



Executive Mayor: Cllr. N Speelman

The Basotho New Year Selemo sa Basotho

Sotho speaking community is one of the many varied groups living in present-day South Africa. By ancestry the Basotho (Brown people) belong solely to Africa. They have been in Southern Africa since around 1400 after moving to this area from central and northern parts of Africa.

By the latter part of the 1800's King Moshoeshoe established the nation of the Basotho from the unification of a number of smaller southern Sotho clans and by his acts of friendship towards defeated enemies in providing land and protection to various people and this strengthened the growing Basotho nation. From this period he was referred to as 'Morena e Moholo wa Basotho' (Great Chief/King of the Basotho). Basotho are accredited with exceeding knowledge of nature having founded many medicinal herbs to cure various and often complex illnesses. They have also founded dried meat and fruits (dihwapa) and (mangangajane) to name just a few. Traditional Basotho food consists mostly of papa, moroho, and nama. Papa is usually described as a stiff porridge made from maize meal.

The brown people celebrate the beginning of the year with different rituals, for instance Mokete wa lewa, in which celebrations commence after harvesting, to thank God and the ancestors for the food harvested. The African New Year celebration is celebrated after the last days of Mariha/winter. This is to give way to new life after the dry season, which is after winter in Central South Africa. The African new year start therefore in August - Phato, known for the blowing winds, clearing Mother Earth and refreshing the ground with showers of Spring.

Africans or Basotho in particular, do not follow the Gregorian calendar as is the practice, but rather rely on the solstice and position of the moon, the natural indicator of seasonal rotation. "Ha kgwedi e toloka".

Selemo sa Basotho se na le dikgwedi tse leshome le metso e mmedi. Dikgwedi tsena di arotswa ka dihla tse nne, mme sehla ka seng se boptjwa ka dikgwedi tse tha-

ro. Mabitso a dikgwedi tsa Basotho a hlasola diket-sahalo tsa tlhaho, tikeloho, mekgwa, meetlo le mesebetsi ya Basotho.

The Basotho year has twelve months. These months are divided into four seasons, and each season has three months. The Basotho months are named according to the events or things that happen in nature, vicinity, habits, the culture and work done by the Basotho people.

Dihla tsa selemo di arotswa ka mokgwa ona:

Selemo/Spring
• Phato / August/ Lwetse / September / Mphalane / October

Sehla sa pele sa selemo sa Basotho ke Selemo. Ke sehlang sena moo ho qalwang ho phetolwa mobu bakeng sa ho lema tshimo - kgolo pele, e leng tshimo ya Morena. Banna bohle ba motse batla phutcha ka letsatsi le hlwauweng hoyla lema tshimo ya Morena. Hape ha selemo se qala le dingaka tsa setso di ntjhafat-sa ditlhaka tse kentsweng ho tisa metse ya batho. Ba etsa dithakgisa ka meriana e qetang ho hlomela botjha. Mekete ya bohlokwa e ka ketekwang sehlang sena ke mokete wa 'Lewa le Matlhatlo'. Mokete wa Lewa ke wa ho leboha badimo bakeng sa bophelo ka mora tse ntle kappa tse bohloko tseo motho a fetileng ho tsona. Mokete wa Matlhatlo ke Mokete wa kamora kutolo, ho lebohela tjhai.

The first season of the Basotho year is Spring. During this season, the Basotho begin to plough their fields, preparing to sow. An important Basotho custom is to plough the main field first, which is the Chief's. All the men in the village gather around the Chief's on the set day, to sow the land. At the beginning of the year, the traditional doctors also renew their services that were done to strengthen people's home, with fresh young herbs. The important feasts that are celebrated during this season are: the 'Lewa' feast, which is a thanksgiving feast, for the ancestors to thank them for all the good and bad they carried them through, and the 'Matlhatlo' feast, which is a thanksgiving feast for a good harvest.

Lehlabula / Summer /
• Pudungwana / November / Tshitwe / December / Pherekong / January

Sehla sa bobedi ke Hlabula. Ha le thwathwaretse le dumaela, ho kena Hlabula. Ena kgaolo ya selemo ke kobo ya mafutsana, le ba kojwana di mahetleng ba a phuthuloha. Nakong ya Hlabula ho na le mefuta ya di-

naledi e iponahatsang, eo ka yona Basotho ba nepang hantle hore jwale ke Hlabula, Tosa ke naledi ya pele e hlalhang mme e tosa busiu kaofela. Ka shwalane ke Sefalabohoho, naleledi e hlalhamelang dithaba e tatetse ho hlaha ka botjhaba-tsatsi ka meso. Ke sehlang sena moo mesebetsi o moholo e bang ho hlaloela masimo le ho behela masea puleng hore a setshabe pula. Basotho ba na le bohale ba ho lekola tsa bolepi ka ho sheba sebopeho sa kgwedi. Ha e thulame, e shebele fatshe, e qhadile metsi mme pula e ka tsholoha. Le difate ha di ka thunya empats boela tsa shwa, ke sesupho sa hore serame / lehlwa le tla ba teng.

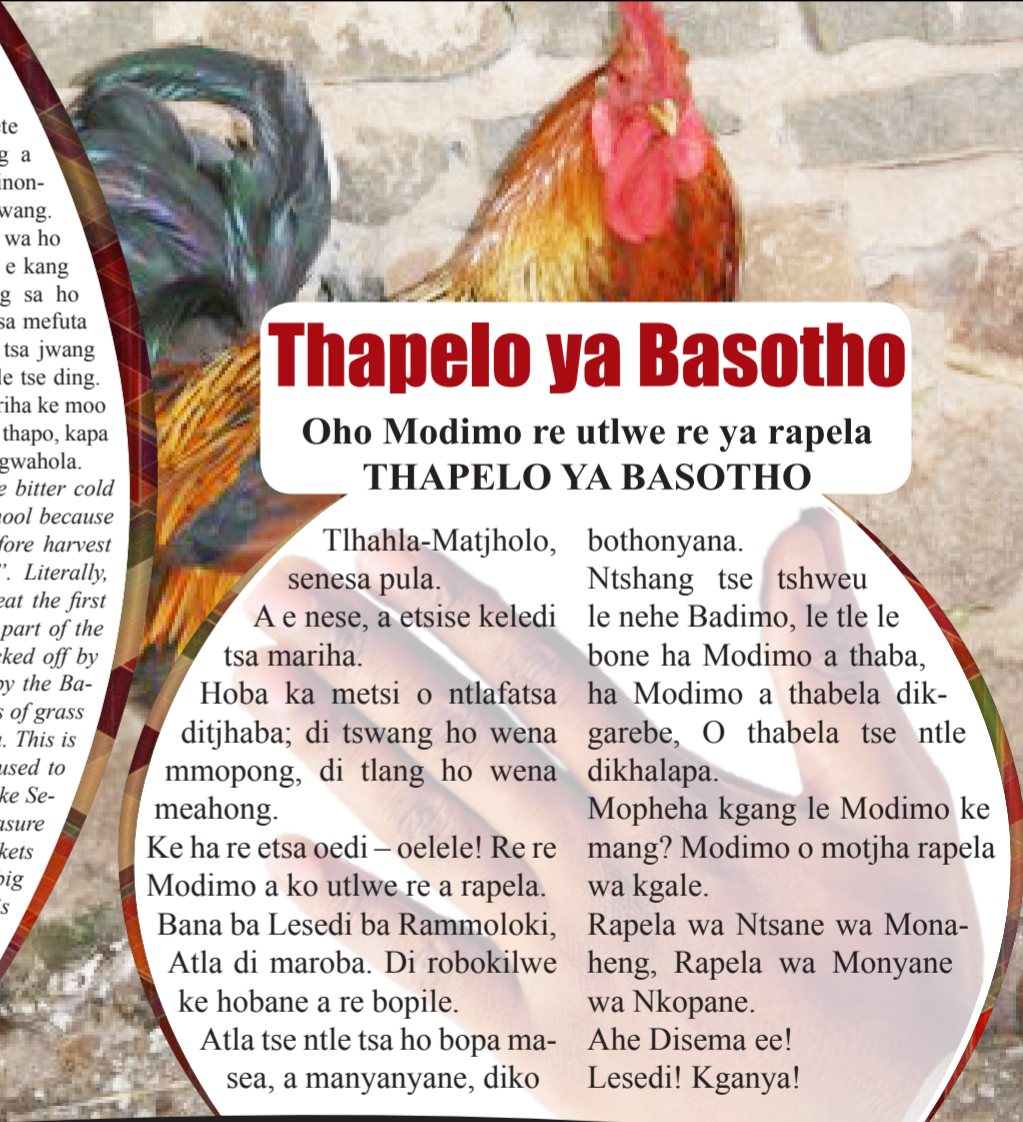
The second season is summer. When there is lightning and thunder, it is the beginning of Summer. This time of the year brings warmth to the poor, and even the poorest people are free. During the summer, there are some stars that appear to show the Basotho that is now Summer. The Tosa star is the first star that appears, and it shines throughout the night. In the evening, the 'Sefalabohoho' is the star that appears on top of the mountains, eager to go over the mountains to appear as 'Mphalalatsane' the early morning star, in the East. It is during this season when the main work is to weed out the fields and to put babies under the rain showers, to ensure that they do not grow up scared of the rain. The Basotho have the wisdom of knowing how to predict the weather by looking at the shape of the moon. When the moon is facing down, it is said to pour out its water, and the rain can pour down. When the trees are in bloom but later dry out and die, they show that the snow will fall.

Lehwetla / Autumn
• Tlhakola / February / Tlhakubele / March / Mmesa / April

Hlwetla le thwasitse re nyakalletse, re ja ditholwana, meroho le mahapu! Hwetla ke sehla sa boraro; sa kgora le nala. Ka lebaka la dijo bongata, ke nako e ntle ho Basotho ho etsa mekete e kang Mokete wa Mohlaba ho leboha Badimo. Ka matjeke letsatsing la mokete ba lelolo ba ya dinqalong (mabileng) ho ya etsa thapelo kapa ho bua le Badimo ba bona. Autumn is here and we are happy, we eat fruit, vegetables and watermelons! Autumn is the third season; there is an abundance of food and we are full. Therefore, this is the right time for Basotho to have feasts like 'Mokete wa Mohlaba' which is held to thank the ancestors. Very early on the day of the feast, the family and relatives go to the graveyard to pray of talk to

their ancestors.
Mariha / Winter
• Motsheanong / May / Phuptjane / June / Phupu / July

Kgaolo ya ho qetela ya selemo sa Basotho ke Mariha, kgwedi tsa bomoshanyana se llele ho disa kgwedi tsa hao di a tla. Nako ya Mariha ke nako e ntle bakeng sa ho bolotsa ka ha tjhai jwale e a bonahala; e se re jwale mophatong kwana ya eba tlala. Pele ho kutula "re loma" mabele. "Ho loma" ke mokete wa dijo tsa pele. Mabele ao mohlomong a robhehileng dihloho kapa a polehileng ha dinonyana di ntse di a kobola ke ona a sebediswang. Ka nako ya mariha mesebetsi o moholo ke wa ho loha, mme re ka qoholla mefuta ya jwang e kang Qokwa, Loli, Moseme le Molula bakeng sa ho loha. Ke nako e ntle bakeng sa ho bokeletsa mefuta ya jwang bakeng sa ho loha disebediswa tsa jwang tse kang dikatiba, dirototo, methlotlo, disiu le tse ding. Moetlo o moholo o etswang nakong ya Mariha ke moo balekane ba ileng ba hlokahalwa ba rolang thapo, kapa ho suwa dikobo tsa bafu ba hlokahtseng ngwahola. These are the months characterised by the bitter cold and is the right time to go to initiation school because there is enough food for the initiates. Before harvest time, we have a feast called "ho loma". Literally, this means to bite. During this feast we eat the first crop of the season. This could be the top part of the grain that got chopped off or that got picked off by the birds. In winter, the main work done by the Basotho is to weave. We can select these types of grass for that: Qokwa, Loli, Moseme and Molula. This is a good time to gather the types of grass used to weave tools or utensils made with grass, like Sesotho hats (dikatiba), baskets used to measure grain (dirototo), beer sieves (methlotlo), baskets used to store grain (disiu) and others. A big traditional event that happens in winter is when those who have lost their relatives go through a ritual called 'ho rola thapo'. This is a way of cleansing them of the bad luck that befell them. The blankets and clothes of the deceased people who passed on the previous year are usually washed at this time.



Thapelo ya Basotho

Oho Modimo re utlwe re ya rapela
THAPELO YA BASOTHO

Tlhahla-Matjholo, bothonyana. senesa pula. Ntshang tse tshweu le nehe Badimo, le tle le bone ha Modimo a thaba, ha Modimo a thabela dik-garebe, O thabela tse ntle dikhalapa. Mopheha kgang le Modimo ke mang? Modimo o motjha rapela wa kgale. Rapela wa Ntsane wa Monaheng, Rapela wa Monyane wa Nkopane. Ahe Disema ee! Lesedi! Kganya!

