Abu Dhabi Emirates Intangible Cultural Heritage
"Traditional Handcraft Arts"

# Abu Dhabi Tourism \& Culture Authority 

| Name of element | Traditional irrigation of palm trees |
| :---: | :---: |
| Main field | Traditional handicrafts |
| Secondary field | Skills related to palm trees |
| Description | Irrigation means the supply of necessary water for growing plants in areas suffering from scarce rainfall, such as the United Arab Emirates. Given the importance of palm trees and their significance for UAE inhabitants. Irrigating palm trees and supplying them with necessary water became part of farmers' skills. They had knowledge of the quantity of water needed for irrigation, type of soil, frequency of irrigation and proper irrigation timings, to name but a few. For palm trees, water is essential although they can withstand thirst, especially in the first days of planting, before blooming and during summer months. Palm trees can flourish also on water that is not so fresh. Palm trees in the past used to be irrigated with underground water extracted through waterwheels pulled by oxen. In other areas of the UAE, they used to be irrigated with spring water found on versants of mountains and valleys, such as Masafi and Khatt springs. Furthermore, the most important sources of underground water are the Aflaj. A falaj is a traditional canal surfacing aboveground, and the most popular among them is found in Al Ain oasis. One narrator recounts how they used to irrigate palm trees "We used to get water by bucket from wells or through the brook of the falaj. In order to keep water around the tree, we used to surround it with one meter diameter of water. Palm trees were irrigated every day, but when they grew, we used to irrigate them every other day or every two days." Another narrator says that the sarma or palm shoot is irrigated for 40 consecutive days so that water reaches the center of the shoot. He adds that farmers in Liwa used to dig for palm shoots until water level as water was also close to surface of the earth. <br> During the time of late Sheikh Zayed Bin Sultan Al Nahyan and with the advent of modern agricultural progress, sources of water developed and dams were erected to retain rainwater. Desalination stations were built to desalinate seawater to irrigate palm trees, and farmers were instructed to rationalize the use of water. Irrigation of palm trees has always been a special task that is so close to the bosoms of the UAE people. They used to enjoy doing it and cooperate with one another to dig wells (faza or helping one another). Palm trees have always special connections with their social and cultural life for a long time ago. |
| Geographical distribution | UAE, especially oases and valleys |
| Practitioners | Men |
| Safeguarding procedures | - Seeking the help of old farmers to make use of and record their experience for this generation. <br> - Introducing irrigation related knowledge into school curricula. <br> - Introducing irrigation methods through different media outlets, especially satellite channels. <br> - Publishing educational brochures on this field. <br> - Broadcasting documentaries on the use of falaj water. |

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# Aflaj and Oases of AI Ain City, UAE <br> United Arab Emirates, Emirate of Abu Dhabi 

## Identification of element:

Field: Traditional irrigation methods
Name of element: Aflaj and Oases of AI Ain
Name locally used: Alnekhl and Alfalaya
Another name: Alnekhl and Alfalaya

## Commercial destination:

History references and travelers' books indicate that the Oasis of AI Ain had once been a destination of trade caravans. They used to visit the place to get provisions of water and ripe dates along with many other products. Some authors mention that inhabitants of AI Ain Oasis were previously doing other jobs in addition to agriculture, such as grazing and hunting. In summertime, many young people used to leave their city and head for Dubai and Sharjah and other coastal towns to work in diving and pearl hunting, and a few of them used to work in fishing.

Until early 1960s, Al Ain was made up of scattered villages separated by sand dunes and palm oases. With the influx of oil revenues, roads were paved and constructions of buildings were on the rise, and this led to more interconnections among different oases and villages, making up the city of Al Ain.

## Characteristics of element:

Aflaj system is a traditional engineering irrigation method passed on by generations throughout hundreds of years. It was first known in the UAE 3000 years ago, and it is still in use even in today's era of technology. This system does not depend on pumps that may break down or water pipes that may rust or burst out. All what it needs is to clean up any silt that may be stuck in canals from time to time, especially after heavy rain.

Despite the harshness of terrain and the sprawling area of AI Ain, Aflaj from old times were the city's integrated irrigation network used in carrying water from mountaintops and depressions of valleys for long distances to be used by the population in irrigation and several other uses. Aflaj were found in AI Ain since the pre-Islamic era. Some of the Aflaj in the towns of Meneh and Samael in the Sultanate of Oman, for instance, were constructed more than 1500 years ago. Some Aflaj in the Eastern Region were built in early 1900s. Man's genius in the city throughout times is apparent in the digging and building of Aflaj which are sometimes tens of meters deep so that people can get underground water through canals. This can certainly be viewed as an engineering miracle especially before the invention of machines.

## Practitioners:

It is practiced by men specialized in this method of irrigation.

## Relevant individuals and institutions:

One of the most important institutions concerned with the safeguarding of Aflaj in the UAE has been Abu Dhabi Authority for Culture \& Heritage, along with municipalities, Ministry of Culture and Community Development (formerly Ministry of Culture \& Information), etc.

## Brief description:

A falaj, derived from the Arabic verb of falaj which means split or cleft, is a water canal that springs from a gap in an elevated place in a rocky stratum. From that stratum, a canal extends for several miles until it reaches arable lands. But what is the definition of falaj?
A falaj is locally known as water running through a canal dug in a land to bring out underground water or other water found in valleys. In his book, Jamharat AI Lugha, Ibn Duraid defines the falaj as "a small river and anything one splits into two is called falaj."

Ibn Manthoor's Lisan AlArab and Ibn Seedat AI Andalusi's Alhikam define falaj as "a river, and it is said it is a small river; it is also the air of running spring water; plural: aflaj, and the word alfulf is derived therefrom and means waterwheel."

The word falaj as used in the UAE, whose plural is aflaj, is an inclusive irrigation system. The word is derived from old Semitic origins which mean "division". The word "falaj" in Arabic may mean division of a property into shares.

## Detailed description:

Reason for name: Falaj - derived from the Arabic verb of falaj which means split or cleft, is a water canal that springs from a gap in an elevated place in a rocky stratum. From that stratum, a canal extends for several miles until it reaches arable lands. If it is at ground level, a small canal is made, and if the land is elevated, it is architecturally excavated in a sophisticated way. If it passes over a low land, a bridge is constructed. In order for the sacred to have sacredness, people created legends of genesis and gave it an aura of veneration and grandeur. In order for a tale or legend to continue, it must have real age-old foundations, whether imagined or presumed, such as the tale of Messenger Solomon, son of David. He visited the place on a flying carpet and ordered his servants of geniis to construct ten thousand canals in ten days. Tales also are told that Persians built such aflaj. However, reality is not similar to imagination. From earlier times, Man's condition was dependent on the circumstances of his place, especially when relief and climates ranging from moderate to harsh. Spatial adaptation of human existence in this area is related to water with all its sources, including rain which falls in certain seasons, or more accurately in one season.

Water is known for its quick evaporative properties in hot temperature, and the traditional ways of using wells result in limited agriculture. For this reason, people in the UAE adapted their relationship with land through extracting water constantly and cultivating land all year round. So, their innovations were consistent with their need to live and settle. They extracted water in the first place to quench their thirst and in this way water was the first component of their simple social life. This shows the importance of this kind of spring and canals and the associations they have with people in the UAE. Man cannot live without water (falaj) and a falaj cannot continue running unless with the care of people.
When something goes wrong in the falaj, the entire village rises up to put things right in this vital waterway, and in case it dries up one can feel their feelings at this moment as if they add water to the falaj with their tears. They defend the falaj with all the power and efforts they have against all the odds.
What is important for us is the civilized administrative way of the falaj through collaboration of all those who benefit from its water in irrigating their arable lands and in many other uses. There are accurate arrangements in prioritizing the use of falaj water. It is clear in this way that the falaj played a great social, economic and political role in the history of the UAE society. It had an impact on the administrative approach and it even created such approach in order to reach an agreement on how best to share its water and resolve any disputes in connection therewith.

Narrow canals carrying water from ponds into small fields can be easily spotted meandering across palm farms and fields in AI Ain oases, producing palm trees, citrus trees, mango, banana and clover. Such canals in old farms were made of mud or stone, and they zigzag and agilely flow between grasses irrigated by water leaking from the canals. As for modern farms, they have cement-made canals dug in a straight line through the fields. However, such modern canals do not have any leakage, and this means that grass is rare or does not exist in their surroundings. In fact, traditional irrigation ways are more enticing for those interested in natural history. Irrigation in this environment helps in the emergence of beautiful flowers, various types of butterflies and frogs and small valley fish.
Until recently, it was interesting to watch farmers using this irrigation system which works as follows: water is passed from its distant mountainous sources to a large basin or several ponds at the border of the farm, and from that point ramifies a network of surface canals in all directions. When a small canal branches out of a wider canal, a gate made of metal or stone or sometimes of a pile of rags is built. The gate is opened so that water will flow into notches and irrigate trees planted in that place. Another gate is opened to flow water into other notches. In this way, water is carried to all planted trees over one or two days. At night, collection ponds are filled up to repeat the process once again in the following morning.
When rain falls here, it mostly falls on mountains. In several areas of Hajjar mountains, there are many brooks running all year round, in addition to some deep ponds storing water for a long time even from the time of drought. Water from such resources was used for several centuries ago in irrigating fertile soil at the foot of the mountain range. Al Ain City is an example of a large oasis living on water resources from the mountains and an irrigation system that carries water through a network extending for tens of kilometers across mountains and plains of pebbles to the farms at mountain foot.

This system of irrigation canals is known in other parts of the world, even in Europe (Spain) and Central Asia; with the most sophisticated of all in Iran and Afghanistan where each canal is known as "kanat" and "kahreez". It was believed that such canals were the most ancient in the world as they were mentioned in ancient writings from the era of the Assyrian king Sargon II 714 BC . It was also believed that the art of building such canals came to the Arabia from Iran and Iraq. However, archaeological studies showed that the canal network across the western side of the Hajjar mountains in the UAE and Oman preceded the Iranian canal system hundreds of centuries ago. It is likely that engineering skills needed to build such sophisticated waterways were passed in the opposite direction. The origin of the word canal which is "kanat" in Arabic indicates that the underground irrigation system originated in the Omani Peninsula and not in Iran.

Doctor Waleed Yassin Al Tikriti, Archaeology Advisor at Abu Dhabi Authority for Culture \& Heritage conducted studies on several fossils revealing deep aflaj dating back to one thousand year BC, which precedes the aflaj of Iran. Aflaj recently discovered were lined with layers of thin stone and they were so slender. Moreover, they were dug deep by workers from certain clans, such as AI Awamer, who are proficient in this type of work. Their grandchildren are still living in this area until now, and they renewed the old system 50 years ago.

Types of aflaj: Aflaj are divided into three types:
1- Dawodi Falaj:
A long canal extending over several kilometers underground tens of meters deep; this type of aflaj is known for its continuous running all year round.
2- Ainie Falaj:
It draws its water from one of the springs, some of which are hot springs; the number of these aflaj is limited.

## 3- Ghailie Falaj:

It draws its water from surface and semi surface running water for no more than 3-4 meters deep. The level of water in this type of aflaj directly rises after rainfall and it may dry up when rain stops for a long time.

When falaj water reaches the center of a community and inhabitants take the water they need, water is distributed to different agricultural plots according to an accurate system that depends on time division under the supervision of an elected person known as falaj agent. Part of the crops may be allocated as endowment for the falaj to spend on maintaining canals and waterwheels, with the consent of inhabitants and the supervision of the falaj agent.

In early 1970s, the government exerted great efforts to safeguard this valuable heritage. It started to lay down maintenance and development plans in order to repair the aflaj and raise their water efficiency by developing the water source of the falaj and digging supplementary wells and ensure that falaj water is efficiently used by introducing modern irrigation system.

How falaj works? The canal starts from the water source in the mountain or from a water pocket underground reached through an excavated well. The falaj is dug obliquely in order to ensure water flow by the force of gravity. For this reason, the angle of obliquity must be calculated accurately so that the falaj shall reach the fields it irrigates exactly at the required level. Every one hundred meter approximately a cylindrical hole is dug up and opens to the falaj. This hole is known as "thaqba" which provides fresh air to workers and facilitates works of maintenance in the future. When the falaj approaches farms, it turns from a tunnel to something that is similar to a ditch covered with stones and baked bricks to prevent water evaporation or contamination.
When the level of water flow reaches the surface of the earth, a big basin is dug, known as "sharia", to collect water and it can also be used as washing basin. It is lined with flat layers of rocks. At a location close to the spring, known as Bed'a Ibn Saud, there is a long steep stairway descending into the bottom of sharia. (This finding provided information on the history of the system). More than 300 pottery fragments were found while digging to reach the bottom of the sharia located 3.8 under current surface level. Fragments dated back to the Iron Age, which is 3000 years ago.
A network of aghial rises from the basin to carry water to the fields that need to be irrigated. With the elapse of time, it was necessary sometimes to deepen the water course to ensure it will continue flowing. This led to more extension of the system for longer distances every time and a little lower height. This all meant that fields and houses were receding a little backwards.
Iron Age aflaj were found in Hili, AI Ain City at Beda'a Ibn Saud, and to the north in Jabib and Maddam areas. As for the Sultanate of Oman, they were found in Almayaser and Raki. Two chinaware pots were found next to one falaj in Oman. In Hili, UAE, fossils exposed big structures next to sharia, and they were believed to be administrative positions to distribute precious water that was in short supply. Each one of them was known as falaj house.
The aflaj system is still in operation until now even in today's era of technology. This system does not depend on pumps that may break down or water pipes that may rust or burst out, and for this reason it is still in use without stop for 3000 years now. All what it needs is to clean up any silt that may be stuck in canals from time to time, especially after heavy rain.

By the end of 1940s, late Sheikh Zayed Bin Sultan AI Nahyan, founder of the UAE, when he was representative of the Ruler in Al Ain, laid down a program to renew water resources, including the aflaj. The execution of the program went on for 18 years and it was able to provide the city with water, giving AI Ain great fame.

Aflaj AI Ain: Al Ain city has around 300 falaj, most of them dried up already and the remaining ones are of unknown age.
Most important aflaj of Al Ain at the moment are:
Falaj AI Ain, Falaj Hili, Falaj Katara, Falaj Dawawi, Jahili Falaj, Jimi Falaj, Moatared Falaj, Moaeji Falaj and Mazyed Falaj.
Falaj AI Ain is known as Falaj AI Sarooj as it springs from Meragh area, east of AI Ain. It is a big falaj that flows underground as part of large canals with a number of openings to facilitate the cleaning and control of water. Then it branches out within two feet wide and one foot high cement aqueducts to irrigate palm trees and farms in Al Ain. This falaj runs for 9 km . From 30 years ago, late Sheikh Zayed Bin Sultan Al Nahyan extended the falaj to 10 km from the old course which stood at 5 km only.
As for Hili falaj, it is also a big falaj and springs from AI Oha area, north of AI Ain City. It is considered one of the deepest aflaj as it is 30 meters deep. It has five water openings in addition to many other openings found along the course of the falaj, with 60 feet distance between each falaj and the next. Water runs underground for long distances obliquely until it reaches the surface of land and then it is distributed on modern made cement aqueducts to irrigate palm trees and farms. This falaj runs for 12 km .
As for Falaj Katara, it springs from Saara region, south of Buraimi, and reaches AI Ain within underground canals, and at Katara area it begins to surface and runs within aqueducts until water reaches palm tree farms in the region. This falaj runs for 8 km .
Falaj Dawawi springs at the area of Shepehat, east of AI Ain, and it supplies water to Dawawi area, and runs for 7 km . Water level has declined in this falaj at present.
Late Sheikh Zayed Bin Sultan Al Nahyan ordered the digging of 87 wells to feed that falaj, with 6 meter distance between this well and another, each of them is 24 meters deep and one meter diameter. All these wells are interconnected.
As for Jimi Falaj, it springs from Alqa'a area, east of AI Ain and runs in underground canals to surface in Jimi area. Water then runs into aqueducts that pass by farms to irrigate them. This falaj runs for 6 km .
There is also Moatared Falaj which springs from the old Bait Almanbees, east of Al Ain city and it feeds Moatared area after which it is named. This falaj runs for 6 km .

The Moaeji Falaj runs in city center for 6 km and it is currently of no use because it dried up. As for Mazyed Falaj, it springs from western Safafa, east of Jebel Hafeet and it irrigates Mazyed area. It runs for 12 km and is 24 meters deep. It runs within canals with openings, and when it surfaces on the ground it runs within aqueducts that distribute its water on palm tree farms.

Jahili Falaj starts east of AI Ain Hilton, passes by old Maraba'a and continues its path until it reaches the Jahili Fort which was given the same name of the falaj as a kind of good augury. The Fort is still in its place until now.

Where the aflaj run? Thousands of years ago, the City of AI Ain had five palm tree farms that date back to old times and they were always known for their fascination. One can hear the whispering echoes between palm trees. It gave the inhabitants a breather in the middle of sand dunes which were later turned by people into ranches to escape the scorching summer sun and reap the best types of dates.
They were turned into economic sources and important tourist destinations. Between its houses and the fronds of its palm trees, stories are narrated for generations about those good old days. The best poems and songs were composed by poets and men of letters. The first thing that strikes one's mind while wandering between its alleyways and aflaj, under the shade of its trees,
is the song by Mohamed Abdo "How many times I remember hours of late afternoon and the whispering echoes between palm trees."
Monuments: In the city of Al Ain, the oasis is considered one of the basic natural and geographical features that bestow upon the city a kind of peculiarity that sets it apart from other cities in the UAE. It has five oases: the biggest and most gorgeous one is AI Ain Oasis, located behind the bus station at city center; Jimi Oasis, Katara Oasis and Hili Oasis. Those oases were developed by the Municipality and became one of the outstanding landmarks in the city where people can visit and promenade. They are a delight for visitors and give them an aura of tranquility and peace of mind. There is also Moatared Oasis located in Moatared area, which is currently being developed by the Municipality as part of the oases development project in the city. Al Ain Oasis is located at city center, but the Moatared Oasis is 4 km away from city center. Hili Oasis is 10 km away from city center, and both Katara and Jimi Oases are 7 km away from city center.

- Early beginning of oases:

The oases formed through carrying water from springs via the aflaj canals. Falaj is an Arabic word which means water canal. It is a smart way to carry underground water after collecting it under versants, and from there canals begin to collect water and give it out to oases.
There is no supported historical evidence or documents that refer to the history of the early beginnings of oases in Al Ain area or how they developed and when they were inhabited. Therefore, it is not possible to take one oasis and say it is the first oasis because they are all the product of natural transformations and formations. We cannot rule out the assumption that the oases of AI Ain city, especially Hili Oasis, were inhabited by people five thousand years ago. It is known that such area witnessed the cradle of a great civilization and civilizations only emerge in the places where the elements of settlement and living, especially water, are available. In general, historical evidence indicates that all or most of the oases in Al Ain were inhabited three thousand years ago. Although there are no specific figures referring to the number of population that lived in that place, tombs discovered indicate that there was a kind of populated settlements.
Furthermore, the discovery and extensive use of aflaj in irrigation more than one thousand years ago led more people to converge on the area and a busy movement of trade emerged. The emergence of aflaj and their use in irrigation were closely related to the construction of colossal historical buildings which are found everywhere in Al Ain City and the surrounding area. Successive rulers constructed a large number of fortresses, citadels and towers to protect the city's water resources, arable lands and riches in the oases.

## UAE Founder, late Sheikh Zayed's relationship with oases and aflaj:

The oases became one of the main landmarks in the city of Al Ain as they embody both the past and the present, in addition to their great potentials which can be utilized in the future as a real tourist attraction and a destination that reflects the mix of the past, present and future. Late Sheikh Zayed's interest in aflaj is considered the real beginning of the UAE's interest in oases which came as a culmination of the country's keenness on developing facilities for the benefit of its citizens.
Late Sheikh Zayed, immediately after assuming power in Al Ain City, began to look after the oases and restored, repaired and maintained the aflaj. He himself took part in digging some of them and mentioned them several times. He expressed his pleasure to take part in digging such aflaj. He said that digging the aflaj was a good opportunity for people to show the values of cooperation, magnanimity and kind and generous work, which are the traits of people in the UAE, especially the inhabitants of AI Ain. He referred that people used to share their meals, drink and how they used to cooperate in digging for the public interest. His sons and grandsons are still until now paying attention to Al Ain and its lush oases.

Based on this history and deep-rooted heritage, Al Ain Municipality embarked in 1990 on an ambitious plan to renovate the oases of AI Ain city, especially the largest four oases (AI Ain, Hili, Jimi and Katara). Work started in the first phase in March 1993 and included the pavement of roads, and renovation of walls, fences and gates with the use of traditional materials in an attempt to maintain the historical nature of the oases. The Municipality also allocated some areas to be used as restaurants, cafés and entertainment areas. There are currently five traditional cafés built with local materials which were used in the past. Some of those cafés became points of tourist attraction. As for the second, third and fourth phases of the development project, they include additional improvements in the four oases included in the first phase, in addition to the Oasis of Muatared. Some producers also shot some movies and TV serials at the oases given their authentic aesthetic and traditional features.
The aflaj system in most of central Oman helped in the creation of an administrative structure that led to more coherence among the inhabitants of such populated islands. The Sultanate of Oman does not have a river that runs through the country, as it is the case in the rivers of Tigris, Euphrates and the Nile, whose banks witnessed the emergence of great civilizations. However, Oman has a good reservoir of underground water that can be obtained from wells and aflaj.
The Municipality of AI Ain restored the fences and internal passageways and tried to preserve the traditional architectural nature of the place in a way that preserves their appearance and provides access to farmers and workers so that they can easily reach their farms. In the same time, this helps tourists and other visitors to enjoy the atmosphere of the oases and their fascinating scenery without any hardship and to spend interesting time with palm trees. At the center of AI Ain oases there are several houses and mosques telling the stories of the oases and named after their original owners of the city's dignitaries. At the main Al Ain oasis, there is the mosque of Ali Bin Hammad Al Mutawaa, AI Rabina Mosque, Rashid AI Muatawa AI Dhaheri Mosque, Obeid Al Nasseri house and Shahil Mutawa Al Dhaheri house. At the Jahili oasis, there is the house of Bin Hamouda, and Sheikh Mohamed Bin Ahmed AI Dhaheri Mosque. At Katara oasis, there is the house of Bin Ani Al Darmaki, house of Saleh Bin Bedwa Al Darmaki, and Rashid AI Hayet Al Darmaki mosque, in addition to many other houses that are still telling the stories of the inhabitants that once lived in that good old time. Life at that time was simple and characterized by security and peace of mind which was a priority over money, along with dates, and camel milk.

## Safeguarding of oases:

In order to preserve this tourist and economic wealth, H.H. Sheikh Mohamed Bin Zayed AI Nahyan, Crown Prince of Abu Dhabi, passed a resolution to safeguard these oases. The resolution defined the palm oases as those of the old city of AI Ain whose border are shown in the maps and plans approved by the Municipality. The resolution indicated that the Municipality must set the procedures and planning and development standards which would protect such oases from extinction and to put an end to urban progress towards the oases. The resolution stressed the need to expose the city's landmarks within the unique heritage context as it is the only city that is home to old oases.
The resolution also prevents any change of purpose or the use of lands in the oases and added that no buildings or constructions would be made at the oases unless through royal orders and on certain conditions. No facilities at the oases may be leased for any purpose and no monuments at the oases may be affected, including mosques and traditional houses, unless for the purpose of maintenance according to the standards set by the Department of Municipalities and Abu Dhabi Authority for Tourism and Culture. No palm trees would be removed from the oases and no new trees would be planted in order to preserve species and maintain the authentic nature of the place. The resolution also called on palm tree owners within the oases to pay more attention to them and notify the authorities in case they notice any blight.

## Terms used in the Aflaj system in the UAE:

The main terms used in the Aflaj system are as follows:
Shariaa: When water flow level reaches the surface of the ground, a big basin known as "shariaa" is dug to allow for water collection. It is also used as a washing basin, and it is lined with flat layers of rocks. At one of the locations close to AI Ain, known as Beda'a Ibn Saud, there is a long steep stairway that reaches down to the bottom of the shariaa. (This finding provided information on the history of the system. More than 300 pottery fragments were found while digging to reach the bottom of the sharia located 3.8 under current surface level. Fragments dated back to the Iron Age, which is 3000 years ago).

Gheel: It uses the irrigation from aflaj and works this way: water is passed from its distant mountainous sources to a large basin or several ponds at the border of the farm, and from that point ramifies a network of surface canals in all directions. When a small canal branches out of a wider canal, a gate made of metal or stone or sometimes of a pile of rags is built. The gate is opened so that water will flow into notches and irrigate trees planted in that place. Another gate is opened to flow water into other notches. In this way, water is carried to all planted trees over one or two days. At night, collection ponds are filled up to repeat the process once again in the following morning. The name given to the part built underground is falaj. As for the surface canals that can be seen above ground, they are known as aghial and the one of them is called "gheel". The word means inhabited valley and thicket, and for this reason the name is given to several small villages in the UAE.

Late night: It is the quarter of late night and comes at 7 o'clock after midnight of the sunset timing.

Amat alfalaj: It is the point where the falaj springs or it is the stem source of the falaj. It is also called head of the falaj, while other people call it "mother of the falaj". In most of the Ghailie aflaj, amat alfalaj is exposed. As for the Dawodi Falaj, it is the first covered well at the head of the falaj. The depth of the amat Dawodi alfalaj is 60 meters in some types of aflaj.

Aather: It is approximately half an hour period and means that the arable land has a share of the falaj water for half an hour according to its turn in the irrigation order every week or more. It is the most common sharing system of the falaj water among its owners. One day is called either one or two "bada"; each day must include 84 Aathers. If one day is one "bada", the "bada" includes 84 Aathers. If it is divided into two "badas" this means that each "bada" has 42 Aathers. The most common system is to divide the day into two badas, one for the daytime and for nighttime (theoretically: each day is divided into two sections, day and night). J.C. Wilkison and Alhajari mentioned some aflaj that have 3 badas every day. In such types of aflaj, each bada has 61 Aathers, and each Aather is divided into 42 "qias". Practically, the qias is the smallest unit of the water share which is approximately equal to the time needed to irrigate one palm tree with good water flow.
Each falaj using Aather as a unit to portion out water has its relatively special system in giving names to other bigger or smaller units of the Aather. Such units have different nomenclature and different periods of time. For instance, "alqama" is a quarter of Aather, and "alrabia" is 6 Aathers. There are also other time units such as "rabie" which is equal to 6 Aathers (quarter of a "bada" middle of the day) and "robaa" is equal to 6 "qias" (quarter of an Aather). However, there are other smaller units, such as "mithqal" and "habba". An example of this is the qias which is equal to 8 mathaqeel and each mithqal is equal to 36 habba. Whereas the Aather theoretically is equal to 30 daqiqa, habba is equal to 26 seconds. J.C. Wilkison referred to water portioning system in the falaj of Almalki, in Izki, Oman where Aathers are divided into smaller
and smaller subdivisions until it reaches a unit called "jalila". One jalila is equal to 5 parts of a second divided into thousand parts. Practically speaking, we cannot measure such small units through traditional methods, but they are used in calculating inheritance only.
Preliminary ratios of division do not change after water is divided among owners of shares. However, shares of water or land may be sold or leased. After the decease of the owner, shares of lands and water are divided among heirs in accordance with Islamic Shari'a law. Every farmer irrigates his land with the same number of Aathers in each cycle, and the order of irrigation shares does not change in the cycle if a farmer does not irrigate his land on time.
Bada: A bada is half a day ( 12 hours). It is said "bada" of the daytime and "bada" of the nighttime. It is also known as "khabora" in some areas.

Badwa: One quarter of "radda" and it is a period of time. Badwa begins when the height of a person's shadow reaches 24 feet in most of the Ghailie aflaj. But in some Dawodi aflaj, the time of the badwa is different according to the area of irrigation through the falaj. It may begin when the person's shadow is 24 feet or 20 feet high or any other height according to what is common.

Bedar: He is the person specialized in dividing, distributing and turning over the water of the aflaj. He is able to tell apart the types of palm trees, the number of plants needed to pollinate each palm tree, and the type of prolific male palm tree. The bedar works on behalf of employers against certain fees given to him.

# - Prepared by Ammar Al Sanjari 

- Supervision: Dr Sulaiman Khalaf


## Resources:

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\author{

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}

تحليد العنشو
الحتل : أنظـة الري المدَيبة اسم العنصر : افللاج وعاحات مدبية اليّين

## 

اسم آخر : النخيل والنلادبا
متّصد تجاري : تشير المراجع التاريخية وكتب اللرحالة ان واحة العين كانت متصدا للتو افل التجارية فهي تأتي لتتزود منها بما تحتاجه من ماء اولا ثم الرطب وغيره من المتتجات ويشير بعض الكتاب إلى أن سكان واحة العين سابتا كانوا يمارسون

بجانب الزر اعة حرفا أخرى كاللرعي والصيد، وكان كثير من الشباب يهاجرون من موطنهم هذا في فصلل الميف ويتوجهون إلى لبي والشارقة و غير ها من المدن اللساحلية للعمل في الغوص وصيد اللؤلؤ وهناك تلة كانت تعمل في صيد الأسماك.

لق كانت مدينة العين وحتى أوانل اللستينات من القرن الماضي عبارة عن مجمو عة من القرى المتفرقة التّي تفصلل بينها الكثبان الرمية وراحات النخيل ومع تدفق عاندات اللنطط فتحت الطرق وازداد العمران فارتبطت الواحات والقرى الُلختلفة ببعضها البعض مكونة مدينة العين.

## الآمصانص الثمعيزة لثمنصر :

نظلم الأفلاج هو نظام هندسي قديم للاري تّوارثنُ الأجيل منذ منات اللسنين عرفته دولة الامارات العربية المتحدة منذ 3000 سنة ولا يزال يؤدي عمله حتى اليوم، في عصر التكنولوجيا هذا ، حيث أنه لا يعتمد على مضخات تد نتّعطل وقساطل قد تصدا وتنفجر، فان كل ما كان يحتاجه هو تنظيف الأقتية من الطمي بين الفينة والفينة، خاصـة بعد المطر الشُليد بالر غم من صتوبة التضاريس واتساع مساحة العين إلا أن الأفلاج في هذه المدينة تتدم ومنذ أقم العصور شبكة متكاملة للري ونتلَ المياه من قّم الجبال وبطون الويان الى مسافات طويلة ليستخذمها السكان في الري وفي مختلف الاستخدامات الخرى وثد وجدت الأفلاج في العين منذ ها تبل الإسلام ، فبعض أفلاج مدينتي منح وسمانل في سلطنة عُمان على سبيل
 عبترية الانسان في هذه الملينة على مر العصور في طرق حفر وبناء الأفلاج اللتّ تصل أعماقها عشرات الأمتار للحصول على المياه الجوفية من باطن الارضن عن طريقّ التنوات، مسا يُعد إعجازاً هندسياً في وتت لم تثوفر فيه الآلات الميكانيكية.

المُملِِسِ :
أناس متخصصين بهذا النظام من الري من الرجاله.
الأنراد والمؤسسات المعنية : من البرز الهينات والمؤمسات المعنية بالمحافظة على الأفلاج في دولة الإمارات هيئة
 الوصغ الموجز :
الفلج - من الفعل فلج بمعنى فلق وشق - هو باختصـار قناةٌ ماتية لها هصدر هن فجوة في مكان مرتّغع في طبتة صخرية، ومنها تمتلد تناة مسافة الميل عليدة حتى تصل إلى ارض تابلة للزراعة ـ لكن ها هو تعريف الفلج؟

الفلج في العرف هو الماء الجاري بِر فتاة مشتوقة في الأرض مصدرة المياه الجوفية الموجودة في باطن الأرض او تلك اللياه المتواجدة في مناطق الأودية، وفي كتاب جمهرة اللفة لابن ديد يعرّن الفلج بقرله: "هو النهر الصغير، وكل شيء شُشتَّه نصفين فتَ فلجّهُ". يعرفه لسان العرب لابن منظور، والحكم لابن سيدة الانتلسي "النلجه هو النهر .. وقيل هو النهر الصغير، وقيل هواء الماء

 سامية قيِية تعني (التتسيم) وما يقلبل اللنج في اللغة العربية هو تتّسيم الطككية المى انصبة .

الوصن التّصبلي



 السطورة البداية و التككرين، والبسوه ثوب الميبة، والمهابة، تتالتله الالسن بالتكرار، والتقارثان، ولكي تيشّ الحكاية
 زار المنطقة على بساط الريع وتد امر خذمه من الجن بان يبنوا عشر ة الابت تناة في عشرة أليام. او ان الفرس هم من بنوا



بالماء بشُتى مصادره ومنها الأمطار وارتباطها بمواسم معينة أو بعغنى الثق بموسم واحد.






 خمة تل ان نجد مثيلاً لها. وتلمس إحساسهم وكانهه يزيدون في مجراه دمعات من محاجرهم في حالات الجفات، ويحملون


 الززراعية ومختلف الاستخذامات الأخرى .. نهاك ترتيبات دقيقة تتظم الأولوية في استعمال مياه الفلج والاستفادة منه و هكذا




 بين الأعشاب التّي ترتوي من المياه المتسربة منها. الما في المزارع الحديئة، فتّ تم استبدالها بالتّنية مبنية من الإسمنت، تثّق

طريتها باستقامة عبر الحتول. وحيث أن المياه لا ترشح منها، فابن الأعشاب نادرة أو معدرمة الوجود حولها. والحتيتة أن











 الاني بينتل المباه في شبكة تمتا عشرات الكيلرمترات، عابرة الجبال وسهول الحصباء، وصولأ إلى المزار ع المعامة ترب

> السفع حيث التربة الغضنارية.

وهذا النظام لآتية الري معروت في الماكم اخرى في العالم، وحتى في أوروبا (إسبانيا) وآسيا الوسطى. وكان اكيُرها تعتيداً




 يعتبر لليلا على أن نظام الري تحت الأرضي إنما نشا في شبه الجزيرة العمتية وليس في ايريان.



 حيث قاموا بتجدليد النظام القيع تبل 50 سنة خلت.

النواع الألهلاج : وتتقس الأفلاج إلى ثلاثة النواع :
1.النغلج الداؤدي:-

وهو عبارة عن تَّاة طويلة محفررة تتتد عدة كِلو متر تحت الأرض، بعقق يصلل الى عشرات الالمتار، ويمتاز الفلج الالأددي بتواصل جرياته طوال العام.
2. الثنكع العيني:

ويستمد مياهـ من إحدى العيون ومنها عيرن مياه ساخنة ، وعد هذه الأفلاج محدود.
3.الغلج الغبّي:

ويستّد مياهـ من المياه الجارية السطحية وشبة السطحية باعماق لا تزيد عن 3-4 المتار. ويزيد منسوب العياه في هذا النوع من الأفلاج مباشُرة بعد هطول الأمطار، وقد يجغ عند انتطاع الأمطار لدةة طويلة .

وبع أن تصل مياه اللفج الىى مركز اللتجمع الععراني ويأخذ السكان حاجتهه من الماء، يتّ ترزيع المياه على الحيازات



وكيل الفلج.
في اواتل السبعينات قامت الحكرمة بجهود كبيرة في المحافظة على هذا التراث التِيم، فبدات في وضع خطط للصيانة
 وتأمين الاستغلال الأمتل لعياه الأفلاج بابذخال نظام الري الحديث.

نظام عل اللُّع : تبدا التقنة من مورد المياه في الجبل، او من جيب مانئي تحت الأرض يتم الوصول إليه عبر بنر دحفورة.



 أو تلوثـ.
وعنتما يصل مستوى جريان الماء إلمى سطح الأرض، يحفر حوض كبير يدعى "الشنريعة"، ليتم جمع الماء فيه. كما يستظم




وكانت الكسرات تورد للعصر الحدييّي، أي لحوالي 3000 سنة مضت

 ادنى تليلكا، وكان نلك يعني تراجع الحتول والمساكن للوراء بعض الثئي.


 والثمينة، ركان واحدها يسمى بيت الفلج.
 وتساطل تد تصدا و وتنجر، فلْته لا يزال يعمل بدون توتف منذ 3000 سنة. كل ما كان يحتاجه هو تتظيف الأتتية من الطمي بين الفينة والفينة، خاصة بعد المطر الشطيد.
هذا، وتّ وضع الثيخ زايد بن سلطان آل نهيان موسس دولة الامارات العربية المتحدة ، عندما كان مسـلأ للحاكم في العين
 عامأ، ورفر الماء الذي أكسب العين شهرة واسعة بسبب تكور زراهتها.

أللاج العنن : يوجد بعدينة العين ترابة 300 فلج , ولكن معظمها تد جغ والأفلاج المتبتية غير معروفة الأعمار تصما . واهم الأفلاج الوجودة في مينة العين حاليا هي :
فلج العين , فلج الهيلى , فلج التطارة, فلج الاداوددى , فلج الجاهلى , فلج الجيهي, فلج المترض , فلج الويجعى , فلج مزيد

 قالمين وارتناع تلم لتتوم بسقاية النخيل والمزارع بسنطتة العين , وطول هذا الفلج 9 كيلومترات , ومنذ 30 سند قام صات السبو الشيخ زايد بن سلطان آل نهيان بزيادة طوله إلى 10 كيلومترات بعد أن كان طوله خمسة كيلو مترات نتط.

 الفلّ , والتّي تشزارح السسافة بين الواحدة والأخرى فيها ترابة 60 قدما , تسير فيها اللياه تحت الأرض مسافات كبيرة


ويبلغ طول هنا الفلفج 12 كيلومترا .
 يظهر على سطح الأرض , حيث يسير ضمن عوامد وتصل مياهه إلى مزارع النخيل بالنططةتّ , ويلغ طول هذا الفلج 8 كيلّومترات .

 تبلغ المسافه يبن البنُر والأخرى 6 امتار وعلى عمق 24 مترا لكل بنر , وتطر كل منها متر واحد وتصصل هذه الآبار بعضها البعض . وينبع فلج الجيهى من منطقة القاعة شُرتي العين ويسير في تنوات تحت الأرض يظهر بعدها على سطح الأرض في في منطقة



ويليل طوله 6 كيلو مترات.


 بتوزيع مياهن على مزارع النخيل
 تيهنا به وهى ماز الت قائتة حتى الآن.

أين تجري الاهلاع : منذ آلات السنين فتحت مدينة العين الجنانها وسط خمس مزارع للانخيل موغلة في القتم وتنردت
 وحولتها يد الإنسان إلمى مرابع استظلت فيها من حر الصيف ومنها جنت الجرد أنواع الرطب والتثور



 من الإمارات حيت يوجد بها خمس واحات، وهي واحة العين التى تتع ظلت محطة الباصات في منطتة وسط الميينة وهي الأكبر والأجمل، وراحة الجييم، وواحة القطارة وواحة الهيلم، هذه الواحات تم تطوير ها من قبل البلالية.
 والطمأنينة إلمى وجود واحة المعترض التي تتع في منطقة المعترض حيث تخضي في الوتّت الحالى لأعمل التطرير التّي

تترم بها البلاية ضمن مشرو ع تطوير الواحات في المينة. تثع واحة العين ني منطتة وسط المدينة، بينما تبعد واحة العترض مسافة 4 كيلومترات عن وسط الميبنة، الما واحة الميلي فهي تبعد 10 كم عن وسط المينينة، وبالنسبة لواحتي التطارة والجيمي نهما تبعدان مسافة 7 كم عن وسط المينية. - نشأة الواحات: تتئلت الواحات عن طريق نتلّ المياه من العيون عبر تنوات الأفلاج، والفلج هو مصطلح عربي يعني تناةٍ
 وتتّنبـبـا على الواحات.
وليس هـاك اللة تاريخية ثابتّة أر وثانتق تشبير إلى تاريخ نشاة الواحات في منطتة العين، او كينية تطور رها ومتى بدا استيطانها وبالتلالي من غير المكن تحيد واحة بعينها للتول إنها اول الواحات بل هي تنتاج تحولات وتثيكيلات طبييةية لكن
 فالمعروت أن هذه المنطتة كانت مهدأ لحضارة مبيدة والمعرون ان الحضارات لا تتشُا إلا في الأماكن الثّي تيّوفر فيها مترمات الاستيطان والتي ياتّي على راسها ترفر المياه. وبشكل عام تثير الشُواهد التاريخية ابلى ان كل الو الو معظم واحات


الوجودة تدل عطى نوع من التّمركز السكاني.
 هذه اللمنطةّ، كها أدى إلى بروز حركة تبادل وتجارة واسعة وارتبطت نشأة الأفلاج واستخذامها في الري بنشأة المباني
 والقلاع والأبراج لحماية موارد المياه ولحماية أراضيهم الزز اعية وثرواتهم في تلك الواحات.

المؤسس الكولة المُّيخِ زايد بالواحات والافلاع : أصبحت الواحات إحدى المعالم الرئيسية لمدينة العين فهي تجمع بين


 لخمة الوراطنين.
فتد أمر الشيخ زايد رحمه الش فور توليه الحكى في مينّة العين برعاية اللراحات وترميمي الأفلاج وإصـلاحها والمحافظة
 كانت مجالا اظهر فيه السكان تَيم التّعاون والشهامة و العل الكريم الطيب الأي يتّتع به أبناء الإمارات وخات وخاصة أبناء العين
 بعده حتى اليوم يواصلون التَامهم بالعين وراحاتها الغناء.
 العين وبذاصة الواحات الأربع الكبيرة (اللعين و هيلي والجيمي والتطارة). وتد بدأ العطل الفعلي في المرحلة الأولى في مارس 1993 وشُل رصف الطرق وتجبيد الحو انط والأسوار والبوابات باستعـال مواد تتليدية معا حانظ على الجاتب

 أما المراحل الثانية والثالثة والرابعة من مشروع التطرير فهي تشضمن تحسينات إضانِية في الواحات الأريع التّي شملتها

المرحلة الاولى بالإضافة إلى واحة المعترض وتد حرص بعض المنجين على تصوير بعض الأفلام والمسلسلات داخل الواحات ونلك لما نتمتع به من مظاهر جمالية وترالثية أصيلة.
كان الفضل لنظام الأفلاج في هعظم أنحاء عُمـن الوسطى في إيجاد نظام إداري يعمل على تماسك قاطني هذه الجزر
 كبرى، لكن الطبيعةّ لم تبخل عليها بمياه جوفية تجود بها الآبار حينا والافلاج حينا آخر. وثد حرصت بلحية العين على ترميم الأسوار الخارجية والمرات الداخلية بذات الطابع المعماري القليم مما يحافظ على شكلها وفتح الطرق داخلها بحيث يتكن الصحاب المزارع والمزارعون والعملل من الوصول بسهولة المى مزارعهم وفي الوتت ننسه يتيح للمياح وغيرهم من الزوار اللرصة للتتعت بجو الواحات ومناظر ها الخلابة دون صعوبة وتضناء امتع واججل الأوقات بين أشجار النخيل. كها يوجد وسط واحات العين مجهوعة من المنازل والمساجد التي مازالت تانعة حنى الآن تروي حكايات الواحات وتعرن بانماء أصحابها الأصليين من وجهاء المدينة حيث يوجد في واحة العين الرئبسية مسجد علي بن حمد الططوع ومسجد الريبينه ومسجد راشد المطوه الظاهري ومنزل عبيد الناصري ومنزل شهيل مطوع الظاهري. وني واحة الجيمي هناك منزل بن حموده ومسجد اللشيخ محمد بن أحد الظاهري. وفي واحة اللطارة منزل بن ون عاني الدرمكي ومنزل صـالح بن بدوه الدرمكي ومسجد راشد الحايط الدرمكي إلمى جانب منازل أخرى عديدة مازالت تروي ثصص وحكايات سكان تلك الواحات في الزهن الجميل حيت كانت بساطة الحياة والأمن والأمان و هدوء البلل ثبل الملى وزادهم التمر واللرطب وحليب النوق.

حـاِية الواحات : ومن اجل الحفاظ على تلك التُورة السياحية والاتتصايية أصدر الفريق أول سمو الشّيخ محمد بن زابد آل نهيان ولي عهد أبوظبي تراراً بشأن الحفاظ عليها حيث حدد القرار واحات النخيل بانها واحات نخيل العين التقيمة التّي تُعتبر حودها وحرمها كها هي موضحةٌ بالمخططات والخرائط الصصدقّة في دائرة اللبلمية وتَضى الترار بضرورة ان تُتوم
 ورتف الزحف العمر اني عليها والعمل على إيراز معالمها بشكل يحفظ للمدينة طابعها التراثي الميز كونها المدينة الوحيدة

> المحتخـنة للواحات التديمة.

كـا أكد القرار على عدم جواز تغيير مهامها أو استعمال أراضيها ولا يسمع بإقامة أية مبان أو منشآت داخل حرم الواحات إلا بأوامر سامية وبشروط محدة حيت لا يسمح بتأجير أي منثأت لأي غرض يخلم الواحات كها يحنر الترار من المساس
 البلييات و هيئة أبوظبي للسياحة والمقافة ما لا يسمح بإز الة أي نوع من أنواع النخيل القائمة فيها أو زراعة اشبجار داخلية ونلك ضماتأ للحنظل النوعي وتاكيد طابعها الأصلي وطالب الترار من الصحاب النخيل داخل الواحات ضرورة الاهتمام بها والإبلاغ عن أية آفات.

هصنطات مستعـة في نظلم الألاج في دولة الإمـارات :

ان أمه مصطلحات المصتخلـمة في نظام الالْلاج هي :

اللشريعة : عندما يصل مستوى جريان الماء إلى سطع الأرض، يحنر حوض كبير يدعى "الشُريعة"، ليتم جمع الماء فيه.
كـا يستخدم كحرض للثضيل. مبطن بشر انح مسطحة من الصخرر. وفي احد المواقع التريبة من الحين، ويدعى بدع ابن سعرد، شناك درج طويل شديد الانحدار ينزل إلى قاع الشُريعة. (هذا الكشف هو الذي وفر المعلومات حول عمر النظام: فتّ

مثُر على اكثرُ من 300 كسرة نخارية عغد الحفر للوصول إلى تعر الشريعة الواقع على عمق 3.8 متر تمت مستّوى السطح الحالي. وكانت الكسرات تعود للعصر الحيدي، الي لحوالي 3000 سنةّ مضت). الثغل : يستخم نظام الري من الأفلاج والالي يعمل على النحر التالي، يتم تمرير الماء بن موارده الجبلية النانية إلى حوض





 والأجمة، ولا فإنها تطلق طلمى عد من الترى الصنيرة في الدولة. آخر اللليل : أحد تقسيمات الردة ويطلق عليه ربع آخر اللليل ويحين مو عده الساعة السابعة من بعد منتصف اللليل بالتوقيت الغروبي.









 واحدة عند وجود تَفق ماء جيلـ.

 وحدات الخرى للوتت متل ربيع والذي يساوي 6 تثار (ربع بادة منتصن اليوم) والربعة تساوي 6 ثياسات (ربع أثر) ومع





في حساب المواريث نتط.
ولا تاتير النسب الأولية للتّهيمر بعدا يقس الماء بين مالكي الأسهم، ولكن من المككن بيع مهم الماء أو الأرض أو تأجيره. وتتس أسهم الأرض والماء بعد وفاة المالك بين الورثة حسب الشريعة الإسلامية. ويسقي كل مزارع ارضضه بنسس عدر
 بـــدة : البادة نصف يوم (12 ساعة) ويقال: بادة الليل وباد النهار . ويطلق عليها (خبورة) في بعض المناطق.

$$
\begin{aligned}
& \text { بـوة : الحد أرباع تتسيمات الردة وهي عبارة عن توتِبت زمني. وتبدا البجوة عنما يكون طول ظل الشخص (24) تَما، }
\end{aligned}
$$

بـــار: البيدار هو الشّخص النتخصص في معرنةّ كينية تتسيم مياه الأفلاج وتوزيعها ودورانها
بالعمل نبابة عن أصحاب الأموال متابل أجر يننق عليه.
-!:عاد: عتار الستنجري
-إمنر افت: د.سليمان خلف
الدصادر :
http://www.zayed.ae/sait/show.php?id=242
http://www.omanet.om/arabic/tourism/tourism12.asp?cat=tour\&subcat=tou1

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http://www.nizwa.com/volume44/p11_20.html


