

The "KUJOUR"

Role of the African God-man in the Nuba Mountains Community of Central Sudan

By:

Mohammed Haroun Kafi Abu Ras

E-mail: lshimal5th@yahoo.com

E-mail: mh-kafi@hotmail.com

It is true that every religion as whether heavenly, i.e. sent by God, through Prophets from or at times as many ancestral beliefs are existing in such as Africa, Asia, etc.. with no doubt they are strongly worshiped and considered. This though they may differ in concepts upon views of each different believers, such as the Muslims, Christians, Jews, Buddhists and Shamanism. Though some may honour and prefer theirs more than others or than the rest, yet for each group, at least there is a convenience that theirs is the Saviour and moreover, it is the right track to organize their family in different ways.

The "Kujour", is a common word everywhere in the Sudan, like the term "Feki" but, the first is from the eastern part of the Nuba Mountains, the Kwalib ethnic/tribe and the other is an Arabic word. However, before we discuss our topic, at length, in short we can refer to them both as religious guides/leaders/worshippers and religious people.

The "Kujour" my book was first published by the Institute of African and Asian Studies of Khartoum University in 1978, under supervision of Prof. Sayed Hamid Hurez who was by then the head of the Folklore Department.

Though it discussed the concept of the African traditional life and concept of belief and religion, it is at the same time not taken at the wide to dimension the sample of the Nuba Mountains alone. In a way, the Nuba Mountains example could still be found applicable or practiced in some other African Region.

I shall in the following pages discuss these topics:

1. The Kujour: Meaning, how to become a Kujour
2. Works and duties
3. Hymns, dreams and trance
4. Death and the transfer of the trance to another shaman.
5. Traditions and heritage justification as in the sample of Kadugli personal names

- (1) The word 'Kujour' is a popular word and sacred elements/person in the whole of the Nuba Mountains Region in S. Kordofan. It is just the word "SIBIR"; and though this latter one is in Arabic but, even in this pronunciation or else in the Arabic form and, it is rarely known by many Arabic speakers. The Kujour is the religious person the Sibir is the ritual ceremony.

The Kujour is a spiritual term and deed. It is known in other Nuba Mountains ethnics or languages as "ta musla" in Kadugli Language, "bel" and "kuni" in Kwalib and "Abade' in Nyamang. As the term tha succeeded to be taken as a uniform, for explanation, it has two joint parts. The first is "Kuj" which means to "hung" then the other part "oor" means "spirit". To this the full meaning is the person whom she or he hung by the sacred

spirits, i.e. that they dwelt the body, inhabited and driving, controlling and are spiritually using the person, directing him.

In the northern part of the Nuba Mountains, the "abadia" is the sacred spirit which had dwelt and existed in the Kujour that next to it he/shall be spiritually along this transition to a higher stage, to a "Kwir". It means that person who is higher than "Kuni", which more embodied by the sacred spirits.

Late Prof. R. C. Stevenson referred to "Kuj" as the person who has been hung by spirits; to mean "Kuni de Kaydi".

** There are other concepts in the Nuba Mountains. To this, in short I shall give 2 terms.

1. **Kadugli**: The ethnic and capital. The Almighty God is called "Musala" while the Kujour is "ta-masala". **Ta** means to belong or to do as that or in a way or another with some powers. So it means a God-man or woman as each could also be.

In Kadugli language at times if you are speaking about "musala", someone may ask you: which one, the small or big? That do you mean the Almighty or the one the smaller power of the same inhabited him? This means the Kujour God-person.

2. **In Moro**: South of Kadugli

Ruma: the snake

Rumariyola: that Ruma in heavens i.e. God.

3. **How to become a Kujour?**

Works and Duties

As this paper looks as an introduction in a very limited form. In short to start point (2), it is usually believed that dreams of fear like snakes and symptoms of hallucination once they attack a person, that he/she often dreams of, this means it is a gradual to passage to the Kujour state.

At times he is tested or else alone by himself he may inform those around him about something hidden away from him by others. On search, once found, this promotes his prophecies to an upper state. After undergoing many tests and changes, a professional God-person may discover and point out to the people that he is to form the rituals and celebrations for the Kujour stage as he is now possessed.

The rituals may take long as 2 weeks in Nymang area in Dilling, North Nuba Mountains and he shall be accompanied by 2 young boys and girls who are not yet adolescent. The 4 ceremonies are:

1. Getting rid of population and dirt, that he is to be pure now.
2. Entering the Klatch: to be there for a time for sacred prayers or retreats.
3. Hitting or fighting the obstacles (bad spirits).
4. The chicken sacrifices. Some ladies in Dilling, the Nymang are not eating chickens, that they are for men only.

The set of works the Kujours as evolved in or believed to do are:

1. Rain-making and agric blessings
2. Blessing marriages

3. Treatment of people, especially those caste by magicians as he the Kujour is taken as more powerful than them all.. spiritual treatment.
4. Forecasting and protecting soldiers on their way to fight.
5. To announce and initiate seasonal rites, among them rites of passages, such as the "Kambala"..passage from childhood to manhood, the young girls to womanhood "adolescence" as in granary ceremony. These and others, such as the start of the cultivation, the harvest, wrestling, etc... etc.... The Kambala is for 2 weeks and the granary is for 3 months.

In treatment, the Kujour differ. That of Nymang, N. Nuba Mountains would first be in a trance till reaching a sort of madness and danger, moving, staggering and speaking alone. As in this case someone has to guard him, not to fall into danger, to interpret his speech as his language at that moment would change into another; and to tell him later on what he was saying or as right, "what was said through him."

This is different than that of Kadugli group, i.e. the southern part of the mountains, he is always in a trance, ready for his work. It differs in work as the Dilling Kujour blesses or speaks only, while the Kadugli one uses:

1. A calabash with water then soaks the water, while the calabash is on the sick part of the body, like the abdomen or so, then he starts moving out of the calabash a combination of things unbelievable to exist in the body.. like stones, pieces of iron, grass, threads, etc..etc..
2. He or she the Kujour could also use a duster or cleaning device and start sweeping the ill person, getting out of him several things, like in the calabash case.

3. In Kadugli case, the Kujour may shout slowly at the lame person to stand and walk and it happened.

4. Hymns and Death:

These are seasonal festivals; each has its own rights and songs, hymns, such as the initiations, the harvest, marriage, extra....

At treatment, once the Kujour fails he would after several trials say:
Oh God, this is yours. You send him to the world; and so back take him to your majesty. In Islam it is stated that man came from God and he shall go back to God.

4-5 Heritage: Personal Names:

The Nuba Mountains people in the area between lines N. 10-12 / 28-32 E, have their own names different than the Arabic/Islamic or Christian or else than any other different parts of the Sudan and the rest of the world.

In this for, following as:

Males

1. Kuku
2. Kafi or Kappi
3. Tiya or Tiyo
4. Tutu
5. Kuwo
6. Keki
7. Asso
8. Kanno

Females

1. Kaka
2. Tatto
3. Koche
4. Kekki
5. Kuwo
6. Kikki
7. Tisso/Asso
8. Kanno

These set of names are (8) followed by (8) others of 9, 10, 11, etc.. till 16. The Nuba people say that the mother gives birth to 16 children, no-more. Rarely that this would be more.

That the 13-19 years of age is the adolescence. Once the girl is married, starts to deliver children. That in the traditional norm, the birth is approximately $1\frac{1}{2}$ years. That is $3/2 \times 16 = 24$ years.

+ i.e. – 7 – 20 years of marriage

= 39 – 44 – 46 years of womb activity

Or once it is 2 years = $2 \times 16 = 32$ years production. $32 + 70$ age = 52 end
It looks fair as the parents have to spare the rest of the time for other duties. At least mum is to be active as the father is still on. The above though is traditional, yet it looks scientific. Along with it the body scars once every 4 years on the abdomen, once counted, they (X4) times four, they give last age of the person at that ceremony.

4. Summary:

Abu Ras Nuba Mountains

Studies Centre:

To have a sample of an African heritage, this is a proposal for a support, to start with \$400,000 for buildings, books, stationary, equipment, transport, researchers, lecturers, etc.. etc.. to be linked with the Afro-Asian Institute.

I am presenting and supporting it. We are considering the land, added to it this sum of \$400,000 from donors. For certain , the Nuba Mountains region is the place for that for all the writers, researchers, tourists and all.

Thanks to all, the UNESCO and to Prof. Hurez who gave me the torch.

Note:

The proposal for "Abu Ras Centre for the Nuba Mountains Studies" is ready. Written by myself. This also contains collection and/or photo copying books, papers, etc on the Nuba Mountains region and ethnics.

The proposal is also considering a future museum under a professional Sudanese Nuba artist.

Culture is a stand. No economy of the whole country is taken for a support of only one ethnic than the others.

Thanks.

Mohammed Haroun Kafi

Resume

Author of:

1. The Kujour: in Arabic
2. Rhythms of Creation
Poetry of Black African poetry of struggle, love and life:
Selections, translation and a comparative study.
3. Sudan Conflict
4. Beyond the Land of NO Graves: On Sudanese Identification
through personal names.
5. Human Rights Violations at Sudan War
6. The Philosophy of Peace and Its Impact on:
Conflict, governance and the growth of economy in Africa. Of an
Arabic translation: Prof. Hizkias Assefa.
7. The Palestinian Poetry of Struggle
8. Introduced 2 books
9. Etc....etc....etc...