

Studies in
Qatari
Folklore 2





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Introduction

This is the second issue of *Studies in Qatari Folklore*, published by the Heritage Department. As the first issue, it introduces several studies that were originally published in *Al Ma'thurat Al Sha'biyya* which focus primarily upon aspects and manifestations of folklore in the Qatari community. Those studies scrutinize folklore and its impact upon Qatari values, customs, traditions, norms, ideologies and daily practices. The scope of those studies is not limited to one dimension as the researchers' perspectives probe into the deep recesses of Qatari heritage to embrace myriad aspects of its folklore such as: children folk games, jokes, costumes, wedding customs, folktales, and the sea.

As a term that was first coined in mid nineteenth century by William Thomas, folklore has grown into an indispensable component of any human culture. It embraces literature, art, proverbs and sayings, architecture, anecdotes, riddles, jokes, epics, ballads, costumes, tales, myths, fables, music and knowledge as a form of tradition. It is a legacy that is orally transmitted from one generation to another and is reflected in the values and the ideas of the group. It is also the popular practice of any community that encompasses almost all walks of life and makes the group distinct and different. Hence, in a world of globalization, societies cling to their folklore, where

folkloric studies and folkloric research are seen as quite significant since they characterize each culture and emphasize its distinguished features.

In our contemporary societies, we are all trying to reach out to our roots to assert our ethnic identities. It is thus important to look into folklore as it expresses itself in our traditional culture. Folklore intersects with anthropology, sociology, psychology, morphology, and religion, to mention but a few of the disciplines that mingle with folklore opening up the door to multiple readings and explanations. Folklorists in Qatar have embarked upon the academic trajectory of conducting their research on Qatari heritage, its values, its roots and its indicators. Through gathering data, carrying out fieldwork, holding interviews and recording media, researchers have pinned down their studies and produced scientific examinations of Qatari heritage and folklore. Relying on different approaches and genres, Qatari folklorists in this issue create a wide array of studies that transcend a single vision of folklore and present various stances by using different approaches. The studies presented in this issue are organized thematically, the first three studies focus on folktales with a collection of stories, examining the joke in folktales and reading folktales through the lens of morphology. The following researches lay the emphasis upon traditions with the image of the sea and diving in the Qatari collective unconscious and the Qatari traditions practiced in weddings. Then the issue presents three studies that relate folklore to children, whether through children's educational institutions or children's games. The last theme is contemporary folklore as seen in the *majlis* and the male traditional costume of the *besht*. All studies strive to highlight the presence of folklore in Qatari culture and to keep it alive by highlighting its depth and its significance for the

people who still practice it and carry it throughout time.

The first research in this issue is related to folktales. “Folktales from Qatar” by Hamad Hemdan Al Mohanndi introduces a rich aspect of Qatari folklore, namely, the tales. These folktales are selected texts from *Folktales from the Arabian Gulf: A Selection of Popular Tales Collected in the Filed*, which is issued by The Gulf Center of the Cooperation Council for the Arab Gulf States. The book is translated by Dr. Fayyiz Sayyagh, edited by Sylvia Ismail, illustrated by Faraj Daham and supervised by Aman Al-Hamdan, and it was published in Doha, 2003. The selected stories are: “The Golden Cow,” “The Thorn Tree,” “A’ssoom and A’rooy,” and “The Four Women and the Cow-Seller.”

The next research “The Art of Popular Witticism in Qatari Folktales” by Prof. Sabri Moslim Hammadi is equally concerned with folktales. He approaches the joke in folktales as a focused structure involving a shocking paradox that shatters our expectations, offers an unpredictable ending, and remains serious, witty and entertaining to its reader or listener. The significance of the joke lies in its intensely short form, in addition to its ability to carry uncountable implications. The joke belongs to folklore since its author is anonymous. Its phrasing differs according to its environment, and also owing to its popular adage even if it is said in classical Arabic. Hence, the joke becomes a form of popular literature that embraces the peoples’ ideas, beliefs, views and their social, moral and philosophical outlook. The joke, as short as it is, can sometimes contain the experiences of long ages and the situations the people have been through. The researcher introduces, in terms of form and content, twenty jokes published in *Folktales in Qatar, Part II*, which is a collection of folkloric stories compiled by

Dr. Muhammad Talib Salman Al Dweik during his field study. He states the name, place, work and age of each joke teller, and the book is issued by The Gulf Center of the Cooperation Council for the Arab Gulf States, Doha, 1984.

Dr. Rami Abu Shehab treads the same path of folktales, but his is a morphological approach. In “Qatari Folktales, A Morphological Perspective,” the researcher introduces three folktales chosen from two different sources. The first, “Hamad and Hamda,” is taken from *Folktales in Qatar*, by Dr. Muhammad Talib Salman Al Dweik, and the other two, “The Dining Table, the Cup, and the Axe” and “Al Khadrabona,” were prepared by researcher Laila Al Badr and published in *Al Ma'thurat Al Sh'abiyya*. He adopts a morphological approach with the aim to trace the morphological structure as defined by the Russian folklore scholar Vladimir Propp, in which he specifies the functions of the characters in a story in light of their circles of action. This is examined in addition to the beginning of each tale, offering a structural reading of the tales and their transformations.

The following two studies shift the attention to Qatari traditions. The sea has always played a crucial role in the life of Qataris throughout history; it shaped their consciousness and was their means of making a living for long decades. Despite the radical changes in the Qatari community, the sea is still a vital part of it. In “The Collective Unconscious: The Model of the Qatari Relationship with the Sea” Dr. Kaltham Ali Al-Ghanem examines the development of the image of the sea in Qatari folklore. Her research poses a lot of questions and attempts to answer them: Has the relationship between the Gulf man and the sea changed? Does the diving community with its cultural folklore, values and symbols still exist in the collective unconscious?

Have civilization and urbanity taken man away from his spatial environment and yielded new relationships with technology, not the environment? Has the emotional relationship between him and the environment, the sea and the desert dissolved? Petroleum did not yield literature, culture, practices, or social customs. Are all literary and artistic movements in the region at the age of petroleum nothing but an extension of the two cultures of the sea and the desert, or are they a product of the cultural interaction with neighboring cultures and the social changes that accompanied education and urbanity? All these questions are posed in the study, which is based upon the notion that folklore is the informal component of culture which includes all the explanations and information produced by a community within a long span of time. The researcher introduces songs, poetry and odes that reflect the community's customs, traditions, aspirations, desires, tragedies and sadness as examples of folklore.

In her field study “Customs and Traditions of the Wedding Night in Qatari Traditional Society” Ms. Nora bint Nasser bin Jassem Al Thani is actually conducting an ethnographic study that presents field material documented with photographs on the celebration of the “wedding night” in the traditional Qatari society, be it a wedding in urban areas, or in rural ones. It is a translation of the first and second sections in the fifth chapter of *Marriage: Its Organization, Customs and Traditions in Qatari Society, A Field Study*, prepared by Sheikha Noura Nasser Jassem Al Thani, and issued by the National Council for Culture, Arts and Heritage, Doha, 2005. The fifth chapter entitled “Preparations for the Wedding Night” presents the field material in which the first section deals with the special preparations made by the bride's family which include: inviting people to attend the wedding, preparing the newlyweds' room and preparing the food. The

second section is about the bride's preparation for the wedding night as follows: the bride's henna, the parts where the henna is tattooed, preparing the henna, its drawings and its painters, celebrating the bride's henna night and the accompanying songs. The second section concludes with examining the changes that occurred in the bride's henna such as its shapes and inscriptions, and how it has become an individual night with its own celebrations.

The issue moves on to present three studies that examine folklore and children since those children are the true bearers of the culture and the most significant recipients of its folkloric heritage. "The Role of Kindergartens in Suffusing Tradition in the Minds of Qatari Children" by Prof. Huda Basheer deals with folklore as a component in the intellectual interaction, and a part of the cultural entity of the peoples; it holds beliefs, ideas and principles, as they are transmitted from one generation to another hence strengthening the bond between the past and the present. Folklore is indispensable to support national identity and establish a sense of belonging. Qatar has a rich cultural wealth and possesses a unique popular heritage, which is always developed and enriched by the state, in accordance with 2030 vision, and also as part of its successive strategies. The research deals with several items of Qatari folklore, which are closely linked to the world of childhood, namely: songs, stories, art, foods, drinks, customs, traditions, knowledge and methods of treatment. It analyzes its elements and emphasizes what fits with the child's world in the time of globalization. It also proposes some practical suggestions, which can be the base for building the character of the Qatari child through coordinated efforts among family, educational institutions and the media.

Mr. Abdul Aziz Rifaat's "Qatari Children Folk Games" is divided into two parts; the first one introduces "The Terminology and Its Concepts," whereas the second one falls under the subtitle "Features." "The Terminology and Its Concepts" is a preliminary analytical study that introduces an operational definition for the popular concept of games. The analysis focuses upon Qatari popular games and it is considered as an attempt to define the genre of folklore based on theory of gender. However, the researcher does not object to other attempts to define popular games in the light of other premises, in fact, he calls for other approaches to be adopted. He concludes by defining popular games as follows: "simple traditional art forms, competitive in nature, physically or mentally manifested, or both, with voluntarily participation not an enforced one, not connected to a specific occasion, or targeting any end other than playing, they possess authenticity, tradition and are common in the culture in which they exist."

In "Features," Mr. Abdul Aziz Rifaat divides Qatari popular games' features into two types: general features, which are common with other folkloric materials, and generic features, which are related to popular games as a folkloric genre different from other genres. Hence, the generic features are divided according to a set of criteria: First: simplicity; those games are simple and uncomplicated, whether in their rules, tools, structure or practice. Second: authenticity; these are the games that man first knew in all cultures, despite any modern regular sports that emerged from them. In Arab culture, during pre-Islamic and Islamic times, Arabs knew popular games and practiced them, and they are mentioned in a number of Arabic references and dictionaries. Third: originality; as those games directly express the culture of the community and the reality of its many environments

on one hand, and the different developments they witnessed on the other. Fourth: competitiveness in general; this feature builds a barrier between those games and other folkloric materials.

The last two studies shed light on folkloric contemporary practices that are related to the past. Mr. Hamad Al Mohannadi is concerned with the past and the present in his research as he chooses a folkloric practice that digs deep roots in both temporal landscapes. In “The Traditional Roles of *Al Majlis* (Assembly)” the researcher is trying to develop a clearer picture to understand the *majils* in the framework of Qatari folk culture; it is studied as a system made up of popular dynamic elements that keep it alive in people’s memory, and makes it an integral part of everyday life. These elements are: intersecting customs, traditions and norms, which are agreed upon and not documented. Popular literature, especially Nabatean poetry, proverbs and sayings, keep those elements safe; they pass from one generation to another depending on: groups, transparency and recognition. In other words: all those elements are subject to the approval of the group, are transmitted orally and collectively, without any opposition from their bearers, and several indications prove that this transmission is done efficiently and is non-stoppable. The research provides a set of roles for al majlis including: the social role, such as strengthening social ties through meetings at various events and arbitration of disputes peacefully. The educational role is evident as it constitutes a small school for learning honesty, respect for the opinions of others and for the experiences of the elderly. The media role lies in delivering news and social norms honestly, spreading Islamic culture, and respect for others’ privacy. The literary role is represented in reciting poetry, eloquence, skills of speech and dialogue, and reading the biographies of the prophets and the righteous.

In the last research Mr. Masoud Basheer Al Sulaiti adopts a similar stance by looking into the past and the present simultaneously in his research “Different Kinds of *Beshts*.” The *besht* is a male dress; it is worn over “thub” in everyday life, holidays, wedding nights and special events. The *besht* knitting man (*Elhayek*) is an artist; he uses different colors, be them white, black, red, brown, off-white ... etc. There are two kinds of *besht* textiles which are: the thin *besht* which is worn in summer and it is lightweight, and the thick *besht*, which is worn in winter and it is normally thick. *Besht* is a Persian word used for woolen garments. The Persian called it “*bosht*” which means ‘behind,’ as it covers the back. The *besht* is made of different kinds of wool such as goat’s wool and camel’s wool which were imported from Iraq, Syria and Iran. The study introduces the raw materials used, the knitting materials, the main parts of the *besht*, the embroideries, and the most famous kinds of *beshts* which are: combed *besht*, *najafi besht* and *el’baraqa besht*.

The aim of publishing the second issue of *Studies in Qatari Folklore* has not changed. We are still seeking to introduce to an English speaking audience, or at least to those among them who are interested in folklore, the folklore of Qatar, its values, its ideas, its principles and the spiritual aspirations that are concretely and beautifully seen through people’s behavior. The presented studies explore those aspects in much depth and reveal that folklore is part and parcel of Qatari life that manifests itself in many forms and defines the national and ethnic identities of the group. It remains a valuable component of our culture that truly deserves to be studied, understood, kept, and to always be proud of.

Yomna Saber



Folktales from Qatar

By: Fayyiz Sayyagh

Folktales are an integral part of social life in Qatar and in the Gulf countries in general. Tales were told to children for educational intents, but adults in turn would gather wisdom and expertise while listening to them.

Folktales are part of the heritage of the people of Qatar. Heritage may be defined as the accumulation of experience in various domains of life: social, intellectual and artistic, and the resulting products.

Folktales are oral traditions that constitute a part of the intangible cultural heritage. According to UNESCO glossary, it is defined as follows: “Intangible cultural heritage is the practices, expressions, knowledge and skills that communities, groups and sometimes individuals recognize as part of their cultural heritage. Also called living cultural heritage, it is usually expressed in one of the following forms: oral traditions; performing arts; social practices, rituals and festive events; knowledge and practices concerning nature and the universe; and traditional craftsmanship.”

The *American Heritage Dictionary* defines the folktale as “a story or legend forming part of an oral tradition.” While the *Merriam-Webster* speaks about: “a traditional story” and also “a characteristically anonymous, timeless, and placeless tale circulated orally among a people.”

The four selected following folktales were directly heard orally from storytellers. “The Golden Cow” was collected by Dhabiya Abdullah Al Sulaiti; “The Thorn Tree” was collected by Kaltham Ali Al Ghanem; “A’ssoom and A’rooy” was collected by Dhabiya Mohammad Al Khater; and finally “The Four Women and the Cow-Seller” was collected by Ali Al Fayadh.

There may be two approaches to these Qatari folktales: the first is surely the pleasure of reading them in their simplicity and wit and is therefore the approach of larger public audience. The second approach is that of the folklore experts and specialists who may address them according to their different methodologies or interests.

The Golden Cow

Once upon a time, there lived an affluent merchant and property-owner who had been unfortunate in his first two marriages: his wives had died before they giving him any children. Then his third wife gave birth to a beautiful baby girl, but she died soon afterwards.

The man loved his little daughter very dearly, and he decided not to marry again in order to protect her from any mistreatment in the future. As she grew, the little girl endeared herself even more to her father by her wit, intelligence, beauty and wisdom.

When the girl was in her early teens, her father asked her if she would mind him remarrying, so that there would be someone to look after her. The girl agreed, but the stepmother turned out to be a selfish and cruel woman who treated the girl lovingly in front of her father, but turned against her as soon as he was out of the house.

The fact that the stepmother was also childless made her all the more jealous of the girl, and she used to swear at her and hit her regularly. Finally, the girl could bear it no longer, and she decided to leave home, but without causing her father undue distress.

This is how she planned her escape. She went to the jeweler and asked him to make a huge golden cow, in which she could hide, promising to pay the jeweler whatever price he asked. She explained her purpose to him: how unbearable her life had become, and how escape by hiding inside the golden cow would be a way to leave her troubles behind.

She began to visit the jeweler every day to make sure that he was carrying out her order with attention to every detail. He finished the task, covered the cow with golden plate, and then let the girl climb inside. He gave her a key to lock herself in from the inside, and put the golden cow on display in his shop window.

Now the ruler's son occasionally went to the jeweler's shop and when, one day, he spotted the golden cow in the window, he bought it and ordered the jeweler to have it sent to his private chambers in the palace. The ruler's son asked his mother to take good care of the precious golden ornament.

The ruler's son was in the habit of eating his meals in his chambers. On the day he bought the golden cow, food was left for him in his room as usual, and the door locked. Feeling very hungry, the girl opened the little door in her hiding-place, slipped out, helped herself to some food and then climbed back inside.

When the ruler's son returned to his room, he discovered that the food had been eaten and the plates were quite empty. He asked his mother what had happened, but she could give no explanation, so he concluded that the maid might have eaten his food. Still, the same thing happened on successive days, even when his mother herself brought the food to the chamber. Everyday, the food disappeared, and no one could explain how or why.

So one day, the ruler's son made up his mind to stay in his room and solve the mystery of the disappearing food himself. He hid in his bed and kept watch from behind the curtains. As soon as his mother had brought in the food and left the room, the girl came down from her hiding place inside the cow to help herself.

The young man allowed her to finish her meal. Then, just as she turned to go back to her hiding place, he leapt from his bed and challenged her:

“Who are you? Where did you come from?”

“I appeal to God and to you, sir,” she replied, and she went on to tell him her story. His heart was softened by her account, and he promised to give her protection.

He kept the girl safe in her hiding place in his room, and asked his mother to continue bringing food every day, even when he left the country and accompanied his father on one of their regular visits abroad. When his mother asked him the reason why, he told her not to ask for an explanation, but to see that his wishes were respected.

One day, the young man went away on just such a trip with his father. At this time, his cousin was preparing to get married. The bridegroom’s family asked the ruler’s wife to lend them the golden cow to add a decorative touch to the marriage ceremony. She was reluctant to, because she felt she should keep her promise to her son, but the bridegroom’s relatives pleaded with her to let them borrow it – and eventually she gave in.

The golden cow was transported to the cousin’s house and placed in the bridal chamber. Hidden away inside, the girl did not notice the move. Early in the morning, she slipped out to have her breakfast as usual, but found herself in a completely strange place. When she saw the bride combing her hair, the girl was filled with fear and panic: she stood rooted to the spot, unable to move or go back to her hiding place.

Now, the bride was not a beautiful woman, and when she saw the lovely girl, she suspected that her husband would find her very attractive; so she attacked her and threw her out of the house.

Covered with bruises, the young woman collapsed in the street outside, unable to take another step. A water carrier named Fattoum found her there and took her to her house. Fattoum did not have any children, so she was very happy to have found the girl. She thanked

Allah The Almighty for this gift, and proceeded to treat the cuts and bruises on the girl's body with ashes and salt, and to feed her and find new clothes for her.

Once the marriage ceremony was over, the bridegroom's family returned the golden cow – now empty, of course – to the ruler's house. Once more, the ruler's wife began to bring food to her son's room, but when she returned the following day, the food had not been touched. She was puzzled, but she could think of no explanation.

When the ruler's son eventually came back from his journey and asked about the food, his mother told him that she was taking it to his room every day, but she had noticed that it had not been touched for some time.

“Did you lend the golden cow to anyone while I was away?” he asked.

His mother felt obliged to tell him that she had lent it to his cousin's family to decorate the bridal chambers. This caused the young man real distress: he became ill and took to his bed for days on end.

The palace doctors were troubled by his condition. He was sent back to Bahrain and India for treatment, but to no avail. The sick young man did not leave the palace for years.

Then one day, a medicine man came to the palace compound. He heard the story of the ruler's son, and the ruler's wife came to ask him if he had any medicine that might cure him. The man asked to see her son. He examined him, and then turned to the family and said: “I have just the right medicine for this young man, but it might take some time to work – perhaps a month or two, or maybe even a whole year.”

The family agreed to let him try the cure, and allocated him a room next to the young man's chambers to enable him to care for his patient.

The medicine man started work the very next day. He prepared some

flour, mixed it with water and sent it to be baked in one of the houses in the town. He continued with this for about eight months, until every single household had baked bread for the ruler's son: yet none of the loaves had cured him. People began to whisper among themselves that the medicine man was an impostor, and that he was deceiving the royal family.

Sometime later, the medicine man realized that Fattoum, the old water carrier, was the only person not to have made bread for the sick young man. He sent some servants from the palace with flour and water, and asked her to make some. Fattoum baked the bread for the ruler's son every day for the next three days, and on the third day he began to show signs of recovery from his chronic illness. The medicine man suggested that it was not the bread, but rather the baker of the bread, that was helping restore the young man's health and well-being.

Officials from the palace went to Fattoum to persuade her to tell them the secret of the bread. At first, the old woman denied that there was anyone else to help her with the baking and housework. Finally, however, when she heard about the condition of the ruler's son, she told them about the girl and promised to hand her over to them on condition that no harm should come to her.

Fattoum accompanied her to the palace. When the ruler's son saw them, he was overjoyed, and said:

“It was Allah The Almighty who gave you this beautiful young woman as a gift. Now Allah is rewarding you for all the care you have given her. Please come and live with us in the palace, in comfort and dignity. You will be beside your daughter, and she will be the wife of the ruler's son.”

This tale was collected by
Dhabiya Abdullah Al Sulaiti

The Thorn Tree

A married woman remained childless for a number of years and so she became increasingly worried. One day, as she was walking through the neighborhood, the hem of her dress became entangled in the dry branches of a thorn tree. She thought that it was a good omen and she pledged that, if Allah The Almighty blessed her with a baby boy or girl, she would make sure that the child looked after the thorn tree by watering it every day, so that it flourished.

Time went by and the woman became pregnant and gave birth to a baby girl, the joy of her life. As she grew older, the little girl often played outside with the children of the neighborhood. One day, while she was out playing with them, she heard a voice saying:

Gooli hag ommech teddy ntheirech (Tell your mother to keep her promise), *Wella hafarna gbeirech* (Or else a grave will be dug for you.)

The little hurried home in a panic and told her mother what she had heard. The mother remembered her promise and, taking a pot of water, she went outside with her daughter to show her how to look after the tree.

“You have to water this thorn tree daily,” she explained, “for I promised that my child would take care of it.”

From then on, the girl would go to the tree, water it and trim it duti-

fully every day. The tree grew taller and stronger, and its leaves turned a healthy green. And so the years passed until the girl reached puberty.

One day, a man was out riding his horse, and he saw the girl as she was watering the tree. He said to her:

“You, who look after the thorn tree! How many leaves are there on your tree?”

The girl looked up at him in surprise and answered him with the question:

“You are an educated man. Tell me, how many stars are there in the sky?”

At this, the man went away. The next day, the man came back to the thorn tree and asked the girl once more:

“You, who look after the thorn tree. How many leaves are there on your tree?”

Again, the girl replied with the question:

“You are an educated man. Tell me, how many stars are there in the sky?”

These encounters were repeated over the following days, and still the man was unable to persuade the girl to show any sign of warmth in her response. In perplexity, he went to ask the advice of Um Al-Heilan, an old woman known in the area for her shrewdness and wickedness. He told her what had happened, and complained to her that if he said two words, the girl answered with ten.

Um Al-Heilan asked him to go and see her the next day and she would tell him what to do to win over the girl.

The following day, he went to see her and the cunning woman told him to put on a loose dress, wrap himself in an *a'baya* (cloak) and *milfa* (head cover) and cover his face with a mask or *batoola*.

Wrap yourself so well in the clothing that only your ears remain uncovered,” she advised, “and come to my house, where you will meet the girl – she comes to see my daughters every day.”

Sure enough, the next day the girl watered the thorn tree and then went to the woman’s house.

The man arrived, tied his horse some distance from the house and went in, disguised as a woman. Everyone greeted him and kissed him as if he were one of them; they had coffee and talked for a while, and then he left.

The following day, the man waited on his horse for the girl to come to the thorn tree. As soon as he saw her, he asked her to tell him how many leaves were on the tree. She answered by asking him to count the number of stars in the sky. The man countered this with:

“We kissed and hugged, and aren’t you embarrassed about it? I did all this with you yesterday in the house.”

At this, the girl realized that she was the victim of a deceitful trick. She resolved to punish him for what he had done, but said nothing to show that she understood what had happened. Instead, she invited him:

“Come and have coffee with me under the thorn tree tomorrow.”

The old man accepted the invitation, and the following day he went out to keep the assignation near the thorn tree. Meanwhile, the girl bought alcohol, herbal medicine and food in preparation for her revenge.

When the man arrived, he found the girl sitting under the tree preparing the meal. They greeted, she gave him a first glass to drink, and he relaxed. He went on drinking to the point of intoxication, and at the same time the girl plied him with cucumbers and medicine until finally he collapsed, unable to speak or move. At this point, she left him.

The man woke up many hours later, staggered to his feet, mounted his horse and went home, where he kept his bed feeling very unwell.

He did not come to the thorn tree for several days.

The following week, the girl dressed herself in man's clothing, pulled the *ghutra* (head cover) over her mouth, and went through the neighborhood carrying medicines and shouting: "I have herbal medicines for you! I have treatments and cures for all ailments!"

The man's wife came out and called to her: "You came just in time, kind medicine man. Please come and treat my husband. He has been sick since last week, and he hasn't moved from his bed. We don't know what to do with him."

The girl went inside and gave him some medicine. He recovered quickly.

A few days later, the old man approached the girl yet again while she was watering her thorn tree. He turned to her and said:

"We kissed and hugged, and aren't you embarrassed about it?"

The girl looked up at him and answered scornfully:

"We gave you alcohol to drink, put cucumbers in your mouth ... and we gave you medicine to cure you."

At this, the man could do no more than acknowledge:

"This girl has indeed got the better of me!"

Bas hatha heyyah wkhalsat. (And thus ends our tale.)

This tale was collected by

Kaltham Ali Al Ghanem

A'ssoom and A'rooy

One fine spring morning, two little sheep called A'ssoom and A'rooy* left their families and went into the countryside to graze. Now, in days gone by, animals used to talk. After a while, it started raining heavily, and A'ssoom said to A'rooy:

“Let’s go home for lunch, as it has started to rain.”

“I’m going,” replied A'rooy. She stood up on tiptoe, and began to sing:

Bawgaf ‘alal-azlaf

Wa banshor al-aswaf

Yam al-metairah joodi

‘alan-ne ‘aji as-soodi

(I stand up on tiptoe

And spread out my wool

So pour down on me, on rain,

And on the black goats and sheep.)

Finally, A'ssoom said: “I’m going to leave you.”

“All right, go!” came the answer.

“If you don’t come back with me, I’ll tell the wolf to eat you up!”
A'ssoom threatened.

“Very well,” said A'rooy, “go and tell him!”

Angry, A'ssoom departed. She went to the wolf and called him.

“Yes”? He said.

“Come and eat A’rooy. She doesn’t want to go home – she wants to stay out in the rain.”

“No, I won’t,” replied the wolf.

Then A’ssoom said: “I’m going to tell the dog to come and chase you!”

“Very well,” said the wolf, “go and tell him.”

So A’ssoom went to the dog and called him.

“Yes?” he said.

“Come and chase the wolf,” she said.

No, I won’t,” replied the dog.

Then A’ssoom said: “I’m going to tell your owner to come and beat you!”

“Very well, “ said the dog, “go and tell him.”

So A’ssoom went to the dog’s owner and told him to come, but he refused. When she threatened to go to the barber and tell him to shave the man’s beard, he told her to go ahead and do it – but the barber refused. She went to tell the fire to burn down the barber’s cottage, but the fire refused. Next, she went to the water to tell it to put out the fire – but it would not help her. Then she went to the camel to tell him to jump into the water and force the water out, yet the camel would not help her. So A’ssoom decided to tell the *gardash* (an insect) to come and infect the camel, but even the insect refused.

Finally, A’ssoom went to tell the cock to frighten the *gardash*. He agreed. He jumped at the *gardash*, which attacked and stung the camel; the camel jumped into the water, the water splashed the fire, the fire burned down the cottage, the barber shaved the man’s beard, the man beat his dog, the dog chased the wolf – and the wolf ran off to eat up A’rooy.

When the wolf reached the house, he couldn’t find A’rooy, but A’ssoom was at home: so he ate her there and then.

*A'ssoom – related to the Gulf dialect word “*assam*”: obstinate, hard to convince.

* A'rooy – perhaps from the Arabic “*arad*”: to limp.

This tale was collected by
Dhabiya Mohammad Al Khater

The Four Women and the Cow-Seller

One day, a man came to the *souq* (market) to sell his cow. Four women were sitting in the shade sewing clothes.

The first woman said: "I can take his cow."

"And I can take his clothes," said the second.

"And I can get him into trouble," said the third.

When she heard what her friends had to say, the fourth woman added emphatically: "and I can get him out of trouble!"

When the man came nearer, the first woman said to him: "hello, good fellow. Do you want to sell the cow?"

"Yes, I do," replied the man. "That's why I came here!"

Then the first woman said: "I will buy it from you, but first you must let me take it home and milk it, so that I can find out whether or not it is producing milk. Only then will I give you the money. You just stay here with my sisters until I return."

The man let the woman take the cow, and off she went; but she did not come back, nor did she bring him the money. He felt that he must have lost both the cow and the money.

After a while, with the sun high in the sky and beating down on them, the three women prepared to leave.

"Where are you going?" asked the man.

They answered with one voice: “Why do you ask? We are going to our homes, of course.”

“But where is your sister?” he asked.

“Why do you say ‘sister’? We don’t know who she is; we just happened to meet her here.”

“But she said you were her sisters!” protested the man, “and she told me that she was going home to fetch the money. Do you have any idea where she lives?”

“No, none at all,” said the three women, “we met her here for the first time.”

At this, the man was reduced to tears. He begged them to tell him what was going on, but to no avail. He started to wander around the town, looking for the woman who had stolen his cow. As he was walking along a street, the second woman came up to him in disguise.

“Where are you going?” she asked.

“Please help me, good woman, and may God have mercy on your parents,” he replied, and then he told her all about his encounter with the four women early that morning.

“You poor man, you were deceived and cheated,” she said, “now come with me and I will take you to the woman’s house. But first, let us go and fetch some water.”

The man agreed, and he accompanied her to the well. In one swift and cunning move, the woman dropped her bucket down the shaft without his noticing, and then she said:

“Oh, my bucket has fallen down the well! I must go down and get it.”

“Oh! No, You mustn’t do that,” said the man, “I’ll go down myself and fetch it for you.”

The man took off his clothes and went down into the well. When the woman was sure that he had reached the bottom of the shaft, she took his clothes and ran off.

The man came back up with the bucket, and realized with dismay that the woman had stolen his clothes and disappeared. He was still in a state of shock when the third woman came along, also in disguise. He did not recognize her, and greeted her, saying:

“Good evening, good woman.”

The woman greeted him in turn, and pretended that she did not know who he was.

“What is the matter, good man?” she asked.

“Oh, may God punish the women whom I met today!”

He told her the story of the women.

“They are all swindlers,” said the woman, “but you are a man and you should have been more skilful in your dealings with them.”

“Well, after all,” answered the man. “I am a stranger in this town, and I don’t know anyone here. I cannot distinguish the good from the bad.”

“Well, come with me then,” said the woman, “I will give you some clothes, and I will tell you how and where to find these women.”

She took him to her house, gave him food and clothing, and then said:

“First, let’s go to the *souq* to do some shopping, and then I will take you to the women.”

The man took her words at face value, and he went with her to a textile shop to buy some material. When they entered the shop, the woman began to select expensive rolls of cloth. Then she pretended that she had lost her purse, and said to the shopkeeper:

“I am sorry, I left my purse at home. I’ll go home and get it – I’ll leave

my husband here with you until I come back with the money.”

The shopkeeper believed her and accepted the arrangement. The woman went out and left the man sitting there, waiting for her to come back.

In the meantime, the fourth woman went to the graveyard to fetch the body of a small child, who had just been buried. She cleaned the corpse, rested for a few moments, and then carried it to the *souq*.

By now, the shopkeeper was growing impatient. He turned to the man and said: “Your wife is taking her time. She promised to come back promptly.”

“She is not my wife,” said the man.

“How can you say that? She told me that you were her husband, and that she was going home to get the money. Get up, and go and fetch your wife – or the money!”

“I told you, she is not my wife,” the poor man repeated.

“What do you mean? She came into my shop with you!” shouted the shopkeeper angrily, and he went for the man and grabbed him by the throat.

A crowd gathered to watch, with some attempting to intercede. As the numbers grew, the fourth woman came and blended in with them. She approached the shopkeeper, dropped the dead baby under his feet, and began to weep and wail:

“He has killed my baby!”

People gathered around her and caught sight of the body of the baby. The woman insisted:

“This man has killed my baby!”

In a state of shock, the shopkeeper protested:

“It was an accident! I was having a fight with this man – I didn’t see your baby when it fell beneath my feet.” Then he said to her: “ask me for anything you want, but forgive me for what I have done.”

“All right,” she replied, “I will take this shop, and, in addition, I want this man released.”

The shopkeeper agreed, turned to those around them and said:

“I want everyone here to be witness to the fulfillment of my promise, I grant this store to the woman, and I release the man.”

So the man went off to look for his cow, and the woman took over the store.

This tale was collected by
Ali Al Fayadh



The Art of Popular Witticism in Qatari Folk Tales

By: Sabry Moslem Hamadi

Translated from Arabic by Abdelouadoud El Omrani

Folklore books are full of patterns of classic and popular witticism; they appear as concentrated structures comprising a shocking paradox that surprises us and whose end we did not imagine. Stronger and more intense is this shocking and unexpected element, deeper and stronger is its effect. Its importance lies in its short and dense shape; it does not need in fact much time or lengthy attention, and is therefore suited to our times and all times. In addition, witticism may carry innumerable contents. And although it suggests entertainment in its external aspect and may bring joy and laughter, it may, on the other hand, summarize facts implying a position of rejection of a given situation. But popular imagination substitutes the direct refusal and confrontation with allusion and insinuation through the procedures of folkloric witticism that allow to reach the target from unexpected ways despite giving a comprehensive image that serves the purpose.

If we look for a modern form that is similar in its technique, we may consider what is called the short story. It contains the intense concentration of an idea built on a sharp paradox or a flashing moment that enlightens the previous events. In its concise technique, it may be written in a few lines; and that is the feature that makes it a literary genre not very far from the art of witticism. Additionally, the two genres (witticism and the short story) reach their audiences quite easily since both are short and they may be included in newspaper columns and magazine notes.

Anecdotes present in witticism grow, revive and are subject to amendments; they may be formulated in different ways and include additions inspired from the moment in which they are narrated. The way witticism is performed is important for their effect, it includes gestures and sounds' or situations' simulation and mimicry to seem more convincing.

Witticism belongs to folklore in general because anecdotes' authors are unknown, but also because of the variety of their narration according to contexts. It may be compared to a natural plant that may grow in different environments and convergent conditions. We can add as well the popular character: although it may be narrated in standard language, witticism includes a terminology from the popular glossary. The genius, the presence and the effect of witticism come from this sharp concision that leaves a trace in the memory, particularly when it grows in a context that is not distant from the nature of the ordinary man, its good nature and its optimistic vision inspired by the community's values and the sustainability of its ideals. Therefore, major witticisms have a social feature, and even an educational intrinsic form similar in its objectives and its primary formulations to children's literature before its special features are elaborated. It has in other cases the aspects of a preaching similar to wisdom but in a sharp witty style. It may as well be incorporated into animal stories and narrated by other creatures than

humans. Folktales may be also be built on short form witticism that is extended and reaches an unusual length for a folktale. In other cases, it has the form of a quiz to test the intelligence of the folks and their acuity, or it may be inspired from the paradigms of standard literature with heroes from the literary world such as the Abbassid poet Abu Nawas or Juha whose personality is still questioned by researchers. Dr. Abdelhamid Younes⁽¹⁾, Arab researcher in folklore dedicated some of his works to this figure and said that there are two characters bearing the name of Juha. There is the Arab Juha called Abu Al-Ghosn who appeared at the beginnings of the Abbassid dynasty, and the Turkish one who is Nasruddin Khujah. Dr. Nabila Ibrahim Salem⁽²⁾, Professor of Folk Literature at Cairo University added the German Juha, i.e. Ohlen Spiegel. When the folk imagination selects a character, it usually puts on it additional shades and assigns to it innumerable wits and events that cross times, transforming it into a character that lives in the popular conscience, rather than a true character with concrete historic reality.

It seems that more than one term applies to what is revealed in Qatari folk tales: we have witticism (*Torfah*), anecdote (*Nadirah*), wisecrack (*Molhah*), and joke (*Noktah*). These are all terms with different linguistic roots in Arabic⁽³⁾. It seems, nevertheless, that the term *Torfah*, i.e. witticism is the most appropriate to the humorous literary art we are addressing. This literary genre is supposed to entertain its reader, and this entertainment is not far from the function of literature as long as educational goals go along with it; literature usually educates using an entertaining style, and entertains when it educates⁽⁴⁾. We prefer the term *Torfah* since it suggests what is new⁽⁵⁾ and surprises us through its seriousness while astonishing us with a speech or an action we did not expect. It seems that here lies the essence of witticism and the secret of our reaction towards it. Witticism is not always funny and humorous, especially when it directs sharp criticism and satire to compelling

circumstances and unbalanced situations. Witticism addresses harsh situations with a figurative caricaturist style and focuses on the funny side of the criticized phenomenon. It has been said that “the worst misfortune is funny.”

Wisecrack is also synonymous to witticism and anecdote; witticism is translated by Munir Baalbaki as: *Molhah* or *Latifah*,⁽⁶⁾ while Majdi Wahbah and Kamel Al-Muhandes define *Molhah* as “an attractive deep saying characterized by seriousness and wit in thought and the ability to amuse and entertain the reader or the listener.”⁽⁷⁾ This genre of literary art that spreads sarcasm and joy is present among all nations, especially in the field of folk literature.⁽⁸⁾ Prof. Nabila Ibrahim calls witticism: popular joke, and defines it as “short news in the form of a story or even an expression or a word that inspires laughter. The joke is a play with words able to create a double meaning. There is the apparent meaning that is hilarious only because it is related to the first meaning.”⁽⁹⁾

Although specialists in the field of folk literature do not agree on a single conventional term to name this folk genre, some of them accept nevertheless the standard term used in this study, i.e. *Torfah* (witticism). Dr. Talal Harb dedicates a special chapter to it and defines it as “a genre of folk literature inspiring joy and laughter. It does not mean that witticism is just nonsense inspiring unjustified laughing, it is in fact a folk art including the ideas, beliefs, opinions of the people as well as their social, ethical and philosophic points of view. Witticism summarizes sometimes in its small and innocent mold experiences of complete eras lived by people and through which they have accumulated expertise and gained a given altitude.”⁽¹⁰⁾

Whatever the issue, witticism may converge with folk tale in general when both of them cancel the sad reality of the average man at the level of narrative imagination.⁽¹¹⁾ Anecdote seeks in some cases to mock this reality, and in other cases to justify it and accept it. These attitudes are reflected in selected specimens of Qatari folk tales. In

this regard, I would like to praise the efforts of late Dr. Muhammad Taleb Salman Dweek in his excellent book *Folktales in Qatar* ⁽¹²⁾ in which he calls the selected witticisms (joyful humorous tales) in consistency with the nature and title of his work. In fact, it is a university dissertation that has brought an addition to the field and showed the efforts of the researcher and his accuracy in collecting and editing material. Furthermore, the field of Qatari folk stories is fertile and reflects this type of narratives in the whole Gulf region. Researcher Dweek performed multiple tasks to bring out his book; he collected the stories, classified and studied them, an endeavor that requires field and theoretical efforts. We are not assessing the work but we are rather reflecting of witticism art as the book presented it and according to specimens collected in the field by the researcher.

The start of some stories gives them a storytelling aspect. The story called “Misunderstanding” ⁽¹³⁾ begins by: “It is said that Bedouins...” and the narrator is Khalifa Al-Sayyed (Doha). This method is correct in field studies since the name of the informant is provided as well as his occupation, residence, and age. The summary of this witticism is that Bedouins used to suffer from dry season and were waiting for rain. The paradox is the guest who visits them and whose name is *Matar*, i.e. rain. They ask him therefore to send some rain and when he refuses, they beat him until he is saved when it really rains. This witticism is somehow distant from the folk format of witticism to look more like stories from heritage literature generally. But the following one is sunk in popular environments: “*Far Boufarah Khayes Al-Merara*” ⁽¹⁴⁾. The title points to witticism and the story starts with the expression: “*Ken feeh wahed metzawej...*” i.e. (There was once a married man...) and we recognize the vernacular dialect in the choice of some words. The story-teller is Ahmad Al-Sayegh (Doha) and the hero is a husband who suffers from the illusion of being powerful and tough. He saw once a mouse and attacked it,

hitting it with his sword. He felt proud and overconfident. But when his wife saw the mouse on the doorstep where the husband exposed it to be seen by all walkers, she played down her man's enthusiasm and his bravery and said: who slaughtered the small mouse? Her husband felt angry and said: You are divorced and not allowed to eat the dates of *Al-Badiaa*. It is a conventional expression that is said in such situations, and *Al-Badiaa* is the name of a kind of dates from Arabia. Her mother understands the situation and the character of her daughter's husband and therefore corrects the mocking words of her daughter. She meets her daughter's husband who is living with his illusions and asks him: who killed the lion who is lying at the doorstep? He answers proudly: It was killed by your daughter's husband. Once she has satisfied his vanity, she says: She will come back and the dates of *Al-Badiaa* are not forbidden to her. And he does not object. It is evident in this case that such witticism has a social function in the form of a psychological lesson in the way the spouse should treat her husband at home, trying to assimilate some of his illusions and satisfy him as much as possible.

The hero of the story of "Juha and the Bedouin"⁽¹⁵⁾ is the character of Juha; the story is told by Heyya Rasheed (she is from Doha). Juha is in this case a rogue who bluffs the poor Bedouin who has brought his butter for sale in the town. Juha convinces him that he is a buyer and brings him to a mosque that has two doors and that he presents as his house. While the Bedouin remains waiting at the first door for the rogue to bring him his money, Juha flees away from the other one. After waiting for a very long time, the Bedouin understands that he was cheated and became one of Juha's victims. The story does not assign importance to the period when the adventure occurs. This is also true with another story whose hero is the famous poet Abu Nawas: "Abu Nawas and the King's Daughter"⁽¹⁶⁾ narrated by Heyya Rasheed too (Doha). Abu Nawas pretends to be stupid and inadvertent in order to

attract the attention of the king's daughter who has decided to close her house to prevent people from seeing her unless they pay a sum of money. Juha asks one of his friend's who is starving to see her to bring him a lamb, two saucepans and loaves of bread. With these accessories, he settles under the window of the king's daughter and tries to slaughter the lamb from its fat tail. The princess's servant is surprised by this stupid behavior and calls the princess to show her what the two idiots are trying to do. The two friends see her and thus fulfill their wish. After that, the princess orders her servant to step down and show them how to slaughter a lamb. The story goes on lengthily building on this joint, and Abu Nawas continues to show the ignorance and pretend stupidity: he does not know how to slaughter the lamb, then he does not know how to cook it or how to eat. The princess is obliged to come down and meet them in order to show them the way. This witticism is undoubtedly an echo of many others that are referred to Abu Nawas and inspired from heritage literature although Qatari vernacular terms were introduced in the way the story is told. The story of "Girls with Lisps" ⁽¹⁷⁾ is a concentrated witticism and refers to girls who cannot pronounce appropriately some letters. The mother orders her three daughters, suffering from lisps, to stay silent otherwise the suitors will hear their handicap and will not marry them. One day while weaving wool, the thread of the younger broke and she exclaimed: "*the tottom tread broke!*" (meaning: the cotton thread broke). Her middle sister replied then: "*tie it and th-tay thilent!*" (for: tie it and stay silent!). Then the older concluded: "*mamma orteret you to th-tay thilent, and you are all thepeaking!*" (mamma ordered you to stay silent, and you are all speaking!)

The story of "*Al-Anzroot*" ⁽¹⁸⁾ is built on a simpleton hero who never says the right words in the right situation. His wife asked him to bring back when he comes home *Al-Anzroot* (a kind of medical plant that has dry tough leaves); he forgot the name and looked for it in his memory in

vain and continued repeating to himself: “*mafeesh*” (meaning: nothing!) while walking on a beach at noon. He did not notice the two fishermen who were throwing their nets and pulling them empty each time. Superstitious, the two men were convinced he was bringing them bad luck with his exclamation. One of them slammed him on his face and ordered him to say: two big and two small! (Referring to fish of course). He started repeating the new sentence while still wandering through the town. He met a funeral and people were mourning a young child; he walked with them still repeating “two big and two small.” The bereaved family got angry and someone slammed him again and taught him to say: “May God give you patience and reward you!” And he started immediately repeating the new sentence endlessly fearing to forget it. Suddenly, he found himself in the middle of a marriage repeating the mourning words and receiving new slams and recommendations to say instead: May God bless your actions and bring you joy. These were the words he said to two brothers who were fighting and kicking each other. The elder kicked him in turn and taught him to say: “You should treat your younger brother in a better way, be kind to your brother.” And he repeated the sentence to a man who was chasing a dog out of the mosque. The man thought the words were directed to him, he slammed him again, and taught him to say: Go away dog, from God’s house! The simpleton hero stood at the end in front of a leather craftsman handling a piece of leather between his teeth, pulling it with his hands and trying to cut it; when he heard the last expression, he slammed him and said: “Do you want a slam with *Al-Anzroot*?” (i.e. a dry tough slam). The simpleton jumped in his arms and hugged him: thank you so much, you just reminded me of what my wife told me to bring home! This kind of witticism bears a folk soul; it may be narrated in different ways but its main message remains the effect of words when they are not said in the right situation, thus harming the audience. It is also an educational lesson to youth that encourages them to know what to say according to the social situation or ceremony, whether sad or happy.

The story of the “Foolish Girl” ⁽¹⁹⁾ is built on a paradox similar to that of the above-cited “Misunderstanding” whose hero’s name is *Matar* (rain). The name in this case is Ramadhan (name of the holy Muslim fastening month used also as a person’s name). The husband asks his dummy wife to keep the money for Ramadhan, intending to be spent during the holy month since he will be absent and she may need the money. The wife understands it is money to be given to a man called Ramadhan; a succession of misfortunate events built on the wife’s stupidity lead the man in front of the Sultan who will judge and punish him.

The story of the “Clever Blacksmith” ⁽²⁰⁾ refers to the intelligence of this craftman and is built on the paradox of greed and rapacity. The young apprentice who works at the blacksmith’s shop steals the money that the man has been saving in a jar in a corner of his shop. Knowing that the apprentice is hearing him, the blacksmith says: “I was going to fill it with money if only the thief has left it a bit more!” The apprentice brings back the jar and the money, hoping to steal again once it will be full. The clever blacksmith gains his money back and tells his wisdom: “Who wants all has nothing at the end!” Another witty story is entitled “The Three Liars” ⁽²¹⁾ and tells about the fertile imagination of a liar who stuns his colleagues with his chimeras during a lying competition; he wins the Dinar dedicated to the worst liar. The champion liar said: “We had a fowl at home that used to jump on the roof every morning to crow. One day, he broke his leg while jumping and we repaired it by putting around it a paste made of dates and salt. We forgot to take away the kernel of the date and after a period of time a date palm came out of his leg and started to grow. People used to throw manure over the tree until it became a real tree. One day, my father decided to climb the palm tree, and when he did, he found a large island with forests and rivers. When he felt tired, he decided to rest a little bit and found a watermelon just in front of him; he used his knife to open it but the knife split

inside the fruit. My father looked from the hole in the watermelon but split in turn and found himself inside where he remained three days. While searching for his knife, he met a long caravan of dromedaries and merchants transporting goods. When he asked about his knife they replied: You are looking for a knife you lost three days ago, but it is now three weeks that we are ourselves looking for a camel loaded with goods. Forget my friend, the place here is huge and you will not find it.” When the two other liars heard his story, they gave him the Dinar since they felt unable to invent a similar lie. This witticism based on exaggerated lies may be told in different ways.

Witticism may come also on other creatures’ tongues, apart from human beings, thus taking the form of an animal tale. The tale called “A Fox’s Trick” ⁽²²⁾ reflects the folk belief about this animal. The fox advises the lion who is sick and weak to kill a bull and eat his heart to be cured; simultaneously, he advises the bull to go and visit the lion and tie a friendship with him. Both animals believe the advice according to the logic of the tale. When the bull goes to visit the lion, the king of animals welcomes him and says: “Welcome, my doctor!” When he approached, the lion devoured him and went to have a rest. In the meantime, the fox ate the bull’s heart and brain. When the lion woke up, he asked about the bull’s heart and brain, and the fox replied: “I don’t know what you are talking about, if he had a heart and a brain, he wouldn’t have come here, and he wouldn’t have believed my words.” This witticism summarizes conscious projections of human nature that are reflected through animals.

The educational witticism appears also in the story of “The Lame” ⁽²³⁾ built on the idea of frightening a young girl of the wolf and other animals in order to keep her at home at noon when the sun is burning. It has different versions showing that starring roles are divided between men and animals in some witticisms.

Many witticisms are also built around the small beetle in the frame of the metamorphosis of humans into animals or insects. The idea has been largely used by important literary figures among whom is Franz Kafka. Kafka suggests that a human being who loses his will and suffers oppression and subjugation is transformed into a creature that is strange to others as if he were a different creature diverging from the human nature of an ordinary human being. But the folk story does not bear usually these contemporary meanings that appeared later in history, it uses nevertheless the joke and indicates that the external aspect may be different from the inner part of someone. A creature may be small in size but great once it has gone through life experiences, especially when it has the will and the capacity to work and produce. This is what the beetle-girl has done in the story called “Beetle”⁽²⁴⁾ and whose mother is a woman who has prayed God for a long time to give her a boy or a girl, even if it is a beetle. God Almighty exhausted her wish and gave her a girl whose essence is between a human being and a beetle. When she marries and her husband asks her to prepare him *Margoogah* (kind of flat Arab bread), she is confused and her hands are unable to mix water and flour, her movements are funny and the daughter of the king of Jinnis who was hiding in her house and who sees her, laughs and feels sympathy towards her. The princess was sick and had a ring blocked in her throat, fortunately her loud laugh liberates her throat from the ring and she recovers quickly. The young beetle receives her award and is thus metamorphosed into a beautiful young lady.

In other cases, tellers narrate similar stories substituting the beetle with a smaller needle as we hear in the story of the “Small Needle”⁽²⁵⁾ or the girl may have the shape of a finger as in the “Finger Girl”⁽²⁶⁾ or a chicken in the “Chicken Girl.”⁽²⁷⁾ Finally, the needle and the finger and the chicken come back to their original shape and are metamorphosed into beautiful young girls. Their beauty is sometimes so overwhelming

that the servant in the “Chicken Girl” is so stunned by her beauty that she falls from the ladder.

In the story of “The religious man and the old woman,”⁽²⁸⁾ we are faced with the summing-up of the experience of the average man who knows about the poor external aspect and the rich inner soul. A respectful religious man is tempted by the chicken of an old woman, he steals it, slaughters it and eats it. The old woman wishes good health to the person who stole her chicken, and feathers appear everywhere on the man’s body because he ate illicit food and betrayed his good old neighbor. The old woman feels sorry for him and changes her prayer saying: May God reward me for my loss! At that point, the man recovers his ordinary nature and swears that he will never eat again illicit goods.

Among the other stories that contain witticism is the story of “One-way love”⁽²⁹⁾ that deals with the difference of age between lovers. An old man who is sixty or seventy years old falls in love with a young girl who is sixteen or seventeen years old, and it is natural that she does not respond to his sweet words and poems, but she replies positively to a teen that she loves, provoking thus the jealousy of the old man. He substitutes his defeat by telling a poem in which he remembers his power and strength that are still intact even after his old age:

*Hey beauty with beauty on her cheek,
I accept God’s sentence and your orders,
I may be a horseman if you prepare the horses,
And I may be a lumberjack if you prepare the axe,
Don’t be fooled by the bird’s feathers,
The Houbara with its beautiful feathers remains a prey for hunters.*

It is possible that the young girl would mock the old man when she hears his poem, but it shows nevertheless that he still bears the flame of life inside him.

In the tale of the “Quiz of the man who made the princess speak again,”⁽³⁰⁾ the plot is around strong curiosity in human nature when the clever young man excites the curiosity of the silent princess by telling her his story. He narrates a story that goes beyond the intelligence of the princess. It is the tale of four persons who go for adventure, a carpenter, a tailor, a jeweler and an *Ulema*. They help each other to make a statue of a young woman, then dress and ornate her; each brings his specialty and acts according to his expertise. When it is the turn of the *Ulema*, he prays God to give her life, and when God fulfills his prayer, they all hear a very beautiful young woman who speaks with wisdom and beauty. At that point, the clever storyteller stops narrating and asks the important question: who deserves this girl, and who is the person she will choose to marry? Then, the princess comes out from behind the curtains and shouts: “She will go to the one who helped giving her life.” When she speaks, the young man knows that she will be his wife as promised at the beginning.

The tale of the “Wondrous Fish”⁽³¹⁾ is longer although it bears the features of witticism. The hairdresser of the princess is extremely keen to make sure that nobody sees the beauty of her mistress. She even chases away the birds from the garden to ensure they don’t see her. But in fact, this hairdresser is a man disguised in women’s clothes and has a forbidden relationship with the princess; this fact explains why the Wondrous Fish laughs at them and reveals at the end the true identity of the fake-woman and the illicit relationship not blessed by marriage, and the lovers are thus sentenced to death. Another version titled the tale of “The wondrous fish that laughs at the hairdresser”⁽³²⁾ narrates the same facts with some differences in the details.

In summary, this study indicates that popular witticism built on high

concentration and unexpected paradox has many similarities with some Qatari folk tales that have in some cases the same structure of witticism itself or use witticism as their core topic. It may be narrated through animals or by using symbolism, or the main roles may be played by men and animals simultaneously. It may use Arabic classic heritage as we have seen with Abu Nawas or Juha, adding popular witticism and localizing the lexical terminology and the environment. Witticism has also in other cases the form of a quiz of religious account. It has in all its patterns a clear social reflection, and deals with the average man's concerns and aspirations through its own logic. And even if it is sometimes directly educational, it contains both educational and artistic pivots. It is thus understandable why it was kept in people's conscience and memories as they heard it from their forefathers. Popular witticism is highly flexible and has a great capacity to change and adapt to varying positions, situations and contexts in the frame of the Qatari folk tale, reflecting the nature and temperament of folk tales in this region. It also remains an important format among the formats of folk tales in general.

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Qatari Folktales from a Morphological Perspective

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The folktale is a collective work that represents societies and communities and their primitive, early formation in a certain way, and hence folktales gain their significance from anthropological, psychological, and historical perspectives (...). The general structure of folktales indicates that they are texts overlaying multiple voices, such voices help shape the folktale and make it easy to move across generations. But folktales remain faithful to their very nature, despite the passage of time, multiple narrators and different perspectives, as well as the contexts in which they are narrated. However, a folktale, much like any text, has specific shared characteristics, patterns and structures, as a text with linguistic patterns embodying certain functions.

Here the question begs on the similar characteristics and elements (telepathy) across folktales globally and across geographical areas governed by single cultures. There is a structural similarity across all folktales regardless of their geographical, cultural and civilizational backgrounds, as though they were produced by a single brain in a set pattern or mould. Scholars developed a keen interest in interpreting such similarity. And there have been two main approaches; one seeking justifications for the said similarity by focusing on the internal similarity between two externally different phenomena, as such ‘telepathy’ cannot be attributed to common genetic roots (the automatic generation theory).

The second approach looks into such morphological patterning as a result of a bond that usually relies on the plot and its variations. But there are obstacles to the comparison of plots, as the comparison may prove hard to attain or improper. So folklore scholars, including Vladimir Propp, attempted to explain such similarity by reference to the structures and constructions characterizing folktales, as while the building components of every folktale vary depending on the incubating environment and cultural context in which the folktale was born, the function of the folktale, the cornerstone of the structuralist or morphological approach, turns out to be a key element in analyzing a folktale, and explaining its construction mechanism and structural similarity.

The present research seeks to study three Qatari folktales selected from two different sources; one from the book by Muhammad Talib Al-Duwaik entitled “Hamad and Hamda” and two folktales prepared by Laila Al-Badr and published in the *Journal of Folklore* (Doha) in two different issues-- “*Al-Sofra wal Qadah wal Mushaab*” (“The Dining table, the Cup and the Axe”) and “Al-Khadrabouna.” The study relies on a morphological analysis approach founded by renowned Russian folklorist Vladimir Propp, and aims to explore the morphological structure which stands on the function of narration, the circles of actions of

characters, and the folktale's composition, transformation and general structure.

Folktales from a morphological approach

Undoubtedly, folktales, given their different patterns and classifications, were profoundly studied and explored by several scholars. But in the present study, we will admit that a folktale is a comprehensive text that combines all narrative patterns, particularly the tales that are impacted by the concepts of heritage, oral standards, superstitions, sermonic tradition, and the sense of humor, among other things, dubbed as folkloric tales.

A prominent literary dictionary defines a folktale as a “short narrative conveyed orally, with its original author unknown.¹” The folktale contains several narrative patterns, including mythology, wonder, heroic acts, fairy tales... etc. The term defines such narrative form acclaimed worldwide, particularly in communities where the patterns of expression were used to express the varying levels of existence and where the different situations produced such forms of entertaining stories utilizing imagination, values and morals.

Having defined the concept of a folktale, we will have to define the morphological approach set by Vladimir Propp, especially in terms of the functions (moves) as being a central concept in the philosophy of this approach. From Propp's perspective, morphology is the study of “shapes and components and their internal correlation and relation to the entire structure.” It is worthy to note that this term is related to linguistic contexts, that classify it as “a branch of grammar which studies word structure through the smallest unit, the morpheme, besides the position of the word within the sentence. Morphology is divided into two branches, the study of morphological changes and word structures.”²

Propp sought to find out a structure that explains the similarities across folktales, based on the premises that an objective classification or a classification based on narrative patterns in the lights of the characters and functions— cannot explain the similarities across folktales. So, Propp focused on the internal structures of the text, and excluded all the elements that lie outside the narrative, especially historical, cultural or social contexts, in order to reach the general composition which makes the respective tale a distinct piece. Such attempts by Propp follow the school of Russian structuralists who aimed at breaking the correlation between literature and other sciences, especially given the dominance of other sciences over literature. Such effort was meant to build a scientific perspective on literature, so scholars resorted to the raw material from which a text is generated, i.e. language.

In order to reach target results, Propp analyzed a large body of Russian fairy tales, eventually setting 31 functions and a monograph of seven patterns of characters. The function, in a narrative perspective, is defined as “A certain function which extracts its very nature of the course of the plot in which it appears. It is an act explored with regard to the role it performs on the plot’s level (the action).” Propp deemed characters as variable elements and classified them into seven circles.

Although the functions are the most important result reached by Propp in his study, he also discovered the correlations between functions, including the fact that they are systematically associated and paired together, including the modes of interdiction, difference, conflict and victory. The following are examples of functions identified in Russian folktales by Propp’s *Morphology of the Folktale*:

1. A family member is absent from home (Function: Absentation).
2. An interdiction is addressed to the hero (Function: interdiction).
3. The interdiction is violated (Function: violation).
4. The villain makes an attempt at reconnaissance (Function: recon-

naissance).

5. The villain receives information about his victim (Function: Delivery).

6. The hero departs from home. The hero is selected, investigated and attacked (Function: Departure).

7. The hero reacts to the actions of a future donor (Function: the hero's reaction)

8. A magic agent at the disposal of the hero (Function: Provision)

The above functions are among the essential patterns that distinguished Russian folk tales. Any function of the above is evident and existent in most or all folktales, take the function "Provision of a magical agent" as an example:

1. Caesar gives the hero an eagle, which takes him away to a distant kingdom.

2. A magician gives Ivan a boat to carry her away to a new kingdom.

3. An old man gives Sochenko a horse to carry him away to another kingdom.

4. The princess gives Ivan a signet ring from which youngsters come out and carry her to another kingdom.

The 'Provision' function is always recurring and repeated with the donor changed, i.e. Caesar, a magician, an old man... etc., which means that the folktale's structure relies on the value of the event, its structural position. So the 'Provision' function is found in most folktales regardless of the geographical backgrounds and cultural contexts that stand behind any changes in the nature of donors, who could be a woman, a scholar, a jinni... etc. The characteristics of the character are a marginal

element and the role a character plays sets its value, not its inner traits.

Three Qatari Folktales (Morphological Analysis)

Prologue

Propp pointed out that every folktale stands on a prologue being the essential element of the entire story without which it cannot be a story. However, a prologue cannot be considered as a function. The prologue sets the stage for the story, by mentioning the names and number of family members and the people in the story, the setting and context, be it a house, a desert, a forest... etc., and opens the story, sometimes with phrases such as ‘once upon a time’ or (in Arabic tales) ‘Blessings be on Prophet Mohamed’ and so on.

In the three sample tales, selected for the purpose of our study, the prologue is constructed by narration sessions, which were usually held at night with family members, especially with children gathered around narrator, usually a woman (grandmother or mother). This setting was necessary to start the tale, including the presence of listeners, the time and place of narration and a narrator. The opening phrase helps us link such elements and sets the atmosphere for a successful narration. And hence the three chosen folktales open with the phrase ‘Blessings be upon Prophet Mohamed,’ which motivates the attendees.

On another level of prologue, we find out that the three folktales flow from a family situation. With “Al-Khadrabouna” tale, a man and his sister live alone and together in a single house, a common situation in several Qatari folktales such as “*Hikayati Al-Hagoul*” and “*Ya Khalana Yaldandara*” where an orphaned brother and sister live together after the death of their parents, and in the “Hamad and Hamda” tale, we find the two-hero pattern also, as the tale opens as follows “The boy was Hamad and the girl Hamda, and their father and mother died.”

There are other common motifs in Qatari folktales such as a family made of an orphaned child (boy or girl) living with the father and/

or father's wife (stepmother), or a man living with his three sons or daughters. I think that prologue pattern builds on a formula that steers the course of events to build the story, and on a formula related to the passive action of presence, particularly with the focus on the orphaned baby's case, the brother-sister relationship in the absence of parents. In this fashion, we find that the prologue of "Al-Khadrabouna" and "Hamad and Hamda" starts from an obsession that puts pressure on the psychological traits of the family, the loss of parents, while the third folktale "*Al-Sofra wal Qadah wal Mushaab*"'s prologue focuses on a family of a woodman, who fears the loss of livelihood, due to insufficient wood in the desert. We notice that the prologue in the three tales is almost centered around a single concept, a family situation and family members' relationship, along with a pressuring element such as the death of parents or poverty. In such stories, we find a clear structure standing on the family concept regardless of social strata and the concern about potential future misfortunes.

Three functions in folktales

If Propp's functions start from (1) Absentation/Departure, it is not surprising to find this function in our three folktales, along with other functions, which will be extracted from every folktale:

"Al-Khadrabouna" folktale

1. Absentation/Departure: The father and mother are absent by death.
2. Yearning: the young man's sister hears about a man named Al-Khadrabouna and loves him without even seeing him.
3. Violation: the girl gets sick by reason of this distant love.
4. Violation of Interdiction: The news of the love story spreads and the

brother knows of his sister's love of Al-Khadrabouna when she spells his name by a slip of the tongue. The tale goes "One day, he heard her spelling his name and asked her about him." This function is probably associated with a subsequent structural function, as shown in the analysis of Propp of the dual pattern of the specific pairs. This function is followed by another function— Delivery.

5. Delivery is a function resulting from the correction of an offense. We note in "Al-Khadrabouna" that the brother, following sister's illness, becomes ready to receive the news and to go search for Al-Khadrabouna. Here the story goes "The brother answered his sister's request. He loved her too much as his sole sister. He sets out on a journey to find the man." Here we note that the pattern of functions embodies in a hierarchical way. Delivery means that the third function is executed.

6. Departure: The hero (character) goes out to achieve a mission and the brother travels in search for Al-Khadrabouna. Here the inquiry about Al-Khadrabouna's place comes into play.

7. Test: this function exists along with several questions that lead the hero through the way, and that gets achieved by Al-Khadrabouna's question about the reason of the brother's visit.

8. Response: the hero's response to the brother's request to get married to his sister, especially after the brother says "When my sister walks, a stuffed chicken falls down. When she laughs, pearls emit from her mouth, and if she cries, the sky rains."

9. Granting: This function is central to Propp's work and is existent in almost any folk tale. Al-Khadrabouna gives the brother a piece of cloth to give to the sister, so she washes it and pours the washing water in front of her house. That grows a tree marking the house, and when Al-Khadrabouna comes in to arrange the marriage, he will know the house by the tree.

10. Movement: The brother returns home.

11. Query: A neighbor eavesdrops on the talk of the brother and sister.
12. Delivery (Access to information): The villain (neighbor) knows the story of the piece of cloth.
13. Deception: the neighbor decides to take advantage of the information and deceive the girl and get married to Al-Khadrabouna instead.
14. Surrender to deception: the neighbor slaps the washing water and pours it in front of her house, and the girl takes a fake bowl of water.
15. Villainy: A harm happens when Al-Khadrabouna comes in to marry the girl, but gets married to the neighbor. That inflicts harm on the loving girl. Here we note the implicit case in which the function exists, while surrender to deception seems to have happened in the function, in a clear structural correlation.

The Yearning function is still on the show in the tale, however, and a search for a solution for this yearning remains. Propp said there was a repeated pattern across folktales. When the girl knows what the neighbor had done, she remains in a yearning mood, and the Delivery function gets recurrent and repeated, as she dispatches her brother again to Al-Khadrabouna. But he does not believe the brother, imprisons him, and assigns a guard to watch him. The girl gets worried (offense) and prays to God to turn her into a dove (Giving/Help).

16. Query/Exit/Movement: The girl turns into a dove and flies in search for her brother and meets the guard who narrates the story to her (Help).

17. Influence: We note the semiotic dimension manifested in the tale, when the girl asks Al-Khadrabouna about her brother, a stuffed chicken falls down from her, and she laughs when she knows about Al-Khadrabouna's marriage, so a pearl pours out of her mouth, and when she asks about her brother, and learns he is imprisoned, she cries and rains fall. That takes the guard by storm.

18. Tracing: Al-Khadrabouna notes the guard's changing mood and asks why? He watches the girl out and recognizes the qualities mentioned by her brother. So he knows of the deception he has been through, as we will see later on.

19. Identifying the Hero: Al-Khadrabouna identifies the hero (the dove girl).

20. Pursuit: Al-Khadrabouna spreads a trap for the dove to catch her.

21. Salvation: the sister salvages her brother and herself.

22. Mission accomplished: the sister succeeds in accomplishing the mission, which takes us to the next function:

23. Secret Known: the false hero gets known, i.e. the neighbor.

24. Punishment: the neighbor is punished by divorce.

25. Wedding: It is the end when the loving girl gets married to Al-Khadrabouna.

“Hamad and Hamda” folktale:

1. Absentation: the mother and father are absent by death.

2. Yearning: Hamad and Hamda suffer the deprivation of mother and father as well as hunger and hardship.

3. Query: Hamad and Hamda hear about a generous, rich man who can help them.

4. Acceptance: Hamad and Hamda go out and search for the generous man.

5. Exit: Hamad and Hamda search for the rich man in a long, tough journey, where they suffer hunger.

6. Violation: Hamad does not listen to his sister's advice, asking him

to avoid the well, where they both fall.

7. Test: when they fall into the well, a jinni comes out and threatens to eat them.

8. Surrender to deception: Here lies the implicit function as Hamad and Hamda remain in the well incapable of escape.

9. Harm: the jinni causes them harm by scaring them.

10. Granting: This function comes in through a magic ring worn by Hamad, which gets rubbed against the wall of the well, and a snake comes out and stretches itself as a ladder to climb, while the jinni was asleep.

11. Movement: the magic ring allows them to skip the well and move to another place, where they meet the Sultan's son.

12. Correction of offense: the Sultan's son helps Hamad and Hamda.

13. Marking/reference/recognition functions: the Sultan's son recognizes Hamad and Hamda, and gives them luxury dress to meet the sultan.

14. Arrival: Hamad and Hamda arrive at the Sultan's palace.

15. Change of Look: Hamad and Hamda look as beautiful as heroes.

16. The Sultan's son gets married to Hamda and they all live at the palace.

“The Al-Sofra wal Qadah wal Mushaab” folktale

1. Absentation/Departure: the woodman departs everyday in search of firewood.

2. Yearning: Firewood is on the decrease in the desert, causing the woodman problems as he fails to secure enough money for the family.

3. Acceptance of Mission: the woodman travels away in search for firewood.

4. Harm: the woodman hits a tree three times to get timber, thereby angering a jinni who dwells upon the tree, and the man gets scared.

5. Query: The jinni asks why the woodman did that.

6. Response: The man responds to the jinni's query telling him about his problems.

7. Granting: The jinni gives the man a magic dining table containing all delicious foods when he repeats the phrase: "Turn around, Blessed Table."

8. Movement: the woodman returns home with the magic table.

9. Yearning: this function is repeated along the context of the story, where the wife says the dining table does not provide the money needed to buy clothes and other stuff, so the previous functions get repeated, and the man gets back to the same tree and the jinni denies his action.

10. Deception: the man goes to the sultan to present to him the dining table after the jinni refuses to help him. But the Sultan cheats the man and takes the table and gives him in return a sack of rice and a tiny, sick donkey.

11. Request: The woodman returns to the tree to ask the jinni for a second help.

12. Response (Granting): The jinni gives him a cup, if he beats it with a stone, it gives him all he wishes once he says "Turn around, Blessed Cup."

13. Warning: the jinni warns the man of wasting the cup and says "Beware losing it!"

14. Violation: the woodman takes the cup to a blacksmith to carve it into iron chains to keep it.

15. Information: The blacksmith knows the cup's secret.
16. Deception/Surrender to deception: The blacksmith steals the cup from the man.
17. Return/Granting: The woodman returns to the jinni for a third help, the jinni offers him a magic axe to fix things repeating the phrase: "Turn around, Blessed Axe."
18. Warning: the jinni advises the woodman to keep the axe.
19. Difficult Mission: The woodman takes the axe gives it to the blacksmith and to the Sultan.
20. Mission Accomplishment: The axe attacks the blacksmith and the Sultan.
21. A secret known: The Sultan's and the blacksmith's secret gets known.
22. Punishment: the Sultan and blacksmith get punished by the axe.
23. Completion of Mission: The woodman completes the mission and restores his magic tools.
24. Change of hero's look: The woodman looks great.
25. Reward: the woodman regains his magic tools.

Circles of Character's Actions

--Having defined the most essential functions in the three folktales, characters and their distribution across the circles of actions, identified by Propp, are yet to be identified. Although Propp was interested a lot of the functions being the primary objective of the study, from the perspective, with less concern with the person who did the actions, he was rather interested in the distribution of such functions among characters across the folktale in specific circles.³

Before starting the process of distributing characters over circles of actions, the characters in each folktale should be identified as follows:

“Al-Khadrabouna”: the loving sister – the brother - Al-Khadrabouna – the neighbor - the guard.

In the “Hamad and Hamda” : Hamad - Hamda – the jinni – the generous man.

“*Al-Sofra wal Qadah wal Mushaab*” : the woodman – the wife – the jinni – the sultan – the blacksmith.

Propp identified seven circles of characters in a folk tale, but it should be pointed out that a character could appear in more than a circle, according to action, or the role it plays - when that is applied on the three folktales, we find the circles as follows:

1- The villain’s action circle: the character of the neighbor appears in such circle in “Al-Khadrabouna” while the jinni appears in that circle in “Hamad and Hamda,” and the blacksmith and the sultan in the third tale.

2- The donor’s action circle: I pointed out, in the analysis of functions, the importance of the donor’s action in composing a folk tale. It is noted that such function appeared in the three folktales. The character of Al-Khadrabouna played a donor’s function in “ Al-Khadrabouna,” while Hamad played that function, especially the ring was a grant that enabled him to come out of the well, also the cavalryman - who gave them food and clothes. In “*Al-Sofra wal Qadah wal Mushaab*,” the jinni was found in the circle of donor, as he gave the woodman three help tools.

3- The helper’s circle: Usually the characters of that circle intersect with the circle of granting. In “Al-Khadrabouna” we find that the help action is achieved by the guard’s character, also Al-Khadrabouna himself, as he accepted helping the loving sister and married her. Besides, the sister tried to help her brother quit capture. We note here that the

character occupies more than a circle, especially in “Al-Khadrabouna.” The helper’s character appears in “Hamad and Hamda,” while the jinni acts as assistant and appears in the circle of the donor’s action.

4- The girl’s action circle, a required person, or tasks: Such character clearly appears in two of the three folktales, discussed before, where we find the girl’s character— equivalent to (the required purpose of marriage) – appears in “Hamad and Hamda.” Hamda appears in such circle and the loving sister appears in that circle in “Al-Khadrabouna,” while in “*Al-Sofra wal Qadah wal Mushaab*” the characters in the same circle were absent, unless the wife belongs to the context of that circle.

5- The sender’s action circle: This circle seems as an incentive for getting out and searching. That circle appears through a character that leads the hero into going on a mission or taking action. This is evident in “Al-Khadrabouna” where the sister dispatched the brother to Al-Khadrabouna. It is worthy to note that the loving sister plays more than a role; she appears in the sender’s circle, the princess’s circle, and the hero’s circle. In “Hamad and Hamda”, the brother and sister are in the sender’s circle, as they decided to search for the rich man. If we start from the concept of Philippe Hamon, who believes that the character transcends realistic form, as the conditions of deprivation and hunger implicitly represent a character which led Hamad and Hamda to escape their ordeal. The presence of the rich man can be explained as a character motivating departure. The third tale, the wife or the family acts as a motivation for the woodman to search for his family needs.

6- The hero’s action circle: The characters in this circle are obvious. Al-Khadrabouna exists in that circle – the loving sister could be in the circle. Hamad and Hamda play the same role in the second tale, while the woodman fits into the circle in “*Al-Sofra wal Qadah wal Mushaab*.”

7- The false hero’s action circle: The value of characters of such circle are defined by trying to steal the hero’s role. In “Al-Khadrabouna,” the

neighbor's character plays that role while the character is absent in Hamad and Hamda, unless the jinni plays it. And though inconsistent, it is closer to the villain's action circle. In the third tale, the false hero relates to the villain's circle as in both characters of the Sultan and the blacksmith who stole the tools granted to the woodman by the jinni.

The general structure of the three folktales:

It is noted, after designating the functions in each tale, that there is a general structure of the three tales. The structure starts from absence, need, offense and so on. That prompts us to stop by some functions that get repeated in almost all the tales, but we will only highlight a few points in order to discover morphological similarities. If we discuss the function of need, we will find:

1. "Al-Khadrabouna": the girl loves Al-Khadrabouna and suffers from her lover's absence.
2. "Hamad and Hamda": the two need food and have no parents.
3. "*Al-Sofra wal Qadah wal Mushaab*": The woodman suffers from a lack of firewood and fails to meet family needs.

This function is followed by a function of trying to handle the offense, then a test or deception function follows, then a help. The help takes the shape of grants or donation. Donations in the three tales take the following types:

1. "Al-Khadrabouna": The brother gives his sister the water for washing the cloth: "...then he gave the man his piece of cloth and told him: Let your sister wash this by... her hand."
2. "Hamad and Hamda": Grants are given more than once. The magic ring gives the two siblings a way out of the well: "When the jinni fell asleep, Hamad's hand touched the wall. He was wearing a magic ring... a snake got out... they did not know whether it was a snake or a ladder³. Granting appears when the man who saved them gave them food

and clothes..” After a while, the man brought them the best dress, food, milk, and dates.”

3. “*Al-Sofra wal Qadah wal Mushaab*”: The jinni gives the dining table to the woodman: The story goes: “Pity on you. We will give something instead of firewood.”

Generally speaking, we note that the tales proceed to discover the villain, the punishment and reward. Such pattern represents an evolution of functions which appears through the three tales. Several scholars have identified the following classification:

The tale	Offense - need	A test/Correction Attempt	Reward/ Punishment
“Al-Khadrabouna”	The sister loves Al-Khadrabouna and the neighbor steals the water.	The brother goes to Al-Khadrabouna, and the sister turns into a bird.	Al-Khadrabouna knows his sister’s secret and punishes the wife with divorce and marries the girl.
“Hamad and Hamda”	Orphanhood, deprivation and hunger. Falling into the well and the jinni’s threat.	Getting out of the jungle, skipping the well by the snake’s help.	They meet the cavalryman and Hamda marries the rich man’s son. All live in the palace.
“ <i>Al-Sofra wal Qadah wal Mushaab</i> ”	A – The woodman does not find firewood in the jungle. B. The sultan and blacksmith manipulate the woodman.	Getting out of the jungle and meeting the Jinni who helps.	The woodman finds the magic tool, punishes the Sultan and blacksmith and regains his tools.

According to Propp’s concept of folktale, a tale is based on those functions discussed above, besides distributing the characters among seven circles of actions. The morphological approach is not so inter-

ested in the characters and their physical and moral traits. The action in the tale can be made by any character. No difference if the villain was the jinni or the blacksmith. This approach is not interested in his name or qualities. The tale does not depend much on the moral formation and construction of characters, it rather depends on the actions done by the characters. The character is identified in the first place by its role. The nature of action identifies the character and puts it a narrative context. The blacksmith existed among the villain's action circle, as he stole the magic tool. The same thing applied to the neighbor who stole water to get married to Al-Khadrabouna. The tale does not depend much on the name of the neighbor, her qualities or morals, or any other qualities of the character. The semantic construction of the character comes from its actions, not from descriptions and information about it.

Conclusion

The tales are after all a text that bears meanings, educational values and embodies the nature of human beings, including jealousy and lack of satisfaction. Jealousy was the motive prompting the neighbor to steal the water, while the motives of the blacksmith were greed and the desire to steal. The woodman suffered lack of satisfaction and did not draw lessons from his experience. Such semantic outcomes do not form a tale as they represent motivations that justify the character's actions. The action in its value and role makes up the tale. Although Propp explained the value and significance of motivations as a morphological element, the folktale still actually depends on the patterns of functions and their presence in the text. So every folktale, in order to be formed, should start from a lack of balance and stand on a state of need or offense. Hence, the plot develops in order to satisfy the need and correct an offense through a series of functions. The tale in all its phases represents a pattern of life simulation and the human journey throughout life.

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The Collective Unconscious The Model of the Qatari Relationship with the Sea

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Introduction

A lot of thinkers contributed to clarifying the concept of culture. Their designations thereof varied in accordance with their specialties. Philosophers, men of letters, intellectuals, and scientists have all defined culture in a way that extended its different meanings.

However, the school of biological evolution played a role in defining culture, tracing it back to mental and biological evolutions that humanity underwent. Some studies have overestimated the impact of biological factors on human behavior, on individual and ethnic levels. They argued that certain ethnicities develop culturally more than others. Others have relegated culture to the realization and response of the human mind to systems of kinship, legends and myths (Scott MacEachern 2003). It is noticeable that evolutionists understand human culture as

a human production. Nonetheless, they attribute it to biological factors related to the abilities of the human brain to realize things, turn them into symbols and give them terms of expression. Such abilities have developed correspondingly with the evolution of human life. However, they discovered lately that biological factors are not the only ones in this field. Societal conditions in which man lives also play a role in influencing the biological evolutionary process, which includes realizing life, understanding it, and the methods undertaken to organize relations with other individuals.

On the other hand, anthropologists and sociologists carried out deep studies on culture, its origins, and its role in man's life, society, and evolution. Definitions of culture have been coined as seen from moral, behavioral and environmental spectra. For idealists, man is a moral creature who tends to bestow an idealistic meaning upon his life, and aspires to achieve high objectives likely to elevate his being above satisfying his physical needs. This tendency helped him discover ideals and highlight the importance of organizing life. It also developed an intellectual system and lifestyles that made him capable of developing and growing. Behaviorists, however, believe that man is thought and behavior, and that the latter requires prompting actions. This is the very role played by culture, which realizes the principles of order and continuation. However, environmentalists argue that man's spontaneous responses to the environmental conditions he lives in grow with time into systems, rules, and methods that individuals follow, and eventually become a collective culture that frames their life and makes them distinct.

Diversity is the main feature of these definitions. Even anthropologists and sociologists, who are mainly concerned with this issue, have offered somehow different definitions for the cultural elements and the crucial factors that shape them. Culture is the inherited customs for some, and rules of behavior or methods to organize life for others. It is seen as a learned behavior, and also as mere dismantling and prompting

behaviors. Others have added up materialist factors to it besides extra human productions; such factors have been attributed to economic and geographical conditions, or social circumstances, or religious doctrines ... etc.

Actually, E. Tylor's definition in *Primitive Culture* is the most famous. It is based on the hypothesis that culture develops according to the same rules of evolution in life. In Tylor's view, the development of human thought resembles evolution in natural life. Primitive societies enter more-developed stages as a result of the growth and development of total human experiences which are gained through interactions among individuals and communities. Hence, culture for him is: "the collective compound that includes knowledge, ideals, art, ethics, laws, norms, and any other customs or faculties acquired by man as a member of society." This includes the subjects that are considered as materialist components of culture such as tools, technology, means of hunting, food preparations, agriculture ... etc.

It can be observed that Tylor has focused on the collective part in producing and acquiring culture, and discarded the individual aspect. However, his definition is more comprehensive than the preceding ones. Culture is a collective, not an individual, production. It includes the total of what man produces; it is compounded because it consists of several albeit varied parts and components. It is acquired by an individual because he is a member of a certain community, which includes privacy since individuals belong to different communities where each has its diverse conditions that yield different cultural patterns. Acquiring culture also includes transportation and learning, since it is inherited and learned, which leads to the emergence of general cultural features that characterize the behavior of community members. If it is inherited, it digs deep temporal roots that can extend to reach the very beginnings of human communities.

Emile Durkheim, in *The Division of Labor* (1893), drew a connection between culture and individual behavior based on the part played by

culture as the collective mind formed through the individuals' belief in certain doctrines, ideals, and morals. The latter enhance the community's interdependence and solidarity. He noticed that culture leads to establishing the collective unconscious centered on socially vital subjects, knowledge, information, values, morals and beliefs. This content is the collective unconscious in simple communities; it is worthy to note that he highlighted the part of religion in forming this collective unconscious.

Thus Durkheim connected individual awareness and the collective unconscious in simple communities and even complex ones. However, the level of awareness should differ according to social classes and division of labor. He argues that the impact of the collective unconscious increases in simple communities which are characterized by homogeneity. In such communities, the power of the group's values unifies patterns of thought and behavior, which impels the community members to participate in one culture that becomes their collective unconscious; the impetus behind different forces that individuals cannot help but to adhere to.

The definition has been taken a step further after the revisions conducted by Kroeber and Kluckhohn (1952). They introduced a thorough definition of culture as "different means of life, be them explicit or implicit, rational or irrational, which man has reached throughout history. It is located in a specific time and it establishes guiding lines that direct individuals' behavior in society." It is obvious that this definition includes remarkable and inherent phenomena. It broadens the scope of culture to embrace all facets of life, whether they are realistic, perceptible, imperceptible, logical, illogical, real or legendary. The definition also underscores the part played by culture in directing individual behavior, which implies the individuals' participation in certain significations and behaviors that are actually the collective unconscious, although the definition did not state that.

Arab intellectuals, philosophers and sociologists contributed to defining culture. According to Zaki Najeeb Mahmoud (1989) culture is a general case that incorporates values and standards as reflected by religions,

customs, preferences, and arts. It guides man in his journey and his reactions. Culture is not knowledge and information per se, but the spirit that roams to push this cognitive construction towards specific objectives man seeks to realize. It is clear that the definition focuses on the moral and normative aspects contained within culture; being a directive of human behavior.

Safwat Kamal (1986) believes that through using mental and materialist potentials, artistic and moral appraisal of life aspects, being on earth, and being in the community, man established a culture that reflects his identity and the different walks of his life. However, Ma'en Zyada thinks that culture is the sum of practices that include things, events, proceedings and behavior which carry symbolic and abstract dimensions. Nonetheless, this symbolism does not make them less realistic or true.

Na'eema Eitany defines culture as "the production of thought in different fields, be them in the past or the present. It is the homogenous compound of memories, imaginings, values, symbols, expressions and creativity that preserves for humanity what builds a nation and maintains cultural identity. This usually happens within the framework of developments that emerge from their inherent dynamism and their ability to give and take." This definition is more comprehensive than the previous ones since it emphasizes the role of culture in creating the collective memory that gives a certain community its cultural and distinctive identity. Culture hence has been set up throughout time; it is a changeable and developing process owing to its potential to interact and exchange with other phenomena.

Despite the different definitions, some intellectuals agreed upon the part played by culture as a behavioral directive. Culture is a human production established throughout time and resulting from various conditions. It is the collective unconscious and it includes the abstract, the symbolic, the realistic, the materialist and the immaterialist. It is acquired, inherited, and taken up throughout time amongst individuals and communities; hence it is a changeable and developing phenomenon.

Culture and Folklore:

Folklore is always referred to as the popular inherited culture and its legacies. It is all that is practiced and believed in by the community. Its origin is unknown and it holds a temporal dimension that could be long or short; and throughout time it grows into mental, moral and intellectual structures that guide individual and collective action.

Some consider folklore as the collective unconscious since it reflects the level of general cognition and understanding life as adopted by the peoples. It influences their viewpoints, life stances and behavioral patterns; and its strength lies in being the total intellectual and materialist production of a community. It is a common production that mirrors a common and general perception; hence it is collective and continuous.

Folklore is the informal component of culture which includes all the explanations and information produced by a community within a long span of time. Some consider it as the center of culture since it embraces unrecorded traditions which emerged through time and sharing life by human groups in a specific place. It could be said that it is a product of individual and collective creative processes that come into existence to satisfy the needs of a community and preserve its continuity. It reveals the active contribution of individuals and groups, and the interaction between man and his surrounding environment. Therefore, it is a very vital aspect of communities since it includes all that was produced by them whether it is knowledge, beliefs, values, norms, customs, traditions, arts, literatures, music, creative works, solutions, techniques, and innovative methods of interaction with environmental conditions and other peoples, which had been discovered and inherited by successive generations.

Although folklore is the informal component of culture for some, it is still general. Folklore goes beyond a certain category or level because its dominating aspect is not written but handed down orally; thus it has been designated as popular. Some mix up folklore and cultural legacy and

regard folklore as the culture of commons or of the unintellectual. It is also considered traditional because it is part of the past and is related to rural and Bedouin communities.

Within this framework queries evolved as to whether popular culture signifies an elementary stage of comprehension and cognition; being primitive and uncivilized. Does this render popular culture and popular man as illogical? Does urbanization lead man to learn and acquire the higher components of culture which are characterized by logical thinking and explaining phenomena rationally? Mohamed Al Johary (2008) argues that this is an unrealistic inferring since there are individuals who are fully urbanized, yet they believe in illogical myths and take pleasure in folkloric songs ... etc. This only shows that folklore goes beyond a certain category of people and is not related to a specific mentality or intellectual level. It exists inside each human being.

Nowadays, some people do not divide culture into popular and non-popular parts; there is a cultural legacy which stands for all inherited forms of culture from the past. However, scientists do not agree upon the temporal span through which to categorize the cultural product as a part of folklore. There is currently a universal trend that emphasizes the importance of traditional knowledge and folkloric aspects as a human heritage that must be preserved on the one hand. Previous experiences, on the other hand, can be studied to explore their structures and abilities to ameliorate the present. Folklore, seen from this perspective, is a storehouse of knowledge, values and techniques that must be discovered, polished and used to enhance cultural identity which is threatened by various sources of cultural globalization.

It is possible to underscore that cultural legacy is a cultural phenomenon which is continuous and changeable simultaneously. It is continuous due to its field, the time it emerges in, and its strong impact on the collective unconscious. All that we say, imagine and undertake is an extension and part of a legacy; it might be somehow similar or dissimilar to the previous

form and content. It also stands for the essence of cultures as it reaches out to the people and their past, and it is considered as premises and directives of life in the present; especially when it is a common not an individual product. It is the sum of cultural and knowledge accumulations. It resides in popular sentiments despite the temporal distance from the conditions that gave rise to it and despite the lived reality.

Although the cultural legacy is steady, this steadiness is relative since it goes through unnoticeable slow and unremitting changes, like any other human phenomenon. It is transferred through different means and its content could be partially or totally different in cases of rapid social changes. Due to the aforementioned characteristics the cultural legacy of a community can be looked at as a crucial component of the community's identity that makes it distinct.

Local Culture and Cultural Identity:

People are born in certain places and times. However, they have roots, abstract or concrete, which are the culture they are born into that provides them with spirit and thought, and gives life a meaning. It delivers to them the required skills and techniques to make life easier. Usually the local culture represents the identity of a community, its acquired wisdom through time and its collective unconscious. It preserves the community's homogeneity and makes it different from other cultures. Hence, man identifies himself through it and introduces this self to others from the scope of his cultural identity.

When the cultural legacy is threatened, do we expect a weaker influence of the collective unconscious as a behavioral directive and a definite cultural identity? In our communities, there are several factors menacing the cultural identity in the age of globalization. Where are we to locate the cultural root in the face of this huge tide of knowledge and cultural symbols that are infiltrating everywhere because of the modern revolution

in communications?

Rediscovering the Relationship between the Gulf Man and the Environment and the Sea in the Gulf Area through a Study on Folklore:

The culture of simple communities is influenced by the impact of ecology on the individual and the society. It results in forms of positive and negative interactions. Such forms are inherited and changed into stable and changeable methods and lifestyles. The cultural and intellectual lives get their symbolic and practical significance from this interaction. This relationship, with its influences upon all forms of cultural life, gains more importance when it is mutual. Thus it results in creative and different forms as materialist and immaterialist cultural products, starting with inventions and technological methods, and ending in arts, poetry and music.

An ancient relationship has been established in the Arab Gulf between man and his physical surroundings. Despite its pure economic incentives, this relationship resulted in cultural structures and lifestyles that made these communities distinct. When the sea was the center of daily activities being the source of income, this relationship developed into an emotional and cultural one; the sea became the focal point of man's thinking and inspiration.

The significance of this relationship increased when man was able to use the sea and its riches in building an accredited and international trade of pearls, which could be found in deep locations at the bottom of the sea. Man discovered those locations and created a geological map with given names which are still surviving in the popular thoughts and sentiments of the people.

This relationship helped in developing the creative sense in the Gulf man, which was obvious in the methods he established to use the hidden resources of the sea, and in his cultural legacy. Symbols of this unique relationship between man and the sea emerged in words, names, stories,

songs and arts. They yielded legacies, music and tales, which structured the collective unconscious of the people eventually. Mostafa Attiya (2009) suggests in his research on oral folklore in popular poetry that this relationship emerged between man and the sea in the Gulf and developed to embrace humane dimensions, not merely materialist ones. There are many models of this folklore that show this relationship and explain aspects of its popular culture.

The Sea in the Collective Unconscious:

A historical and serious relationship came into existence between the forces of nature, exemplified in the sea, with its strength, wideness, continuance, and the Gulf man. The latter struggled to handle this huge force with simple means such as ships, sails, fishing and trade. He felt weak in the face of this mysterious force which had many times conquered him; and he prayed to God asking for protection from it. Yet, he also confronted it with man's willpower which created life on earth through a long struggle with harsh circumstances.

Man has developed a deep awareness of the importance of the sea in his life. On the one hand, he loves the sea, respects it, and believes deep down that it is the source of his income. But on the other hand, he fears it, and feels powerless to exploit its riches that he needs in order to carry on and keep his family. The sea also represents a threat on his life. Anyhow, the content of this relationship created a common culture, awareness and collective unconscious that had its unique features and could be seen in many symbols that reflect the strength of this relationship between man and the sea.

Believing in God and monotheism were the refuge for handling problems that emerged while interacting with the sea as a dominating natural force at a time that lacked technology. Phenomena of ebb and tide were effective because of the shallow coasts, and wind directions were a controlling

factor while using sails and the force of those winds to sail the ships. This oppression gave rise to the skill of collective rowing, and the calm winds produced soft music and a monotonous rhythm that matched its calmness, the sea, the rowing, and the sadness resulting from hard toil and being away from home and family. The sea was never a home, despite the long time spent there.

The effect of the sea is too clear on Gulf poetry, especially on poets who lived in coastal cities and villages, and who spent most of their lives watching the sea waves touching the walls of their houses. Houses were established on the coast longitudinally with attached walls. The people would sleep on their roofs seeking sweet breezes of air while listening to the waves touching the beach sand. During the time of diving, the sun would rise on countless ship sails that roamed the Gulf searching for pearls. Most of the population would take part in this diving; it was the main source of income in an environment with scarce natural resources and limited economic opportunities. Hence, the sea became the most influential environmental component in the poetics of men of letters and creators. This impact still exists till the present day and is reflected in literature and arts such as stories, drama, poetry, painting, and fine arts.

Has the relationship between the Gulf man and the sea changed? Does the diving community with its cultural folklore, values and symbols still exist in the collective unconscious? Actually and lamentably, civilization and urbanity have taken man away from his spatial environment and yielded new relationships with technology, not the environment. Thus, the emotional relationship between him and the environment, the sea and the desert dissolved. Nowadays, he is indifferent to the destruction resulting from his several activities of economic investment in projects that are not related to the sea as a natural resource, but as a source of beauty that enhances the luxury of modern man. The sea has become a mere investment for profitable projects.

Man could no longer rightly interact with the environment, which does

not influence his consciousness any more as it has been replaced by other elements and factors. The most important of those factors is petroleum, not as a substance that he produces, but as an enigmatic element that holds no direct relationship with him. However, it remains his source of income and luxury. At every stage, man experiences conditions that shape his consciousness but does petroleum have the same impact on people's life like the sea?

Petroleum did not yield literature, culture, practices, or social customs. All literary and artistic movements in the region at the age of petroleum are nothing but an extension of the two cultures of the sea and the desert, and a product of the cultural interaction with neighboring cultures and the social changes that accompanied education and urbanity.

Nonetheless, the Gulf man did not maintain that deep, quiet, rich entity that was discovered by his great ancestors. Evidence shows that the procedures that accompanied economic development had a negative impact on the general condition of the sea at the Gulf coasts, which had been subject to different forms of environmental destruction and pollution. This damage resulted from industrial growth, urban development plans, and adopting harmful methods of fishing that resulted in the extinction of ample marine species. A lot of creatures which used to live near the coast have disappeared such as calms, seashells, and some fish species. Coasts that have been harboring different kinds of birds and creatures to lay their eggs have been destroyed. The sea is no longer a site for poetry, singing and trade; it has moved a long distance away from the spirit and consciousness of the Gulf man.

Folklore and the Significance of the Sea:

The environmental impact on local culture was direct and it resulted from a vital interaction between the creator and the sea in particular, which led to diverse manipulations of the sea in cultural symbols and poetic

imageries. This interaction left behind a rich legacy of beautiful oral and musical culture. Materialist interaction, however, could not stand in the face of technological changes that dominate the avaricious scene of life in the region.

Artists, poets and common people have transformed their daily experiences and sufferings into cultural products, in which the sea, with its soul, sound, power and quietness, was the muse. This was reflected in their painting, sculpture, arts, music, stories, poems, proverbs, names and daily conversations. The sea represented the cultural warehouse of the region. It still forms a part of the popular sentiment and distinguishes the folklore that constitutes the cultural identity of the region's peoples.

The sea folklore with its practices, concepts, expressions, industries, crafts, laws, norms, values, principles, morals, behavior, literature, poetry, proverbs, songs, music, arts, tales, stories and legends have all forged the collective unconscious of the region.

It is also hard to forget how the components and sources of culture intermingle in structuring the collective unconscious and the duality of this culture – the culture of the desert and that of the sea. Such intermingling enriched popular culture, forged its identity, and introduced profound perceptions on life which shaped consciousness and imprinted unique cultural features upon it.

Examples of the Impact of the Sea on the Collective Unconscious:

Songs, poetry and odes reflect the community's customs, traditions, aspirations, desires, tragedies and sadness. They also echo its cultural and social structures and its civilization "where popular customs gain their significance from social practices and continuity throughout generations" (Mahmoud Fahmy Hejazy 1984).

There are many examples that show the impact of the sea upon the

collective unconscious taking shape in working songs on boards of the ships such as holo songs, the accompanying rituals of diving such as tob tob sea songs, and folk poetry. A folk poem is among the components of the collective unconscious since it is a collective, not an individual, product. The oral circulation of such poetry enriches it. Although a person must have composed the song, it still depends on the people's acceptance and circulation of it, as Ahmed Aly Morsy argues (1983). The more the song expresses the collective sentiment and its concepts, the more it continues and becomes part of the folklore that shapes the collective unconscious throughout the passage of time.

First: Holo Songs and Work Songs on Boards of the Ships:

Holo songs were the most common form of popular singing in Qatar and the Gulf; they expressed the relationship between man, God, and the sea. The diver faced the sea armed by his deep belief in the power of the Creator, and religion which, together with the environmental conditions, shaped the collective unconscious.

Song No. 1

Hey Allah and hoolya

We seek the generous one

We seek the generous one

Popular Song No. 2

Holo Allah here we start - *holo Allah* grant us safety

Holo fulfill our wishes

Holo travellers

Holo Allah grant us safety

Holo songs still exist in the popular unconscious despite the disappearance

of their function that accompanied the disappearance of diving seventy years ago. However, the collective unconscious still brings them to life, even if they have lost their vital significance because a part of the social legacy strives to keep them. After the demise of most of the people who practiced such arts, the process of maintaining them is considered quite important; it is possible to incorporate them into the current arts in light of the present trends of re-discovering folklore and using it to breathe life into the collective unconscious so that the Gulf man can realize the role of the sea in the community's past and present.

Second: Popular Songs on Diving

Since diving in search of pearls was the main source of income, its activities and conditions represented the epitome of the Gulf culture. Divers used songs and arts in different emotional and social expressions to describe divers who stand for the collective unconscious with the harsh conditions they went through. Hence, such conditions were transformed into feelings expressed through songs that were sung at social occasions and group ceremonies. They dwelled in the popular consciousness ever since that time; such as the song of *um al hanaya* which is still sung by artists and musicians as their muse for melodies, music and other artistic expressions.

Popular Song No. 3

Rowing till we reach the beach, *um al hanaya*

Rowing till we reach the beach

The rowing is made by all the boys

The rowing

Don't make things hard on them *nokhotha*

Don't make things hard on them *nokhotha*

Their hands are cut by the diving ropes

Their hands are cut.

Popular Song No. 4

A famous song about the pearl diver:

Where are you diver of 80 *ba'as*?

He is pulled back with his *deine*

The one who dies will leave others in sorrow

And the one who lives will pay his debts

Women sing this song in which they praise the diver who probes into the deep pearl *herat* (diving places), which can reach the depth of 80 *ba'as* (the *ba'a* is 1.5 meters). They ask the *seeb* (diver's assistant) to pull the diver from the bottom of the sea and show them the *deine* (oysters' net) round his neck filled up with oysters. If he dies while diving so deeply, his beloveds are going to mourn him. If he lives through it, he is going to pay his accumulated debts. This song is the perfect expression of how the collective unconscious frames the realities of success and failure, and how it plays an imperative role in directing men to dive. Women practice this kind of encouragement since they are a part of this collective unconscious.

Such songs had specific functions in social life and in building up the group's lines of thought and values. They aimed to spread an air of vigor and bravery to encourage the community members to dive, on the one hand. On the other hand, they helped people to accept the idea of the death of their sons and men while diving in search of precious pearls, being the main source of income and of the community's economy.

Third: Diving Conditions and Shaping the Collective Unconscious

The conditions related to diving included: being away from the beloved, the danger of losing the diver's life, or losing the family or a dear one

during the diving season. These conditions had their psychological effect on the population such as: the disappointment when distributing the profits, the social conditions that impel them to return to diving after *qifal* (getting back home), the conflicts of the people's desires and their love of the desert.

Fearing to Lose the Beloved:

There is a common story about this issue in Qatar and Kuwait. Seif Marzouk Al Shammlan avers in his book *The History of Pearl Diving in Kuwait* (1978) that it is originally a Kuwaiti tale that spread later on in the region. It tells the story of a young man named Jaber who wanted to go diving at a very early age. His mother, being too afraid, pleaded the *nokhtha* to keep an eye on him since he was too young. After getting engaged to a girl, he left with the divers and died after plunging into the bottom of the sea and he never emerged from it again. The ship crew searched for him a lot but they could only find his *deine*. When the ship returned home, his mother was grief-stricken after learning the news of her son's death. She said those lines:

My heart aches for Youssif and his divers

I pleaded him to look after my beloved son

All I got back was his clothes folded

Curse be upon the ship that gave them back to me

Our hidden rifle that was my son's

May the one who uses it instead of him be cursed

Sometimes the happiness of the diver is incomplete upon his safe return home for he might discover, as we mentioned before, that his beloved wife died when he was away in the mysterious deep herats. He never learns the news of her death and other sailors might hide the news from

him out of pity, and when he returns, he is shocked she is not waiting for him at home and then he knows about her death. A lot of them expressed this poetically to show their grief.

A poet says upon his return home and not finding his wife:

The day I returned home and found no one

I asked my family and said I wanted to see my wife, where is she?

Popular Song:

The fear held by the family and the beloved of the sea shaped cultural and emotional meanings, and directed the collective unconscious. It dwelled inside the popular sentiment and was reflected in myriad social and cultural activities such as group ceremonies accompanying seeds grinding (*The Story Teller* Warda Al Modhaiky, 1990):

Hey ... hey

Sitting at the beach contemplating your sails for a while

Hey ... hey

The sails are unchained but the heart is still tied

The scene of ship sails flowing while heading to the pearl herats was deeply engraved in the collective memory. It appeared in the form of poems and lyrical poetry. The farewell scene expressed the anguish of the family and the loved ones for divers on their way to the unknown.

Another song:

Waiting for the Divers' Return

The *oud* (big) diving period that could take up almost three months signified a sad time for the population. It affected their family and emotional lives, and was echoed in many cultural phenomena that mirrored how man felt suffocated by such economic conditions that were imposed upon him by

a harsh environment.

How I long for the *iqfal*

Folding the diving ropes and hanging the *deine*

Like papers being folded

I will fold that month

Like papers being folded

Two months and the third

And the divers shall return

Disappointment upon Distributing Profits

Impacts of destitution and disappointment surfaced many times when the profits of diving were distributed upon *iqfal* (return). Profits were minimal and sometimes there were no profits at all. Loans made by the sailors before the diving season from the *nokhtha* could not be repaid. After the *iqfal* the *nokhtha* would announce a certain time for all sailors to go, settle their accounts and take their share in the profits. The sailors gathered in front of the *nokhthas' majales* (councils) or sat on the *habous* (stools) while waiting for their *qalathas* (shares) in the profits. Once the sailors assemble, the *nokhtha* would call them inside the *majlis* or the house backyard where rugs and mats were laid, *nafala* (food), coffee and tea were served for them as guests, and then the calculations would start. The asset of the ship would be deducted (the expenses of the voyage), and the remainder would be divided among the crew. The diver's share was three assets and the *seeb's* was two. If the profits were high, the share of the sailor would be more, but the lower the profits, the less their shares. Many times the share of the sailor would not be enough to cover the (loan) he took at the beginning of the season. Therefore, some would leave the *nokhtha's majles* happily, and the majority would leave with an added debt. Economic conditions were quite severe on the psyche of the population and were reflected in other cultural phenomena, popular

songs, poems, proverbs, and common sayings.

The poet expresses his disappointment under such conditions:

If it hadn't been for hope, I would have intended nothing

I wouldn't have gone diving nor attended the *miyani*

Nine months and the divers are still trying.

Rida Diving

There was another season for diving before winter called *rida* then *radidah*. What distinguishes the *rida* season is the agreement of *nokhthas* with one of the 'houses' that supply them with the needed manpower for this voyage. Those were considered as urban people and did not go to the land after *iqfal* or winter. A lot of tribes' people from Doha inhabitants preferred not to participate in *rida* or *radidah* seasons. The season of 'going back to the land' was what they cared about most, especially the Bedouins, who would go out to the city after *iqfal*, head to the 'land' to meet their families and camels. There are poetic lines that describe how the Bedouin feels about diving after the *iqfal*:

And with the *iqfal* please do not mention diving again

Each will ride *thaloul* to take him far away

The poet is saying if the diving season ends, do not bid me to return. Instead of the ship, I will be riding my *thaloul* (camel) which will shorten the far distances in the desert where my family and people live. This position largely applies to many Bedouins who live the whole year in the desert. Nonetheless, for tribes' people who live in cities in summer and go to the desert in winter, some of them would leave the place of their families or tribes in the desert to participate in the *rida* or *radidah* by the end of the season and in *basheeriya* – freezing cold – seasons, and *khanjeya* (by the end of spring) at the beginning of the season, and then they would return to the desert.

Urban people usually participated in these seasons actively and directly; the urban man always went to the sea. His life and emotions were tied to the sea and he could not stay away from it. However, the Bedouin did not harbor the same feelings for the sea, but to its opposite pole; the land and the desert. His life was connected to the desert; he took pride in his camels more than the ships that were the pride and joy of the urban man. There was another class of people whose emotions were divided among the sea and the land. Those were the semi-urban people who moved between cities and deserts and participated in the diving seasons despite their presence in the desert.

Second: Poetry

Al Faihany's Poetry as a Model

Poetry in the region has been particularly affected by this relationship before the discovery of petroleum. Poetry was among the most significant cultural features, whether through its wide spread, people's interest in it or through the role it played in social life. Poetry was used to transfer and record their news, confirm their social identity, support their economic status, and create personal and tribal loyalties. Additionally, poetry had its usual uses to express flirtation, love, complaints, praise, satire, eulogy ... etc.

Mohamed Ibn Abdul-Wahab Al-Faihany is regarded as one of the most poetic Gulf writers. He used to live near the Gulf beach, moving between Qatar, Bahrain, the East Side and Kuwait. He always interacted with his environment, physical, human and cultural surroundings; which made the influence of the sea quite conspicuous in his poetry in which he many times delineated the sailors and the terrors that accompany diving in search for pearls. He introduced poetic connotations and images that expressed his meanings and feelings in different conditions.

Some of Al-Faihany's sea expressions being employed to enhance the

poetic image are as follows:

The first image: drowning:

We got drunk in the sea of their love; we lost our way and were guided by them

But oh dear for we drowned; the rope of our *jida* was cut and we fainted and died

The poet used the theme of (drowning) in the sea to show his state of suffering because of love. The drowning image is that of the diver who deeply plunges into the sea to collect oysters and faints because of exhaustion or the high sea pressure. He is unable to hold on to *jida* which is the rope that pulls him when he dives. The end is usually death as nobody can save him because of the depth and he is carried away with the sea currents. In such a case, it is said that the person is *sinyan* (*yasani* means in the language of the sea people: fainted) while collecting oysters from the sea.

Drowned in the middle of *ghaba*, killed without a reason

The *ghaba* is the deepest part in the sea, where no one can be rescued. Al-Faihany here draws a love in which he drowned just like the sailors had drowned in the deepest unfathomable *ghaba*.

Layeth in the *ghaba* and its water; drunk and unable to talk

Layeth is floating on the surface of the sea and being pulled by the waves, just like a person who drowns and is moved by the waves. The poet likens his love life to the drowned *layeth*.

The second image: the sea

My sea it too deep and unveils no secrets for it is not shallow at all,

Nobody ever is to be seen in it, no diver and no swimmer

The poet borrows the image of the sea and compares his ability to keep secrets to the deep sea, not the shallow one. It is also a sea to which

nobody goes (*lahi weshahi*: the workers on the ship), nobody dives into, and nobody swims in. The poet interacted with the sea conditions in his age, when the sea held great significance in the people's life. He manipulated its natural phenomena such as ebb when the water recedes and the land that was hidden by the tide is exposed; he is as deep as the sea which is not affected by ebb and tide. He also used the names given to diving in search of pearls to stress that his sea is so profound even for clever divers.

Be like brothers and ride my deep sea,

Without *bild* and without aid.

Al-Faihany always exploits the image of the deep sea to create his different poetic figures of speech. Here, he likens his state to that of the voyagers on the ship who go through the deep sea without the tools that would assist them in knowing and facing its terrors. The poet employs the names of such tools that were used by the voyagers such as (*al bild*) which is a tool used to measure the depth of the sea before diving. On every ship, there was an expert of this tool called *al bilaad*, taken from the name of the tool he uses. When the poet stepped into the sea of love, he was like the voyager who went on board of the ship with no *bild*, guidance or assistance.

The third image: the diver

His hands and arms are open wide in the waves in utter surrender

Anbar: *nabr* is the diver's emergence from the sea to its surface. *Salib* is what lets the rope of *eeda* loose and it is the rope that helps the diver to come to the surface. The poet compares himself to the diver when he resists being pulled by the *seeb* which he should keep an eye on and pull when the rope of *eeda* is shaken. Hence, he surrenders to love and even to his wish to die because he is like the diver who jeopardizes his life by letting go of the rope of *eeda*.

The reader of Al-Faihany's poetry can notice how he draws his poetic images based upon the reality of life around him; he manipulates them to reflect the situations he faces in his life. The reader can equally notice the great impact of the sea and diving upon his sentiments and how he expressed this in poetry that is still recited till the present day by the people in the region.

Women, the Collective Memory and the Collective Unconscious

Actually, women play an imperative role in the collective memory through transportation and educating children by using different methods. They also have a crucial part in directing the behavior of men in the community. They praise certain jobs and behaviors that have been of great significance in satisfying social needs and handling economic, and even political, conditions. For example: in *mararda* songs which are one of the forms of local cultural, women play an essential role in encouraging men to go to war, fight the invaders and confront the enemies. In Bedouin societies, women accompany men in war and cheer behind them war cheers and sing specific songs that push knights and men to sacrifice their lives for the glory of their tribe.

The Mother's Usage of the Image of the Sea in Social Upbringing

This relationship had an impact on the common method of expressing the community's customs and values through poetry, common sayings and simple songs that people exchange and keep throughout generations. They are used spontaneously in occasions and daily events, or to express in certain situations specific religious, social, economic, or even political and military values. They also used them to develop knowledge, principles and emotions inside children. Environmental phenomena such as the sea have become educational material for kids, as they were used in nursery rhymes and songs that adults sing for little children or teach them to sing themselves.

The role played by the Gulf mother has been highlighted; she keeps

by heart many songs that she recites while caring for her children, in addition to breast feeding her babies, looking after their personal hygiene, cuddling them, putting them to sleep and waking them up. Through those nursery rhymes and songs she plays her educational part. She softly talks to the child with a kind, monotonous and low voice that creates serenity inside him.

Grandmothers and aunts in the extended family system also participated in the upbringing. They also sang to the children, praising them when right and scolding them when wrong. They pampered the little ones and created inside the boys values of bravery, magnanimity ... etc., and inside the girls values of timidity, obedience, appreciating beauty ... etc.

This educational role was very important in traditional communities, being one of the crucial elements of transferring and keeping local culture and lifestyle to maintain the community. "Besides, the prevailing culture in the community would totally fade away if this educational part by the family ended" (Ahmed Abu Zaid 1979).

By examining children's songs in Gulf communities as means of education, our first observation will be their simple structure and vocabulary, and their spontaneity and naturalness. They are composed of simple linguistic structures and easy rhythms that go with the child's age and understanding. They easily direct the event or the occasion the child is passing through since there are rhymes and songs that help the child to sleep and others to wake him up in the morning. There are songs that encourage him to eat, talk, walk ... etc., and songs related to certain ceremonial events such as *alnoon* (teething), *alkhatima* (memorizing the Holy Quran), *eid* songs ... etc.

In all cases, these 'nursery rhymes' have been kept throughout generations. They do not iconize a particular person or group, but rather the civilization and culture of a particular people, which is the reason their origins remain unknown. They are more related to the popular sentiment like "folktales,"

especially with songs connected to ceremonial events, *tahwia* (putting babies to sleep) which are generally related to famous folktales. Poems are taken from *Al Sira Al Hilalia* (the epic of Beni Hilal), stories about the sufferings of women which are caused by their mothers in law and *dra'air* (co-wives) ... etc. Poems are also based upon elements of environmental phenomena such as cosmic and geographical phenomena that are related to lifestyles, economy, animals, and creatures that live in the ecosystem.

Employing Environmental and Sea Elements in the Learning Process:

A child grows within the boundaries of an environment and gets close to its elements; he knows and celebrates them, he recognizes them, and he deals with them directly without the involvement of others. He witnesses cosmic phenomena, acknowledges them, feels them and understands their strong impact.

Analyzing the content of these nursery rhymes shows how they embrace multiple cognitive aspects, such as introducing to the child cosmic phenomena like eclipse, stars, planets, times, and weather phenomena such as rain, rainbow ... etc. Additionally, they introduce to him social events and relate them to environmental elements, and economic conditions such as trade, grazing and diving. He also gets to know the jobs at that time and he learns about the meaning of belonging and the different motives of young people.

Analyzing Some Folk Nursery Rhymes

***Tasbeeha* or Morning Songs**

The mother teaches her child about place, time and the creatures that are related to a certain time. She cuddles him with this nursery rhyme when he wakes up in the morning:

A good morning to you before the bird takes to the sky

The bird has two wings and you have all the goodness

This song is referred to in the local dialect as *tasbeeha*. It shows different

educational images and values such as: spreading joy upon waking up early in the morning as it likens it to the bird's morning when it takes to the sky in search of food. It introduces to the child the morning time and creatures like birds which have wings, and it pampers the child as well through its beautiful wordings that are filled with care and love.

Another *tasbeeha* that shows the impact of the sea:

Your early morning is filled with flowers and apples

Your morning is a thousand ponies and *jammal* and shepherds

Hamad is on board of the ship seeking his bread

Mohammad is riding *shaqra* and going around the pastures

This song also echoes elements of the local environment like the jobs of grazing, the *jammal* who looks for grazing places and the ship owner who looks for pearls and trade.

Another example which introduces natural resources, their names and some social values:

This is Aisha and her father and she has been offered dowry

They came proposing to her father

This is Aisha and her father and she has been offered dowry

She has been offered half of what is in *Al Hassa* and the herat with all its *quomash*

This song delivers information about diving such as pearl *herat* and *quomash* which is how the people in the region call pearl.

Another example:

Beautiful Maryam, come along let me see you

You have fully embellished your hands with pearl and coral.

Names of girls and boys:

The influence of the sea was obvious in choosing names related to the sea for children:

Boys' names: Bahr (the sea) and Johar (pearl).

Girls' names: Quomash, Loloa, Hissa, Dana, Jowhara (all are pearl names).

Hence, the interaction between local culture and the surrounding environment was quite significant. The sea was among the most crucial environmental phenomena surrounding man, from which he learnt through a direct relationship his knowledge on wildlife and its different components, and how to incorporate it in his native system, ways of thinking, values, arts and methods of upbringing. This is something that we miss nowadays after the dissolution of this direct relationship between man and natural environment, especially the naval one in which he lives. Man has lost his sense of belonging to its components; he knows nothing about it, does not interact with it emotionally or intellectually, and his relationship with it is limited to the materialist aspect only in an indirect way and through technology.

Needed Stances:

Rediscovering local cultures and folklore.

Studying the data of local culture and stressing their existence in real life.

Preserving cultural roots; keeping the cultural legacy is maintaining the cultural identity.

The sustainability of local culture by reviving its positive elements and employing them to improve man's relationship with the environment.

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Customs and Traditions of the Wedding Night in Qatari Traditional Society

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The present paper is an excerpt from a book that will be published in January, 2014 by the Ministry of Culture, Arts & Heritage under the title *Marriage in Qatar*, written by Noora Bint Nasser Bin Jassem Al Thani. A comprehensive study about marriage traditions and customs in Qatari traditional society.

1. Special Arrangements of the Bride's Family

1.1 Invitation to participate in the wedding

1.2 *Khella* arrangement for the bride and the groom

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2. Bride's Arrangements for the Wedding Night

2.1 Bride's Henna

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2.3 Preparation of Bride's Henna, Henna tattoos, and women in charge of dying with Henna

2.4 Bridal Henna Celebrations and Accompanying Chants

1. Special Arrangements of the Bride's Family

1.1 Invitation to Participate in the Wedding

Ethnographic material indicates that invitation to attend the wedding primarily occurred in urban regions. It was mainly intended for residents of areas remote from the wedding venue, whether these areas are Bedouin or urban. Nonetheless, invitation to participate in the wedding was not required in Bedouin areas since everyone was involved in the preparations. As a matter of fact, both men and women were involved in wedding arrangements and preparations. An informant relating to this recalls, "Bedouins come to weddings without invitation. This also applied to people in urban areas. However, they now think differently. People living in the same neighborhood and relatives came to weddings without invitation once news of a neighbor's wedding spread. Things are different now. Invitation has become a necessity even if they share same walls. It is also required by family members and relatives."

As for women, neighbors and relatives were inured to frequent visits, and they all followed up wedding news and date. This is because kinship and social relationships in the past were close and strong at the lo-

cal urban community level. It is noted that women of the neighborhood come and participate for a whole week prior to the wedding. However, and despite all these close relationships, the bride's family must send one or two women with whom they have ties of kinship to invite family members, relatives, and neighbors residing far and inform them of the wedding date. On the other hand, the groom and his father are both responsible for inviting men, the invitation is usually simple and it takes place at the mosque when gathering for prayer. For those not present then, a man, acting on the groom and his father's behalf, would be sent to invite them. Yet these traditional methods of invitation has changed to be more fashionable, as reliance now is more on modern tools, like a phone –in both Bedouin and urban areas- cards, and printed letters, which have all become the prevailing trend. Invitation to attend and participate has become more necessary, even if both share same walls or, as it is called locally, *Toufa*, as indicated by an informant.

1.2 *Khella* Arrangement for the Bride and the Groom

The second step in marriage arrangements is the preparation of the *Khella*, which is the room prepared for the bride and the groom to spend their first night together. Preparations start by cleaning the bride's house, removing garbage, leveling the ground, and covering it with sand, as houses in the past used to be built using gravel and clay. *Khella* is prepared and furnished one week or more prior to wedding night, and so the house would be similar to a beehive. If the family is affluent, they would buy *Khella's* supplies and accessories, which usually include *Manather* (mirrors), elegant fabrics, like *Breisem*, which is a soft fabric made of silk or nylon yarns, which is *Murakhat*, i.e. embellished, with embroidery, locally referred to as *Zari*, and expensive *Zil*, i.e. carpeting. Yet if the family belongs to the lower class, they will depend on borrowing from neighbors; “*they borrow mirrors and carpets.*” *Khella* is prepared by covering the ceiling with bright-color fabrics, mainly red and green. The same is used also for covering room sides, fixing the

fabric with nails. Once covered, mirrors, which are usually linear and have different names like “*Bu Tawoos*” or the mirror embellished with peacock drawing, would be hung.

Another type of *Manather* used in decorating *Khella* is the “*Rummana*”; an ornamented and embellished ball. All these decorative items used to ornament almost all *Khellas* are brought from India. The ground is then covered with *Zil*, and in one side of the room the wedding bed or mattress are placed. The bed would consist of a number of mattress layers made of cotton arranged to a height that is similar to a regular bed’s. Another option is to place a wooden bed embellished with fabric covers, where *Sondooq Al-Mabeet*; a box in which the bride’s simple clothing items are packed, is also placed. A partition is then arranged, separating it from the rest of the room, made of Sari fabric, and is locally called “*Qati*”; i.e. the separator. The *Khella* finally would look very attractive due to ornaments, decorations, and bright settings. Once these arrangements are completed, the *Khella* would be closed until the wedding night, when it is opened to be perfumed by spraying perfume and perfumed “*Mashmoom*- basil; a pleasantly smelling green plant used for perfuming, especially in weddings.” The bride spends around seven days in *Khella*, until it is time for “*Huwal*”, which is the move to the groom’s family house.

1.3 Food Preparation

This procedure is related to the preparation of cooking ingredients and breakfast for the couple getting married. The Bride’s mother and her female neighbors prepare and cull bread ingredients. The oven is also prepared for baking, and cooking pots are placed on cook stoves. It is noteworthy that families belonging to the affluent class recruit cooks as well as people to serve coffee for invitees and provide anything else to generously honor the men and attendees. But lower classes depend on

their expertise and those of their neighbors and friends in cooking, helping, and preparing. The bride's mother prepares several desert dishes, among which is "*Khabees*"; bread roasted then grinded using "*Rahamillstone*" that is similar to porridge, and "*Luqeimat*"; is a dessert made of yeasted dough that is fried in oil after shaping it into small balls, served on a tray to women. Another dish is "*Khanfaroush*", which is grinded bread combined with eggs and saffron; the batter is then poured into circles and fried in a small amount of oil. Neighbors and friends usually help in preparing these sweet dishes... etc.

2. Bride's Arrangements for the Wedding Night

Ethnographic material indicates that simple and secretive arrangements existed in urban areas to embellish the bride before the wedding. This process often takes place in the bride's family house, or sometime in her maternal or paternal aunt's house, especially if the bride is young and embarrassed to be seen by anyone. However, the family has another intention when sending the bride to a relative's house, which is to keep her uninformed of her marriage plans. The actual embellishment process happens the morning successive to the wedding: "They usually take her after the wedding night to bathe her, braid her hair, help her wear the embellished and embroidered "*Darraeyya*- a long and loose dress embellished with embroidery worn in special occasions", the *Nashl* dress '*Nashl* is a very loose dress that comes in different bright colors and is embroidered with golden yarns', and gold accessories." "A bride is only embellished the first morning after the wedding. On the wedding night, they take the bride and have her seated on a *Zouleya*; i.e. carpet, and they take her to the groom... the *Zouleya* is carried by four women; each woman carries one side, and they take her to the room, where the groom is waiting. They leave the room then close the door, leaving both inside." Sometimes parents may allude to the bride that her simple preparations, like bathing and wearing clean *Darraeyya*, is intended only for a relative's wedding.

It was a custom for certain families in urban areas not to inform the girl of her marriage until one day prior the wedding, or may not even inform her at all. In such case, no preparations for the wedding used to take place to the extent that parents do not arrange for anything.

Nonetheless, there are other indications contrary to the abovementioned, confirming the bride's reliance on herself when she needs to beautify herself without assistant. "The girl is so poor. They give her a dress and ask her to clean herself and take a bath. Sometimes they apply Henna to her pretending to do this on the occasion of her sister's or a relative's marriage.

The same applies to Bedouin areas where the bride is brought to the groom's house in a procession without embellishment. As a matter of fact, traditions in the past did not give significance to embellishment before the wedding. Girls were not allowed to apply *kohl* (eye liner) or perfume before getting married. Once wedded, traditions would give her permission to do so, "*A girl may not use Kohl or perfume until she gets married....*" These are similar to traditions followed in urban areas in terms of avoiding beautification before the wedding. However, there is a difference in the manner in which she arrives at the groom's house. In Bedouin areas, the bride is not carried by women, but by her brother or father who gives her away to the groom. Sometimes the brother or father accompanies her when she is given away, but without any embellishment. Yet, "*the morning successive to the wedding night, the bride is taken, bathed, beautified, and dressed... They wake up in the morning, and enter her room one after another; this is when the bride looks her best; as beautiful as a full moon.*"

Actually those traditions followed in past times by the Qatari urban and Bedouin local communities have been changed.

A good example of changes to traditions is the existence of beauty experts and specialized centers that undertake the bride beautification

mission, whether at her home or in the same center. “Nowadays it has become a requirement for girls to get beautified and embellished at the bride’s family home. Coiffeurs are now responsible for bride beautification. Some bring the hairdresser home.” This statement indicates the diminution of certain traditional roles, which hold and maintain heritage and transfer it from one generation to another. These roles include the role of *Mashta*, *Ajjafa*, *Rjeedah* or *Hawwafa*, which all refer to the women responsible for beautifying and embellishing the bride. As known, modern hairdressers do not pass on or maintain heritage.

Furthermore, Henna night has turned into a primary part in wedding traditions and celebration stages in Qatar’s both Bedouin and urban communities. This is similar to *Shabka* (gold ornaments presented to the bride by the groom/his family) and the engagement ring.” It should be noted that the occasion has its own set of traditions.

2.1 Bride’s Henna

Henna is considered a basic element in wedding celebrations, especially for the bride, not the groom, and both in past times and present. The change has also reflected its effect on Henna, making it more significant in present times. More shapes, tools and materials have been added to it, and so it has become more important in bride beautification procedures. Further, Henna constitutes a central theme in many folkloric aspects, especially those connected to folk medicine and beautification. Collected field material has not introduced critical or many details about wedding Henna, but there is much elaboration here on bride’s Henna and the various cultural elements it comprises.

2.2 Place where Bride’s Henna Rituals are Completed

Collected field materials indicate that the first and primary place in which the bride is dyed with Henna is her parents’ house; a fact unanimously agreed upon by all narrators. The bride is dyed with Henna in her parental house, or as confirmed by a narrator, “They apply Henna

to the bride in her father's house." The grounds upon which this unanimous agreement on the bride's family house being the place where she is dyed with Henna is built based on the fact that, in the past, the traditions of the Qatari community prevented girls from going out until after they get married. This is when the bride is dyed with Henna, but without tattoos, and most of the time only after getting married.

However, change has also affected these traditions. Nowadays, one can find Henna artists who are professional in Henna preparation, tattooing, and Henna-based bridal beautification. There are special shops and beauty salons with expertise in providing the service. The Bride now approaches beauty salons or coiffures for Henna application. They may also ask a salon to send Henna expert to service the bride at home instead of going to their shop. Consequently, it has become a tradition now for the bride to move to beauty salons, which have become venues for Henna application customs instead of the *Liwan* (large sitting room) or the house.

2.3 Preparation of Bride's Henna, Henna Tattoos, and Women in Charge of Dying with Henna:

In the past, the Qatari bride's embellishment rituals depended sometimes on environmental resources, like *Wars* (Curcuma), *Mashmoom* (Basil), and Henna, and sometimes on items brought from abroad, like rose water and perfumes.

Ethnographic material indicates that most women in past times used, prepared and dyed themselves with Henna. As such, they did not entirely depend on the *Ajjafa* (specialist in hair braiding), *Khaddabe* or *Hennaya* (both refer to specialist in hair-dying with Henna) when applying Henna to the bride. Indeed, Henna practices would be undertaken by the bride's mother, maternal or paternal aunt, or the eldest sister. Evidence for this is that men are knowledgeable about Henna preparation methods and Henna tattooing, despite the fact that it was not something

a man would use.

Furthermore, ethnographic material concludes that, in the past, Qatari locals prepared Henna from green Henna leaves, which used to be left until dry, then grinded and kneaded with black lemon juice. The paste would then be left for a few hours to initiate fermentation, which is the last step before it becomes useable. Based on the foregoing, there was room for producing variant types of Henna; for example, the black tone of Henna, which was brought from abroad, and the second was the regular red Henna.

In addition, there were two types of tattoos; the first was used by little girls, like *Tibaq* and *Aroos* (tattoo patterns). Patterns were inspired from the environment and mainly comprised dots and lines drawn on palm and back side of hand to form palm trees, stars or moon shapes. Fingertips are also covered with Henna; the method in this case is called *Taqmee'* (i.e. dyeing fingertips and nails with Henna). The second type of Henna tattooing is *Ghamsa*; a method referring to dipping or dunking the hand in Henna without drawing dots or lines. This latter type is mainly used by older women. Yet, an exception to this classification is the *Tibaq* pattern, which was used by both little girls and women. The method entails positioning a piece of kneaded Henna on the center of the hand and closing the hand while the piece is still inside.

There were many Henna tattoo patterns that were popular in the past; for example, *Saafa* or palm fronds, *Darb Al-Hayya* or snake path, *Qamar* or moon, and *Najma* or star. An informant recalls, girls tattooed “*Nakhla* (palm), *Bakra* (female camel), *Qa'ood* (baby camel), and fingertips Henna dipping or *Taqmee'*.” The former patters were usually applied to little girls and women who liked these patters. Sometimes Henna was applied in a rectangular shape from the forefinger to the ring finger across the palm, with lines extending from the rectangular shape towards fingers. Foot tattoos are more visible and prettier; therefore, foot shape patterns and tattoos are called “*Shafe'eyye*” and comprise

adding a dot to the heel.

It is noteworthy that all women know Henna and are able to prepare it, as it is commonly used. An informant confirms, “Everybody doodles on themselves; they all apply Henna.” Also in old times, specialized women, who at the beginning were Ethiopian, handled the process. The woman in charge of dyeing the bride with Henna was called “*Hennaya*” or “*Ajjafa*” in urban areas, and “*Khatabah*” or “*Mashata*” in Bedouin areas. Tattoos were done using matchsticks as drawing tool; a matchstick would be dipped in Henna paste, and then used to draw fine lines on hand or foot. Fingers were also used in the process.

Indeed, change has recently occurred in traditions. For instance, Henna tattooing has become a field of specialty that certain women are professional in, comparing to old times when Henna was a general practice handled by the mother, sister, paternal and maternal aunts, friend, neighbor, ...etc. on the other hand, nowadays chemical materials and dyes are added to Henna to colour it black or red. Moreover, ready-made “*Barza*” Henna dye is now available and girls can take to a Henna specialist who can apply it in different shapes and tattoos. Accordingly, *Naqsha* is no longer applicable to girls only, and *Ghamsa* is not limited to married women as in the past.

1.4 Bridal Henna Celebrations and Accompanying Chants

Collected field material shows that “Bride’s Henna” is seen as key marriage tradition. But, contrary to current times, it did not enjoy major significance in the Qatari community. Besides, no independent festive night was designated to Henna, when comparing to currently prevailing traditions. As a matter of fact, no independent “Henna night” existed in past times. Further, it should be noted that cultural communication with the Bahraini community and other Arab communities played a significant role in bringing in and spreading celebrations held prior to wedding night, like *Jalwa* (a night in which the bride is dressed in green and

women attendees sing special *Jalwa* songs) and *Henna Night*.

Most informants in urban areas confirm the absence of bridal Henna celebrations or designation of independent Henna celebration night. In reality, the Qatari community was inured to Henna application at home, and sometimes in private. Also the bride might not be informed of her wedding, or might not be told about it at all; hence, she would be deluded by her parents who might inform her that she is being dyed with Henna for her sister's marriage or as a treatment for her hands.

Undoubtedly, ethnographic statements indicating the above confirmation vary between urban and Bedouin communities.

Moreover, bridal Henna celebrations did not exist at all in the past, or, if any, they used to be simple domestic or familial celebrations, at the kinship or neighborhood level.

Place where Henna is Applied to Bride

Another aspect of this celebration is the performance of *Jalwa* rituals on Henna night and two nights prior to the wedding. Some; however, may accept Henna night without performing *Jalwa*, but the night, in such case, is celebrated by folklore band performances. This practice is a consequence of cultural communication with the Bahraini community; therefore, it is not considered part of the Qatari absolute heritage. During *Jalwa*, the bride is dressed in green and leans also on green *Dawasheq* (mattresses) or sits on a chair. She is also covered with a green *Khedar* (veil) with embroidery work similar to the one used on her dress. Four women, each holding one corner of the veil, start moving it up and down while singing "Modest in her wishes... etc.", while the remaining women repeat after them. The leader of the four, who chants the poem, is called "*Mutawaa*." This is absolutely similar to the practices of the Bahraini community in the night they call "*Tajleesah*" or "*Jalwa*." Songs and praising chants sung in this night include the following:

*Khadeeja's brought in procession today
On a chair, they seated her
Houris elevating her for the sake of Prophet Mohammad
Another chant sung during bride's Jalwa:
A wish among her wishes
Beautiful in its meanings
Embellished with ornaments and a crown
All my passions are for her
Supporting her is God, the Giver of all good
And Houris' elevating her
Prayers be upon Prophet Mohammad
As long as the sun rises
And upon his family and companions
As long as my moon weeps while hanging on the branches*

The following is a folkloric song connected with bridal Henna:

*Your Henna is now a paste, girl
Your Henna is a paste
When they give you away to your groom
Will you be embarrassed?
Your Henna is all leaves, girl
Your Henna is all leaves
When they give you away to your groom
Will you be sweating [i.e. out of shyness]?*

Actually, many changes have affected these traditions. The following lists aspects of these changes:

1. In old times, bride's Henna did not vary in shapes and tattoo patterns, and lacked extensive existence of experts in the art. All females were knowledgeable about Henna preparation and application- the proverb says: "Those who have Henna can apply Henna to their hands." In current times, Henna has acquired several tattoo patterns and geometrical shapes. Adding to this, there are now professional artists available in salons and hairdressing centers; yet, most of them are foreigners (Ethiopians, Indians, and Filipino).
2. Henna Night was not an independent night in the past; contrary to this, the practice used to be part of the wedding itself. Mainly, bride beautification rituals would begin *after* the wedding, not before it. Nowadays, an independent Henna Night is designated with celebrations that include a banquet serving and chanting.
3. Bride's Henna celebrations almost did not exist, yet, if any such celebrations would be confidential and limited to family members only. Contrary to traditions prevailing today, Bride's *Jalwa* was not widely spread in Qatari local communities. Presently, *Jalwa* is broadly celebrated, and Henna Night acquired its own celebration rituals.



The Role of Kindergartens in Suffusing Tradition in the Minds of Qatari Children

By: Huda Basheer

Translated from Arabic by Abdelouadoud El Omrani

Folk tradition is part of the intellectual interaction and cultural repertoire of peoples as it bears its practiced beliefs and ideas from the distant past, and passes those beliefs and ideas down through generations to connect the past with the present, as well as to assert the link between different cultures, thereby fostering national identity and affiliation.

And given the revolution of mass media and high-tech, including satellite channels and the internet, which can replace cultural identity and folk traditions with imported values and patterns of behavior totally unrelated to our civilization and originality, we need as childhood educators, to use all possible means to assert and revive our folk tradition in the minds of children. Modern technology and its resulting knowledge can play a key role in preserving our constants, i.e. our culture, heritage, values and customs.

The nation has faced issues no less challenging than the restoration of its independence and liberty, particularly the issue of unity and comprehensive development. Tradition had to be consulted and interpreted, to be employed in a direction that helps deepen the values of national unity and accelerate the pace of development and prosperity.

In such a way, tradition, with all its material and spiritual dimensions, becomes a key element in the development of the concept of unity and cohesion, and strengths that the concept entails.

Tradition also becomes a source of civilization richness that nurtures a societal culture. Therefore, working to emphasize the bright sides of tradition is a requisite for our existence, and a bridge between past, present and future.

Our nation's past is full of glorious times and history bears a myriad of testimonials that the Arab nation presented to humanity a wealth of intellectual, civilization and scientific messages and teachings. Islamic scholars for instance, invented influential experimental scientific research methods on which modern civilization relied heavily in building the present scientific and technological revolution.

So how can an educator convey the positive image of our past and explain the missing historical link to the children, especially given today's children's fascination with foreign cultures? We need to rear our children with a sense of pride of their past, and make the glorious moments of the past a robust support for the child's existence in today's humanitarian civilization, to grant them confidence in their mental and existential capabilities.

This issue is a pillar in our present study, and the other key elements of the study relate to child's image, status, values, rights and nurturing methods in tradition.

Our tradition has a wealth of innovative practices, which can form a cornerstone in many art and cultural products for children. Childhood

specialists and experts need to employ the elements of tradition to foster the sense of affiliation in the minds of children by reintroducing the arts invented by our culture over the ages.

In our folk tradition, a due attention was paid to children who were rightly absorbed in all artistic outputs, including folktales, songs, anthems, games and aphorisms, and that very thing helps children find a link with the past.

In today's world, we have several reasons to continue the attempts of suffusing folk tradition in the minds of our children, including the dominance of material values in life, which prompts us to take action to preserve the elements of our continuity, by engaging children in the different arts and crafts created by our ancestors, including expressionistic arts.

Tradition

1- Tradition is an affluent of cultural richness and a key resource of a given mother culture. It is the summing up of experiences and experiments of any respective group and nation, and a reflection of human activities in the different areas of thought, science, literature and arts. It is also a reflection of how life existed in its multiple walks and areas. On these premises, therefore, tradition, besides being a set of material and intellectual remains of the lives and innovative activities of our ancestors, embodies their lifestyles, values, traditions, expectations, spirit and identity.

2- Some believe that the Arab folklore, i.e. all the innovations produced by the Arab peoples throughout history, including rituals, ceremonies, beliefs, habits and traditions-- form a mental and material culture that embodies the spirit, wisdom and creations of the nation across its history, including language, music, songs, *zajal* (traditional vernacular poetry), dance, tales, biographies, epics, aphorisms, fashion, jewelry and ornaments, medicine, industries, crafts, traditions.... Add to

this the other byproducts expressed by the interaction, cohesion, collision, cultural struggle and inheritance from one generation to the other.

Qatar's Heritage

Qatar enjoys a rich cultural repertoire and a unique folk tradition and heritage. The Qatari State under the rule of His Highness Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani sponsors such treasure trove and continuously works towards its enrichment to allow it to live up to modern developments.

The State demonstrates keen interest in all the walks of cultural life by establishing new museums, libraries, theatres, art centers; supporting publishing houses and cultural publications; and sponsoring a rich cultural event schedule throughout the year.

In recent years, Qatar has organized several festivals, forums, exhibitions and conferences for prominent intellectuals, writers and artists, reflecting the State's keenness to encourage Qatari and Arab innovation and openness to world cultures, while preserving the values of Qatari society.

As a result, Doha has turned out into an Arab cultural capital, and its renowned festivals and events now form a cornerstone of the Arab cultural scene, including the Doha Cultural Festival, the Doha Book Fair, the Doha Song Festival and other authoritative events. (Qatar News Agency Website - 2011)

Folk tradition includes the following areas:

- Folk beliefs and knowledge: the whole body of thoughts and beliefs of a given population, such as believing in good luck.
- Customs and traditions, including the habits practiced at childbirths, weddings, feasts...

- Folk literature, including all folktales, adages, traditional oral music genres, puzzles and songs.

- Material culture, including the traditional methods of building houses, cooking, agriculture, popular arts, such as folk music, dance, games, plastic arts and traditional fashion. (Mohamed Fawzi Abdelmaksood, 26 - 1994)

In the present report, we will discuss several types of folk tradition closely related to children, including popular songs, folk games, folktales, customs and folk arts.

Popular games

Popular games refer to any game practiced by a given population since childhood and passed down through generations with relative alterations and amendments, both practiced by males and females. Such games always relate to songs and have a set of steps and movements shared by children. Children learn such games without guidance and merely by watching peers.

Characteristics of children's folk games:

- These games are ancient and cannot be traced back to a known author or source. They are simple and reflect a given group's belief system. They rely on vivid movements, can remain alive for a long time, and are closely related to environments, customs and traditions.

- Folk games are diverse and interest society members of all ages.

- They need no equipment, tools or sophisticated playground.

- Such games do not require special skill or preparation, and help develop the capability of children of different ages.

- They include some practices that reflect social traditions and principles.

- They do not need a particular supervision or leadership by an adult. Older children organize the game and distribute roles. (Abdul-Tawwab Yosuf, 26 - 1999)

The Importance of Children's Games:

These games are important for children and get developed as children's skills grow. They reflect the traditions of ancestors, fulfill psychological satisfaction and joy for children, and serve as a natural exercise for developing children's strengths, as they help develop children kinetically and emotionally, and shape their personality.

The games develop the relation between the child and his/her surrounding setting as they practice and learn a lot of skills. The child respects the rules of the game, thereby limiting his/her selfishness and increasing his/her sense of belonging to the group. (Safaa Mohamed Shawki – 57 - 2003)

In the past, our childhood was prevailed by purity and familiarity with neighborhood children, as there were games practiced in streets, districts at village levels. These games helped integrate the youngsters of the entire district and accustom them with the challenges embedded in the games. Such games embodied human identity. For instance, some young men feared things such as staying in the darkness, or practicing challenging games that may affect their image, or facing drowning if the game was played in a sea. The games unveiled the traits of these youngsters. (*Al-Alaab wal Ahajeez Al-Shaabiya* – Khalifa Al-Sayed Al-Malki - 2011)

In the past, several games were practiced outside of homes, at sea shores, squares, streets and lanes, and in cafes; the games played on land, at sea were usually sports, while the others practiced in cafes for instance were artistic and mental.

Popular Games in Qatar

1. Mental games:

Al-Kashati: a game for children living in a town at seafront; it was played in groups from 9-14 years old boys. (Folk Tradition Center – 2003)

Al-Sabba: an ancient mental game played at homes by children and adults of both sexes. (*Al-Alaab wal Ahajeez Al-Shaabiya* – Khalifa Al-Sayed Al-Malki - 2011)

Al-Mudud: an artistic, social game for girls, wherein they crafted dolls from the bones of birds and chicken, and dressed them, and build paper houses or kitchens. (Folk Tradition Center – 2003)

Movement games: *Al-Rayen* game played by 3-9 years boys in-house during day time. (Folk Tradition Center - 2003)

Al-Qais: a game played by a group of 8-12 years old girls at summer inside and/or outside homes. (Folk Tradition Center - 2003)

Al-Khushisha: a hide-and-seek game played at daytime or night at homes or lanes by boys and girls. (*Al-Alaab wal Ahajeez Al-Shaabiya* – Khalifa Al-Sayed Al-Malki - 2011)

Tug of war: an imported game that appeared in Qatar in 1950s and was practiced by a group of boys and girls at the seaside or in homes, with the aim to prompt power and challenge. (*Al-Alaab wal Ahajeez Al-Shaabiya* – Khalifa Al-Sayed Al-Malki - 2011)

Al-Dahrori: a game practiced by a group at lanes in daytime. (Folk Tradition Center - 2003)

Al-Khabsa: a game played by a group of girls seated on a heap of sand. One girl had to bury a tiny stone or colored beads into the sand, and spray water on the sand to stiffen, then the group cut the sand into pieces and gave each participating girl a piece. Every girl had to take her piece and mold a new heap, then search for the buried bead; whoever found it was declared the winner.

(*Al-Alaab wal Ahajeez Al-Shaabiya* – Khalifa Al-Sayed Al-Malki - 2011)

Ana Al-Theeb (I'm the wolf): a game played by a group of 3-6 years old girls at daytime. (Folk Tradition Center - 2003)

2- Folk songs

Folk songs included all chants and *mawals* vocalized by adults and children in different ceremonies to assert a set of educational and social objectives directly or indirectly, in a simple and entertaining way. Such songs were not accompanied by music or beats, and aimed at strengthening the relation between a child and his/her peers in the group.

These songs were accompanied by hand clapping, making them easy to remember. (Fathi Al-Sinfawi – 99 - 2001)

Folk songs and children’s growth stages: Folk songs suited all stages of child development, right from birth, such as the songs used to put a baby to sleep, to the ones celebrating teething and earliest walking steps, to the songs that reflected the care and pampering of babies... For grown up children, there were also different popular songs to sing with friends. And every social occasion had some religious, social or political kind of songs.

Following are a few examples of folk songs:

Al-Tahmida: a recital that glorified Prophet Mohamed, and was chanted when a person completed the memorization of the entire Quran. It was also an encouragement to the peers to do the same.

Taq Taq ya Mattar: chanted at rainfall to convey joy.

Bal-houta hadi amarna: chanted during lunar eclipse.

Ihmido yal qalqani: chanted to uplift children.

Bil nafila yammul shahm wal lahm: chanted at mid-Shaaban month, when people fast and donate food such as *harees* and *thareed*. Children chanted this song to receive nuts and sweets from neighbors and family before *Maghreb* (night-fall) prayer time.

Baker Al-Eid: Children and adults chanted this song on Eid’s eve.

Al-Ayedoh: Children and adults turned out in groups and visited neigh-

bors, chanting this song to receive a gift pocket money from neighbors in the Eid.

Several other songs were used in the past and we still sing them to our children:

Hamama noudi noudi

Tullo tullo ya ikhwati

Awka ya faras

Ya mart abouti

Ommi tunadini

(Al-Alaab wal Ahajeez Al-Shaabiya – Khalifa Al-Sayed Al-Malki - 2011)

A need to preserve children's folk songs:

- Folk songs assert children's identity and enhance their personality and sense of life.
- They deepen the sense of affiliation and introduce the habits and traditions of society to young children.
- They help develop child's vocal skills, musical and kinetic competence.
- A folk song is a symbol of teamwork that helps children belong in groups, identify with surrounding environments, and appreciate the value of diligence.
- Folk songs remind children of the memories and experiences of grandfathers and grandmothers.

3- Folk Beliefs in Qatar

The belief system of any given community includes popular adages

that spur optimism and/or express pessimism. Such beliefs shall not be taught to children if they sound superstitious and fall behind their mental development level. But they shall be documented for the benefit of adults and the society at large, in order to revive old beliefs including religious, health and superstitious beliefs.

Religious beliefs:

- If something fell and broke down, people used to say: *Qad il sharr* (That took the evil away) or *Asaah Dafi Bala* (Hopefully that pushes away an evil). They thought an upcoming evil fell in such broken thing and hence the danger was gone.

- Pessimism of *athan* (call to prayer) ahead of prayer time: if people heard *athan* ahead of prayer times, they thought a dangerous thing must have happened. So they had to rush to their homes and make sure family was safe, then they gathered at the mosque to see what happened and to perform a brief prayer.

- Pessimism of passing in front of a praying person: if a person posed in prayer that meant s/he stood in front of his/her Lord, so a person who passed in front of him/her would nullify the prayer.

- Moving the *masbaha* (rosary) during Quran recital.

- Distributing bread to neighbors.

- Itching right or left hand: People thought when a right hand itched, an evil thing or quarrel would happen, and if right hand itched, a good thing would happen. So people kissed an itching right hand on both sides, and thanked God.

- Solar and lunar eclipses: In a solar eclipse people invoked God to take away their fear and care. In a lunar eclipse, people believed that a whale ate the moon and divided themselves into two teams, men praying at the mosque (as advised by Prophet Mohamed), and women and

children brought brass vessels and beat it with iron rods to make a noise that terrifies the whale, to release the moon. If the moon was not released, the Day of Judgment may come, they thought.

Drinking hand-washing

Water to avert envy:

- People who feared the envy of others in the past drank or bathed in the water used in washing hands after eating sweets or coffee, and used to keep that water for a while after hand washing.

- Unrolling prayer carpet right after prayers: People believed the devil sat on prayer carpets if left unrolled after prayers.

- Wearing a dress on reverse side: They believed wearing a dress on reverse side meant an invocation to Allah to send rains and blessings or take away an envious feeling.

- Pessimism of a child's screaming or crying during nightfall: People thought that the action would cause quarrels.

Health beliefs:

- Drinking *ashraj* (a senna blending) once monthly was thought to cure ninety-nine diseases and people preferred it on Wednesdays.

- Drinking crabmeat and shrimp soup for curing diseases. People thought these soups heal respiratory diseases such as cough, phlegm and shortness of breath.

- Avoiding *al-halwana* meal. They avoided such delicacy for fear of diarrhea and stomach pain.

- Passing above a sleeping person: People thought crossing a sleeping person, especially a child, harmed his/her growth.

- Right/left eye twitching. If the right eye twitched, that was a reason

for optimism; it meant they would see a pleasant thing or person.

Superstitions:

- Performing the funeral prayer on the envious person: People prayed this prayer for the believably envious person to nullify his/her harm. If that person was seated somewhere, they sprinkled salt behind his/her back, without letting him/her feel it.

- Pessimism of open scissors: Leaving a pair of scissors open believably stirred problems between family members, and somebody had to quickly close it.

- Sleeping on the back: People thought sleeping on the back invited nightmares as the devil sits on one's chest at sleep.

- Choking (the blockage of the airway) by water or food.

- Looking into lightning: People advised children to avoid looking into lightning as that may make them blind.

- Reversed shoes (people disliked leaving shoes in reverse position as they thought it may cause problems, and brought the shoes back to normal positions).

- Sweeping floors at night: It was a taboo as people thought jinni may live at homes, and sweeping meant banishing and angering the jinn.

- Biting tongue during meals was a sign of bad luck.

(Khalifa Al-Sayed Al-Malki - 2010)

4- Customs and Traditions

The body of habits and customs pursued on popular occasions...

4.1 Qatari wedding – habits and traditions:

The wedding had a set of traditions in the Gulf region since the distant past, much like anywhere else. Wedding habits served one goal,

the happiness of the married son and daughter, given the inherited social norms that awarded legitimacy to the marriage.

After the official declaration of wedding, the groom's family used to carry a precious gift (*Al-Dazza*) to the bride's house. That gift included jewelry, perfume, cloth and dress. The dress had to be tailored and embroidered with gold and silver threads for the bride. The gift also contained a fine silk handmade gown that highlighted the bride's beauty. Dowry in Qatari society comprised of gold or silver coins wrapped in a white handkerchief and presented to the bride's family. (Qatar News Agency Website)

4.2 *Al-noon* habit:

An indigenous event around Gulf region that celebrated the baby's first tooth or early walking steps... In Qatar per se, the celebration marked the appearance of the first tooth, and was held afternoon in the presence of children, parents, relatives and neighbors. The baby's mother used to unroll a carpet, ascend to a high place in the house with a basket of sweets and nuts (similar to the '*Garangao*' basket below), and to rain the children's with sweets. Adult invitees got also nuts and sweets.

4.3 *Garangao*

Garangao night was celebrated in mid-Ramadan month during which children were cherished for fasting half the month. That encouraged them to complete the month. Children were rewarded with sweets and nuts from neighbors.

4.4 Traditional delicacies:

For a long time, Qatar was famous for its varied local delicacies given its geographical nature, habits and traditions.

Qatari dishes usually contained meat, rice, wheat, vegetables and spices. Names of Qatari meals include *zalabia*, *tharid*, *qursil-tabli*, *al-saqu*, *khubzruqaq*, *al-nakhi*, *al-bajila*, *al-marquqa*, *barnioush*, *al-maqboos*, *al-madrooba*, *al-luqaimat*, *al-khanfaroush*, *al-khubaisa*, *al-harees*, *al-hasw*, *aishwalahim*, *al-biriani*, *al-asida* and *al-balalit*. (Qatar News Agency Website)

4.5 Folk medicine:

Folk medicine employed multiple methods, including illusion, primitive understanding and inherited beliefs, and stood on two pillars:

- The belief in prescription, while the certainty of healing was not questioned.
- Experimentation of medications prepared with a mixture of herbs or the like.

4.6 Folk Arts

A. Folk dance

Qatar has a rich folklore and traditional arts that were practiced at Bedouin and urban areas on multiple occasions; i.e. wedding, feasts...

Folk dance was practiced by a single person and/or a group of dancers.

Group dance was popular among men, and followed beats. *Al-Arda*, *al-Matari*, *al-Tanboura*, *al-Samiri* and *al-Rijali* are examples of these performances, which were practiced on national occasions and weddings.

In single performances, the dancer invented movements, though there are certain inherited styles. In *al-Razeef* dance, for instance, the performer dances with a sword, gun or knife in hand, and hits the floor with his leg. It is performed with the dancer's head in upright position symbolizing pride.

There is also *al-Zafan* dance performed by a single person and accompanied by vocals. The dance combined jumping with walking on the tunes of oriental *oud* and *mirwas* (a percussion instrument). Male performances existed also at *Samiri* and *Laban* entertainment sessions. (Qatar News Agency Website)

B. Handicrafts

Embroidery: the decoration of traditional men's and women's wear was an ancient craft in the region performed by a craftsman named '*al-Durzi*' who used colored, silver and golden threads to jazz up clothes. Half-automatic and full-automatic machines have been used to guarantee a rapid and accurate finish. Women's wear such as *al-Deraa*, *al-Thawb* and *al-Bukhnug* and men's wear such as *al-Shalhat* and *Daqla* were embroidered in this fashion.

Weaving: a traditional art form in which usually craftswomen demonstrated their skill, *al-Sadu* is an example of such crafts, and has been versatile and contained several shapes and decorations.

Gypsum decorations: the gypsum material was used to decorate old houses in Qatar. Created locally, gypsum was used to cover housing walls, castles, palaces, towers and mosques, instead of mud as it had better qualities for resisting to natural elements. Gypsum was used in making molds in abstract geometric and floral forms to decorate houses in Qatar. People also used gypsum to make burners.

5- Material Culture

A. Architecture:

Traditional architecture in Qatar had multiple expressions including religious buildings (mosques), civil architecture (palaces and markets) and military buildings (castles and towers).

Qatar's land and climate affected local architectural styles; the availability of raw stones in the desert or along the Gulf coast made them a key component in house building.

Mud brick was used instead of stone. With the passage of time, Qatari architects developed more advanced material and introduced some innovations, using gypsum instead of mud in covering the walls as well as wood in building ceilings...

Sculptured teak wood was used at house entrances: the ceilings had special spaces at the entrances of houses and at mosques to alleviate inner temperature. Due to the sweltering sun, windows were made relatively smaller in rectangular shape. In halls and upper rooms, windows overlooked the inner part of houses and streets, besides openings for ventilation and lighting (*al-Badjir*) which always existed at living rooms and upper chambers.

Folk crafts and professions

Falconry

Pearl hunting

Al-Besht craft (tailoring)

Al-Sadu craft (carpet weaving)

Al-Attar or *al-Hawwai* (perfumes)

Al-Hajjam (hairdresser and medicine man)

Al-Saqqai (water distributor)

Al-Jassas (gypsum Works)

Al-Haddad (ironsmith)

Al-Saegh (jeweler)

5 Folk Literature

It appeared in several formats including folktales, biographies, aphorisms, *mawals*, puzzles ...

Folktales can be considered as a link between the past and present, as they passed on the wisdom, traditions and habits of peoples from one generation to the other. They helped develop imagination, while containing information as well as behavioral and social guidance. Their original authors are unknown. Folktales are the most common traditional form in building cultures.

The folktale contains a set of events crafted by the imagination of the people and depended on oral narrative to tell ideas, topics and human experiences. Garvey (2006) explains that folktales narrated by children help develop their oral fluency, attention, and other innovation skills.

Some researchers argue that folklore is “the study of the entire oral repertoire including art forms that contain different patterns of tales, aphorisms, songs, and dances for which spoken language is used as a medium of transfer.” This viewpoint has led some scholars to use terms such as oral literature, narrative art, and unwritten literature to indicate that ‘folklore’ is literally the folk literature. (Ali Haddad)

Conclusion

To sum up, here are some practical suggestions that may form the groundwork for formulating recommendations on the topic in question. As far as education is seen as an essential method for forming children’s personality, and as long as social upbringing is a key tool in uplifting children’s culture, we need to apply more rational and transparent methods to help children realize the value of their history and traditions as a phase of human development, while gaining a critical mind able to select the positive elements out of their tradition. Following are a few suggestions:

1) Education curricula and cultural products dedicated to children shall observe the constants of our history and civilizational heritage.

2) Efforts shall be coordinated between parents, school administrators and the media as educational channels, who need to find a homogeneous framework of action to direct children to take pride in their tradition in such a way that enriches their future.

3) Education models and methods shall be developed to help educators explain the concepts of traditions to children, and textbooks shall contain well-selected material, that does not collide with modern scientific facts.

4) The training courses offered to teachers and educational activists shall contain sessions on heritage and tradition.

5) Universities and higher institutes need to pay enough attention to research studies focusing on tradition and child culture.

6) Seminars and open days on childhood culture need to be held.

7) Distinguished writers and artists in the fields of fiction, theatre, animation, poetry and creative arts shall be invited to discuss the best methods to introduce tradition in their creative works.

8) Heritage exhibitions and museums need to cover all the walks of traditional lives, while looking into ways to employ them in upbringing children through institutional programs or in parallel frameworks.

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Qatari Children Folk Games

The Terminology and Its Concepts

By: Abdelaziz Refaat

Translated from Arabic by Abdelouadoud El Omrani

Folklore materials – in particular within the same genre – are characterized by their strong mutual intertwining and their deep interdependence to the extent that it is often almost impossible to talk about clear limits separating a given material from another. It is absolutely not true nevertheless to deduce – because of the confusing intertwining – that it is impossible to find valid criteria to distinguish between different folk genres and that we will lack objectivity in our research if we look for such criteria within this wealthy creativity of nations. Such deduction would eliminate the theory of genres, making of our folklore science terminology mere false and meaningless clichés, and eliminating once and for all the folklore as a science.

We know for sure that it is not easy in some cases to distinguish between a folk material and another, and that reputed researchers made errors in this regard. We believe that this is not due to the fact that folk genres have materials that are lacking a common denominator, it is due in our point of view to the absence of an accurate concept to each one and because folklorists did not bother to look thoroughly for this accuracy.

In our subject, the lack of accuracy in defining the nature of folk games and their concepts led some studies related to folk games and in particular children ones to incorporate some folk practices that may not be classified as games. This is the case for example of the children celebrating the rain fall considered by some as a folk game. The same is valid for that children practice consisting of extracting worms from the soil for fishing, although such practice is classified among folk knowledge and not folk games.

Although the existence of such confusion justifies the scope of our study and our intent to develop particular concepts for these aspects that constitute qualitative feature(s) of folk games, it is also true that we don't have to review all the definitions present in theoretical studies about this genre of folk art. Some definitions are defective and may lead to useless polemics unproductive for the reader. It is sufficient in this regard to address one single definition and to discuss it in order to define the nature of folk games, that is to define the limits of this research.

Folk game has been defined as “a physical activity both kinetic and mental, inspired from the environment and bearing historic roots; it is issued from the individual himself with no external coercion and gives to the practicer a thrill and the spectator a pleasure. It does not require complicated rules, laws or tools.”

Although such definition includes several criteria that let it look

accurate, it is in reality no more than a general school definition that may be extended to many other folk genres and practices: why shouldn't in fact folk dances included for example under such definition? Or even those children's celebration practices including a movement's element such as "*Tag al-Matar*" (rain is falling), "*Garanga'o*" or "*Haya Beya*"...

Folk dances as a genre and children's celebration practices as a folk phenomenon are both inspired from the environment, have historical roots, give thrill to the practicer and even more pleasure to the spectator than folk games. They also do not require complicated rules, laws or procedures. Such criteria appear then as mere features or general criteria that apply to all folkloric genres with no exception; no defined criteria for folk games remains as an autonomous genre except the statement that they are "a physical activity both kinetic and mental." And even such criteria is unfortunately not an impeaching criteria nor bearing the limits between folk games and other folk genres and practices. In fact, the above-mentioned folk dances and children's practices are undoubtedly physical activities.

This physical activity is supposedly a kinetic activity only, that is to say exempt from mental activity, which is far from reality, then a large part of folk games according to this supposition, has the same features. Only the so-defined strategy games are not included in such classification (*Al-Sabbah* game for example), and they are proportionally very few compared to other folk games that do not require a great or direct mental effort when practiced. Therefore, we have either to add folk dances and children practices - according to the previous definition - to folk games, mixing in this case genres that should not be mixed, or we consider only strategy games as folk games, reducing in this case the large area of these games to just a narrow subcategory.

It is clear from the previous analysis that the author of the above-mentioned definition is building his definition from a good knowledge of institutional sports such as baseball, football and others. He is not relying on a good knowledge of folk heritage. It is possible that his point of view is somehow corrupted by the enthusiasm towards the contagious *Janadriyya* games including an authentic patriotism and a deep love towards popular expression means. This definition including series of very general features, clearly prominent in folk materials in general without taking into consideration the particular features that characterize folk games from other folk phenomena and practices. We are thus consequently invited to consider these aspects whose relations constitute the nature of folk games. The aim is to define a feature or more that are proper to these games, and that are landmark criteria differentiating folk games as a genre from other folk genres.

Without entering into details that will be seen later, we can already state that folk games have a competitive nature expressed clearly in the sum of procedures accompanying such games as the way of choosing the members of each competing team, who plays first, and the way the game is played. But most important is the appearance of this competitive nature in the end of the game that sanctions usually the winner and the loser. We do not find this criteria in children's practices mentioned earlier, and not even in folk dances. This is due simply to the fact that these have no competing nature.

We find in this very simple and very accurate addition that qualitative feature that defines in general folk games. This particular feature that did not change through centuries defines undoubtedly what is a folk game and what is something else. It is nevertheless not a distinguishing feature differentiating the nature of folk games from known institutional sports. These have indeed the same competing feature as folk games and even more pronounced. The fact that

institutional sports have more complicated procedures than those of folk games, even though it is true, does not define clearly the limits between these two kinds of activities. It even seems as an idealistic escape! What can then distinguish folk games from institutional sports, apart from these competing criteria? We can clearly see the distinguishing features of what is folkloric in its rootage, authenticity, simplicity and other features we will see later. But limiting ourselves to these features only, that may be sufficient indeed, will impeach us from studying the important structural differences between what is a folk game and an institutional sport.

Folk games have an intrinsic function among which the “training function.” It is fully incorporated in the folk game structure to an extent that folk games practitioners do not have the objective of being trained or else, but playing is an objective in itself, giving them pleasure and entertainment. While in institutional sports, such function, i.e. training is separate from the game structure to constitute an autonomous and self-standing function. This difference, that may seem simple, is in fact a crucial one concentrating several important issues that support the differentiation between folk games and institutional sports. The most evident issue is probably the fact that the incorporation of training within the structure of folk game gives it the possibility of providing its practitioners with methods and skills of practicing the game in an intrinsic manner, and without supporting its effects and consequences in real life. In institutional sports on the other hand, things are completely opposed; training is intended for itself and requires time, effort, finance, planning, organization and other procedures that ensure victory over the competing player or team. Defeat in this mission has serious consequences of course whether for the trainer or the player: it may lead to a sanction of warning, reward withholding, sanction of not playing for a given period, or definitive exclusion from playgrounds. This is due to the multifaceted

separation between the function of training, managing and others in the institutional sports. This is completely absent in the structure of folk games. Additionally, the perfect integration of the training function in the structure of folk games makes the players participation a fully voluntary activity with no coercion or obligation, while participating or not in the institutional sports has not this free-will feature. In this case, it is not decided by the players themselves but is decided by the coach assessment during training sessions. In this light, he decides who will play, who will not, who will sit on the reserve/substitute bench.

It is noteworthy that the integration of the training function within the folk game's structure seems to have been judged carefully to push players to win on one side but without stressing them on the other side or spoiling the pleasure of playing. This aspect has the benefit of providing folk games with a safety psychological health feature compared to institutional sports in general.

There is another significant point that requires a clarification. Folk games are relatively few in numbers to such extent that their competitive nature is not clearly visible, its kinetic chart does not include those procedures or conclusion that shows that nature. We can cite to illustrate this fact the game of "*Doorfah*" (a rope suspended between two piers and used for swinging), the game of "*Dahdrooy*" (an iron circle pushed by a bent stick), and the game of "*Medood*" (dollies made by girls for playing). Such games are all clearly individual ones and their collective practice is rather exceptional and not the rule and are dictated by conditions that are external to the game itself. Therefore, its competitive nature appears only during its collective practice through some traditional procedures taken by the players to define the winner. We can see that for example in "*Dahrooy*" when players draw a starting line for the race and an arrival one. The first arrived is the winner. The competition appears in "*Medood*" through

the number of dollies, the accuracy of manufacturing, the decoration, and the skills used in their imitation. The winning girl is the one that presents the best dolls in quantity, beauty, perfection, and skills in imitating the character that the dolls represents. In “*Doorfah*”, players may define a given height to be reached while swinging, those who reach it are the winners.

One may object of course pointing to the insufficiency, mainly when we deal with an individual game that has been isolated from its collective practice in real life, leading to the impossibility of revealing its competitive nature, and to a confusion between it and children practices we mentioned earlier since they both share the same nature. At this point, another distinctive feature appears to us: such individual games are different because they are not practiced during a given occasion but at all times. In this very feature lies a clear distinction not only between these individual folk games and other children’s practices such as “*Garanga’o*”, “*Haya-Beya*” or “*Tag al-Matar*” but also between all kinds of folk games, whether individual or collective, and said practices. When we ask simply about the content of this feature (not depending from a definite occasion), we could answer that it has a vital content that finds its legitimacy in the fact that playing is a vital need for childhood and an efficient way to prepare, train and habilitate children for the future, it is even an excellent educational mean to provide children with a huge amount of responses to issues and situations they may face in their future life. On the other side, the relation between a given practice and a ceremony or occasion produces a religious content (it may be relatively easy to deduce it through the analysis of this practice’s components and their connections). This religious content that may be summarized directly in few words is extended symbolically on a procedure map that has a celebrating nature, a nature that is crucially different from the competitive nature of folk games.

But all these conclusions are falsified if we try to extend them to the children's practice of extracting worms from the soil. This may be practiced individually or collectively, it may have a competitive nature if the children decide that the winner would be the one who extracts more worms in less time. Even more important is that such practice is not connected to a given occasion, it is similar to that in the individual folk games. Why don't we consider it then a folk game?

We have already pointed that folk games practitioners do not have a defined objective of the game, but playing is the objective in itself. But "extracting worms from the soil" has a defined objective: extracting worms for sea-fishing. For this very reason, we cannot consider it a folk game as long as the above-mentioned objective is present. The analogy is effective, and hunting with falcon for example when practiced for a livelihood has said goal as an objective, and may not be classified as a sport or a game, but a craft for livelihood. If hunting with falcons is practiced for entertainment and free-time it is a sport for its practitioners. When it is largely spread among common people, it is undoubtedly a folk game.

Building on what we have seen, it is clear that folk games have essential features that allow to distinguish them from other folk practices, and also from institutional sports that bear similar nature. Any folk practice, institutional support or other phenomenon appears as a folk game in the field that allows it to submit to said criteria, all other practices that do not obey to these criteria are not part of this arena.

At this point, and after providing the previous definitions, can we put a definition of folk games that respects those criteria, and define accurately with no confusion nor ambiguity the concept of these games? Providing a sententious definition of folk games is surely not easy, especially that the previous analysis is related exclusively

to Qatari children's games; it is possible, although improbable, that there are folk games in other cultures that are contradictory with this analysis. We need therefore to be cautious and say that our definition of folk games is a procedural definition that does not close the door to any other attempt to define better folk games.

Folk games in our point of view are "simple traditional and artistic forms with a competitive nature that are performed kinetically or mentally or by both ways on the basis of voluntary non-coercive participation, and not linked with a particular occasion or ceremony, and without bearing any profit objective. They are characterized by authenticity, rootage and their fame in the culture where they are practiced."



Qatari Children Folk Games

(Part 2)

Features

By: Abdelaziz Refaat

Translated from Arabic by Abdelouadoud El Omrani

It is noteworthy to remind the readers that we have seen in the First Part published in the previous issue of *Al-Ma'thurat Al-Sha'biyyah* the features of Qatari children folk games, yet we did not study them accurately and their presentation has been just a single element in the course of our analysis of what may be considered a folk game and what is not appropriate. This lack in the analysis led us to draft this paper to see the objective dimensions of such features trying to understand correctly their importance.

In fact, folk games have a number of features that may be divided into two types:

General features that are shared with other folklore materials, and that may not be used to distinguish folk games from these materials but that are useful to distinguish between what is folkloric and what is not; and

Qualitative features directly related to folk games as a genre although these may be shared by other phenomena, practices or folk arts from the same folklore genre. But there is always one or more features that belong only to folk games and that create the distinction between them and said phenomena, practices or folk arts. These allow us to address such games as a defined folk genre.

The division of the features in general and qualitative does not mean at all that general ones are insignificant, it points only to the fact that they are just a primary base. General features appear as necessary conditions for folk games, but they are preparatory conditions. Thus, the study of folk arts should always start by addressing them.

The most important features of Qatari folk games may be summarized as follows:

SIMPLICITY

Folk games are simple and not complicated in their proceedings, rules, laws, tools, structures and the way they are practiced. This feature that may be understood as an element to lower the value of these games is in reality a technical feature that helps to build the structure of the game, the clearness of its paths, and the extension of the number of those who practice it. It gives all chances to children to practice the game, and allows on the other hand the game to play its function as largely as possible.

Utilitarian objects are usually simple or at least simpler than objects produced for other uses (such as decoration for example). This is true

for folk games too that have functional properties in the child's and the community's lives. It is therefore necessary that games are simple in order to have a maximum impact in performing the functions that are attributed to them. These games are made for children and their complication impedes their practice by young minds and children may be unable to make them manually.

The reader will easily see the simplicity of Qatari folk games compared to other ones, this is very evident in the game's tools, structure and the way it's practiced. But concerning the folk procedures in making the team or deciding who is the player or the team that will start first, we prefer to address this issue under a single section to avoid repetition while explaining each game independently.

TRADITIONAL DRAW METHODS

Drawings are not the single method used in folk games; these may be practiced without drawing by a direct choice of a player or a team that will start the game, in such case the agreement of the other party is required. We have noticed that draw is used mainly in competitive games. Here are the main traditional draw methods:

1. : (Head or tails) a player puts a coin on his index, then gives it a sharp kick from behind with his thumb, the coin flies with such speed that it is impossible to distinguish its faces. When it lands on the ground, the challenger covers it with his hand and asks: (Head or tails). Once he chooses, both challengers check if the coin is on head or tails. If he is mistaken, his challenger will start first, and vice-versa in the other case.
2. : (The pebble) one of the players holds in his hand a small-size pebble that he hides behind his back in one of his hands. He then shows both hands to his challenger, closing his fist to hide the pebble. The challenger points to one hand, if the pebble is there, he plays first, otherwise his

challenger starts.

3. : (Counting) is often used when players are reluctant to perform a given role. They all stand in a row, and the player who has been chosen counts saying: (*Akra Bakra*, God has told me to count until 10) and he starts counting until 10. The player who has the number is saved, and it goes on until there is one single remaining player. He is the one who will perform the undesired duty required by the game.

These are the traditional draw methods used in Qatari folk games. It is possible that the list is not complete, but these methods are the most used and well-known.

There is also a method to constitute teams in games where they are required. It is called *Tarabees*. Each team chooses its captain called *Al-Abou* and a referee is appointed to control the ongoing selection. Two players each time go a bit far from the group and choose a pseudonym for each of them such as Day and Night, Gold and Silver, or Sun and Moon... They meet then *Al-Abou* who will choose first and ask him: who do you want in your team: Day or Night? He selects his co-players in this way while the referee checks that no one suggests to the captains who is who to direct their choice.

ROOTAGE

Folk games are the first games that people know in all cultures , and from them are issued most of the institutional modern sports. Arabs have known in Pre-Islamic times and after Islam folk games and they allowed a great care for them. Many games are cited in Arab encyclopedia and references, Ahmed Teymoor compiled a book about them titles “Arab Games” in which he enumerated 107 different games, ordered them alphabetically and edited them according to cited encyclopedia and references.



AUTHENTICITY

Children folk games are not just artistic forms of expression of folk culture to which they belong, they are also a limpid mirror reflecting the reality of social life in which they are practiced. In Qatar for example, the children's games of and are simply the two games from a sea-environment, they reflect the pearl-diving activity, a profession that has been practiced by entire generations and taught from fathers to sons.

COMPETITIVENESS

Competitiveness is a distinctive feature between folk games and other folk activities. It is the most important criteria in this regard. It may be expressed in an asymmetrical way as with the game: “ I am the wolf who will eat them,” said by a party, and “I am the one who protect them” replied by the other party. As it may be symmetrical when both competitors have the same behavior and moves as it happens with games such as , and others.

It is noteworthy that competitiveness varies from a game to another and is due to the nature of the game itself. It appears that the most important aim in folk games is entertainment and fun and not the results themselves. Since the main aim is reached, the rest has less importance.

SPONTANEITY AND FREE-WILL

Folk games are characterized by the fact that their practice is completely free and there is no obligation, coercion or restraint whatsoever. Children are attracted spontaneously by the simplicity of the games and the desire to have fun in a way that is accepted by the community. Children are totally free to select the game they want, to start it when they want and to end it when they want to.



A NON-PRODUCTIVE ACTIVITY WITH NO MATERIAL INCENTIVES

Folk games in general and children games in particular have no material production, no financial loss or win. They are thus different from work and the arts. And even the transfer of property as in beads games is rather symbolic than effective. The loser does not get poorer and the winner does not become rich, the games are mainly played to consume time, effort and energy without looking for material benefits.

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The Traditional Roles of *al-Majlis*

By: Hamad Al-Muhannadi

Translated from Arabic by Abdelouadoud El Omrani

This paper will attempt to clarify the concept of *al-Majlis*, i.e. traditional Arab gathering room and assembly hall, for a better understanding of its system in our folk culture. This leads to the study of *al-Majlis* phenomenon as a system composed of folk elements that revolve in this concept and keep it alive in people's memory as an integral part of their daily practice.

In our search for the concept of *al-Majlis* as a component of folk culture, it seems appropriate to address the wider concept of folk culture produced by men, a culture that has an impact on people's behavior and in which they live and shape their lifestyles and daily behaviors.

Introduction

Culture is one of the terms that witnessed the most dramatic expansion and prosperity through the ages; it is quite rare to find another competing term as much spread as the concept of culture. There are tens of attempts to define the concept of culture, but the most spread is probably its definition as the cultural heritage of language, beliefs, arts, literature and life ways and behaviors; it indicates that culture is shaped from all directions and is an interaction that translates men's awareness of his environment. Linguistically, culture is defined by refinement and glossiness, and conventionally it indicates the evolution of ideas, intellectual features, practices, behaviors and lifestyles. Culture may be classified according to two trends:

- A realistic trend in which culture relates to all forms of learned behavior that is particular to a community or a given group of persons; and

- An abstract trend that considers culture as a sum of ideas extracted from the observation of the perceived reality that encompasses the forms of learned behavior that is particular to a community or a given group of persons.

Folk culture on the other hand is represented by particular features related to human life in society; it manifests itself through the aspects of the community's life, its behaviors and the concepts it expresses. Means of such expression include folk poems, proverbs, customs, traditions and beliefs in which people believe and that they practice. People find in their folk culture ready paradigms with great credibility and that people embrace spontaneously because they are common and spread.

Customs point to the repetition of a given process or an unconscious activity related to an action that is produced by its repetition even if it is a social activity. Custom may be individual, it is

formed and practiced apart from the community and constitutes the social value of human being in some cases, or collective formed by the sum of acts, actions and various behaviors born spontaneously within the community; it constitutes a social necessity and draws its strength from it.

Conventions are social norms that indicate common meanings of uses, customs, traditions and regulations, especially when they include a sentence. A custom is an incomplete convention lacking that people feel they should respect in order to become a convention.

Tradition is a sum of rules of behavior particular to a restricted group; it is born from a collective acceptance and agreement about given procedures that are particular to the community where they appear.

The Traditional Roles of *al-Majlis*

All along the history of Arabs, *al-Majlis* has been linked to the tribe as the basis to manage power and rule the society, constituting a fortress and a refuge. In the Gulf and Arabia societies, the tribe still constitutes a social unit ruled by a framework that defines the nature of internal relations between tribe members and their relation with the other. Qatari society is a part of such social fabric where *al-Majlis* played – and still plays – the same role that was defined all along the stages of Qatar's social and political history within a frame of values that call for:

- Solidarity and brotherhood; *al-Majlis* is deeply wise and rational when weighting issues and making decisions;
- The principle of consultation, opinion survey and considering the interests of the single individual as well as the community;
- The respect and reverence towards seniors, affection towards youth, protection of refugees, turning a blind eye towards *Mahram* relatives, fulfillment of the covenant and contempt of disloyalty.

Undoubtedly, *al-Majlis* has been present as a concept in the mind of Qataris whether in rural or coastal areas notwithstanding its architectural features and its shape. It was not influenced by economic changes that affected Qatari society. The features of this concept remained solidly rooted thanks to the roles played by *al-Majlis* with the consent of the community:

The social role

Many social issues are addressed in *al-Majlis*, and although the attendance participates in their discussion, the last word remains for those who have a deep understanding of the conditions of the tribe or the neighborhood. *Al-Majlis* is opened to everybody and is frequented by men from all social stratas; it has several functions:

- Welcome guests at any time of the day and night;
- Men's meeting place where members of the tribe play their social roles;
- A crucial role in strengthening social ties through meetings that are held in special occasions such as weddings, religious feasts, funerals, marriage contracts...
- Arbitrating social and familial disputes and conciliating through peaceful means between litigants.

The Educational Role

Al-Majlis constitutes a miniature school where emerging youth learn:

- To respect the adults;
- To welcome the guests;
- To be sincere and honest;
- To listen attentively;
- To respect the different opinions and the experienced elders;
- Life and social experiences.

The Role of Media

Al-Majlis has been for a long time the alternative to the media in broadcasting news and bringing knowledge to people based on the following principles:

- Ascertain the information and respect social conventions;
- Spreading Islamic culture;
- Respecting people's privacy;
- Bringing news related to people;
- Bringing news related to wars.

The Literary Role

- Reciting poems;
- Skills in speech and oral interventions;
- Reading prophets and saints biographies.

The public morals of *al-Majlis*

Folk social culture has determined morals for *al-Majlis* that people ought to respect when they attend them:

- The seats in the middle of *al-Majlis* are reserved to elders and dignitaries, the guest sits always on the right side of *al-Majlis* host;
- Never harm other people by gossip and backbiting that are considered as vile behaviors;
- Priority in speaking is given to older attendees and it is allowed to interrupt a person who speaks before asking permission;
- Giving preference to the other by offering a cup of coffee and the nearest seat to the center of *al-Majlis*;
- Attendees should start greeting the attendance from right-to-left;
- Respecting eating etiquette by giving preference to the elders and the guests, beaing careful, using the right hand when eating, eating and drinking moderately;

– Offering coffee to the guest in the first place then the elders. Avoiding placing the cup on the floor after drinking. Shaking the cup between the hands to inform the server that you do not want any more.

The above facts and descriptions indicate that in the frame of folk culture, *al-Majlis* constitutes an integral system of folk elements. We may talk about customs, traditions and conventions that are intersected, agreed upon, unwritten and unrecorded and passed from a generation to another based on:

- communitarianity;
- orality; and
- consense.

In fact, all the elements of said system depend on the consense and agreement of the community and are passed orally, collectively and without opposition from their bearers. All indicators show that this oral communication is done with efficiency and did not stop until nowadays. Folk literature and especially poetry, proverbs and maxims constitute faithful holders of these customs, traditions and conventions.

The concept of *al-Majlis* is characterized by:

- The absence of the intellectual in its modern meaning since *al-Majlis* carries to feature of incognito in this regard;
- The absence of an official authority or official institution that manages the culture of *al-Majlis* because such culture is produced by all the community.

In the study of *al-Majlis* as a concept with its own charm and prestige and in order to present a comprehensive approach, we will review some selected poems that address the topic:

Lahdan bin Sabbah Al-Kubaisi said these verses about *al-Majlis*:



*There is Bin Thani, easy with his companions
Helpful towards guests who visit his home*

*Similar to famous Hatim Atta'ee in early times
His Majlis is the way for passengers.*

The poet said also mourning Abdelaziz Al Saoud:

*In his Majlis, chairs are aligned straightly
His carpets and furniture come from The Levant*

*Prepared for sitters who come to appreciate his blond coffee
In a Majlis where art of the coffee is practiced with dignity.*

In turn, Saad bin Saad Al-Mohannadi said:

*A house built by people of good positions
Built by highly educated people of knowledge*

*And Al-Majlis accurately described by people
Where guests are dignified and most respected.*

Bin Sbeet (the poet Ali bin Saeed bin Sbeet Al-Mansouri) said in the sixth and seventh advice of a poem that includes twelve pieces of advice:

*In the sixth, do not show anger in your face
When a visitor come to you asking a favor
Act sweetly until he feels cool
And after a while ask about his request.*

*In the seventh, stand up and dignify those
who visit you*



*Make it easy always for your guests
Mix coffee with cardamome
In a luxurious Majlis with yellow coffee containers
With well-grouns coffee beans,
Then several gentle and nobel men will visit your Majlis.*
In his complaint to Abdallah bin Jasim Al-Meslamani, Mohamed Abdelwahab Al-Fayhani said:

*Your reputation reached beyond stars such as Suheil
Cited in Gabes, Persia and Hayel
There is no Majlis with its cups of coffee
Where you name is not cited with good references
It is difficult to enumerate your qualities
As it is hard to talk about the ocean.*

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Different Kinds of *Besh*s

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The *besh*t is a male dress, it is worn over “*thub*” in everyday life, holidays, wedding nights and special events. The *besh*t knitting man (*Elhayek*) is an artist; he uses different colors, be them white, black, red, brown, off-white... There are two kinds of *besh*t textiles which are:

1-The Thin *Besht*:

It is worn in summer and it is lightweight.

2- The Thick *Besht*:

It is worn in winter and it is normally thick. *Besht* is a Persian word; it was mentioned by Hanafie in his book “*Mouji'm El'alfa: 'th Al'bagdadiya*” (*The Glossary of Baghdadi Words*). The word is used for woolen garments. The Persians called it “*bosht*” which means ‘behind,’ and it covers the back.

The *besht* is made of different kinds of wool such as goat’s wool and camel’s wool which were imported from Iraq, Syria and Iran. Each woolen piece is called “*Asaa* or *Taaqa*.” The raw materials and the embroidery used by dressmakers in this craft are:

First: The Raw Materials:

The raw materials are the essential elements used by *besht* dressmakers; for example:

1. The cloth used in *besht* production is from hyrax or wool.
2. Zari yarn: it is silk thread covered by silver and gold plated.
3. *Albraism* ; it is thread of natural silk.
4. *Albatana*; it is a strip of cloth with *besht* color.
5. *Shama'a al'assal*, Zari yarn threads are interwoven into it to make the knitting easy.
- 6- *Alqitan* ; to embellish the *besht* front, it is golden thread ending with spherical golden balls.

Second: Knitting Materials:

Knitting materials are the materials used by the knitting man to knit the *besht*; they are available at the local market, being simple materials such as:

1- The Hammer:

It is made of steel and its knocked-upon base has a wooden square piece.

2- The Needle:

It is called *El'mieber*, it has many kinds, with big, medium and small sizes, depending on the needle port. The thread is inserted through the needle's small hole. The second selvage is tapered to allow the passage of the textile. The big needle is used for "*mou'kasira*," the small needle for "*tar'jib*" and the medium needle for "*El'hei'la*."

3- The Candle:

It is a raw material made of candle. It is used to knit Zari yarn and strengthen the cotton yarn. Also, it is used to fix the thread in knitting and allow its flow.

4- *El'fetya*:

It is a measurement tool by inches and centimeters; it is used to

measure the *besht*. Other people use their hands to measure by *e'l'sheber* or *el'feter* or *Es'bae*. *El'sheber* is the length of the palm of the hand from the thumb to the ring finger. *El'feter* is the length of the thumbs and the forefinger. The *Es'bae* is the length of the finger till its phalanx.

5- *El'Matwi*:

It is a kind of rolled cloth; it is square- or circle-shaped. It is used to wrap Zari yarn or any other kind of threads around it.

Third: The Main Parts of *Besht*:

1. *El'jem*:

The sleeve; the openings on the *besht* on both sides.

2. *El'qtan*:

El'qtan is one of the components of *besht*; it is set in the interior side of *besht* from the top. It is a kind of Zari yarn or “*bresem*,” and there are three plaits which fall on the embellished sides.

3. *El'khabena*:

Knitting that shortens the *besht* after taking the length measurement of the customer from the front, the right, the left, and the back. The interior side is used to re-lengthen the *besht* in the future.

Fourth: *Besht* Embroideries:

1. *Elhei'la*:

It is one of the knitting components. Zari yarn is used intensively to knit the *besht*, it is triangle- and square-shaped, and it depends on the knitting position, whether it is on the sides or the back. There are two forms of *Elhei'la*:

First: normal.

Second: hanky.

2. *El' brouj* :

It is the final knitting that passes through the top sides of *besht* and the back side, it gives an attractive and nice form to the *besht*. Zari yarns are used intensively, and they take the form of the Arabic letter '*El'aelef*,' so that it will be mirrored on one level.

3. *Halazuni*:

It is a kind of knitting, that has a spiral form between '*el'terjeib*' and '*El'heila*' sides.

4. *El'terjeib*:

It is a kind of knitting that uses Zari yarn and cotton; they are parallel threads wrapped from the right side of the first part to the left side *besht* top. Probably, they are two or three parallel threads.

5. *Lam'toun*:

It is name for *besht* knitting; it is positioned along the hand, and 'El'mekser' is knitted on it from the shoulder to the palm of the hand.

6. *Darboujaah*:

It is a kind of *besht* knitting that consists of *el'mekser*, 'el'heeli,' *elbrouj*' and 'elke' taen.'

7. *El'mekser* :

It is a kind of *besht* knitting used in *besht* craft. The raw materials used are Zari yarn and 'el'breesem.'

The Famous Kinds of *Beshts* are:

1. Combed *Besht*:

It is a fancy haute-couture *besht*, with nice embroidery. It is called combed *besht* because it has lines like the comb lines. They are covered with gold and silver from the top shoulder to the down waist; and between these lines there are some colorful lines in blue or red.

2. *Najafi Besht*:

It is a splendid kind of *besht*; it is also called *besht (eshameel)*. It is knitted from wool sheep or from light hyrax. Then come 'EL'badri *besht*' and 'el'mareini *besht*.'

3. *El'baraqa Besht*:

This kind of *besht* was commonly used in the past. It is made of wool with long lines which have different colors. These can be white, brown, black or white. The knitting was called '*el'labnae*.' As the *besht* is thin and solid, it is worn in winter.

Despite daily changes and developments in our life and the extinction of many crafts, professions and popular industries which were widespread in the past, the *besht* is still keeping its authenticity. There is a growing demand for *besht* in Qatar, the Gulf area and the Arabian Peninsula.



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