**PILIGRIMAGE TO NAKFA**

For Eritreans, Nakfa is the most significant place. Nakfa is the place of resilience, love, devotion, determination…..Nakfa the strong hold of Hizbawi Gmbar and the society of *tegadelti!* Nakfa is the sacred place where many of our beloved *tegadelti’s* spirit rested.

Nakfa once was liberated had never occupied by Derg! Nakfa the place where qusiai- religion of self-reliance principle of Hizbawi Gmbar, “Nselai bteyetu bbretu” incepted!

It was in 1998 during Woyane invasion that I went to Ertra for the first time and it was for the first time that I also visited Nakfa with my nice Selam. At that time, one *Gedim Tegadalit*, Botul Adem, born and raised in Nakfa, encountered at the bus station, and she asked me “are you coming from Asmara” I replied yes, she looked at me and continued “mebtsea neruki diu?” I smiled in response in which Botul comprehended immediately the purpose of our visit. Yes I visited to pay due respect to the entire Martyrs who rested in peace in Nakfa, including my beloved brother, Mengstab, and many neighbours as well relatives whom I consider as brothers and sisters.

Like many Eritreans during the Derg regime, growing up, listening to dimsi hafash, and later after liberation in the diaspora, reading the remarkable history of *Gedli* under the title of “Meswati waga Harenet” and other similar sources convinced me that Nakfa is a Holly place where every Eritrean should visit every year as Mecca and Yerusalem.

Nakfa for *tegadelti*, especially those who spent mainly their *Gedli* life in Nakfa has a lot of personal, social, political, economic as well spiritual experiences. From their various narratives many of us learn the significance of *Gedli,* *tegadelti* and Gmbar Nakfa. Moreover looking to the survivors who have overt and covert wounds, any human with two eyes could read the extraordinary “zeiytneger” resilience and endurance!!!!

In addition, the extensive interviews, books and short stories including the songs are excellent sources to understand the significance of Nakfa and the ultimate sacrifice of *Tegadelti*. However, visiting Nakfa in person is a true blessing! Anyone feels it right there and starts to communicate with all the spirits of *SEMAT*I. The cream of the society who sacrificed their lives for the liberation of Ertra and the people of Eritrea! In fact, it is a sacrifice for social justice and human rights! Therefore it is a sacred place.

As many of us aware of, Eritreans from different part of the world, pay a visit to Yerusalem and Mecca Medina for pilgrimage every year. According to many believers visiting to Yerusalem and Mecca is a blessing. Only those who are fortunate would get that opportunity. Many of us particularly the elders have a deep desire to visit Yerusalem (Christian) and mecca, (Muslims).

However, I find it is ironic to observe Eritreans pay pilgrimage to Mecca and Yerusalem for years but never been to Nakfa, including parents of Semati as well siblings. Similar to the Holly places, NAKFA is also should be recognized the place where the potential of the higher source, Melokotawi Haili, demonstrated its Holly power within Tegadelti and Gedli Eritrea in Nakfa! If the higher source (amalk or allah) wouldn’t be presented within the spirit of Tegadelti all the miracle wouldn’t had happened!

Therefore, no doubt that Nakfa is the Holly place for Eritreans of course and for any peace, justice and equality loving people from anywhere around the globe for simple reason. Nakfa is not faith, gender, ethinc specific as our *Semati* comprised both female and male from all ethnic, social, and religious background in our society. This assured anyone regardless the faith, religion or belief one follow could visit Nakfa for pilgrimage from anywhere!

Amuqe Zkhri Nsemati!

Awet Nhafash