

ODES (COMMEMORATIVE POEMS)

TO

THE GRAND ETHIOPIAN RENAISSANCE DAM

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Attorney at Law
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Ode to Aba-I (Nile) River in July

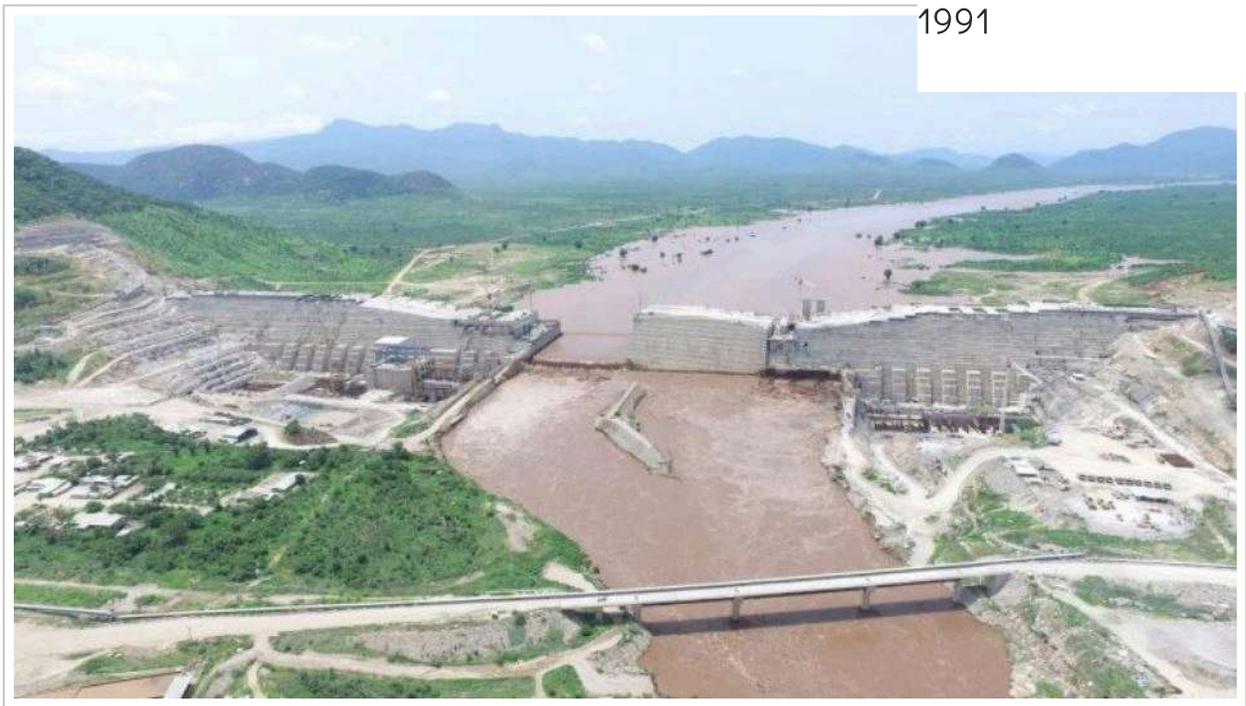
የአባይ (ህዳሴ) ውዳሴ በሃምሌ!

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Posted on July 12, 2020, 4:51 pm By almariam



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Aaahhh! Longing for the sweet earthy scent of Aba-I
 Her beauty and bounty resounding to the sky
 Waiting for July on the calendar
 Hail Aba-I, I salute you from afar.

Aba for the Father
 I, for the Son of the Light and Power
 Aba-I, the Mother
 Of the longest running river.

Strangers call you Baḥr Al-Nīl, Nile and Neilos
 To me, you are the “River Gihon” of Genesis
 “That compasseth the whole land of Ethiopia”
 Destined one day to be a utopia.

There stood I at Aba-I
 Starkly saw in my mind’s eye
 A future so radiant and bright
 My heart filled with gushing delight.

It is July at Aba-I
 Pride glints in the lion’s eye
 For July brings the light of prosperity
 Farewell and begone poverty!



Aba-I many found you a source of plenty
 As your people scoured the earth for charity
 Aba-I now you are the source of our power
 Our great equalizer!

Rushed to leave for thousands of years
 Aba-I helplessly we stood and shed our tears
 Now rest your feet for just a while
 And make Ethiopia your domicile.

“A gift of the Nile”, they call themselves
 Recite their history in superlatives
 If anyone should tamper with “their water”
 They promised a day of wrath and slaughter.

They call themselves the “Lords of the Nile”
 Damned the GERD but it was all futile
 In July we asserted our sovereignty
 To last for all eternity.

Egypt has nothing to fear
 They are our brothers and sisters so dear
 We will share our Aba-I equitably
 With malice towards none and responsibly.

Sudan shall tame its annual floods
As Aba-I mends their livelihoods
Let's join hands in our Africinity
And together affirm our humanity.

[G]reat is the month of July in Ethiopia



[E]nergy for regional cornucopia
[R]ise up and shout in the dawn of summer
[D]amn! Behold the beautiful tower of our power!

No longer will we live in the dark
Aba-I today is our Ark
God gave Noah the rainbow sign
And today brought Ethiopians together by His design.

Aba-I shall power our industry
Commerce and agriculture shall follow in symmetry
Our youth shall gain employment
No more trouble, only excitement!

Aba-I dearest, have you heard?
Your children fighting unable to go forward
They beg for answers at the U.N.
Forgetting their own African Union.

Aba-I dearest, Lake Tana your mother can't breathe
Choked by water hayacinth
We are standing idly by
Shame on us for watching as passersby.

Aba-I said Abiy will light our way to prosperity
Warned no one can tread on our sovereignty
Come hell or high water
Abiy said Aba-I will produce power.

Let us all enjoy Aba-I without acrimony
No more talk of hegemony
Aba-I is our gift to keep
There will be no reason for anyone to weep.

Let Aba-I be Aba-I for one and all
A source of life for nations great and small
Let our hopes overcome our fears
There is no more need to shed tears.

Let us gather around Aba-I and sing
Ethiopia, Egypt and Sudan make a ring
Lets us lift every voice and shout in July, "I am Aba-I"
"I am Aba-I. Aba-I am."



About almariam

Professor Alemayehu G. Mariam teaches political science at California State University, San Bernardino. His teaching areas include American constitutional law, civil rights law, judicial process, American and California state governments, and African politics. He has published two volumes on American constitutional law, including American Constitutional Law: Structures and Process (1994) and American Constitutional Law: Civil Liberties and Civil Rights (1998). He is the Senior Editor of the International Journal of Ethiopian Studies, a leading scholarly journal on Ethiopia. For the last several years, Prof. Mariam has written weekly web commentaries on Ethiopian human rights and African issues that are widely read online. He played a central advocacy role in the passage of H.R. 2003 (Ethiopia Democracy and Accountability Act of 2007) in the House of Representatives in 2007. Prof. Mariam practices in the areas of criminal defense and civil litigation. In 1998, he argued a major case in the California Supreme Court involving the right against self-incrimination in *People v. Peevy*, 17 Cal. 4th 1184, which helped clarify longstanding Miranda rights issues in criminal procedure in California. For several years, Prof. Mariam had a weekly public channel public affairs television show in Southern California called “In the Public Interest”. Prof. Mariam received his Ph.D. from the University of Minnesota in 1984, and his J.D. from the University of Maryland in 1988.

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 ሁኔታውም ያስገድዳል!

If Not Abiy Ahmed, Then Who? I
Stand by Ethiopia and Abiy
Ahmed! »

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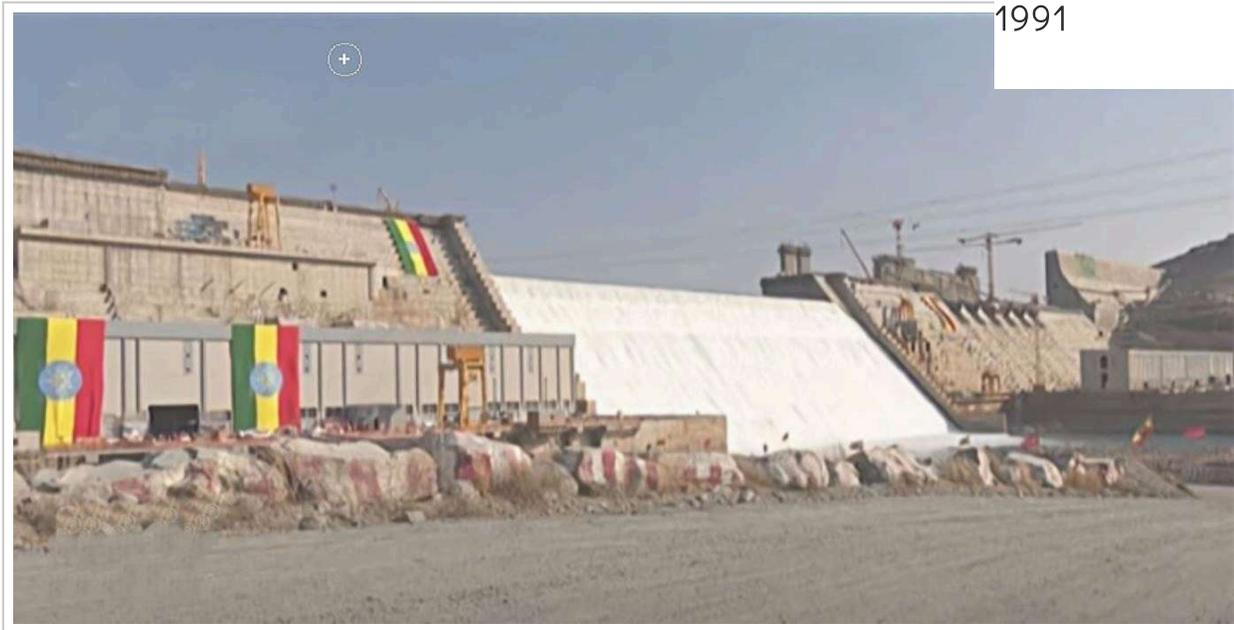
Ethiopia on the Move (Flow): Commemorative Second (Third) Ode to Aba-I ("Nile") River on the GERD 8/11/22

Posted on August 11, 2022, 8:05 am By almariam



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UPDATED ON AUGUST 11, 2022

I was present at the Grand Renaissance Ethiopian Dam (GERD) on February 20, 2022 when the first turbine (#10) kicked into action.

No words can express my feeling of pride, joy, honor and dignity in Ethiopia that day when the GERD produced 375MW of electricity and delivered it to the grid!

On August 11, 2022, the second turbine (#9) kicked into action!

Sitting ten thousands of miles away, I still feel the same pride, joy, honor and dignity in Ethiopia.

I thank the Almighty for this day and for blessing Ethiopia with the River Ghion Abai ("Nile").

I thank the people of Ethiopia for every penny they paid to make GERD a reality. When the world turned against us, we turned ourselves to the Almighty and to ourselves and made it happen.

I thank the engineers, technicians, laborers and all others who toiled to build the GERD over the past decade.

I thank the Ethiopian National Defense Force and regional militia for their service beyond and above the call of duty.

I thank our GERD negotiators who performed their diplomatic and technical duties with professionalism, skill and ethics.

I thank H.E. Prime Minister Dr. Abiy Ahmed (Abiy "Aybegere" Ahmed) for his steadfast leadership, meticulous oversight and guidance, insistence on accountability, and innovation; and ultimately for his decisiveness, determination and dedication to the completion of the GERD!

Above all, I thank PM Abiy for being a man of his word.

On June 11, 2018, PM Abiy assured Egyptian President Abdel Fattah Al-Sisi, "Ethiopia has no, no intention whatsoever to harm our brothers and sisters in Egypt over the use of the Abai ("Nile") waters."

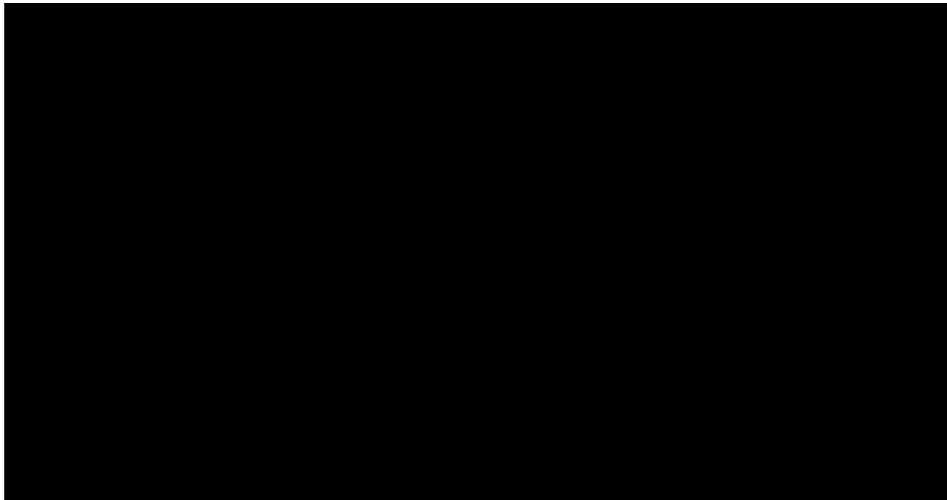
Today, the GERD protects Sudan and Egypt from destructive floods and neither country has suffered "substantial harm" (legal language), indeed no perceptible harm to their share of Nile waters.

Congratulations to all of us. እንክዋን ደስ አለን !

GERD: One big step for prosperity in Ethiopia, one gigantic leap for African progress!

00:00

00:16



Author's Note: I wrote my first Ode to Abai River (celebratory poem) on July 12, 2020 on the occasion of the second filling of the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam (GERD). Abai (a/k/a "Nile", "Blue Nile" to non-Ethiopians) is the River Ghion mentioned in Genesis 2:13 ("The name of the second river is the Gihon; it winds through the entire Land of Cush." The Land of Cush is present day Ethiopia.

Unfortunately, neither the Biblical people of the Land of Cush nor their descendants today have been able to use the waters of Abai to sustain themselves and flourish as a great civilization. So, the mighty, mighty waters of the River Ghion kept rolling on for millennia carrying rich silt and sediment downstream as Ethiopians watched in misery.

Just like the great African American Paul Robeson sang it for Ol' man Mississippi River rolling, I always told myself brokenheartedly,

Ol' man Abai river. That ol' man Abai river.
He don't say nothin' But he must know
somethin' Cause he just keeps rollin' straight
outta Tana Lake. He keeps rollin' along.
Rollin' along the valleys, canyons and
deserts. He don't plant teff, corn, wheat, or
cotton in Ethiopia. Them that plants 'em is
soon forgotten. But ol' man Abai river He
keeps rollin' along. And you and me

Ethiopians united We sweat and we strain.
Our bodies all achin' And wracked with
poverty and pain. That ol' man Abai river, he
just kept rolling on... outta Ethiopia.

On February 19, 2022, the mighty River Ghion, for the first time since time immemorial, stopped rolling and looked at Ethiopia for just a fleeting, flickering moment.

"Behold!", exclaimed Ol man Abai river. "What beautiful land! What beautiful people! I must shine eternal light upon them!"

So, ol' man Abai river shone its bright light on Ethiopia over the GERD on February 19, 2022, a date that shall live in glory in Ethiopian history.

Indeed, February 19, 2022, marked the coming to pass of Biblical prophecy.

In the beginning God created the heaven
and the earth. And the earth was without
form, and void; and darkness was upon the
face of the deep. And the Spirit of God
moved upon the face of the waters. And God
said, let there be light: and there was light.
(Genesis 1-3.)

Darkness had been on the face of Ethiopia since time immemorial and now light shines upon her from the eternal waters of the River Ghion.

For it is divinely declared, "Let there be light on Ethiopia: and there was light" bursting from the GERD.

That light will also shine on Ethiopia's neighbors and all of Africa until kingdom come.

I am proud to be present at the GERD when Ethiopia ushered in the Age of Light, a new age of prosperity driven by electricity.

As I listened to H.E. Prime Minister Dr Abiy Ahmed making his speech announcing the opening of the GERD, Shakespeare's Sonnet 29 flashed through my mind.

Aahh!

There were many times over the past decades I had "troubled deaf heaven with my bootless cries" desiring this or that for Ethiopia.

There was even a time I wished I was Ghanaian. There was a time I asked myself, "Why Can't Ethiopia Become Like Ghana?"

But as I stood tall gazing in ecstasy at the GERD on February 19, I was filled with pride and joy and "scorned to change my state with kings."

I would not have traded my pride in the GERD for anything in the world!

I join H.E. Prime Minister Dr Abiy Ahmed in recognizing and thanking Ethiopia's leaders, the great people of Ethiopia who paid for the GERD with their blood, sweat, tears and money, and especially the Almighty who made it all possible despite the dirty tricks and conspiracies of nations great and small to thwart and even physically destroy the GERD and keep Ethiopia in eternal darkness.

But the Forces of Darkness no longer have power over Ethiopia in the Age of Light. They have been defeated by the Forces of Light.

It was all foretold by one of Africa's post-colonial founding fathers, Kwame Nkrumah of Ghana, who poetically declared, Ethiopia shall rise and shine like a diamond in the African skies.

Ethiopia, Africa's bright gem/ Set high among the verdant hills/

That gave birth to the unfailing/ Waters of the Nile

Ethiopia shall rise/Ethiopia, land of the wise;

Ethiopia, bold cradle of Africa's ancient rule/
And fertile school
Of our African culture; Ethiopia, the wise Shall rise...

Ethiopia Shall Rise and Shine- Second Ode to Abai River (የህዳሴ ውዳሴ!)

At the dawn of creation were the words
"Let there be light!" (Gen. 1:3)

In a big bang moment the universe became bright
And the River Ghion/Abai ("Nile") became Ethiopia's
birthright. (Gen. 2:13)

There was no light in the millennia-long Ethiopian night
Then turned the turbine on the River Ghion with might
February 19, 2022, brought all Ethiopians joy and delight
To enjoy Ghion's bounty with our neighbors without a fight.

It is our Great Ethiopian Renaissance Dam
Built with our own blood, sweat, and tears
We toiled ceaselessly for years and years
Today, we stand proud having fulfilled our forebears' dreams.



I walked down Entoto hill
Saw women loaded like beasts of burden
I cried out, "This a crime, it must be forbidden!"
Said they to me calmly, "When GERD comes alive, we will all
be unladen."

Gazing over the GERD, I saw a land of milk and honey
The utopia I dreamt for Ethiopia

No more war, no more dystopia
Only the mighty, mighty United Ethiopia.

It is a new day in Ethiopia
Let the mighty Ghion wash the sins of our fathers
Let's not make hate and war our earthly leftovers
Let's seek peace as the source of all our answers.

Let Aba-I be Aba-I for one and all
A source of life for nations great and small
Let our hopes overcome our fears
There is no more need to shed river of tears.

[G]reat is the month of February in Ethiopia
[E]nergy to produce as regional cornucopia
[R]ise and salute in fall, winter, spring, and summer
[D]amn! Behold the GERD, the beautiful tower of our power!

Let us gather around Aba-I and sing
Ethiopia, Egypt and Sudan form a ring
Let us lift every voice and shout, "I am Aba-I."
"Aba-I am".

"I am Aba-I Ethiopia!
I am Aba-I Egypt!
I am Aba-I Sudan!
I am Aba-I."
Aba-I am.

Ethiopia on the move!

Back in the day, we used to sing "Keep Your Eyes on the Prize", the unofficial anthem of the American civil rights movement.

The prize was (and despite the absence of a civil rights movement today) and remains equal rights.

Today, I keep singing the same song except the Prize I shall keep my eyes on is Ethiopia.

I spent the last seven weeks in Ethiopia.

It was a wonderful time of discovery for me. I (like many Ethiopians in the country and in the diaspora), know very little about the real Ethiopia.

But I soon discovered Ethiopia is the richest poor country in the world.

We have land that could make us the breadbasket of Africa but suffer the scourge of drought.

We have mighty rivers which roll out as we beg for Western handouts.

We have minerals and precious stones hidden in plain sight under our feet begging to be plucked.

I just don't understand why we remain poor!

Over seven weeks, I discovered and experienced firsthand the love, generosity, and appreciation of the Ethiopian people wherever I travelled, near and far.

I got big hugs and kisses from complete strangers (damned be Covid!) for what they say I have done for Ethiopia. It brought tears to my eyes.

I am so humbled by the love and appreciation of shoeshine boys, waitresses, soldiers (high and low rank), storekeepers, students, journalists, construction workers, religious and civic leaders, businessmen and women, farmers, cab/ride drivers, pilots and air crew, teachers and academics, grandmothers, politicians (across the political spectrum), civil servants and so many others I met travelling throughout Ethiopia.

For seven weeks in Ethiopia, "my cup runneth over."

I thank all the "strangers", really my dear friends I never knew, for their love and kindness. I could expect no greater reward.

As I moved around Ethiopia, I discovered Ethiopia is on the move.

Ethiopia is moving away from poverty to prosperity fast.

Indeed, there are daily challenges. But as GERD powers our prosperity, we shall forever abandon the darkness of poverty.

Ethiopia is also moving from disunity to community.

From enmity to fraternity and amity. From calamity to pacificity.

From ethnocentricity to nationality. From exclusivity to inclusivity.

From barbarity to humanity. From brutality to civility.

From illegality to accountability. From hostility to commonality in our diversity.

From Western indignity to Ethiopian national unity in our sovereignty.

When our "friends" called their citizens to move out of Ethiopia, Ethiopians the world over moved into Ethiopia by the hundreds of thousands.

Why?

Because Ethiopia is on the move. Rolling on to prosperity in dignity, unity and sovereignty on our Abai river.

Ethiopia is moving and rising higher and higher.

If you don't believe me, go, and see for yourselves Ethiopia on the move. On the roll.

No point in sitting in the diaspora and moping around and feeling funky.

I say, "Let's get a move on!"

You don't want to be left behind when Ethiopia moves on, moves forward and keeps on moving.

Let's keep moving and grooving with Ethiopia.

I just
gotta say
it straight
up:



Do you?



About almariam

Professor Alemayehu G. Mariam teaches political science at California State University, San Bernardino. His teaching areas include American constitutional law, civil rights law, judicial process, American and California state governments,

and African politics. He has published two volumes on American constitutional law, including *American Constitutional Law: Structures and Process* (1994) and *American Constitutional Law: Civil Liberties and Civil Rights* (1998). He is the Senior Editor of the *International Journal of Ethiopian Studies*, a leading scholarly journal on Ethiopia. For the last several years, Prof. Mariam has written weekly web commentaries on Ethiopian human rights and African issues that are widely read online. He played a central advocacy role in the passage of H.R. 2003 (Ethiopia Democracy and Accountability Act of 2007) in the House of Representatives in 2007. Prof. Mariam practices in the areas of criminal defense and civil litigation. In 1998, he argued a major case in the California Supreme Court involving the right against self-incrimination in *People v. Peevy*, 17 Cal. 4th 1184, which helped clarify longstanding Miranda rights issues in criminal procedure in California. For several years, Prof. Mariam had a weekly public channel public affairs television show in Southern California called "In the Public Interest". Prof. Mariam received his Ph.D. from the University of Minnesota in 1984, and his J.D. from the University of Maryland in 1988.

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From the "Ugly American" to the
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ONE ETHIOPIA, GERD STRONG! »

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AI Mariam
@AIMariam1



WITH THE COMPLETION OF THE GERD, PRIME MINSTER ABIY AHMED AND THE PEOPLE OF ETHIOPIA MADE ETHIOPIA GREAT AGAIN!

On July 3, 2025, PM Abiy Ahmed let the world know Ethiopians have accomplished their mission to MAKE ETHIOPIA GREAT AGAIN.

For me, PM Abiy by completing the GERD made true my dream of Making Ethiopia Great Again.

A great country needs a great leader to realize its greatness and live out its divinely ordained great destiny.

Shakespeare wrote, "Some are born great, some achieve greatness, and some have greatness thrust upon them."

PM Abiy is a great leader not by birth and not because greatness has been thrust upon him.

PM Abiy is a great leader for no other reason but for his relentless, single-minded, uncompromising, tenacious and persistent daily efforts to MAKE ETHIOPIA GREAT AGAIN.

PM Abiy Ahmed breathes Ethiopia, loves Ethiopia, talks Ethiopia, walks Ethiopia, sleeps Ethiopia, dreams Ethiopia, imagines Ethiopia, prays for Ethiopia and lives Ethiopia.

Ethiopia is in his mind 24/7/365.

For years, I have been preaching and teaching Ethiopians to "Make Ethiopia Great Again."

"The Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam is now complete, and we are preparing for its official inauguration," proudly announced PM Abiy.

Those words brought tears of joy and pride to my eyes.

With an installed capacity of 5.15 gigawatts, the **Great Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam (G-GERD)** is the largest hydroelectric power plant on the African Continent. The GERD is a roller-compacted concrete gravity dam (type of concrete that is compacted by a roller before it is completely hardened), standing 175 meters high and 1,800 meters long.

When PM Abiy declared the G-GERD will be inaugurated in September, I recalled what is written in Genesis.

In Genesis 1 is written, "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. Now the earth was formless and empty, darkness was over the surface of the deep, and the Spirit of God was hovering over the waters. And God said, "Let there be light," and there was light. God saw that the light was good, and he separated the light from the darkness."

In Genesis 2:13 is written, "The name of the second river is the Gihon; it winds through the entire land of Cush."

The River Ghion is what is today called the Nile River. It is the Nile River, which is Ethiopia today.

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Approximately 85 percent of the water that flows into the Nile River comes from the Ethiopian highlands through Abay (a/k/a) "Blue Nile".

To me, the completion of the GERD is the coming to pass of divine prophesy. God said, "Let the light shine upon Ethiopia and Ethiopians. Let the light shine from the River Ghion on the ancient Land of Cush."

I can now see clearly Ethiopia marching out of the darkness of poverty into the GERD-lighted Promised Land of Prosperity, Peace and Progress at the speed of light.

Those who live in the darkness of hate and envy said, "Ethiopians can never build a dam on the Nile." Ethiopia's historic enemies left no stones unturned to block, delay and thwart the GERD project."

They all failed because there "Standeth God within the shadow, keeping watch above his own Ethiopia."

Now, behold the GERD standing in its full divine majesty.

Ethiopians built the GERD with their blood, sweat and tears.

I have visited the GERD many times since 2018.

In 2018, when I returned to Ethiopia after 48 years, I visited the GERD and was filled with doubt if it will ever be finished because of the monumental mismanagement, waste, abuse and fraud of the TPLF (woyane) regime.

In 2019, the GERD was facing tremendous challenges with construction delays and issues related to negotiations between Ethiopia, Egypt, and Sudan regarding the filling of the dam reservoir.

In 2020, when the first phase of filling the reservoir began and the water level increased to 540 meters, I became fully confident, despite the scourge of Covid 19, that it was just a matter of time before the dam would be completed.

In 2021, GERD was moving fast with the second filling and major work completed in the construction of the physical structure, and preparations were well underway for water storage and power generation.

In 2022, I was elated when it was reported that GERD for the first time had produced electricity delivering 375 MW to the grid.

In 2023, the fourth filling and the reservoir were completed. Water levels reached 625 meters. PM Abiy declared the fourth filling represented a "gift to generations."

In 2024, the last filling was completed and PM Abiy announced that overall the GERD was 94.6% completed.

In April 2025, GERD had reached 98.66% completion, with six turbines operational.

On July 3, 2025, PM Abiy announced GERD will inaugurate in September 2025.

What a blessing it is for me to witness the G-GERD completed and ready for service.

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Thank you a million PM Abiy Ahmed. May God grant you all his blessings to continue your divinely ordained mission to MAKE ETHIOPIA GREAT AGAIN! 🇪🇹🇲🇵🇪🇹🇲🇵🇪🇹

I thank and express my deep appreciation to the tens of thousands of Ethiopians and foreign nationals, and WeBuild (formerly Salini Impregilio) who worked on the G-GERD to MAKE ETHIOPIA GREAT AGAIN.

Let's go GERD MEGA!

@PMEthiopia @AbiyAhmedAli @TagessechaffoD @AdanechAbiebie @TayeAtske @mfaethiopia @_AfricanUnion @USEmbassyAddis @StateDept @marcorubio @VP @EliseStefanik @KristiNoem @PeteHegseth @TulsiGabbard @RobertKennedyJr @PamBondi @SeanDuffyWI @ChrisAWright_ @DougBurgum @SteveMiran @BrookeLRollins @ChinaEmbAddis @GovernmentRF @EUinEthiopia @RusEmbEthiopia @marcorubio @UKinEthiopia @EUinEthiopia @FinlandinETH @GerEmbAddis @Denmark_Addis @CZinAddisAbaba @BelgiumAddis @TiborPNagyJr @SweinEthiopia @flyethiopian @ECA_Official @Landoforigins @US_SrAdvisorAF @GHessebon @SMHaderaAbera #Somaliland #Egypt #Eritrea #Somalia @MOFASomalia #Ethiopia



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Office of the Prime Minister - Ethiopia @PMEthiopia · Jul 3

Regarding the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam

"The Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam (GERD) is now complete, and we are preparing for its official inauguration. While there are those who believe it should be disrupted before that moment, we reaffirm our commitment: the dam will be [Show more](#)

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