourage them to lead a correct life. Poems express feelings of heroism, patriotism, love, and the like. Whilst proverbs can, certainly, be called "a guide to knowledge and correct life."

Eritrean people love to sing and create poetry and do it well. They can make songs and poems on the spur of the moment.

The following is a list of some of the many poets that have contributed to the development of Tigre poems:

Ghelaideos Tedros	Mensa
Ghebremariam Ghebray	Mensa
Ghebru Yassu	Mensa
Emran Kerembezih	Mensa
Aula Mohamed	Mensa
Nettabay Ghebremariam	Mensa
Selim Ghedem	Mensa
Hamed Shengheb	Maria
Neciabi Arbed	Maria
Hamed Lul Egel	Maria
Mekal (Abib)	Maria
Nussur Hamed Ker	Bet Juck

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