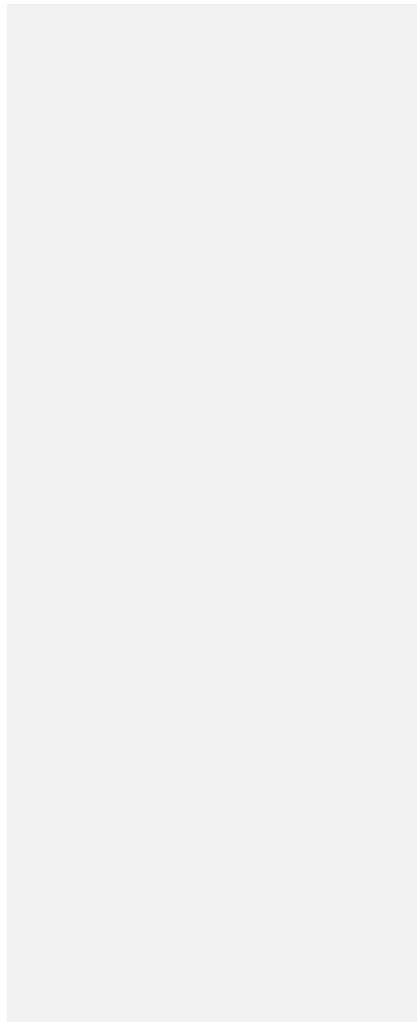


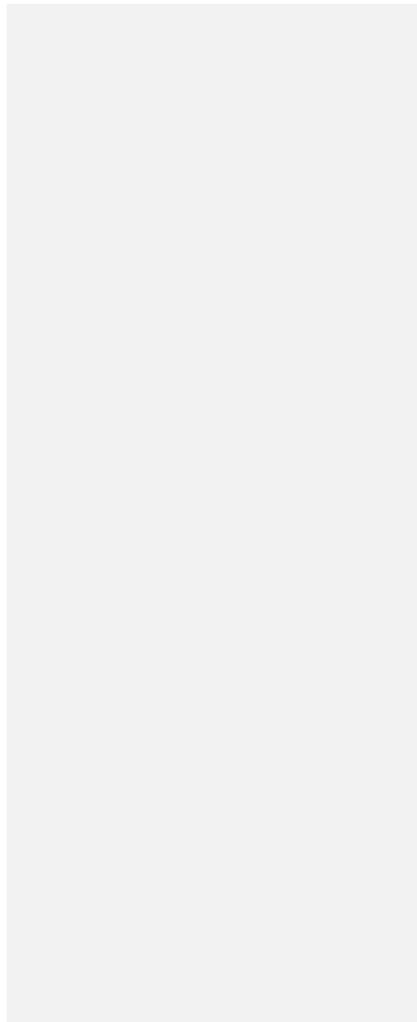
**African Centered Education for the
Evolution of African Collective
Consciousness**

by
Roland Lucas



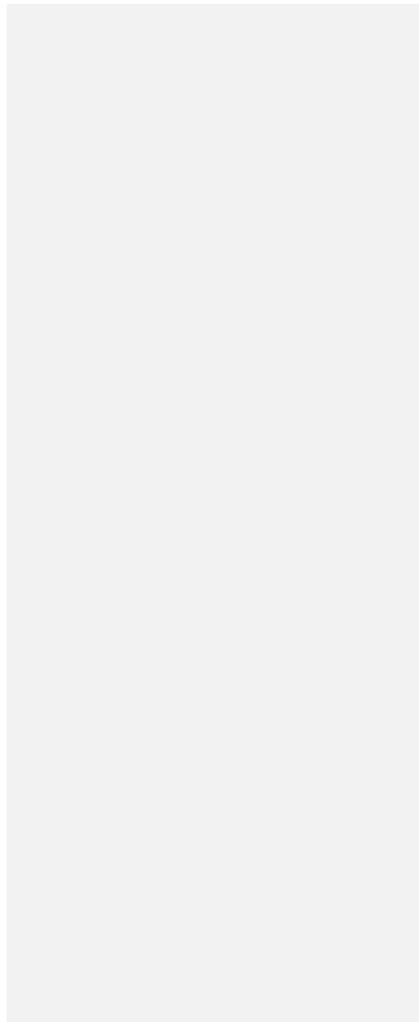
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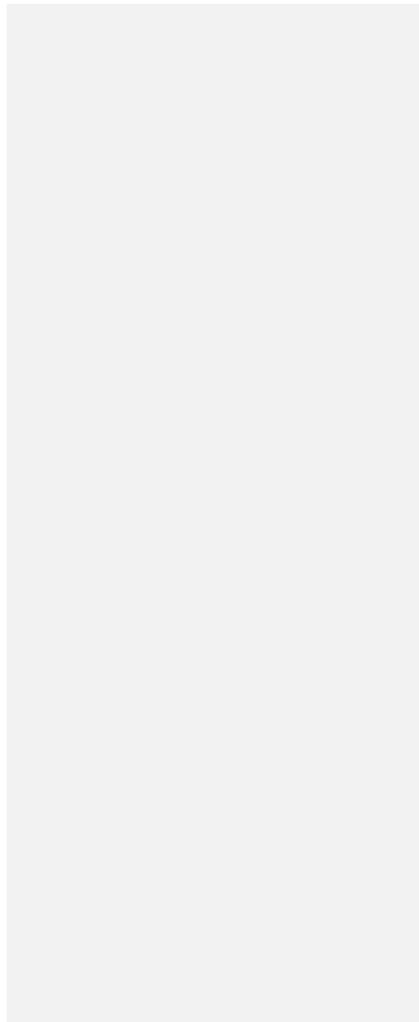
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Dedication

This book is dedicated to all spiritual warriors who have never given up the struggle for freedom and justice for African people. It is also dedicated to the warriors in training. May they too ever image the vindication of Africa and its sons and daughters.

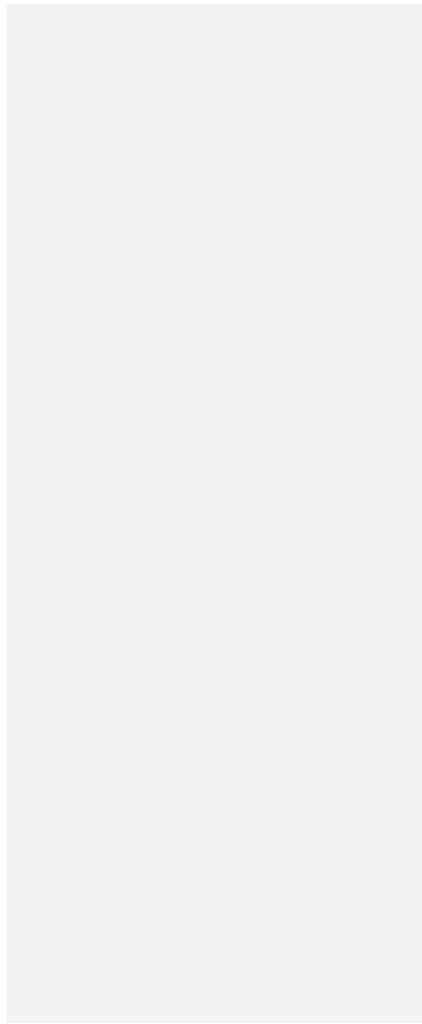




Acknowledgement

This book is a collage of wisdom teachings that I've been blessed with exposure to. These teachings come from the rich vanguard of African spiritual and liberation traditions, past and present. For their work, upon which my own learning has grown, I like to give special credit to Jacob H. Carruthers, Dr. Maulana Karenga, Dr. Chancellor Williams, Dr. Ben Jochannan, Dr. Muata Abhaya Ashby, Dr. Amos Wilson, Dr. Francis Cress Welsing, and our ancestors, Dr. Henrik Clark and Cheikh Anta Diop. This book is also composed heavily of wisdom teachings from the Taoist tradition, as elucidated by Master Ni Hua Ching, and the Hindu spiritual tradition, as elucidated by Sri Aurobindo. I am not a historian or psychologist by training. I am a student and schoolteacher with an appreciation of wisdom teachings so much so that I hope to share them out of love and fidelity to truth, in hopes that they will uplift African peoples, and by extension, persons from all walks of life. I approach this work then from an African centered education stance.

Essentially, all credit for this work goes to the Universal Divine One Who moves through the souls and intellects of the giants I mentioned above and Who has inspired me to further, in whatever way and to whatever degree, the human evolution of the Divinity within.



Foreword

As the wise ancestors of most traditions point out to us, there is a natural, balanced, and integral way of life that leads to higher spiritual realization. Life is a Great Unity, and we only need to be receptive to its instruction. This integral way of life ultimately leads us to the realization that we all share in the essence of the Supreme Being and, in fact, *are* part of the Supreme Being that is manifesting through our own beings. From this perspective, it is erroneous to think that it benefits us to hurt, dominate, murder, or otherwise abuse others or nature; for we *are* that other and we *are* nature. Can a tidal wave harm the ocean? Can a fierce storm harm the sky that accommodates it? Can an exploding star harm infinite space? We *are* the ocean expressing as both the calm and the turbulent waves. We *are* infinite space containing the countless stars. We *are* one with the Supreme Self that contains and manifests as the selves of all people. What we do to others, therefore, we do to ourselves. This is the basis of the imperatives, "Love your neighbor as you love yourself," and "Do unto others, as you would have them do unto you." When we do so, we come to realize that we and the others are the *same self*. The error in our thinking is we accept only that which our limited senses and intellect tell us is real, despite knowing first-hand the limitations of the senses. We make assumptions and rationalizations based on the partial perception of our senses. Doing so leads us far from the ocean of truth and into a small, isolated pond of limited vision, into a limited self-identify.

The oneness of life is evident from the fact that all things in life can communicate with each other, which we see as the powers of attraction and repulsion. The electron of an atom is attracted to the proton of the atom because there is a medium shared by the essence of the two that facilitates their interaction. If not for the shared medium, the electron and proton would not attract, and nothing in life could be formed. This shared medium that facilitates the attraction and repulsion of all things speaks to the underlying oneness of all life. However, because we cannot normally perceive this shared medium with our five senses, or with the instruments that we've created to extend sense perception, we discount its reality. We discount the reality of the integral oneness of life.

By going beyond the limitations of the senses, the limiting thoughts, and the partial belief systems derived from the senses, we can directly perceive the oneness of life that we truly are. As taught in the ancient spiritual traditions of Khemit, China, India, esoteric Judaism, and Christianity, attainment of this

African Consciousness

perception is a great achievement ultimate in life. Meditation, virtuous living, chi gong, yoga, and many other good spiritual practices facilitate this goal.

Once we transcend the dualistic concepts of Black versus White, Male versus Female, Me versus You, Life versus Death, etc., and realize that these apparent differences are just facets of the whole, then we can effectively build societies based on balance, harmony, justice, peace, love, and high virtuous expression. This is called living Maat by our Khemitian, or Egyptian, ancestors. We can start by listening to the essential message shared by most all wisdom traditions: that behind its apparent diversity life is a unity. As we sincerely open ourselves to message of the wisdom traditions, we will begin to attract wise ones living in our lifetime who are willing to elucidate the wisdom teachings in ways we can comprehend in our time and place. Through inner awakening, may we all come to know that we are one with the Father/Mother Supreme Being.

"African Centered Education for the Evolution of Collective African Consciousness"

There exists, spearheaded by a critical mass of spiritually evolved Africans, the evolving higher consciousness of the African collective, or the Ausarian Self. This Self of higher spiritual consciousness can be fully known when the higher consciousness of one's individual self is known. As the ancients of spiritual culture have taught, knowledge and effectuation of one's higher Self is a supreme undertaking of life. A natural extension to that is, knowledge and effectuation of the collective Self or Ancestral consciousness is an equally supreme undertaking. The reason this must be so, is that life is a Unity behind its marvelous diversity; thus, one's individual higher Self is one with any collective Self (i.e. national soul) that the Supreme Being is poised in. The status of the whole is always relevant to the status of the individual, and vice versa. Our individual Spiritual achievement is not complete if we isolate ourselves from the condition of others or from our ancestral heritage, self-content with our supposed state of Nirvana. We must see the evolving spirit in ourselves and in others of our collective as the same. Ultimately there is only one Self that expresses through the unity and evolving diversity of life, the Universal Integral Divine One. The higher African Self has given to the World its first great humanity and civilizations; and this same evolving higher African Self has a role to play in giving to the world its next higher expression of humanity and civilization.

Individual spiritual development naturally occurs over the course of several life times. The individual Soul puts on physical and mental forms throughout multiple life times, not unlike how a person puts on different clothes for different occasions. Individual spiritual development can be accelerated in each lifetime by concerted individual efforts, combined with the decent of Divine Truth Thought / Will Force from higher planes of vibratory existence. In the Hindu tradition, there are forms of Yoga used by initiates called Kriya Yoga and Integral Yoga of Sri Aurobindo that serve this grand purpose. Likewise, the evolution of higher consciousness of any collective occurs over the course of centuries, even millennia; but can also be accelerated in each period with a concerted effort by the collective, an effort typically spearheaded by a highly conscious and spiritually evolved cadre (i.e. spiritual elders or selfless leaders). For the African collective, which is the focus of this writing, the concerted effort needed to further its spiritual evolution in the current era must be solidly organized, span all levels of collective action (i.e. culture, economics, education, politics, etc.), and be guided by already spiritually evolved individuals who have the objective of not only transcending immediate obstacles that face the African collective, be they internal or external, but who strive for the highest ideal of unfettered Divine expression through the African collective. A kind of Kriya Yoga under the tutelage of African adepts is needed today for the African collective to accomplish this ideal in our lifetime. Indeed, this spiritual evolution of the African collective will be part and parcel of the evolution of all humanity, as it was before its interruption by negative external forces.

A Spiritual Evolutionary View of African Historical Development

Individual spiritual development rarely progresses in a straight upward slope, but rather in an upward spiral that sometimes loops downward before ascending to ever-higher levels. So too

is the case with collective spiritual development. It is important for us to at least have an overview of this sometimes eclipsed or oppressed, yet ever rising spiral of collective African spiritual progress. It is also essential to keep in mind that spiritual consciousness is the basis of, and gives proper value to all mental and material realities. The Universal consciousness that has become involved with material matter, also evolves to higher expressions of its Self through physical matter. Hence, physical matter is a support to, but not an ultimate cause, nor limiting substance, of individual and collective spiritual growth. We must take stock of our historical spiritual progress through the ages, along with apparent setbacks, so that we may better know where we are and what development remains towards reaching our collective ideal as unfettered, unlimited expressions of the Divine Will/Force in the world.

The underlying view that is promoted in this book is that historical events relating to the African collective should be seen from the perspective of serving as material for the growth and development of the higher African collective consciousness; just as experiences are food for individual spiritual growth. We must note that collective experiences, as with individual experiences, can be assimilated on the surface and utilized for superficial egoistic gains of the outer being with the mind, body, or vital force as the nexus of identity formation. In this work, we focus on the assimilation of historical experiences by the deeper inner or higher Self of the African collective, the group-Soul. Most traditional African societies have developed an understanding that individuals have a higher Self or Soul that experiences the changes of life on the mental, physical, and vital levels. So too is there a real group-Soul when individuals gather together in synchronicity, solidarity, symbiosis, and strive for elevated collective goals. There is also a hereditary DNA basis for a shared collective group-Soul. We should view our collective African history not in surface terms of apparent ascension and decline, or of isolated events. Rather we should look behind the surface at how the deeper African collective consciousness, the group-Soul, has assimilated historical events to increase its collective Self-awareness as an embodiment and agent of the Divine. In this work only the general lines of some African historical and current movements are mentioned, to encourage the reader to view them and the plethora of details they can relate to, from the perspective of the evolving higher African Collective Self.

An individual can go through periods of regression and ignorance with respect to knowledge of his/her true higher Self. So too can the African collective forget its prior grand accomplishments of high divine expression and become exteriorized in superficial grooves of expression. This is evidently what has happened to the African Collective to varying degrees for the past several hundred years with the advent of European and Arab slave trafficking into Africa, and up to the modern era with the rise of global White racism, colonialism and neo-colonialism. If we recall our collective spiritual experiences of past progress, for the essence of these experiences is always available to us, then our collective higher Self will be invoked. It will come to the forefront of our collective consciousness to govern our collective life and actions in the world. We will move in more forceful, enlightened and universally life affirming steps towards expressing the Divine through our collective higher Self in all modes of life, spiritual, mental, or material. It appears that the European collective understood the ramifications of Africans knowing our history, knowing our true Self. They demonstrated a rudimentary understanding of the inverse relationship between a people who know their higher collective Self via historical memory and the European's ability to control such a people. Thus, they undertook every means to cut off Africans in the diaspora from our culture that contains our collective memory, and blot out or revise African history. Africans must not rely on Europeans for making his-story, the European story, into the collective African story. The European collective world-view must not be the African collective

point of reference. All peoples have their own group-Soul to discover and authentically express. If Africans on the African continent and in the diaspora, supplant their own worldviews with Eurocentric world perspectives, we will continue to be exteriorized, and flounder in ignorance of our collective higher Self, which I call the Collective Ausarian Self. The reason for the name reference to Ausar is that in Ancient Egyptian spiritual culture, Ausar represents the true Self of the individual. This true Self has an integral view of life that understands the Indivisible Unity that always supports the diversity of life. The Ausarian Self knows its Self to be one with all things. This Self resides in the individual while also existing as the unifying essence of life. In its poise as the higher collective African Self that has witnessed the entire sweep of African historical development, I refer to it as the collective Ausarian Self.

How can we assess whether the collective African Self-consciousness is indeed expanding and that we as African people are becoming more Self realized as powerful agents of the collective Ausarian Self? **One important measure is the degree to which we honor our historical culture and experience, as a basis for future collective action, or Sankofa.** *Sankofa* is a word in the Twi language of Ghana that translates as "Go back and get it".

“Sankofa is an ancient concept. Though the work is ostensibly Akan, it is a timeless principle of all creation, and applies to both spiritual and material aspects of creation.

Sankofa is not merely “going back to fetch that which you have lost.” It is a dual process of internal and external development. This concept of Sankofa is analogous to a forest of giant oaks with a linked and intertwined root system. Sankofa is that process epitomized in an ever-expanding root system that develops almost imperceptibly. That root system of timeless historical tradition anchors and nourishes our cultural reality, the flower of our existence.

The expansion of that root system is facilitated by and facilitates, in turn, the expansion of the tree’s crown of limb and foliage. This dynamic and expansive rooting system that is Sankofa, is the process of recapturing the essence of our Africkanity and thereafter immersing the personal and collective self in that Africkanity, and simultaneously ridding the self of non-Afrikan elements. Sankofa is that concept that invokes that spiritual/metaphysical entity/energy that gives life and form to the processes of reAfrikanization. It is a process of re-convergent energies, of the spiritual, ideational, moral and physical dynamics of rebirth. It is this reality of rediscovery and reactivation of that root system that lies at the basis of this current movement of cultural revival.” ~ The Sankofa Movement by Kame Agyei & Akua Nson Akoto.

Such appreciation demonstrates an awareness of our collective African Self evolution along a continuum. One means of honoring our history is through invoking the continued presence of our honorable ancestors, who have through their good deeds paved the way for our progress. In doing so we give evidence of our awareness of a collective consciousness that transcends physical realities. Another indication of the expansion of collective African Self-consciousness is:

- **when we embrace cultural structures, sometimes old and sometimes new, which transcend previously fabricated divisions among us in our societies.** When we do this for the greater good of African people everywhere, it can be said that this is an evolutionary growth

of collective African Self-consciousness. When various African groups are concerned with only their group's capacity for development and expression, this demonstrates a limiting growth condition.

- Another important indication of the expansion of collective African Self-consciousness is **when we individually and collectively refuse to be defined by others and to take on the cultural values of other groups, facilitating their survival thrusts at the expense of our own group.**
- **Development of material self-sufficiency is also a marker for evolving spiritual independence.** Material development serves as a foundation for higher spiritual development. It is a positive sign when African people achieve self-sufficiency and independence from external domination of African resources, the prerequisite for a harmonious society and for unlimited spiritual growth.

As we consider what further **milestones we would look to show that an individual has achieved a higher spiritual attainment**, we can relate those markers to important indicators of evolving collective African Self-consciousness.

An Overview of Individual Spiritual Development

It is reasonable to generally associate the stages of individual spiritual development to that of collective spiritual development, since a collective is made up of individuals. The group-Soul is the unity behind individual Souls working and living together. At a deeper level, the individual and the collective are an undifferentiated whole, with the Supreme Being manifesting in all individual beings. There are some essentials to know about individual spiritual development that in turn can be applied to understanding and actualizing any group spiritual development.

The undifferentiated Divine Being, the One Self without a second, became involved in physical reality, matter, and through the eons has evolved increasingly higher forms of individualized vehicles of being, capable of expressing the unity and integral nature of Life with greater facility. The human being is one such vehicle. The human Soul is an apportionment or extension of the Divine Soul inhabiting matter. This integral view of is expressed by the ancient African ancestors of Kemet (Egypt) in the following passage from the Book of Coming Forth By Day, Chapter 83, The Chapter of Changing Into a Bennu (Phoenix):

I came into existence from unformed matter; I created myself in the image of God Khepera, and I grew in the form of plants. I am hidden in the likeness of the Tortoise. I am the essence of every god and goddess. I am the origin of the four quarters of the world. I am the seventh of those seven Urei who came into existence in the East. I am the mighty one Heru who illuminates the world with his person. I am Pa Neter (God) in the likeness of Set and Djehuti who dwelleth among us in the judgment of Him who dwells in Sekhem, and of the spirits of Anu. I sail among them, and I come; I am crowned. I have become a shining one-glorious. I am mighty. I am holy among the gods and goddesses ...

Comment [RL1]: reference

Foundational to understanding the processes of individual and collective development of consciousness, is knowing the makeup of Man. The ancient Egyptians recognized seven dimensions of the human, the Ba, Ka, Khaibit, Ab, Khat, Sahu, and Khu. The Ka and Ba, relate more to spiritual and transcendent aspects of our being, whereas, the other dimensions are more of the

mental, vital, and physical aspects of our being. The Ab refers to our will, which can be enlightened by Divine Truth (Tehuti) and merged with the Divine will, or overshadowed by our desires, intellect will to power, and otherwise lower aspects of our being. With the Ka and Ba, there were further divisions that reflected the individualized as well as the universalized nature of a person's spirit. The Ka refers to the abstract personality structure of a person that gives form to substance and creates matter. It is a thread of consciousness between man's tangible and intangible being. It can be disintegrated upon death unless it is divinized through spiritual cultivation and become transcendent. (Schwaller de Lubicz (1981) gives these three aspects to the Ka:

1. Divine Ka- the original Ka which is the creator of all the others.
2. Intermediate Ka-Kas of nature, mineral, vegetable and animal.
3. Inferior Ka- individualized Ka; inherited characteristics of psychological consciousness. Consciousness of the Ka evolved from the Inferior to the Divine Ka.

Schwaller de Lubicz (1981) expounds on the individualized and universalized aspects of the Ka: "A man ignorant of his own spiritual world has little or no contact with his Divine Ka. His personal Ka is brought down to the whole of his lower Kas; therefore after death, he will become his own shade or ghost ... the quest for spiritual springs of action and the enlargement of consciousness, can modify the character of his "personal" Ka until the spiritual faculties are awakened and it makes contact with the Divine Ka."

The Ba represents the vital principle or spirit contained in all life in Kemet. When it was represented by a bird with a human head represented the Ba, it symbolized the human soul that goes between heaven and earth. It is the most spiritually transcendent aspect of the human. It is unlinked with the Creator, free, unfixed, and unaffected by the human being whose only link to it is a link of consciousness. It too has individual and universal aspects in the human being. Schwaller de Lubicz (1981) gives these three aspects of the Ba:

1. Ba (universal soul the spirit of fire, which gives life to the world in all its parts. The spirit Ba is in all constituents of the world and in its final perfection.
2. Ba (natural soul) stabilized the bodily form (Ka), and its character is Osarian (Ausar), this is, it is subject to cyclic renewal (rebirth).
3. Ba as the human soul is represented by a bird with a human head

Na'im Akbar gives the Egyptian etymology of the word *Psyche*, which is very revealing of the Ancient African study of Man.

"Psychology is a Greek word revealing its most recent origins among the Greek students of the Ancient African masters. "Psyche", frequently identified with a Greek goddess of the same name actually means "soul". According to Massey (1974) the word Psyche is actually derived from the Egyptian in which Khe is the soul and Su is she; hence the feminine nature of the Greek Psu-khe. Without the article "P", Saku means the "understanding, the illuminator, the eye and soul of being, that which inspires." Not only is the study of the mind derived from ancient Egypt, but even the word used to characterize that study (psychology)."

Our Ancient African ancestors gave us the injunction “Know Thy Self”. We can see that they have studied the nature of Man deeply and have much to teach us still about our Selves. The Divine has provided for the individualization of people through the formation of the individual ego sense. But as we have seen from the Egyptian divisions of man, this ego sense is not the determiner, the true support, nor the highest aspect of our being. It is only an outer layer of the human dynamic, an evolutionary mental construct that needs to be transcended to get to realization of the REAL. I relate the Egyptian Ka and Ba to what I call the Psychic Being, the Soul as well as Ausar. Our Soul, Ba, which is an immortal apportionment of the Divine, is the highest aspect of our being. The ego sense is a surface organizing expression of our being that is sustained by our identification with the individual body, vital force, and mind as being our true self. To reach the higher essence of our being we must instead identify with the Soul as our higher Self, viewing the mind, body and vital as instruments of the Soul; thus, shifting the organizing control of our lives to a higher principle.

The Soul is immortal and resides in a field of perfection. It has no real limitation and is not at all separate from the Supreme Being. It thus has access to all Knowledge, all Power, and all Presence of the Supreme Being. It is one with all things, one with the Divine Will/Force. This Soul resides in all people, but is not expressed through most people in unfettered, non-egoistic terms. In most people the Soul is hidden, unengaged, and only a few rays of its brilliance pass through to the externalized being. The Soul puts forth an ever-faithful representative of its self, the Psychic Being, (Ka) which actively engages life, and evolves throughout the journey of life. The Soul can be thought of as presiding over our nature, while the ever-faithful representative, the Psychic Being, is actively involved with transforming our nature to a higher principle. This representative pierces through the ego sense, giving the outer centered person some glimmer of the Soul's magnificence. This ever-faithful representative, the Psychic Being, is our True Self navigating the world of differentiation and change.

The Psychic Being is located behind the energetic heart center, which is in the middle of the chest. It is not to be confused with the emotions of the heart, or imaginings of the mind. It is a higher principle than these, yet ideally gives them their true value and expression. It is because of the inherent connection and fidelity the Psychic Being has with the Soul that we can grow and accomplish anything at all on earth. For most of us the rays of light from the Soul are distorted and diffused by the ego sense, causing our actions in turn to be distorted and diffused. The Psychic Being can reveal the Soul in increasingly wider degrees as it uses life's experiences for that exact purpose. By shifting our identity and center of consciousness from the ego to the Psychic Being, we can increase the Psychic, Universalizing influence in our lower instruments of mind, body, and senses; over our lives. Our outer being will thus be illuminated, transformed and guided by the Soul's light that funnels through its evolving delegate, the Psychic Being. I may refer to the Individual Soul and the Psychic Being interchangeably as people are more familiar with the Soul, verses it's delegate the Psychic Being.

A Soul centered life vs. an ego-centered life is accomplished by our identification with our inner Soul and moving our consciousness to the Psychic Being. The Psychic Being will then take charge of the outer instrumentation of our being (body, vital and mind), and utilize it correctly for the purposes of our inner Soul. The Soul and Psychic Being are indestructible and survive the death experience until the previous life's experiences are assimilated and the Soul puts forth another life form of itself (body, vital and mind). The growth and essential experience of the Psychic Being are never lost. Once an individual is living a Soul centered life, there is no sense of personal self vs. the self of others. The true Self of others is one with one's own Self. As mentioned

earlier, the Ka and Ba have universalized dimensions to them, not just individual. This one Self is the Ausarian Self of not just the individual, but also of the African collective, and extends to all people. However, when I refer to the Ausarian Self in this work, I am speaking mainly of the Universal Divine Being in the poise of the African group-Soul, witnessing and enacting the historical development of African peoples the world over. For a deeper understanding of the Psychic Being, the individual and group Soul, I refer the reader to works written by Sri Aroubindo, particularly his books, "The Human Cycle, The Ideal of Human Unity, War and Self-Determination", "The Synthesis of Yoga" and "The Psychic Being".

[Sri Aroubindo on the Soul of a Nation]

Discussion on Ni Ching's version of Hua Hu Ching

I have discovered that the esoteric teachings of both the Hindu religion and Taoism are consistent with African views on the integral nature of life and on individual as well as collective spiritual development. For this reason, I include here my reflections on Ni Hua Ching's version of the ancient Chinese classic, the Hua Hu Ching, originally attributed to Lao Tze. I've found this version of the original text to be an excellent guide to personal spiritual cultivation. I have summarized some of my understandings of the lessons for individual spiritual development for selected Books numerated in the Hua Hu Ching. Keep in mind that practices on individual spiritual development are applicable to collective spiritual development. It would be instructive as one is reading the below teachings to consider how these teachings can be extended to the spiritual development of the African Collective.

Book 1

Referring to the master teacher ... *"His instruction was neither ordinary religion nor worldly wisdom, yet it revealed the truth of every aspect of the universe"*. To realize our unlimited life, we need not add things external to our nature, as in religious creeds, doctrines and domineering human intermediaries to our own divinity. Our inner nature already has everything needed. Adding externals to our nature is like trying to wash water, or adding a finger to our hand.

Book 2

"How should men and women who are motivated to attain correct awareness of their true nature calm their minds?" Being motivated to achieve correct awareness of our true nature is a start; however, knowing how to calm and manage the mind is essential. The mind can be an instrument of liberation or imprisonment. It can imprison by being stuck in the past, living in the imagined future, and trying to preserve the moment. It is said the way to manage the mind is like imagining a smooth ball rolling along a smooth disk. Then let go this image of a ball and disk, and all other attachments of the mind. Added to the difficulty are all the dualities created by the mind that separates us from perception of the Real. Intellectual knowledge and direct perception of the Real are not one and the same. In our runaway information age, there is a lack of guidance on how not to clutter or fixate the mind in groves of partial perception.

Book 3

"All lives are one life that can be called the One Great Universal Life". It is the same Source that courses through all forms. So, no life form should be disrespected. Again, it is the mind

that establishes dualities, and notions of superior VS inferior, more sacred and special than the other, self-verses other. To achieve awareness of the true nature of life and Self, these dualities of the mind must be dissolved. You may ask why treat others as yourself? The reason is because in ESSENCE you and "other" are the same. Namaste. Yes, there is diversity and distinction. Yet there is unity behind all diversity. Even more, there is a great Equality of the many and the One Source. Both the many and the One must be embraced as Equal. God and Man are one. Embracing is not even the best way to put it. We need not embrace who we really are as in reaching out. We need to just realize who we really are with inner, integral awareness. This is not the same as intellectual awareness. It is direct perception beyond thought and symbol.

We are the many and the One at once. Embrace that, but ultimately, just be THAT which you already are with integral awareness. I think at the core of this instruction is that we must maintain a non-discriminating mind. That is, maintain an awareness of the underlying unity behind diversity. To value one life form above another is harmful to achieving this awareness. I don't think it means ignore the fact that some need FIRST aid over others. There are people, groups, whose condition are so poor, that they demand our service first. If someone, or some group is dying, regardless of color, nationality, social status, or any other distinction, that person or group needs our focused service FIRST.

Dr. Claude Anderson, who wrote Powernomics, speaks against Blacks getting involved in horizontal issues or issues that affect all groups like poverty, or the environment. He says Blacks need to focus on vertical issues that affect Blacks uniquely, like economic racism. I understand his point, and I refer to this point when I say that if someone, or some group is bleeding, that they should receive first aid. Blacks need to service themselves first in those areas that they are bleeding in. This does not contradict the instruction of unconditional service. It's a fine line. Equality and balance is not always in the middle. Some need more, and with a greater frequency, to strike a balance to the whole.

Book 5

"Kind prince the mind can be just as immeasurable as the universe itself. An integral being ... unites his mind with the Subtle Origin and its expression in which there is no past, present, or future. This is how an integral being deals with his mind." This tells me that to un-tie the knots of the mind, the hang-ups, the habitual grooves or whirlpools we get stuck in, requires joining our minds with that which is above these limiting mental constructs, the Subtle Origin. This goes back to the previous injunction of having a non-discriminating mind that does not regard the dualities of life as irreconcilable, and all definitive. One then rises above the countless dualities, gain/loss, success/failure, beauty/ugly, and life/death, becoming free and unlimited. For the African, it also means aligning one's consciousness with the African Ancestral consciousness or the African Group Soul.

Book 7

"To hold the mind with any rigid framework is to immediately become trapped in the bondage of duality. If one does not discriminate between what is labeled as sacred and profane, one is liberated from the bondage of all concepts." Again, the instruction is not to be fixated on any mental constructs. Allow the mind to move freely like a smooth ball on a smooth disk, and don't be fixated on the image of a smooth ball and disk. Religious doctrine causes the mind to get stuck, fixated and crystalized. This state becomes a self-accepted prison from the wider realization of

universal oneness and Being. Not everyone will break free from this kind of bondage; yet there are beings that have and can support this evolutionary growth.

Book 8

"All the far-reaching, un-faded teachings of the ancient sages come from the same source: the subtle truth of great oneness". Behind the words, the sacred texts, recorded experiences, are the same un-faded Source that sustains all life, that IS all life. This Source exists without the need of our individual minds to image or fix it into concepts, precepts, or doctrines. It outstrips these, and so can we with a non-discriminating mind. This same Source, which sustains us, is within us. We need only go past the symbolic language and images created by the mind to perceive it. It IS our TRUE SELF, for we are one with IT.

Book 15

"Kind prince, to a universal integral being there is nothing that needs to be tolerated or labeled tolerance. Tolerance exists only in the relative sphere. Why is this? If you have risen above the relative concepts of the mind, there is no self and others, no longevity or brevity, no life or death in your mind, so there is no hatred or resentment. What, then, is the necessity for tolerance? One who is highly evolved is attached to nothing and does not depend on any particular mental concept or form in his relations with people or in serving them." The practice of this way of perception would almost be like starting life over. We must unlearn so much to have correct perception. We must let go of so much to embrace an unlimited life. The place to start is our insistence on holding on to the dualities of the mind that separates us from the underlying REALITY of oneness. All dualities are expressions of the same essence between the opposites. Though focusing on one end of the pole is a means of rising above the other pole, as in focusing on the positive to rise above the negative, this keeps us bounded to the relative realm of dualities.

Once we keep to one end of a pole, there will always be the suggestion in the mind of the opposite end of the pole. The way out is to see the oneness that is behind the dualities. Don't reject the many for the One, or the One for the many. That is another dichotomy. See the many and the One as an integral WHOLE. In seeing THAT, realize THAT as your essence because all of existence and non-existence is THAT.

Book 32

"The world and the particles are not separate, isolated things. The particles could be gathered to become the world, and the world could be dispersed to become particles. One small particle contains the nature of the world, and the world contains the nature of each small particle; the nature of each is the same. Although they are not one in the same, neither are they different."

I've pondered over this question deeply for many years. Here is the position I arrived to on this question after much mental struggle. The force of attraction and repulsion speaks to the pervasive oneness of life that is behind all diversity. The universe is made of particles, electrons, protons, neutrons, quarks, etc. How do these particles know to organize themselves in relation to the "other"? It is by the force of attraction and repulsion. Now for one particle to relate to another, to know the other through attraction or repulsion, there must be a medium between that shares in the essence of each. If this were not so there could be no communication, no relation. More so, this medium, sharing in the essence of each particle can thus be said to be on some level, identical or indistinguishable from the particles they join. If this were not so there would be a break in the path of communication, preventing communication. But what we see is that everywhere, all the time,

there is communication of attraction and repulsion. Therefore, all that exist is integrated in oneness by this shared subtle medium. Life is backed by oneness, while at the same time expresses in diversity. Because of the integral oneness of life, I am one with all, and life is unlimited. From this understanding springs my courage, clarity, peace, strength, power, and transcendence of ego, pain, and even the dissolution of death.

One may view that focusing on the African Collective Self is exclusionary of and separative to the Soul of other groups. Consider the injunction to "Know Thy Self". This injunction does not negate the Self of others. It implies that to truly know your Self, is to know the unity of life, and your oneness with it, with others. Indeed, then there is not dichotomy of Self VS other, as the "Hua Hu Ching" mentions is an impediment we must dissolve.

An Overview of Collective Spiritual Development

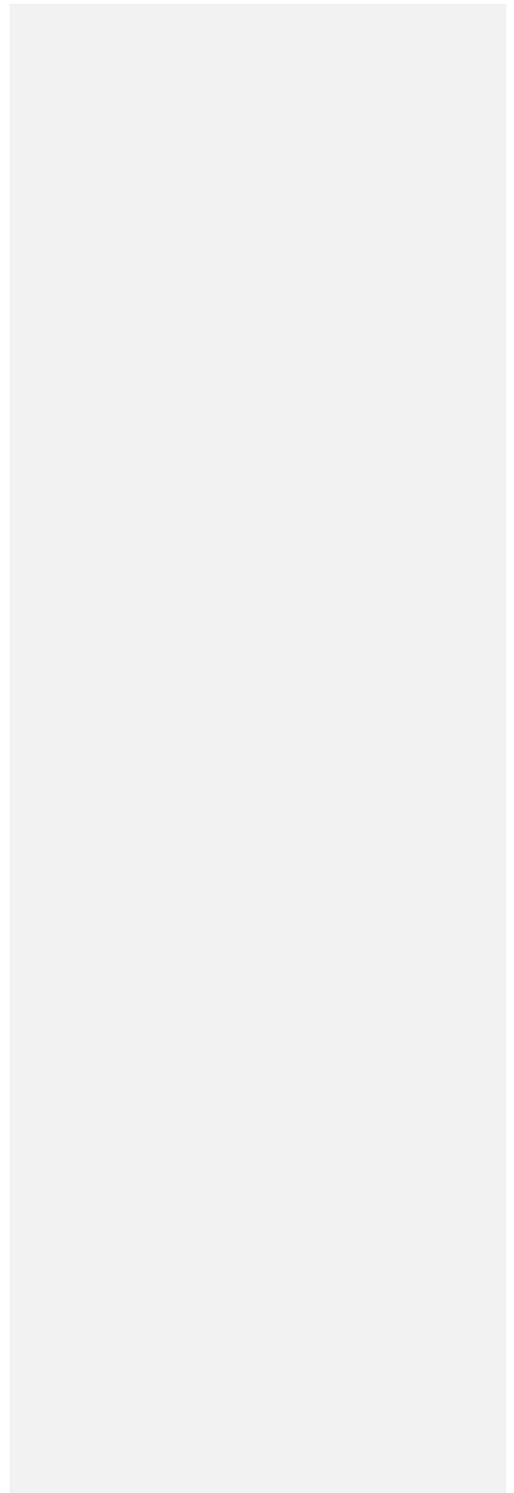
Collective spiritual development, just as in individual spiritual development, is a natural progression of the Spirit of the Universal Divine One involved in matter and Life, to higher forms that have a greater capacity to express the One Being. The destiny of humanity is to evolve collective social life to levels that will increasingly reveal and more freely express the indwelling Spirit of Oneness. The Divine One is the All, the only thing that really exists, THAT has become involved in all of matter, and is evolving through matter to higher expressions of its Self. The Higher Self of the African collective, is one with the Universal Divine One, and is currently spearheading the evolution of indwelling Consciousness that resides in physical matter.

Stages of collective spiritual development are generally aligned to the social development of a people going from family, to clans, to powerful nation states, to country. In the Tao Te Ching by Lao Tze, it states that if an individual knows how to guide his individual life, then he knows how to guide the life of his family, the state, and the country. Implied in this statement is that if a society is organized by un-enlightened individuals, then the family, state, and country is based on an unsteady foundation and likely has embedded within it the seeds of decay, disintegration and transformation. There are notable examples where societies have grown large, perhaps based on its domination over other collectives, and imploded from the lack of internal cohesiveness that comes only by recognizing the inner divinity of all people inside and outside the collective. The Roman Empire is just one such example. Even societies that lasted for millennia, (i.e. the Nubian and Egyptian civilizations) where transformed from their relatively stable structures, to other forms, as the Unlimited Being cannot be permanently limited to any organizing structure. It must evolve to wider expressions of the Divine.

A whole spiritual movement can begin with just one spiritually evolved adept, where his/her energy is disseminated throughout the society starting with a few faithful and self-realized disciples. A spiritual group may flower and become a significant sector in a society over time, seeking to influence the society in subtle or overt ways. The spiritual energy may later be disseminated over a larger number of people; however, the intensity or vibration levels of this energy may become diffused from the original core group, as the number of members increase. A common occurrence historically has been that the purity of the original insights and energy of a founding spiritual teacher become distorted as they passed through many minds, over time. The original expanding spiritual awareness may have become limited in crystalized forms of creed, doctrines, sayings, and prohibitions. The faithful may be split into various stratum of spiritual development, ranging from those who have reached the highest esoteric understandings and spiritual attainment, to those who tend to make the teachings into mere formulas and creed of good social behavior. In the latter case, there is little transformation towards higher consciousness taking place; but it is a start. Since spiritual development in a society is guided by a group of individuals of self-mastery who have dissolved their egos, collective spiritual development need not detract from individual development and vice versa. Individuals support collective development, and the collective supports individual development without stifling proscriptions. Collective development, however, occurs at a slower rate than individual development. Collective spiritual development is more along the lines of an average of the development of its members.

As mentioned, an individual can live an egoistic superficial life of his/her outer being. With individual spiritual cultivation, the person shifts the center of identity to the inner being, or true Self. The same is the case with collective spiritual development, since the collective is made up of individuals acting in some form of solidarity and synchronicity. The progressive Impetus of the Divine Spark is for larger collective to take on attitudes of collective inner being, as opposed to

that of collective outer being. When the collective identity is placed with the outer being, egoism, the collective espouses attitudes that can be very destructive to all people in the world, as in imperialism and racism. Imperialism is egoism played out on the world stage. Ultimately the individual or collective that is living mostly in the outer being is evolving, however slowly, towards Divine revelation in the world; for the true determiner of life and evolution of consciousness is the Universal Integral Soul of life. Below is a chart listing some attitudes/perspectives of the individual and collective inner and outer being.



Attitudes when Identified with the Outer Being

	Perspectives of the Individual	Perspectives of the Collective
Attitudes Towards Life		
Identified with Physical Life	<p>Everything is separate.</p> <p>Matter is eternal; hence matter is God.</p> <p>Truth is only what can be verified with the physical senses.</p> <p>One's body is one's self.</p>	<p>Species, including humans, are fortuitous accidents, as in chance mutations that give rise to natural selection and the survival of the fittest.</p> <p>Society highly values extending sense perception and ability to analyze the physical world with technological instruments.</p> <p>Society seeks short-term material gain with little to no concern for long-term damage to the environment.</p> <p>Measures collective well-being by physical possessions, i.e. land, minerals, human labor force.</p> <p>Champion members with physical beauty.</p> <p>Discrimination against its own members based on superficial characteristics.</p> <p>Members' value measured in ability to make things; products over people.</p> <p>Survival of the fittest.</p>
Identified with the Vital Energy	<p>Absorbed with pursuit of wealth, sex and power.</p> <p>Life governed by desire and personal preferences.</p> <p>Everything is a resource for the powerful individual, whose limits are only the more powerful.</p>	<p>Indiscriminant forces of nature control life; precipitating their need to be controlled by man (Man VS Nature).</p> <p>Society lives beyond sustainability of environment. This leads to coveting resources of other sovereign groups.</p>

	<p>One's emotion's and vital energy are identified as one's self.</p>	<p>The vitally strong of society are most cherished, whereas the sick and weak are devalued, exploited, or ultimately eliminated.</p> <p>Champions members with vital prowess as in sports or hunting.</p> <p>Promotes instant gratification, the pleasure principle.</p> <p>Seeks progress by having highly motivated and productive members who work and sacrifice for the collective, even at expense of individual growth.</p> <p>Seeks to secure and enlarge its self by vital means.</p> <p>Seek power relations in society where a few benefit at the expense of the many.</p>
<p>Identified with the Mental Faculty</p>	<p>Life governed by moral and mental principles.</p> <p>Mind is a product of physical matter.</p> <p>Absorbed with one's own perspective and conceptions.</p> <p>One's mind is one's self – "I think therefore I am"</p>	<p>Society governed by moral and intellectual precepts.</p> <p>Logic and reason is God, Logos.</p> <p>Extols the virtue of mind over matter and behavioral psychology.</p> <p>Theories of mentally superior races.</p> <p>Sets up society where the mentally adept are rewarded far above all other members.</p>

Table 2. Identification with Inner Being

Attitudes Towards Life	The Individual Perspectives	The collective perspectives
	<p>All things are connected, though in appearance separate.</p> <p>Search for the purpose and meaning of life in one's self, rather than external to one's self.</p> <p>Death is viewed as a transition to another phase of life.</p> <p>Life governed by what is intuited to be the truth of one's inner being.</p> <p>Life is a Divine revelation.</p> <p>Aspiration for human perfection as an embodiment of the Divine on earth.</p> <p>The infinite is in the finite but not limited by the finite, and the finite is in the infinite and can identify totally with it.</p> <p>The Divine is the ultimate cause, sustainer, executer and benefactor of actions.</p> <p>The body, the vital and the mind are instruments in service of soul, which is an apportionment of the Divine on earth.</p> <p>Recognizes the limitations of sense perception.</p> <p>One's life is an evolution of the Divine that is involved in life.</p>	<p>Humankind is a Divine manifestation.</p> <p>Matter is the Divine Spirit in manifested form.</p> <p>Truth is what can be verified by the inner being, and by collective progress.</p> <p>The environment is not a possession but a means of support granted by the Divine.</p> <p>A Divine Will ultimately controls the forces of Nature.</p> <p>Humans can engage nature to further the Divine expression.</p> <p>Society engages in sustainable modes of production that do not harm the environment.</p> <p>The forces of Nature are viewed as powers of the Divine and are honored as such.</p> <p>The mind is used to organize society based on Divine revelation.</p> <p>Pursues and measures collective wellbeing by fostering collective identification with Divine.</p> <p>Pursues and measures collective wellbeing by fostering collective identification with Divine.</p> <p>Promotes initiation into higher God knowledge and expression.</p> <p>The talents of all members are respected equally.</p>

		<p>Men and women are viewed as inherently equal.</p> <p>Promotes initiation into higher God knowledge and expression.</p> <p>The talents of all members are respected equally.</p> <p>Men and women are viewed as inherently equal.</p> <p>As above so below; society is to be a mirror of Divine order.</p>
Attitudes Towards Self	The Individual	The collective Self
	<p>I am not my body, my mind, nor my vital energy. These are instruments in service of my Soul, which is an apportionment of the Divine on earth.</p> <p>Recognizes the limitations of sense perception.</p> <p>One's life is an evolution of the Divine that is involved in life.</p>	<p>Pursues and measures collective wellbeing by fostering collective identification with Divine;</p> <p>Promotes initiation into higher God knowledge and expression.</p> <p>The talents of all members of society are respected equally.</p> <p>Men and women are viewed as inherently equal.</p>
Attitudes Towards Others	The Individual	The collective
	<p>All people are expressions of the Divine;</p> <p>All people are treated with the dignity, equality, respect, and honor that one would give to the Divine because the Divine resides in each person.</p>	<p>Honors the concept of the human family and respect for its diversity as expressed through other collectives.</p> <p>Embraces cultural structures that transcend previously established divisions among us in our societies.</p>

		<p>Respects the sovereignty of other people's land.</p> <p>Seeks symbiotic power relations with other collectives, and views these as an indicator of the society's health and progressive nature.</p> <p>Warfare is only for checking aggressive, imbalanced forces.</p> <p>Spiritual aspiration and Divine grace is the world's salvation.</p> <p>Honors the equal rights and protections of other collectives in the world.</p> <p>Uses its granted powers of life to further harmonious development of Diverse expressions of the Divine via other collectives, while fostering unity amongst the diverse collectives.</p> <p>Pays recognition to our honorable ancestors, who through their good deeds have paved the way for our progress.</p> <p>Bases progress upon higher principles taught by ancestors.</p>
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One example of how negative attitudes of an individual can be related to that of a collective is where a continental or diasporan African lives life simply for material gain, mimicking their colonial oppressors, thereby missing the greater meaning of life. So too would the espousal of exclusively materialistic or exploitative goals by the collective African value system be a misunderstanding of the meaning and collective goal of African life. A specific example of this is embracing extreme capitalism consumerism at the expense of collective national development. Material gains are indeed a primal and necessary foundation for the promotion of a healthy society; however, they are not to be mistaken for the ultimate purpose of life. Materialism in a society leads to coveting the resources of others at all human costs, not seeing the other as one's self. The African collective must, like the individual, strive to be none other than the embodiment of the Divine on

Earth, the Collective Ausarian Self. All activities of the collective must support this objective. All that contradicts, restricts, hinders, or confuses this objective must be either transformed to support this objective or else extracted from the body of the organized African collective. Nature and its resources are to be used in harmonious ways to support the development of the collective consciousness to higher levels, as well as to express the underlying harmonies of life in more elastic terms that do not interfere with the health of the environment and the healthy development of group members, nationals, or neighboring peoples. Now that we have some measures of collective growth, we can try to get a better understanding of the evolving collective Self, particularly the African Ausarian Self, as we look at some common expressions of It throughout history, or even in contemporary life.

The collective Self is revealed wherever there is a massing of individuals with a common purpose that is somehow relevant to the indwelling Divine Aspiration. This is a broad description; however, the collective Self has a wide and deep field to operate in, and any singular description of this Self is bound to be limited. If anyone stops to think about experiences where he or she was functioning in a group situation one could recall the sensation of a collective group consciousness. The following are just a few examples:

- The simple cohesiveness of open fluid cooperation, communication, and coordination within a family and extended family.
- The joy and solidarity felt by Black folks in church gatherings, as they collectively sing spirituals or freedom songs.
- The collective solidarity felt by Black folks when working and/or completing a group or community uplift project, or marching for justice.
- The collective psychical effect that placing humans in space or on the moon.
- The nationalistic feelings of people in a country when they work towards a collective goal of national uplift.
- The collective psychical effect when a collective is bracing for an attack or pending disaster or the collective psychical sense when a collective works collaboratively to recover from a disaster.
- The collective psychical effect when a collective successfully fends off a group threat or disaster.
- The collective psychical effect experienced, particularly in a stadium, when a national sports team wins a world championship game and starts a group chant.

There are countless examples of the above. To get a real sense of collective Being, one only needs to think back on when he/she were a part of a collective as it asserted its Self to accomplish group motives of high ethical significance. One experience that I relate to personally is participating in African drum circles. There is a collective Spirit present during these drum circles that defies description; however, I can say that during these events I feel a sense of family, welcoming, of collective vitality, a sense of security, healing, acceptance, peace, and encouragement. I also feel at ease talking to ancestors and higher spirits, guides of the African collective, and invoking their positive energy for support.

A collective can also manifest in less enlightened ways when there is a diminished employment of the higher collective will and consciousness. In such a case there is a greater influence of the outer shell or egoistic dynamic of the collective. Some examples of this are as follows:

- When a collective band together to forcibly take material resources from the indigenous or traditional users of those resources.
- When a collective seeks to bolster its collective self-esteem by diminishing the accomplishments, value, or rights of other collectives.
- When a collective, having achieved some measure of internal success and surplus, does not seek to assist other collectives to reach a similar status.
- When a collective loses its impetus to adapt to changes or integrate fresh perspectives of life and growth into its collective life.
- When a collective view itself as the chosen group by God above all others, and closes itself to the insights and knowledge achieved by others.

The higher collective African Self, the witness to the full range of experiences by the African collective through the ages, is available to each of us to broaden our understanding of life, to fortify us for the difficult struggles immediately confronting us and ahead of us into the future. Part of what the African leaders and priest of high consciousness mean when they speak of invoking the assistance of the ancestors, is that we have an African spiritual Self that is always available for us to support our individual and collective journey of life.

The Collective African Self Consciousness Recognized in African Centered Psychology

Many African centered scholars, psychologists, and activists have illuminated in their works the perception and expression of oneness that is found in traditional African societies and social constructs. The below excerpt from Daudi Azibo's "African Psychology", lends support to my understanding of the collective African Self that is evolving through the distant past, into the present, and through the future. We each are enfoldments of this Self, eddies of the collective Ocean Self.

"Now since the African is the original human being, the consubstantiation principle states "we [Africans] are one people, we are of [we share] the same [spiritual] essence' ... transmitted biogenetically at conception". This shared spiritual essence is the basis for the African self-extension principle: the contemporary African person is a direct extension of the (presumed) Divine (Creator, One God, etc.) by virtue of begetting through the Ancestors and the immediate line of progenitors. Her or his progeny are equally and likewise extended into the distant, infinite future through the required continuation of progeny. Taken together, since they are inseparable, the consubstantiation and self-extension principles give rise to the African extended-self concept." This all can be encapsulated with the African Proverb, "I am because we are, and because we are I am".

Comment [RL2]: reference

Kobi Kambon's definition of African Self extends it to include the collective African Self or "African Self-Extension Orientation"; like what we saw Azibo refer to as the consubstantiation principle.

"The African Self-Extension Orientation (ASEO) refers to the deeply rooted, unconscious, genetically based African Spirituality reflecting a continual-unending urge/striving for collective-communal expression of African cosmic (spiritual) wholeness or unity. African self-consciousness (ASC) represents the conscious expression of African Spirituality (ASEO); which affirms African life, self-determination, and preservation."

The basic traits of African personality, according to Kambon, refer to those beliefs, attitudes, and behaviors; which reflect, project, and reinforce African Spirituality. These are the cognitive-emotional and behavioral qualities that are natural/indigenous to African people, irrespective of social-environmental conditions (i.e. living in under white supremacy domination). There are four components of ASC (**African Self-consciousness**). Implied in these components is the recognition of collective African consciousness. The four components are as follows:

- a) Awareness/recognition of one's (collective) African identity and cultural heritage.
- b) General ideological and activity priorities placed on African survival, liberation and proactive/affirmative development.
- c) Specific activity priorities placed on (collective) self-knowledge and self-affirmation, i.e. Afrocentric values, customs, institution-building, etc.
- d) A posture of resolute resistance/defense against "anti-African/Anti-Black" forces and threats to African survival in general. "

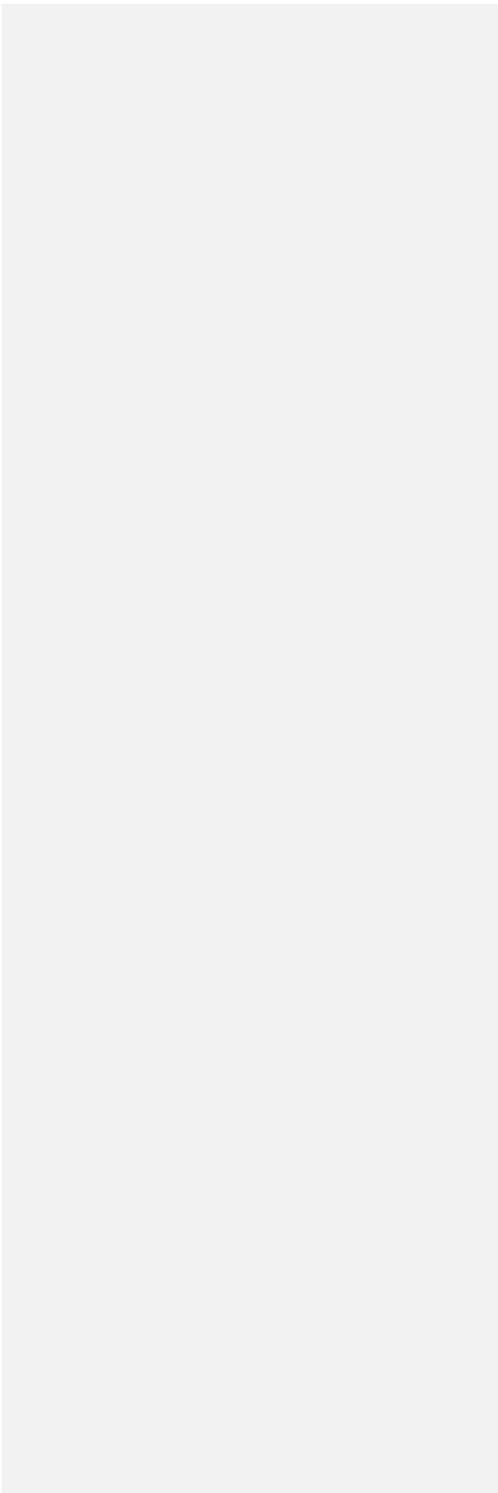
Howard Bruce Bynum, in his "The African Unconscious", lays bare a perception of an African "Soul", the African Unconscious that is like an ocean of consciousness that enfolds to become the individual lives of each of us. This consciousness transcends time and space, yet manifest into personalized beings located in time and space, us. It is thereby one with the Universal Consciousness.

Wade Nobels, in his work, "Africanity and the Black Family", gives insight into to the collective African Self as expressed in extended family and societal relations.

"The notion of self, in accordance with the African belief system, was (is) based on one's individual consciousness taking its reference point, the family, wherein one's existence is perceived as being interconnected to the existence of all else. More specifically, we can note that the traditional philosophical notion of Oneness of Being requires that man conceptualizes his own existence as being an awareness of his universal connectedness, i.e., man is an indispensable, integrated, and interdependent part of the universe. The notions of Interdependence and Oneness of Being allow for a conception of self, which transcends, throughout the historical consciousness of one's people, the finiteness of both the physical body, finite space and absolute time. The notion of self, or more specifically, the awareness of self for African peoples, is, therefore, not limited to just the cognitive awareness of one's own uniqueness, individuality and historical finiteness. In its truest form, it is self-awareness, which is the awareness of one's historical consciousness (collective spirituality and the subsequent state or sense of "we-ness). The most compelling property of the traditional notion of self is the process of cosmologically grounding the self in the collective, social and spiritual sense of the history of one's people. In recognition of this kind of self-awareness, which is consistent with a particular belief system, we can note that the traditional African (and most contemporary descendants) view of "self" is contingent upon the existence of other."

This is a profound summarization of how our individual consciousness is existentially extended into the collective consciousness and is expressed concretely in the organization of family, then community then nation. Agyei & Akato affirm the centrality of the family in expressing the Divine order in no uncertain terms saying, "Family is the first and foremost expression of Odumankoman in the physical (human) realm". Pg 18

Our collective consciousness will express in situations regardless of whether it is from a poise of higher awareness, Ausarian Collective Consciousness, or from a poise of unawareness or unconsciousness. The state of unconscious Consciousness can surge undirected, unfocused, and unaware. In individuals or groups, it expresses as being reactionary, not valuing one's self, one's group, or one's ancestral tradition. It expresses as not having awareness of a historical continuity. It expresses as being externalized, seeking validation from foreigners or seeking external measures of worthiness, beauty and godliness. It also expresses as materialism and consumerism. The Divine Spark that is involved in us continues to evolve out of us. Having discussed some important aspects to individual cultivation of our higher inner Divinity, and related those aspects to collective African spiritual development, we are in a better position to assess, following broad historical lines, how the collective African Consciousness has evolved through the ages.



Chapter 2

Collective African Expression Through Religions

Africans have always been known, since ancient times to the present, to be a people who generally value inner spiritual life. Collective spiritual expressions abound in Africa. It is my sense that traditional African religions in general give expression to the depth of the African group-Soul, rather than, as in far too many cases with Western religions, become fossilized into a set of proscriptions that have lost their initial spiritual energy and morphed into tools of social control by an elite sector of the society. It behooves us, in assessing the levels of Divine expression through African religions, to first assess the benefits and limitations of religions in general.

Religions have both beneficial and detrimental aspects to them. I view religions as training wheels for the individual and society. I think they can be essential to helping people begin the upward movement to the life Divine. However, too often religions place obstacles in the way of completing this process. Furthermore, religions often devalue the Divinity that resides within, and minimize the necessity for bringing the Divine energy down to transform the instruments of our being into unfettered expressions of Supreme Being on earth.

The below is a listing of some limitations of religions. Not all religions will have these limitations, but most will have some. When it comes to realizing our full divine potential, all limitations must in time be transformed or otherwise transcended.

Religions:

- Tend to resist adapting to changing times or accommodation of unique circumstances.
- Tend to restrict or delimit that which is limitless, Divine Being and Expression
- Tend not have flexibility to embrace other cultures and religious expression. This attitude can justify gross actions such as war in God's name; i.e. crusades, or Jihads.
- Tends to worship God as a super human
 - This entails projection of human attributes such as emotions to a God figure. This can limit understanding of God.
 - This attitude can make human life seem insignificant in comparison to God, thus trivializing the human experience, and reinforcing the false notion of man being separate from God, instead of being one with God.
- Tends toward exclusivity or the chosen people attitude. This gives rise to viewing a religion as the only bearer of the Truth and Grace of God.
 - This attitude then becomes a justification for oppressing others; such as confiscation of a people's land because God ordained it.
- Tends to foster dependency on an external salvation in place of individual effort, giving control of life to so called intermediaries who intercede on God's behalf, thus circumventing one's own direct realization of God within. For example, this dependency can take the form of belief that baptism and profession of faith guarantees salvation; vs. internal spiritual effort and development.
- Tends to promote the dualistic view of God vs. man; where there is an unbridgeable gulf between God's status of being and humanity. The opposite of this view is that God and man are one, since God is all that is.

- Tends to promote the view that man is born in sin; which loads guilt on members and can be used to control the psychology of members. This attitude also depresses the human capacity to transcend limiting conditions of life.
- Tends to seek power to interpret and control actions of members, as in racism or abusive patriarchal domination over women.
- Tends to become ritualistic and worship becomes an enacted script rather than a dynamic merging with Divine consciousness, as with trance or being “mounted by the deities”.

The below is a listing of some good points of religions. Not all religions will have these good points, but most will have some. When it comes to realizing our full divine potential, all experiences can be used as stepping-stones towards realizing the Divine within and without.

Religions:

- Most often are good guides for moral development, thus serving as an incubator for the developing soul.
- Can promote healthy community interaction.
- Can serve as an introduction to a power greater than the individual ego; thus, serves as a stepping-stone towards the transcendence of the ego.
- With religious devotion one can develop a faith that can surpass the logical reasoning mind, without abandoning all reason. So, spirituality and reason are complementary.
- Religion can be the springboard to deeper spiritual growth and expansion of consciousness.
- On higher levels of esoteric religious practice one can transcend the limited view of the orthodoxy, obtaining a more integral or universal view.
 - God and man are one
 - The higher motive of a religious body can be not to control the individual, but rather to bring out latent abilities of individuals, to develop individual faculties of power and understanding through initiation.
- Can organize activities of life to facilitate Divine revelation and expression through the individual and the collective.
- In esoteric religions, objects and man are signatures or expressions of the Divine. From this perspective the powers, forces, forms of life are all seen as emanations of God. In formal restrictive religions, this perspective is called polytheism, animalism, paganism, and is condemned.

Capping off this general assessment of religions I include here a prelude that Master Ni Hua Ching has in many of his books regarding religion. He writes:

“The Subtle Essence conveyed by the teaching of the Integral Way is the deep truth of all religions, yet it leaves all religions behind to be the clothing of different seasons or worn in different places. The teaching of the Subtle Essence includes all things of religious importance, yet it is not on the same level as religion. It serves people’s lives directly as all religions wish to do, but it surpasses the boundary of all religions and extracts the essence of all religions.”

I equate the Subtle Essence referred to above with the, Higher Individual Self, the Collective Ausarian Self, as well as with the Higher Collective Self of other national groups and

of Humanity overall. These are all integral and on the deepest level of reality, the One Self or Highest Divine Spirit. The Highest Divine Spirit can poise Its Self in all these forms simultaneously. Religions are vehicles, instruments, or expressive edifices of the Divine Spirit. Some religions are better conveyers of the Divine Spirit than others. For Africans, traditional religious or spiritual systems, have always been a means of individual and group expression of the Divine. Africans have not simply sought mediators between man and the Divine, but sought to transform themselves into unfettered instruments of the Divine through spiritual rituals and divination, and divine possession or being mounted by deities.

Commonalities of Traditional African Religions in Pre-colonial Africa

One of the areas of social organization that strongly points to a continent wide collective consciousness through the ages in Africa is that of traditional religions. This is evident by the beliefs that are held in common by traditional African religions in pre-colonial Africa, whether the religion is of a society located in the North, South, and East or West of the continent. I am referring to here to religious or spiritual systems that were developed by Africans prior to European or Arab intrusions. Some of these commonalities are as follows:

- Belief in One Almighty God that has created the universe.
- Lesser gods are ministers or delegates of God, in charge of various aspects of creation
- The Spirit of God permeates all living and non-physical beings.
- The human soul is an apportionment or divine spark from the Supreme Being and has a destiny to fulfill according the Divine Will.
- Belief in immortality or persistence of life after death.
- Reverence for the ancestors who have passed, yet still interact and even assist the living.
- All aspects of life are under the influence God; if not directly, then through His / Her deities and the ancestors.
- Disease or imbalance on the individual or societal levels seen as resulting from past wrong actions and must be atoned for or remedied by sacrifice and correction.
- Respect and deference to priesthood for matters affecting the health of the society. The priesthood is a powerful force in society.
- Priesthood pushes the envelope of understanding, knowing, and spiritual expression.
 - Divination or reading the signs of nature and seeing developing events
 - Management of unseen forces
 - Tracking long term trends effecting all, leading to study of cosmic forces, Astronomy and Astrology
- Development of song, art, dance, symbols, writing to convey and express spiritual understanding. This led to a learned sector of society known as scribes in ancient Egypt.
- The temple becomes center of learning for society and in some cases, attracts foreigners from distant lands. The inner temple is for developing the spiritual faculties and divine realization of initiates.
- The aspiration of building religiously edifying and revelatory structures brought about development of architecture, mathematics, and science
- The ancestors are closer to the spirit world and can therefore be effective mediators between Man and the Supreme Being.

The espousal of similar religious/spiritual views and practices by Africans across the entire continent, points to a continent wide, deep structure, common consciousness expressing through the medium of traditional African religions. This collective consciousness pushes the evolution of humanity to ever deeper and wider levels of expression. This consciousness has been so definitively established that base and egoistic concepts have been nearly transcended completely in most African societies. One concept that is foreign to the African worldview is the concept that fellow human beings can be viewed as chattel slaves, having no greater status than that of an animal and devoid of basic human rights and dignity. Where there existed slavery in ancient Africa, it did not have the quality of stripping a person of all his/her humanity, freedom, and all of life chances. Even where there were strict cast systems for the division of labor, individuals had an opportunity within that system to not only aggrandize themselves materially, but to develop a deeper understanding of Self and even elevate to a higher status socially. Not all members of a given society will have a wide and deep awareness of their higher Self; just as when we are asleep we usually are not aware of our waking level of consciousness, though it still exists in a recessive state. So, it is with the less aware members of society. Not all religions will be a high expression of the Divinity within the collective. African religions cannot be viewed as static cultural structures that do not evolve over time. Not all religious practices will evoke higher divine expression of the Divine involved with human experience; though some will develop practices that give shape to higher expressions of the Divine within humanity, individually as well as collectively. Africans still have a role to play in giving to humanity ever wider and deeper expressions of the indwelling Universal Integral Divine One through traditional religions.

Higher Divine Consciousness usually remains potent and refined in a few individuals as a sacred trust (through initiation), and then slowly disseminates its elevating influence throughout the general society in a controlled or staged manner to the degree that various sectors of the society can absorb. It seeks to touch all sectors in some way, however faint. One primary effect of the higher consciousness must be to elevate the lives of the society in terms that include the physical, psychological, intellectual, vital, and psycho-spiritual areas. Education, as with life generally, was integrated in wholes rather than fragmented into separate disciplines. Whatever the area of study, it is directed to improve the functioning and maintain the balance of society overall. In addition, there is usually a benefit to the surrounding environment or neighboring collectives that meet it. This is so even if these collectives are invaders, for this too is a means that the Spirit can use to widen its scope of Self-awareness and action on earth. So often invaders, using their current power, write the story of their conquests and achievements over those they conquered, but fail to tell how their own society have been enriched by learning from and general association with those they have conquered. This is particularly true of Asiatic, Greek, Roman, Arab, and European invasions of Kemet, known more familiarly as Egypt. No doubt the Industrial Revolution in North America would not have occurred as it did without the "capital" and life energies, physical, vital and mental, of enslaved Africans.

Another effect of the African higher consciousness, individual or collective, is that it offers a model of human interaction. It informs general humanity as to what is possible on a wider scale (i.e. Egyptian temple and monument building). To remain spiritually progressive, societies must not ignore negative attitudes and energy movements, either internal or external. It must honestly and forthrightly address common human struggles, and demonstrate how these problems can be harmonized and transformed into growth movements. The greater the challenge is that humanity faces, then the greater potential there is for victory over inhumanity, victory of higher

consciousness over unconsciousness. No doubt this is the example that spiritual culture of ancient Nubia and Kemet served for over ten thousand years of human history.

Deep Thought in Mysteries System of Kemet, Expressive of High Collective Consciousness

The study of archeology in Kemet, in conjunction with other sciences, has revealed much regarding the way of life of our ancient African ancestors. However, it is my sense that the world has yet to fully appreciate that the ancient Egyptians were a black skinned African people, remaining so until the infusion of Asiatic hoards into the Nile Delta after 1765 B.C.E.; particularly with the invasion by the Hyksos. Even so, the Egyptians appeared black up to the day that Herodotus wrote what his eyes witnessed. Subsequent to the successive invasions by the Assyrians, the Greeks, the Romans, and the Arabs, there appeared in Kemet the mulatto admixture that progressed to what we see there today. The ancient Kemetians described themselves from the earliest times as a colony of Ethiopia, which is South of Egypt. South of Egypt you have the Nubians who are unquestionably black skinned. This is important to state at the onset because I want to be clear that when I speak of the deep thought of Pharaonic Egypt, I am referring to that of black skinned Africans independent of any significant European or Asiatic influence. The high philosophy or way of way of viewing life that existed in ancient Kemet is an achievement of black skinned Africans; it was not imported. If there were no such thing as global White supremacy, an oppressive ideology based on skin color or lack thereof (albinism), this point about the skin color of ancient Africans would not be necessary. Another point that is worth noting here that renowned African historian and scholar Dr. Henrik Clark made frequent mention, is that the Nile river is the world's first super highway, carrying on it culture, wealth, and facilitating a collective consciousness. The Nile flows from South to North because Southern Africa is higher in elevation than Northern Africa. Therefore, Southern Egypt is called Upper Egypt, whereas Northern Egypt is called Lower Egypt. It is natural then for the direction of origin, imprinting, and continued dominant influence to come from the South of Egypt, Nubia/Ethiopia, by way of the Nile super highway, rather than from the Mediterranean Sea. This fits with the profession by the ancient Egyptians that they are a colony on Ethiopia. It also fits testimonials by the Greeks as to where they derived their wisdom. During the late dynastic periods of Kemet, no Greek was considered by their own learned until they have visited Egypt and studied at the feet of Egyptian sages.

Having said all the above, we now move to the basis of deep thought in Pharaonic Kemet. The environment that the Kemetians developed in, contributed greatly to the development of higher thought in Kemet. The Nile was the source of life in what would otherwise have been largely a desert region. The inundation of the Nile onto the surrounding banks was a regular phenomenon. Kemet was relatively secure from invasion for millennia as it was flanked on the East by the red Sea, and on the West by desert. To the North was the stopgap of the Mediterranean Sea, and to the South were a people of like mind in terms of the deep structure of their respective cultures. Kemet was the daughter of Nubia. This relative security and regularity of environment allowed the African in Kemet freedom to explore the deeper harmonies, relations, and realities of life. It was a basis for continuous, progressive, deep thought and self-reflection. Nature was viewed as supportive of life if properly cultivated, thus God and the gods were supportive causes for human life, if the God force was internally cultivated and outwardly expressed. Man, and Nature was viewed as inseparable expressions of the Divine. There was no definite line drawn where it can be said that this is where Man begins and God, or the gods, end. Man, and God were one, because

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God resides in all. From this fundamental and central worldview that is typically African, sprung the rest of Kemetic thought and social organization. x

I will refer in the following to two developments in ancient black Kemet that I think reveals the deep thought and driving force of our ancestors. These are, the Ausaian myth, and the practice Maat. Before I do, I want to reiterate that higher collective thought is not necessarily something that is instantly assimilated by all members of an entire collective. Even when that higher thought is presented to a segment of a collective, that segment may not be ready to fully assimilate it. In ancient Kemetic Mysteries system, not all the members of the society were privy to the deeper meanings of precepts taught in the temples. Priest underwent spiritual initiation or years of preparation and development before they could be counted as knowing the higher Truths of life. Until then, they were considered as being on many levels ignorant or uninitiated. This is not to say that the general society had no conception of the Divine. It is to say that there were still barriers of thought between one's outer expression and the inner reality within. Initiation was a concerted effort to eradicate all such barriers.

It must also be understood that the light of Kemetic deep thought was a beacon for all of Africa and even the world, this light was assimilated to varying degrees throughout the African collective throughout the continent. Nubian societal practices, including kingship and a pantheon of Neters, or gods, were common with that of Kemetic society. The Nubians were in many respects progenitors of higher Kemetic thought. I say this considering the artifacts found in Nubia depicting known Kemetic gods; for example, the Qustul Incense Burner, that depicts the white crown of a pharaoh. So Nubian consciousness was likely on par with that of the Kemetians. Kemet then was a flowering of other branches of Africa. The deep thought of ancient Kemetians elevated the collective consciousness of Africa and the World to levels it had not previously known.

Ausarian Myth Revealing the Deep Collective Thought of Africans

[Give an overview]

For a comprehensive treatise on the deeper meaning of the Ausarian myth, I refer the reader to the works of Ra Un Nefer Amen; *The Medu Neter Vol. 1*. I also refer the reader to "The Ausarian Resurrection", by Muata Ashby. I rely on much of my understanding of the correspondences between the gods or deities of Ancient Egypt from teachings by these and other African spiritual teachers. An important thing to understand with the Ausarian myth and the deities is that their sphere of influence and control, as delegates of the supreme God, is not only in the external universe, but also within the psychic spiritual makeup of human kind. The gods reside in humans, and correspond to various levels of consciousness and power/energy within a person. All the levels of consciousness have their role to play in our makeup, but there is a question of order and precedence if we are to initiate our higher development and expression of the Divine Spirit within. Ra Un Nefer Amen helps us with this order by presenting the Kemetic tree of life in his *Medu Neter Vol. 1*. Not all the ancient Kemetic gods are initially represented in the tree of life. However, if the various nodes of the tree are looked upon as spheres of general influence, all the ancient Kemetic gods can ultimately be associated with one or another sphere.

The important thing to understand here is that all the energies of the deities are interrelated with one another in an integral and complementary hierarchal order. Humanity must establish an ideal or balanced order between these energies internally and externally; for as above so as below. This balance is known as Maat in the ancient Kemetic deep thought. The result of having achieved

the correct order or precedence of the gods within is to elevate our consciousness beyond the finite and merge it with the infinite, for as the consciousness goes, so to goes our status and power of being. This is key to reaching our human ideal on earth. We reveal the Divine on earth in ways dictated by the Truth/Thought and Will/Force of the Divine through the instruments of our individual lives. The culmination of our inner cultivation is that we identify ourselves as being one with the Divine in form and beyond form. This state in the ancient Kemetic tradition is known as becoming Ausar, and the peace achieved in this state known as Hetep.

Many students of ancient Kemetic cosmology assume the Kemetians thought this state could be achieved only with initiation plus the dissolution of the physical body. However, this is not the case. It can be achieved by focusing one's consciousness to the sphere of Ausar within, and infusing that supreme consciousness into one's waking and even sleeping life. One makes this Ausar level of consciousness constant and abiding. Learning of this goal, through study of the Medu Necher or divine speech as represented by Tehuti (Thoth) the awakening processes of the human faculties (particularly the intuitive mind and will) to accomplish this goal, is what ancient Kemetic initiation is all about. There was also a philosophy of as above so as below. Harmonies of life on the terrestrial level were tied to the harmonies of life on the celestial spheres. It was the goal of Kemetic societies to model and infuse the harmonies it perceived on the spiritual levels into the society at large, thus allowing for the full expression of the Divine Spirit in the physical world. This was accomplished through abiding by the spiritual laws represented by the deity Maat. Thus, ultimately the society, the collective Self, would become Ausar.

The Concept and Practice of Maat

Once a person makes strides towards individual spiritual cultivation, one learns the necessity of practicing collective spiritual cultivation. True Spiritual development informs us that there is no separation between God and humans, or between one individual and all other individuals. This knowledge necessitates that we extend our spiritual cultivation to include collective spiritual cultivation. It is expressed in the ancient Kemetic tradition by the concept and practice of Maat.

In the ancient Egyptian deep thought, Maat represents the harmony and balance of energies in the universe, in the immediate environment, within a human and between humans on all levels. It is premised on the idea that there is a natural and ultimately divinely ordained order for all things, and that humans can have an important role to play in facilitating this order. God can affect His / Her Will for creation through the cooperation and heightened consciousness of humanity. The more conscious we are of the Divine Truth/Thought Will/Force, the more dynamic a role we can play in the ordered, creative impulse emanating from the Divine Source. If we are not cooperative in fostering this order, then the Almighty can evolve other beings to accomplish the unfettered, dynamic expression of His / Her Being in creation. Thus, the ancient Kemetians sought to establish social structures and interrelations that expressed their sense of right order, justice and universal harmony. All that contradicted this was considered an evil or source of disorder (Isfet), and was to be driven out of society.

Here are some Maatian attitudes that determined the approach ancient Kemetians had towards societal development: Social order is to mirror Divine creation. There is no separation of Divine expression and social order. Leaders are charged by the Divine to push out disorder and install Divine order. Man can transform into a divine being or perfected vessel of the Divine, and so leaders are charged to educate members of the society to the laws and practice of Maat, revealed through consonance with the intuitive Mind or Tehuti. Social administration is viewed as an

extension of the God's creative acts on earth. Just as there is a model person of virtue who acts on God's behalf to shape society according to Divine principles, there is the ideal of a perfected society that is the fruit of its members embracing the Maatian principles of good order. This divinized society, the Ausarian Self, is not a static mold or icon, but rather like the dynamic God of creation, is a pliant, charged, effective, expansive, universal, unlimited vessel of the Divine Omnipotence. It is none other than an embodiment of the Divine. Just as there is a fully realized divine person, the real meaning of a Christ or Krishna, there is the fully realized Divine Collective Person. This collective Person's reason for existence is the same as that for the individual; to reveal in wider, deeper and more effective terms, the Divine Will/Force/Bliss Being that is latent in creation, thus knowing the Divine by identifying completely with it. At the time of death, the heart of the deceased is weighed by the gods on the scale of Maat and it is determined if the level of life lived by the deceased merits only annihilation of the person's incarnation impressions. The worthy will reincarnate with impressions from previous lives intact as stepping-stones for higher spiritual progress. The 42 negative confessions (describe in detail) are a general guide for members of the society to know if they are on the right track to living an elevated life. By no means could 42 tenants cover all the circumstances of life where balance, harmony, justice and love need to be preserved and facilitated towards higher expression.

The effect of these aspects of African deep thought in ancient Kemet is to instill in the collective society a shared concept of common good and common spiritual or ethical progress. This attitude no doubt contributed to Kemet society lasting longer than any other civilization in world history. This collective consciousness also had the effect of enabling the society to produce the great pyramids and to push the envelope of human ingenuity, productivity, scientific knowledge and esthetic expression. The ancient Kemetians collectively were the earliest civilizations to develop writing. They developed three forms: Medu Netcher (hieroglyphic divine speech), heretic and the third hieratic (later called demotic), the phonetic alphabet from which the Geek and Latin alphabets are derived. They were the most literate people of the world in their time and their writing system formed the basis of the writing systems of all other collectives, including the Greeks and the Arabs. How can we quantify the effect writing has had on the collective consciousness of African society? With the advent of writing, ideas of an elevated nature could be disseminated without necessitating that they be passed directly from mind to mind. A person can pick up a scroll, and begin to peer into the mind of the original writer; possibly resulting in a direct consonance of conscious thought. The elevating effect on society that the teachings from the temples had, teachings emanating from high priests, written by scribes and disseminated throughout the common people, must have been enormous. This effect can be seen for example in the fact that most people wanted to be assured an afterlife in eternity by being buried in a manner prescribe by the scribe, who got it from the priest; a manner which involved mummification and incantations to the gods, and hieroglyphs of resurrection surrounding the body of the deceased. A divine after life in the higher spiritual realms was not a conception espoused by a few initiated, but rather part of the collective consciousness.

The ancient Kemetians, through their writing systems, have left to posterity ample evidence of their high level of spiritual cultivation. Some African scholars have sought to catalog the spiritual writings of Ancient Kemet ancestors to reclaim the spiritual insights they have developed, to usher a renewed push towards the higher African Self in today's modern life. One such body of work is "The Husia, Sacred Wisdom of Ancient Egypt", authored by Mauana Karenga. In the Book of Coming Forth by Day, are songs of praises, and glorification to Maat and Neters (gods) as the deceased is entering the afterlife. In book IX the 42 confessions of the supplicant to Maat, affirming

that a righteous life was lived. If the supplicant's heart were to be found pure, light as a feather, on the scales of Maat, then he/she would be granted entrance into the higher realms of the afterlife. If not, then the Anpu the crocodile would eat what is left of the soul, denying an afterlife. Here is a sample:

“I have not done wrong, I have not robbed. I have not been greedy. I have not stolen. I have not murdered people. I have not cheated at the measures. I have not committed fraud. I have not stolen the property of God. I have not told lies. I have not stolen food. I have not spoken curses. I have not violated the law. I have not killed sacred animals. I have not dealt deceitfully. I have not stolen land I have not eavesdropped. I have not talked overmuch. I have not been angry without just cause. I have not committed adultery. I have not been unchaste. I have not terrorized anyone. I have not violated the law. I have not been hot tempered. I have not been deaf to words of truth. I have not stirred up strife. I have not been blind to injustice I have not engaged in unnatural sex. I have not been deceitful. I have not indulged in quarrelling. I have not engaged in violence. I have not been quick tempered. I have not misrepresented my nature. I have not gossiped. I have not slandered the pharaoh. I have not waded in drinking water. I have not been loud voiced. I have not blasphemed against God. I have not been arrogant. I have not discriminated against others. I have not coveted other's property. I have not offended the God of my city.”

We can discern from just this passage alone that the ancient ancestors of Kemet developed a high moral code of conduct that reached into every aspect of daily life. We can also see the premium they placed on treating others respectfully, justly and with kindness. A natural extension to this would be to treat even the stranger from other lands justly, respecting their natural rights and dignity. The mysteries taught in the temples were no doubt even deeper manifestations of the high African spiritual Self, a deep wellspring of which the entire society benefited. If only ancient Kemet and other Great African civilizations could transform the aggressive foreigners to this moral way of life and not succumb to corrosive internal and external influence; what heights of Divine expression then would the African collective have reached? How illuminated by living example of their descendants, would the world be? But all is not lost. The group-Soul of the African collective has not forgotten or lost the impression of those heights reached before, the brilliance of Divine expression. These are still within the African group-Soul to access.

Africans have much draw upon by looking back on the evolution of African collective consciousness, expressed in the Egyptian Mysteries system with its mission of initiation into becoming Ausar, and its value of living according to the moral principles of Maat. We need not be concerned about adopting the mindset, philosophies, and ways of life of other groups foreign to our own historical motherland. True we can learn from the best that all peoples and cultures can offer. But we must do so all the while being true to our own Self, the Ausarian Self of the African collective.

Priest's Instruction for Building a Harmonious Society, a Basis for Collective Consciousness

African societies that have endured the test of time prior to the invasions of Asiatics and Europeans were imbued with high moral standards and practices. These societies served as models for other world civilizations, particularly India, Greece, and the Mediterranean world, and Europe. The question of what makes for a harmonious society is a burning one currently where there is still oppression and exploitation on a massive scale of Western cultures against African cultures. Organized political and economic solutions to this oppression and exploitation must be formulated to allow for the free development of the African collective consciousness. However, these African centered political and economic structures, on the micro and macro levels, must be founded also on high moral standards and practices, Maat. Education into ancient African spiritual culture should be a staple of any modern African centered educational system so that our youth will have the necessary foundational understanding of living a harmonious life, before they attempt to erect enduring structures that will withstand the external forces that oppress them. I have put to writing some thoughts, in the form of a fictional story, to this burning question of how to build a harmonious society back in my late 20's as I was raising my first child and was introducing myself to ancient Kemetic spiritual traditions, and my study of Maatian precepts. I include a portion of that story here as I think it still speaks to the primary necessity of Africans having a spiritual foundation in place prior to constructing socio-political and economic structures that will mitigate the global force of White supremacy that oppress Africans even to this day. The setting is ancient Kemet, as it is undergoing invasion by Asiatic hordes, the Hyksos in 1645 BC. The high priest is giving instruction to an initiate on how to reinstitute the harmonies of a healthy society, Maat, within the very bowels of the invaders.

That night, as instructed, the father and his daughters return to the house of the *Shekemu* (high priest). "*Anetch Huraten Atef-Mut Neter. Anetch Huracten Shekemu. As we prepare to make the journey to the land of the Asiatics,*" the father says, "Our hearts are open to receive your teachings."

The chief priest smiles on this little family and says, "Nefer-t, I thank you for expressing your sprit of Maat with all the village. Auseti, I thank you for saving my blood. Remember, Auseti, that with a sincere heart and complete identification with our True Self, we possess power over all external circumstances. Remember, too, that we must be willing at the appropriate time to sacrifice our blood for the sins of the world. Now Nefer-t, you wish to know how to nurture a natural, harmonious society while living among the Asiatics? Daughters, this may be my final instruction to you. Listen well."

"The Neteru, or fundamental principles of life, are rooted in and obey the Will of the Universal Divine One. So too do wise and prosperous societies take root in and obey the Will of the Universal Divine One.

"The Neteru have different functions; yet each Neter shares equally in the One Source of Life, and is its extension. Each relies on the others. Can hot exist without cold? The moist without the dry? Light without darkness? Fullness without the void? Is one expression of Neter Neter (God of the gods) more important than the others? No. Each defines and shapes the other. Each Neter is but a variation of the One Life Force. So, too, do natural societies respect the variations, different talents, and expressions of people, understanding that they all share equally in the One Source of Life. Each adds to the productivity of life. Each can assist the other in a harmonious interplay of Life Force. Leaders without this understanding establish societies where one segment exploits another for selfish gain.

"In Nature, all things are constantly changing, yet behind all changes lies the unchanging truth of Universal Oneness. Using oracles and a developed intuition, the wise leader discerns the Divine Will, comprehends life's phases, and can thus wisely determine what teachings and practices are appropriate for a given period. This is Heru following the Divine Will as taught by the Neter Tehuti, teacher of divine speech or the *Medu Neter*. Guided by the ego, the intellect, and desires, rather than by the Divine Will, the unwise leader promotes narrow views. The unwise leader promotes teachings, dictates rules, and keeps

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ministers who are not appropriate for a phase of the society. Such a leader moves society far from true knowledge of the Higher Collective Self, Ausar.

"The Neteru are constant and pervasive in their potent influence, yet they allow for change, variation, retreat, renewal, and full development of all things. Natural societies have constant and pervasive rules of order for actualizing the potency of life. These societies also allow for change, variation, and the appropriate application of laws according to time and place. What is potent, effective, and harmonious in one time and place may not be so in another. The wise leader knows how to adjust according to time and place while still administering over the fundamental order and power of life. This defines the *Shekemu*, who access the powers of Sekert, Neter of fundamental structure and order. The unwise leader is not able to discern the appropriate laws according to time and place. He therefore misuses powers entrusted to him. This misuse of power may be intentional and for selfish gain. True spiritual power is beyond such negative intention. The unwise leader then often compounds the problem at the expense of others by seeking temporal powers as a substitute for true spiritual power.

"The earth, the waters of the earth, the sun, the moon, the stars all give their energies freely and equally to all, even to those who have strayed from the path of normalcy. Natural societies do not hinder the virtuous fulfillment of their members. In natural societies, all members are cared for, especially in times of difficulty. This is impartial love with the heart of Maat, deity of universal love.

"The constant cycles of nature give birth to and support the evolution of all life. Natural societies live in tune with the cyclic phases of nature. Understanding that all things in nature are equally important and have a symbiotic relationship to each other, these people respect the rhythms of the natural environment. This is called living according to the laws of Maat. Without this understanding and respect for the laws of Maat, a society abuses or destroys the natural environment, or lives beyond the environment's sustainability. With a further lack of restraint, it seeks to plunder the lands of its neighbors. This is done with ignorance to the Law of Energy Response that ensures a corrective response from nature.

"In natural societies, on the other hand, laws are applied consistently and equally to all members. These laws are derived from natural developments and universal principles. They are not artificially established for the gain of some over others.

"In nature, when corrective forces are applied to a type of energy arrangement, this is done because this arrangement threatens the harmony of the whole, not just because it is different. In natural societies, an individual or a group is not arbitrarily singled out for correction because their characteristics or behaviors are different from others in a society. It is only when individuals or groups threaten the virtuous fulfillment of the society that forces are applied to limit them. To apply limiting force otherwise is to be unnaturally discriminating, which leads to social ruin.

"When society is governed by the desires of the lower nature, disharmony and criminality are engendered. Based on ignorance, lack of reasoning and identification with the lower self, these desires allow feelings of discrimination, sexism, and egoism to flourish. In this condition, people come to feel that they are separated individuals who have a right to hurt and even own others who are "below" them as measured by physical strength, wealth, or fame. This egoism and separating individualism engenders a feeling that others, including nature, are objects for one's own egoistic aims. Thus, it becomes possible to plunder, dominate, kill, or destroy others. When society is based on the principles of spiritual truth, the lower nature is channeled, refined, and harnessed as an aid towards spiritual and material achievements that benefit all life. When opportunities are promoted for all to discover their full potential in an atmosphere of caring, understanding, universal love and support, then the best in humanity is brought forth. "The goal of leaders in a natural society is to provoke the awakening, development, and integration of its members' inner Neteru so that they may all become Ausar. This is a process that cannot be forced. It is a natural development facilitated by leaders who are guided according to the intelligence of the heart rather than the intellect or desires. This is called Heru following the guidance of Tehuti. Such a leader intuitively from the Divine within. Such a leader knows how to continuously renew, vitalize, and organize a society."

But now Nefer-t interjects a question. "*Shekem*," she says, "I understood your teaching about bringing heavenly energies in support of earthly energies to manage one's spiritual development. How can I relate that to promoting a healthy society among the Asiatics?"

The *Shekem* responds, "In nurturing a healthy and productive society, heavenly energies of the leadership must be lowered to support the earthlier energies of all people in the society. The leadership of a society must find or create ways to fuel the productive development of the society. The people will respond and work toward the heavenly goals of the society. If the leadership of a society does not develop, refine, and identify with the lowest of its people, then nothing positive will come from such a society, and it will eventually disintegrate. If leadership is too strong and intrudes itself too much into the daily lives of people, then their hot heavenly dictates will cause the people to rebel against it, and nothing positive will be accomplished. For individuals and societies, there must be a healthy balance of heavenly and earthly energies to produce that which is natural, potent, and enduring.

"Daughter, true growth occurs in the process of solving the problems of life, both individually and collectively. All difficulties can be resolved through following the holistic, integral way of life. Creating a better society and world starts with creating internal spiritual development. If you can create internal harmony, then you know how to create external harmony. If you know how to govern yourself, then you know how to govern society and the world. Through spiritual self-cultivation, one comes to realize that there is an indivisible unity between all things, and that there is no self-versus others, Black versus White, male versus female. Because we all share the same essential nature, we are all one, and the one is continuously expressed in all. With this holistic vision, a people of virtue will plant the seedlings of a new age of enlightenment and civilization that will sprout and cover the earth."

The father now addresses the *Shekem*. "Venerable *Shekem*, I am eternally grateful for your instruction. I have one last request. Please give to us some words of spiritual power that will protect us and help us remain on the integral way as we make the journey into the land of the Asiatics."

The *Shekem* responds, "My Son, the power of any prayer or invocation comes from the sincere projection of the heart. With sincerity, one invokes the greatest powers of the Universe. Without sincerity, there is no power. For your protection you may repeat, from time to time, these words with great sincerity: *Highest Universal Spirit, the One without a second, you and I are One*. I also give you these cautionary words: Thoughts and words have their power, but *the greatest power comes from living and being the integral way of life*. Constantly practice virtue and wholeness in all activities with awareness of the Divine Source, your true self, as the doer of all activity. This is the greatest protection and potency of life. Auseti, this is the Source of your Mystical Pearl; the Source from which the greatest healers draw their power."

Auseti asks, "Venerable *Shekem*, how did you know about the Mystical Pearl? I have told no one about that old man who showed it to me. And how did you know that I once failed to have my healing stone when the life was leaving a body right before me?"

"Daughter," the *Shekem* replies, "I and Highest Universal Spirit are one. Now I give to you this word of power to use when there are conflict and tension around and in you. It is *HA*. This is like the sound you make when you are laughing deeply from the belly. It is good to remember not to dwell only on the seriousness of life, but to also be joyful and spiritually tipsy at times. This will help you to be flexible to your surroundings. Tension causes stiffness. Recall that when the winds of life are fierce, it is the stiffest trees that snap first. Remain firm to your principles; yet be flexible to all that is around you. The Divine One experiences this life through you for its greater purpose. This Divine One, who expresses as your True Self, does not kill and is not killed. Even as you see an enemy, it is the self-seeing itself. Therefore you must love even your enemies as you love you self, even if you may have to slay your enemy to uphold the greater justice and peace."

"Venerable *Shekem*," the father says, "we are now fully prepared to leave for this journey following tomorrow's initiation ritual. Is there anything else we should know in preparation for tomorrow's initiation ritual?"

The *Shekem* responds, "This journey will be your daughters' initiation. It will be how they will fulfill the meanings of their names. Indeed, their journey will be our journey and the journey of all humankind for all ages."

And hearing those final words, the father and daughters bow, thank the *Shekemu*, and return to their home.

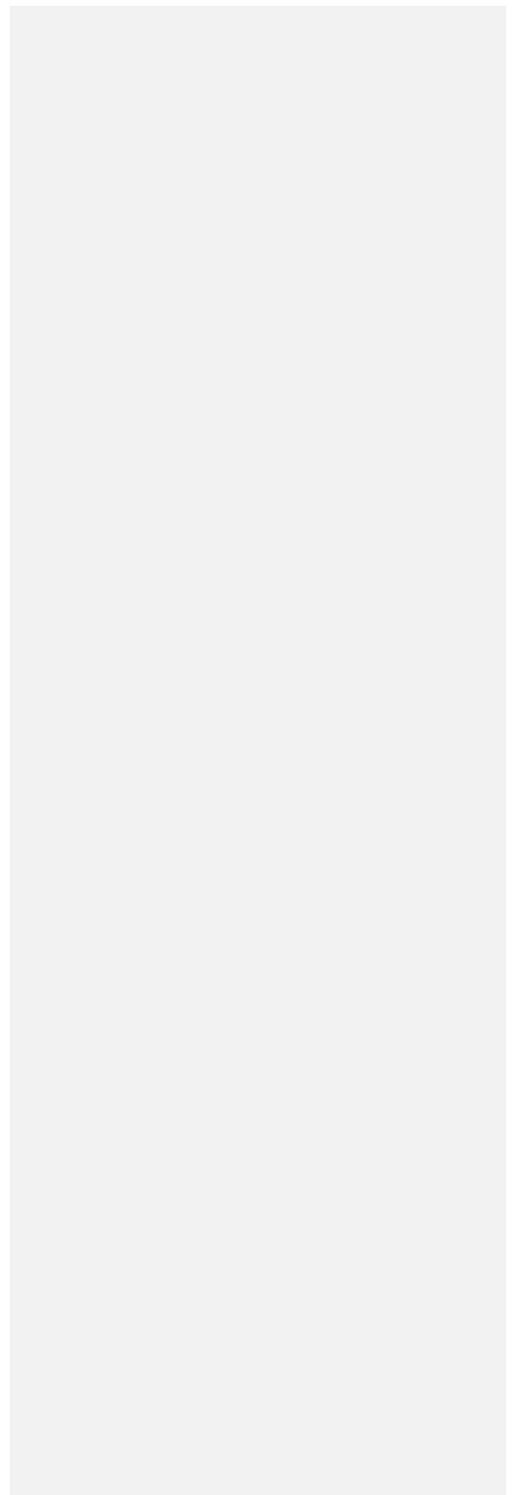
Africans need to draw upon the spiritual tools available to us to endure global White domination. That we have not forgotten how to laugh and enjoy as we struggle through this experience is a testament to our strong spirits. Of course, laughing is not sufficient. We must fully prepare ourselves by accessing some serious spiritual powers to help weather the oppressive forces arrayed against us, and to help create a better world based on Maat. We are all on a journey toward achieving an abiding realization that we are the One Self, expressing in various forms. This is the journey of all humankind for all ages. The current struggle we are all in with global White colonialism is just one stage in a series of that journey. When we find our true Selves, and conduct all movement from that, then we can maintain an inner smile, even through the harshest of times.

The below are other evidences of high collective African spiritual achievement through Kemet:

- The very founding of Kemet, a unification of two lands
- Working in harmony with the cycles of Nature
- The development of agriculture to maintain a healthy diet
- The development of capacity to store food for times of scarcity
- The development of self-defense capabilities
- The establishment of trade in goods and ideas with other countries
- The establishment of maritime capabilities to contact other people
- Architecture that reflect their knowledge of physical materials, iron working, physics, transportation, math and spirituality
- Development of Mathematics, Astronomy to tell the cycles of time, and an understanding of physical forces
- These establishment of a class of scribes
- The establishment of libraries for consolidating knowledge and building upon it for future advancements
- Animal husbandry
- The balance between male and female governance
- Advances in writing systems for both sacred matters and commerce transactions
- The attention to medicine, hygiene, and public health
- The attention to preparing for the afterlife.
- The reverence for the honorable ancestors

Indeed, every marker one can think that evidences collective spiritual growth can be found in the culture established by the African ancestors of ancient Kemet. It is also important to emphasize again that Kemet was a high expression of neighboring African nations; it was the daughter of Nubia. Nubia itself had many dynasties of its own that preceded and coincided with Kemet. It must also be emphasized that the high achievement of Kemet had likewise a positive influence on the surrounding countries of Africa. Consider how the decline and conquering of Kemet had a negative ripple effect on all of Africa. For instance, the decline of Egypt allowed the Arabs to intrude not just into Kemet, but also to most of Africa through the spread of Islam. This Arab intrusion, that included over 1000 years of Arab slave trade, in turn weakened Africa to where it was not able to withstand the onslaught of the Western Europeans who eventually carved up all of Africa and sent her into a dark age. This dark age was not to take firm grip before some of the wisdom teaching of Kemet spread throughout Europe via the Arabs, and not before Africa had another flowering of

high civilization and spiritual achievement of Collective Consciousness through the Mali, Ghana, and Songhai empires.



Early Foreign Intrusion into Kemet and the Erosion of African Spiritual Self Consciousness

Before the exit of the Anglo-Saxon out of the Caucus Mountains around the end of the Würm glaciation (10,000 B.C.E.), Africans were the only people from the tip of Africa and all up through the area known as Jordan and through the Top of Turkey. The Phoenicians were originally Black/African stock. At some point, Jews were created by a mixing of original Africans with invading Anglo-Saxons. They were the Hyksos who eventually invaded Africa and who were subsequently expelled out of Africa by Africans. At one point the Jews were allowed into Africa, and they mixed with the African tribes already there. The so-called lost 12 tribes of Israel were not lost if you knew where to look, African tribes (i.e. Akan). Africans are the original creators of spiritual traditions and culture. We need not refer to Hebrew stock or Jewish religion to validate us. Why get all caught up with a copy religion and not go back to the original African religion that Anglo-Saxons copied so carefully from? I'm saying all religions are copies from the original African, just as all people are.

More on The Decline of Kemet as the Light of the World and its Effect on African Collective Spiritual Progress

- What has happened to the collective Soul of Kemet of East Africans, of Africa, of the world with the light of Kemet obscured through wave after wave of invaders?
- The effect of converting of Kemetic archetypes into Christianity – Inner salvation VS externalized salvation.
- The Continuance of the Kemetic wisdom teachings through the Arabs & Moors into Europe through Christianity and Free Masonry.
- The rise of Central and West African empires, macro shifts in collective African consciousness, with the decline of Kemet.

Chapter 3

Cultural Unity and African Collective Consciousness in Pre-Colonial Western Africa

In considering the evolution of the African collective consciousness towards its highest ideal, we must look not only at religious beliefs in the African collective. We must also look at how these beliefs were lived out daily in concrete relations between members of the collective, in relations with the environment and with other collectives. We should look at how throughout history the African collective has organized material, social/political and educational powers of life to promote the perfection of man as an unfettered instrument and expression of the Divine. This implies suppression in the society of the opposite, a staunch individualism, exploitation of man by man for the benefit of a few, and consigning the fate and function of members to a limited role with possibly no hope for progress.

In the following, the underlying premise is that a cultural, ethical and spiritual thread has continuously spanned all of Africa, and even all of humanity; however negligible these threads may appear to a given onlooker. Cultural, social, religious, scientific, and material exchanges continent wide in Africa, all amount to development of the African collective spiritual consciousness. I present a summary list of common constitutional tenants found to run through all early African states. This is a summary of the adapted from a list giving by Dr. Chancellor Williams in his "Destruction of African Civilization".

The people as a collective are the first and final source of power. The rights of the collective are superior to the rights of any one person. Note: this does not mean that the individual's rights should be curtailed in any way so long as they do not detract from the rights of the collective. Kings or Chiefs are not rulers, but or merely representatives of and facilitators for the collective. Government and the people are the same, and so elected officials speak not for themselves but for the collective society. They represent not their own individual will, but the collective will of the people. Decisions made by a council of elders are final and cannot be overruled by the King who is the council's spokesperson. The land belongs to no one. It is to be used by each generation as a sacred trust from God. Each family has a right to land sufficient for its support. Every member of the state has the right to appeal a decision made from a lower court to a higher one. The trouble of one is the trouble of all. The community is conceived of as one party.

Even as the high Sprit of African collective consciousness cannot be fragmented and always remains integrated even as it is differentiated into the individual lives of Africans, so too are/were the life activities of traditional African societies integrated into a whole. Cheik Anta Diop in his books, "The Cultural Unity of Africa", and "Pre-colonial Black Africa", speaks to a continent-wide cultural unity that can be traced over all of Africa prior to the colonial influence. This cultural unity, evidenced in common practices though all areas of people activity, including political and economic structures, is but an expression of the deeper spiritual unity behind it, the collective African Self. We can investigate how the high African collective Consciousness, the Ausarian Self, has expressed in other major areas of social organization, contributing to higher African spiritual realization. Essential questions to ask in considering how pre-colonial African societies were organized on the mundane levels are, **"what allowed for their civilizations to endure for centuries as in the kingdoms of Mali, Songhai, and Songhai; or even millennia as in ancient Egypt and Southern Ethiopia?"** **"What was the structural harmonies built into such societies?"** **"What were the mitigating factors that reduced the tendency for revolt and**

disintegration, and thus allowed for the continued evolution of the involved collective Spirit in African societies?" Cheik Anta Diop gives his analysis of some of these structures.

Matrilineal system

A matrilineal system is where the wealth and power of the common family, tribe or aristocracy of the state is passed down through the female side of the family line. For example, the succession to kingship would be the son of the king's sister, or in some cases the sister herself. The child would bear the name of his maternal uncle, the one whose heir is to be. African societies produced some of the world's first queens as heads of state. Traditionally all African societies, as well as Indian societies prior to the mixing with European and Arab influences have been matrilineal. What this guarantee is that the female is revered in society and has equal respect, if not more, to that of men. This system of wealth transference and kingship succession has been at the core of providing for ongoing stability in family life for millennia. It precluded sons of fathers fighting over rights to family inheritances or sons dispatching of their fathers to seize the throne. Diop, in his "Towards the African Renaissance", drives home the point of how matrilineal societies as practiced in traditional African societies, promoted stability within.

"Matriarchy is tied to agricultural life for economic reasons. The woman is seen as the most sedentary element in society. In a family, the boy is more mobile than the girl and, even in a sedentary regime, he is like a bird on a tree branch. If he had to transmit political rights, property, ancestral, cult or any other social values, all that would be lost, scattered outside, and tradition would quickly cease to exist. This is why it is his elder or younger sister, it does not matter if he is older than she is, who transmits the rights of inheritance from the African viewpoint."

Twin-lineal System

"In Kemetic (Egyptian), Dogon and African philosophy in general, the two, the masculine and feminine, water and earth, air and fire (I will add construction and destruction, joining and separating, attraction and repulsion) all emerge from the one, the creator. The oneness, or Unicity, of the universe is easily said, but not easily understood. In African Sacred Science, from the One or Primeval Water comes the many, the twin truths of life. The creator is the source of all, which derives from the One. Masculine and feminine, male and female, water and earth, fire and air, positive and negative, day and night, the sun and the moon and all of the other twin forces, COOPERATE MORE than they conflict because they come from the same Source."
~ Oba T'Shaka "Return to the African Mother Principle of Male and Female Equality"

Dogon and Kemetic cosmology tell us that disorder, rather than evil incarnate, is the source of the evils of the world. The Dogon's say that if a man does not have the benefit of the caring???

"Set in Kemetic (Egyptian) cosmology is the divine principle of disorder in the cosmos. ... As we have seen the primordial Nommo Twins and Ausar are both symbolic of the watery germinating principle that is the force of order, as dryness is a source of disorder. As a result the cosmic forces of order and disorder are related and are tied together by

the bonds of kinship. These ties are important because the Dogon, and the sages of Kemet are telling us that order and disorder are twins, they are two banks of the same stream. They occupy the same space and struggle with each other for dominance. They are complementary and conflicting, with the harmony between them outweighing their conflict. The forces of order and disorder lie inside of us. When we synthesize the masculine and feminine, and balance males and females we are able to achieve order within ourselves and in society at-large” ~ Oba T’Shaka

I offer this poem as an ode to pursuing the union of the male female principle in relationships as a vehicle for achieving higher spiritual realization. I wrote this poem while under the inspiration of new love. What I discovered is that it was more of an expression of my aspiration of a spiritual union, and invitation to a spiritual union than it was a realization of that union. Still I think it has value in pointing to how couples in relationships should seek to spiritualize their union and use it to achieve higher spiritual realization of the Divine on earth.

From the Sacred Sanctuary

From the sacred place, I share this heart refreshed by the Divine Bliss.

From the sacred place, I share life recast in mold of Truth Thought,

From the sacred place where this being has consecrated all to the All;

Where all members are spiritualized, universalized and divinized,

I invite you to join with me, in the ecstasy of the Divine Pulsation, emanating from the secret space of stilled, yet infinitely fast Force of Being.

Here we shall talk; we shall breathe breaths of fresh rarified air.

Here we shall gaze into each other's eyes in peace, in friendship, in trust, in Love.

All our tensions have been left behind, as protective sheaths of war, discarded once eternal peace is had; and the nakedness of our true Selves Is revealed to one another in its essential splendor and majesty.

Our words, our sincere intentions have momentous effect on past present and future.

Here there're no masks, no ulterior motive, no hiding, no running, no worry, no doubt.

Sit with me in this sacred sanctuary and let us with unfettered hearts gradually

Release God's miracles made normal, issuing from our souls before one another.

In this sacred place, we are no longer strangers as we reveal parts of ourselves,

Always known to each other as if you are my other Self, and I am yours. We maintain our difference just enough to realize the bliss of Supreme Yoga.

In this sanctuary, we can explore and know the deep recesses of each other's Soul.

There are no longer reasons for veils; all is open; our exchange is free from duty tax.

There is no need for fear; the Divine Will/Force holds all negatives at bay.

Knowing God's Will/Force/Bliss Being, discovered in the sacred sanctuary of our being.

This knowing is not a phantasm of spirit world, for spirit births and suckles the physical.

The sanctuary is not a place for escape, but for realization, rejuvenation, remembering.

Remembering, putting back together, making whole, seeing correct relations,

Merging with Love Being, discovering hidden Divinity, identifying with Source Self.

This is immortality not just for the sacred sanctuary, used as place of hiding and delusion.

Infinitude embraces finite; immortal takes up the mortal; Divinity expresses through man.

Expanding personal love, becoming God Lovers, dissolving ego, all actions made sacred.

Attaining integral vision, all the earth now our sacred sanctuary for Divine Play.

The Host sends forth Its Supernal Light, readying the stage for great transformations.

We are ready for the movement to higher planes yet unvisited.

On this voyage for two, all that is base is ejected or else transmuted to lighter principle, more useful for our maiden voyage to lands of Soul before unexplored.

Why a voyage for two and not just one? It is for one, two for the price of one.

Under the transforming Light we close the gaps between us. Though different we become one, as a rainbow embraces the entire spectrum.

Our hearts, no longer the solo drummer of beats, rejoices in the symphony of free Lovers. Lovers loving the music, loving each other, loving the audience of the gods,

Loving the Host for whom all is arranged and played.

Even our music is transformed, no longer misread notes on Music sheets turned veils.

We play not by sight but by meditative improvisation to each other's heartbeats.

For in this sanctuary, though cool, placid, calm in atmospheric bliss, it is well lit by the Divine Light and we see clearly each other's cues.

We see not with mortal eyes, hear not with mortal ears, knowing only parts for the whole.

We have taken on immortal vision that sees all by identity and oneness.

We exercise the cords of each other's hearts, sometimes playing each other's parts.

Thus, we intimately know the full range the melodic harmonies of Soul music.

We are ready for the great duet, our instruments refined for immortal play. When we play, I know not where I end and you begin, our sounds blending in intricacy.

No feeling of being constrained, as our music bounces off chambers with no walls. Our notes transport us to continents yet uncharted, God travelers discovering God lands.

God playing hide and seek with Him / Her Self, exploring as if never seen before.

And is it not better to play with another, than with one's self, though it is one's Self?

This is why I've invited you to this sacred playground, for mystical play. Not a fleeting game of illusions; but the greatest game, the Lila of Love. Is Love a frivolous game? Am I to toy with your heart or you with mine? No.

It is a game of realities wrought of Truth Being, of Spirit Breath exchanged between us.

All our members~ engaged in the play, no longer separate masters of isolated ego islands,

Now devoted subjects on Continent of Royal King and Queen in sincere embrace.

A Royal game of Real ecstasy and Bliss; a game of fun and seeming chance; A game of switching roles and identities that keeps us guessing and laughing.

It's a game of winning and losing, though we know nothing is gained or lost. How can it when we are one with each other and are one with the All.

Let us play: play with each other, shipmates, with infinite oceans as playgrounds.

We are explorers to new shores revealing hidden mysteries, riches and splendors of Self.

We port and greet the natives as long lost relatives. We prepare a great feast to celebrate.

The communion is wide and deeply felt. Fairies, angels, and even mortals all welcomed.

We dance, for the gods love to dance, to mystic melodies of transformation. We make magic, and renew our kinship. You and I repose in Loves sacred embrace.

Our Tanta movements causing galaxies to move in turn, our rhythms giving them order,

Our hot Breaths birthing stars, our sweat and fluids oceaning planets,

Our vibrations generating new elements, our essence released inseminating love child.

Our Soulful play makes God swoon. This continues for eons in mortal man's time.

We are lifted beyond time and place while still in Love's sacred embrace.

We rest from our love performance, our musical play; but all does not revert and fade.

We are forever changed. Our creations continue from their energized cause.

Our Truth Thought formations have our life within them. We are them and they us.

The sanctuary is not for a brief ejaculatory moment. We rest to ready for higher peaks.

It is always within us as I shall always be with you. We are Soul mates forever.

When our bodies are no longer on this plain, we will still re-member our sacred sanctuary.

Here we can always play God's song in duet. Immortality is not just for this lifetime.

In the sacred sanctuary, past, present and future are known at once in a

sweeping vision.

We reflect on our accomplished harmonies. We see a new Truth etched on our hearts.

We have conquered all, including death, together, forever. It is a new stage for life.

We shook off our smallness and bore all to each other in a sacred pact of oneness. We have revealed and massaged each other's most tender zones.

Each cell of mine integrated with each cell of yours, a unity modeling the Universal.

We have discovered the secret Self through each other by removing self-erected veils.

We have learned much through our experience in the sacred sanctuary. Through faith and trust we've become graduate candidates in the school of Immortals.

The final dissertation, a discourse on unconditional Love and fidelity to one another,

To humanity, and to God, for Whom to Whom, and by Whom all is done.

We have passed the test. We've come to know in the sanctuary a boundless love.

There we anticipated all wonders, pretending not to know the future, but we did.

For the future was an assured outflow of miracles, though only to mortal eyes,

Erupting from the earth seen volcano of Love union, backed by Divine Bliss.

Enter we back to the mortal realm through Love's volcano showing only surface results.

But beneath, is the dynamic magnum Force/Presence of Divine Love turned lava flow.

This Love flow, lava flow, coming from the depths now intimately known, Blows the top off all obstructions, proclaiming its irresistible evolutionary movement.

It erupts with sometimes-explosive force viewed and respected if not revered by all.

Other times it moves slowly and steadily, yet still undeniably towards the Goal.

This lava flow, Love flow, is the resultant testament of our committed Love mixture.

It is movement from our sacred sanctuary back to the mortal realm.

Hot fiery display, it founts high peak. Inventing new form of Spiritual Love, Proclaiming the might of our Invisible Source Tapped; clearing a path made for all.

Full of the Love flow, we fashion new forms of Self, putting on transmuted instruments.

We are no longer made of base elements, but of immortality oxidized and hiding its brilliance.

With disguised radiance we roam the earth, secret agents of a mighty Country.

Missionaries of a new world order, where the infinite is revealed out of the finite.

We no longer forget our secret mission in the clamor of daily life.

We look out into the world and then into each other's eyes, knowing but not speaking.

We hold hands appearing as mere lovers; but beneath the facade, God Lovers

By Roland Lucas to the Divine Shakti in the form of...

The balance between the male and female principle in our societies give the dynamic creative potential to express the High Spirit of the Collective African Self in wider and deeper terms. The question of how African societies have constructed stable forms of social, political, and economic structures is an important one from the macro point of view taken here. These stability-ensuring structures allow for the development of higher expressions of the divinity that evolves through humanity. Another such important structure to analyze in this vein is the caste system.

Caste system

Traditionally in Africa the caste system has essentially been a form of labor division. It reduced competition and formed effective monopolies. People of the caste were empowered by a patron god, and members of a caste could typically assume a common last name, so the system was hereditary. Each profession typically had its representatives within the government who could have complaints addressed to the satisfaction of all. The equality between members of a caste was not always in function, but always in essence. The balanced respect between the castes provided for the stability and longevity of the society.

Referring the caste system in traditional Senegal, Diop speaks to this point by saying:

“Unlike the attitude of the nobles towards the bourgeoisie, the lords towards the serfs, or the Brahmans towards the other Indian castes, the ger (upper class nobles practicing agriculture) could not materially exploit the lower castes without losing face in the eyes of others, as well as their own. On the contrary, they were obliged to assist lower caste members in every possible way: even if less wealthy, they had to “give” to a man of lower caste if so requested. In exchange the latter had to allow them social precedence.”

Diop also speaks to the point of how this system reduced the tendency for upheavals, as in revolutions, initiated by discontented caste members of the society.

“Consequently, if a revolution were to occur, it would be initiated from above and not from below ... members of all casts including slaves were closely associated to power, as de facto ministers; which resulted in constitutional monarchies governed by councils of ministers, made up of authentic representatives of all the people. We can understand from this why there were no revolutions in Africa against the regime, but only against those who administered it poorly, i.e. unworthy princes. In addition, there were of course also palace revolutions. For every caste, advantages and disadvantages balanced out... It can be understood why Africa’s societies remained relatively stable.”

Did this traditional caste system limit the human potential of the people in society? Did it preclude the possibility of a person expressing their higher divinity? Aside from traditional restrictions from moving from one caste to another through intermarriage, it does not appear from details given by Diop that there were material restrictions within the caste. A member of a caste could accumulate wealth in each profession just as in another, including slaves as odd as that might sound juxtaposed to the slave systems of European origin. Since there were no severe limits to the material foundation of a person’s life, it stands to reason that there were no unnatural impositions to a person’s spiritual development or to that of any caste either. We can then further deduce that these cultural structures, while not essentially limiting the possibilities for spiritual material and growth of individuals, do not limit the capacity of society to express the Divine evolution on a collective level.

Constitution

It has already been established that succession to the throne in traditional African societies was done mainly according to a matrilineal system of inheritance. However, the King appointed ministers and council members who helped govern the society, and such appointments were not exclusively from the class of nobles, but could come from the common people. Diop gives an example of this:

Mossi is a constitutional monarchy. The emperor, the Moro Naba, comes by heredity from the family of the previous Moro Naba, but his nomination is not automatic. He is chosen by an “electoral” college of four dignitaries, presided over by the Prime Minister, the togo baba, as in Ethiopia. He is actually invested with power by the latter, however, is not Nakomse (nobleman), but comes from an ordinary family, and who is in reality, the representative of the people, of all the free men, all the citizens who constitute the Mossi nation.” Pg 44.

Diop further explains that with the organization of political power being shared with members from the common people, and even from slaves, revolutionary tendencies within any group were mitigated.

“Thus, ministers who assist the emperor, rather than being members of high nobility of the Nakomse, are systematically chosen from outside of it, from among the common people and the slaves. They represent at court, as we shall see, the different social

categories, professions, and castes. "Those without birth," slaves and laborers, organized into professions (castes), far from being kept separated from power in this period which extends far beyond the Occidental Middle Ages (since, very likely, it may go back to the first century and the foundation of Ghana), are associated with it, not in any symbolic but in an organic way. Each profession has its representatives within the government; they will, as needed, present its complaints."

Diop details similar constitutional and social structures from other African states. All groups of societies were respected and could have their grievances heard, ensuring healthy social development. This contrasts with political exclusion of the slaves, plebeians, and surfs of Europe. This translates into a freedom to develop human potential that corresponds to plasticity in spiritual development of the entire society.

The King as Representative of Both the Nation and the Divine

Thinking of the traditional African King as a representative, or embodiment of the Divine here on earth, points to an ontology that embraces the possibility of humans of any status as possibly becoming divine. In the case of Egypt, not only was it possible for the King to become Ausar, the immortal god, it was also possible for others who were of lesser status to do the same as evidenced by the coffin text of such persons. Furthermore, it was part of the cosmology of traditional African societies that all aspects of life were a mirror, or had a connection with the invisible higher realms of the divine existence. At a deep level the divine and the worldly life were in communion. Such ontology necessitates an aspect of humans as being divine, so that in the least communication with the higher realms of the spirit is possible.

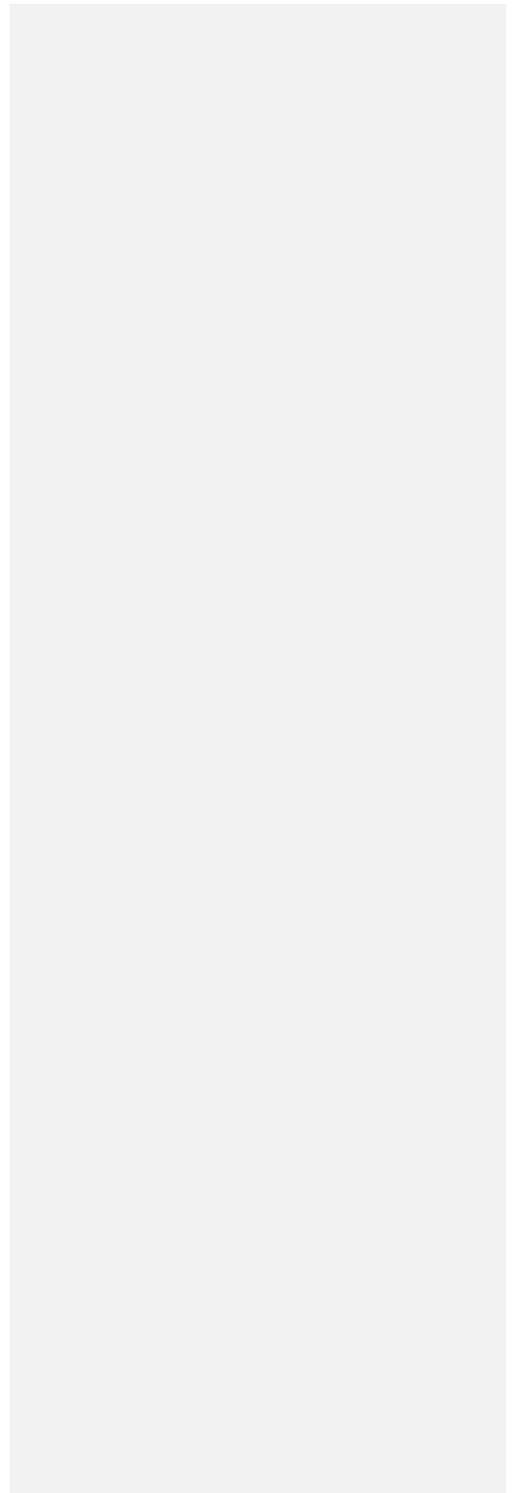
Economic Organization as Support for Higher Spiritual Evolution of Society

African states engaged in economic exchanges between each other, and with other countries for hundreds of years. While local traders used the barter system, there existed a merchant class in larger states that transacted exchange far and wide. Such a system of commerce necessitated an equally sophisticated infrastructure to facilitate it. This includes efficient transportation as in roads and animals, policing the trails, knowledge of weather patterns, communications, money (i.e. gold, salt, and cowrie shells), accounting, in some cases writing systems. Along with economic exchanges naturally came an exchange of ideas, culture and technologies, and how to deal respectfully with fellow traders. Such respectful interactions no doubt contributed to a sharing of values, an underlying unity, and abounding development of internal spiritual consciousness that included on a deep level the recognition of the other as sharing in the identity of the Self.

All areas of life were directed under the belief that God is everywhere present in time and beyond time. An order of daily life was sought that reflected the Divine order or Will above man. Members of the society were treated with equal respect even though they served different functions in the society. There was a comprehensive effort to reach for higher perfection in Arts, Science, Knowledge of Nature and the Universe, along with man's inner capacities. These disciplines were integrated with God knowledge and self-knowledge. A reverence for the dead was an affirmation of the continuance of the soul after physical death and extension of the high respect given to elders. Religion was not just a profession of creed but a daily reality reflected in all areas of people activity. Africans contributed greatly to the advancement of human spirituality as reflected in their

daily living. The African's approach to life was communal where the needs of the collective were balanced with that of the individual. The individual was allowed freedom to advance so long as his/her advancement did not impinge on the welfare of the collective. This is the foundation for the collective to realize its wider calling, its Higher Self, the Ausarian Self. The moral code that guided daily life of respect to fellow members of society, extended to include respect for trading partners as well as the stranger.

The larger implications of the empires of Songhai, Mali, and Ghana on African collective consciousness



Assimilation of Christianity by the African Collective

Notwithstanding the fact that formal Christianity was invented by Europeans (Alexander the Greek at the council of Nicaea, in the year 325 after the B. C. era) to be used as a consolidating force arrayed against non-European collectives, Africans through the ages have assimilated the Christian religion and to a significant extent made it their own, particularly in how they practice it. It is a fact that Africans along the Nile created nearly every element that went into the making of Christianity, in Africa thousands of years before any Asiatic contact of significance. The Egyptian trinity of Osiris (Ausar), Isis (Auset) and Horus (Heru the sun), was translated into the core Christian trinity of God the father, Jesus Christ the Son of God, and Mary the mother of a supposed flesh and blood Jesus Christ. Eventually Mary was replaced in the European Christian faith with the Holy Spirit. I refer readers to the book "The Historical Origin of Christianity", by Walter Williams and Gerald Massey's, "The Historical Jesus and the Mythical Christ" for details of this rendering of Christianity from the Coptic Egyptian (African) original.

The Christian religion had much of its prodigious early growth in North Africa, namely Egypt and Alexandria where much of the ancient Egyptian religions text was housed during the formulation of orthodox Christianity, or the Catholic Church. These texts would come be destroyed when the Romans destroyed the Library of Alexandria. Where Europeans have used the precepts of Christianity to project their culture as being dominant over Africans, and forcing Africans to service European societies, Africans have used the precepts of Christianity to contemplate the greater brotherhood of man, the deeper mysteries of life, the promise of an afterlife, and freedom of their people from oppression in this life. Not only have Africans given the world the foundations of Christianity, but from the time of the birth of Christianity, through the Trans-Atlantic slave trade, and up to today, Africans have transformed the Christian religion, infused it with a purity and spirituality superseding that of European input, in a way that makes it distinct from European expressions of Christianity. Not unlike how Africans transformed the English language into a form of their own, creating what some characterize in our day as "Ebonics", Africans have continually modified over the centuries the Christian religion to partially address their own condition of oppression.

Critical questions to ask are how have Africans used the Christian religion in ways to promote the progressive development of the higher African collective Self in the world, even though in the main the European collective did not have this intent when it pushed its version of Christianity onto the African continent? Has the African collective derived any benefit from the religion beyond the pressured need to affirm the African's submission to the European to survive colonization? It is a common truism that a conquered group will take on the beliefs of the conquerors to progress in the society reformed to the material benefit of the conquerors. Of course, the European Romans has from the start of Christianity used the religion to stabilize its empire, and after emerging from the Dark Ages of being confined to Europe by the Arabs, justified imposing slavery on Africans with the fallacious notion of bringing civilization and Godliness to Africans, just like the Arabs did before them. So, their ungodly acts were justified in the name of God. Has it ever been truly possible for Africans to see God in themselves through the medium of the Christian religion, the religion of their oppressors? Just as a conqueror has never elevated a people materially past were they were before invasion, so too a foreign religion imposed on a people never elevated the spiritual wellbeing of the people prior to invasion. All the elements that went into Christianity were developed and existed in Africa prior to the coming of Europeans. The development of the Christian religion, through copying the original African source, produced a

religion that was never compatible with the African. The God of the European has always been a White Man in the sky that favored the White man on earth, to the detriment of the African on earth.

As most everyone is taught the Christian religion shares the Hebrew's belief in the Old Testament. The Hebrew's / Israelites / Jews believed themselves to be the chosen people of God above all others, and thus destined to rule over all the earth's people in God's name with a divine king. The Christian religion is based on the belief that Jesus Christ is the only begotten Son of God, who was the fulfiller of the prophesies of the Old testament, and who is the only name whereby man can be saved from sin and eternal damnation. As already stated, the Roman Emperor Constantine managed to initiate Christianity as the official religion of the Roman Empire, and established the pope as the supreme pontiff over all religions and even state affairs. This newly erected catholic, universal religion was given a structure that was not unlike that of the Roman military command. Indeed, it was a super control structure erected to place the general populace under the watchful control of not just the church, but also of the state. Commensurate with the newly created Christian religion in Alexandria and Northern Egypt, a veil of European control cast over these parts of Africa. The progression of the Catholic Church with its Egyptian Coptic Church offspring, was backed by the full might of the Roman military. As the Christian church advanced through Africa from the North, the indigenous African religion of ancient Egypt was banned and effectively destroyed in its wake. This was the beginning of Africans losing their minds to European colonizers; and where the mind is controlled, so the body will follow.

The Africanizing influence on the Christian religion served to the historically deficient capacity of the European to accept and interact with non-European as equals. This has been a great achievement and higher development of the African collective movement. The interplay of the colonizing influence of Christianity with the capacity of the African collective to assimilate and transform the religion as an elevating factor of collective life is a complex subject. Indeed, this interplay is still a dominant theme on the African continent today, as Christianity is resurgent amongst African countries as with Nigeria for example. No doubt Africans in the Americas have used some of the best ideas that Christianity has had to offer, to cope with the oppressive onslaught of global White supremacy as it operated for example in the Americas during slavery and after slavery. Gayraud Wimore, author of "Black Religion and Black Radicalism", gives weight behind this assertion.

"To what do we refer when we speak of the valuable contributions of African religions (to the religious creations of Africans in America)? Among other elements we should emphasize the following: a sense of the pervasive reality of the spirit world above, within, and beneath the artificial world of every day; the blotting out of the line between the sacred and the secular; the practical use of religion in all of life; the surrender of excessive individualism for solidarity with the community and nature; the central importance of the family; reverence for the ancestors and recognition of their presence with the living to guide and inspire; the source of evil in the communal consequences of an act rather than in the act per se; the creative use of rhythmic movement of the body, singing, and dancing in the celebration of life and the worship of God.

All these elements and more of African Traditional religion were found in some form, however attenuated, in the slave community and were absorbed to some degree into Black Christianity (and later Black interpretations of Islam). ... More needs to be done in the future if we are to recover and enhance values, particularly those that reflect the

affirmation of life, and the unity of all life in the unquenchable desire for survival, elevation, and the freedom to be Muntu, man and woman, in the most penetrating sense of that profound Bantu word."

Appreciation must be given to how African Traditional Religious concepts were submerged beneath the outward expressions of African/Black Christianity. This adaptation of the form to the essence can be more visibly seen with the African traditional religion merging of Catholicism in Cuba, Haiti and other places of South America. No doubt similar adaptations, though less visible, were made in the African/Black churches of the North America, including down South.

We must take account of how the Collective African Consciousness that was Self-aware even in the dehumanizing conditions of American enslavement. We must account for how this consciousness was unbroken in its continuum from the African Traditional Religions it matured in, through the transatlantic voyage it witnessed, and the physical, abuse it witnessed in the physical, psychological, and spiritual battlefields of North and South America. This collective African Self Consciousness, found expression in the conditions it was presented with, namely European enslavement and European Christian proselytizing but was not itself irrevocably altered from its essence. This Collective African Self Consciousness was embodied by all Africans enslaved in the "New World" but was especially entrusted for revelation through captured African priest and priestesses.

Summarizing how African survivals expressed through Black Christianity Gayward Wilmore writes:

"The point I am stressing is that the early spiritual leaders among the slaves in the Caribbean and North American colonies were the representatives of the traditional religions of Africa that we are beginning to understand and appreciate today. What they brought to Christianity were attitudes and perspectives both in agreements and at variance with missionary teaching. For all of what has seemed to Westerners to be weird and outlandish practices, these men and women retained an instinctive intelligence about existence, physical and mental health, and the preference in life of that which is radically antagonistic to and irreconcilable with the best interests of the community. They had a concept of a Supreme Being who was involved in the practical affairs of life, but in a different way that the Judeo-Christian God. This Being was approachable through many intermediaries, but was known by various names, including Father and Mother, and whose power was supreme over all other powers of the universe. It was not only in the identification of the healing powers of the plants and minerals, or in the exorcism of demonic influences, that these medicine men-preachers contributed to the security of the uprooted slave. What became most significant for a later period was the fact that they recognized the relationship between "bad magic" as whites practiced it and the dehumanizing situation in which they and their people found themselves."

Africans who were enslaved in the Caribbean and South America were in a better position to hold onto their African Traditional Religious practices, even if masked beneath the Christian religious saints of the dominant society. They associated African gods with Christian saints of

Catholicism for instance in Santeria. So in their minds they were not serving the God of their oppressors in their religious practices, but rather transformed the Christian faith to serve their own spiritual needs, their own conceptions of God and the deities.

It is commonly known enslaved Africans in North America did not practice Catholicism in North America, but rather were forced to adapt to European Protestant denominations for the most part, (i.e. Methodist and Baptist and to some degree Episcopalian). These European denominations prohibited the reverence for saints and religious relics or icons. Thus, the enslaved African in the North did not have the same means of masking African gods behind European Christian saints. Did this prevent them from still refashioning the Christian religion to reflect their image of deities, of God? Did African slaves in America imagine God and Jesus to be necessarily White, and thus sympathetic to their White oppressors over them? We know that these enslaved Africans rejected the version of Christianity for the most part of their oppressors as being anti Godly. I think there is enough evidence that our ancestors adopted and adapted the Christian archetypes to address their own unique circumstances and spiritual needs. It may be a simplistic overstatement to say that our ancestors accepted a White God and his White son, Jesus Christ, and therefore automatically accepted the authority of the White man over their lives as masters to slaves. The mere effort to throw off slavery, and dissolve the master slave relationship evidences also the throwing off the idea of White people being endowed to be masters of Black people by God. It may even indicate that Black people did not envision the Supreme God as a big White Daddy in the sky. Maybe the White Jesus in the Black Church was just a front, just like the White saints were a front for South American and Caribbean African religions like Yoruba and Santeria. Other ethnic groups, Chinese, Indian, etc., who have adopted Christianity, image Jesus and God to look like themselves. Could it be that Africans in America have done something similar but in a hidden way so as not to draw the wrath of their White oppressors?

Wilmore identifies three traditions of the Black religious experience that stem from the gathered remembrances of African Traditional Religions: "Survival Tradition", "Elevation Tradition", and the "Liberation Tradition". He categorized the initial developments of Black religion as the "Survival Tradition" that was essentially concerned with getting through to the next moment of life. This religion dealt practically with the matter of sheer survival. Church experience was adapted to give comfort and encouragement so that Black folks can simply make it through the horror of forced enslavement, and later the Black codes, Jim Crow and segregation. To the extent that Africans practiced Christianity, it was a modification of the forms of European Christianity, to make sense of their experience, an experience that could never be the same as that of their oppressors. Thus "Black Christianity" is fundamentally different from White Christianity. The growth of conservative, apolitical independent Black churches were expressions of the "Survival Tradition".

The next pronounced development of Black religious expression was what Wilmore calls the "Elevation Tradition". In this phase, our collective African consciousness was focused on lifting the moral standing of Black people beyond the imposed degradation of chattel slavery and severe restrictions of life chances. It was principally concerned with the uplift of the mentality, the collective material wellbeing, and social standing of Black people after the abolition of slavery. The proliferation of "Negro improvement associations" that were strongly tied to a religious denomination evidences this phase of Black religious expression. The freedman associations, Booker T. Washington approach of "pull yourself up by the boot-straps", self-reliance approach, and later the Garvey movement fits the "elevation tradition".

As Africans learned how to adapt and survive the degradation of enslavement, and reaffirm their humanity to themselves (often through coded language and subversive tactics) their religious expression spawned another phase, what Wilmore terms the “Liberation Tradition”. The collective push initially for Africans in the Americas was for freedom from bondage. The use of Christianity was to give symbolism and form to the singular quest for liberation from the condition of enslavement; hence the strong identification with the Old Testament (false) story about the people of Israel being held bondage in Egypt, and ultimately being led to freedom by God through Moses. This distinctive phase of Black religion in North America was expressive in clear relief through the abolition movement, the Civil War and Reconstruction periods.

Wilmore says of the three traditions, “The liberation and elevation traditions began with the determination to survive, but they go beyond “make do” (survival) to “do more” (elevation) and from “do more to “freedom now” and “Black power” (liberation). Wilmore posits that none of these three traditions were ever phased out and in many cases overlapped each other. He warns against over simplifications and reductionism. They found modern expressions through various institutions and movements in America, be they religious or secular. For example, Wilmore see’s the NAACP, the civil rights movements as stemming from the survival and elevation traditions. The NOI with its withdrawal from aggressive tactics and emphasis of defense, its emphasis on separation from White people, it’s initial apolitical stance, was more an expression of the “Survival Tradition”. Whereas the quest for Black Power through Black Panther party, for instance, was expressive of the "Liberation Tradition".

These three traditions ultimately have been rooted in our Africanity, our essential cultural DNA that asserts our African humanity and even our Divinity. Our unique religious/spiritual and non-religious expressions continue to have redemptive meaning not only for ourselves, but also for all of humanity. We should not underestimate how African Collective Consciousness, evolved through the independent Black Churches, laying the foundations for African liberation ideology and active struggle in America, the Caribbean, and on the Continent of Africa. It was from this foundation that the "Africa for Africans" idea developed. Joseph Booth, a pre-Garveyite who was associated with Baptists, published a book entitled, "Africa for Africans" in 1897. We learn from Wilmore, the role Black Churches served in developing African liberation consciousness.

"The thrust of missionary emigrationism (back to Africa movements), the search for roots in the pre-Mosaic history of Israel (Egyptian history), the challenge to the ethical interpretation of love and redemptive suffering in white Christianity, the prefigurement of black liberation in the story of the Exodus, the willingness to speculate about the "color" of God and the meaning of a black Christ, and the development of Ethiopianism in Africa and in the Caribbean and North America – all of these developments and tendencies gave inspiration and nationalism, a heightened sense of racial identity and messianism wherever blacks writhed under the heel of white oppression."

Before the end of the nineteenth century, what began as theology was secularized as an ideology of political separatism that reached its most explicit articulation in resolutions of the Pan-African congresses and the philosophy of “Negritude”. But well before that occurred, black ministers and lay persons had drawn cultural and political implications for colonization and self-determination-not from egalitarian ideologies of the Western democracies or from Marxism – but from the Bible and Christian theology as reinterpreted by men and women who believed that the

gospel itself contains the most penetrating and provocative justification for racial solidarity and social change

Even as we critique the religions that Black folks adhere to today, particularly the Abrahamic religions White people have taken up, and that is healthy to do, we must respect what Black religion did for our ancestors who survived with their religion, what no one today had to endure or probably could fully understand. If not for their Black Theology, created in the most trying of times, we would not be here to make a critique.

Eric Lincoln posits there are six pairs of dialectical poles that express the major orientations of Africa people through their forms of Black Christian religion. These dialectics are:

- 1) The dialectic between priestly and prophetic functions
- 2) The dialectic between other-worldly versus this-worldly
- 3) The dialectic between universalism and particularism
- 4) The dialectic between the communal and the privatistic
- 5) The dialectic between charismatic versus bureaucratic
- 6) The dialectic between resistance versus accommodation

I would extend this paradigm to understand the collective development of Black life generally, and to understanding much of the conflicts we experience in trying to get together as one. Two such extensions are the dialectic between communal versus capitalistic economic enterprising; and the dialectic between practical self-help versus dependency on divine intervention. Lincoln summarizes his model for understanding the Black church in comparison to others:

“These six pairs of dialectical polarities give a more comprehensive view of the complexity of Black churches (and for that matter Black people) as social institutions, including their roles and functions in black communities. The strength of the dialectical model of the Black Church is that it leads to a more dynamic (as opposed to a static, polarizing and limited) view of Black churches along a continuum of dialectical tensions, struggle, and change. The problem of single, non-dialectical typological views (one shoe ideology fits all) of Black churches (Black individuals, Black movements, other Black organizations, and Black strategies), is they tend to categorize and stereotype Black churches into rigid pigeonhole categories like “other-worldly”; they miss the historical dynamism of institutions (and approaches to resistance) moving back and forth (between opposites) in response to certain issues or social conditions. Besides allowing for institutional change, the dialectical model of the Black Church offers methodological flexibility.” ~Eric Lincoln, The Black Church in African American Experience.

Albert J. Raboteau, *Slave Religion, The Invisible Institution in Antebellum South*, cautions against a reductionist view, a view that Lincoln’s model corrects, that Christianity is simply a slave religion that breeds passivity, lack of concern for the harsh realities of life, and inferiority in Blacks who practice it.

“To describe slave religion as merely otherworldly (or a total submission to the will of White people) is inaccurate, for slave believed that God had acted, was acting, and would continue to act within human history and within their own history as a peculiar people

just as long ago he had acted on behalf of another chosen people, biblical Israel. Moreover, slave religion had a this-worldly impact, not only in leading some slave to acts of external rebellion, but also in helping slave to assert and maintain a sense of personal value --- even of ultimate worth. The religious meetings in the quarters, groves, and "hush harbors" were themselves frequently acts of rebellion against the proscriptions of the master. In the context of divine authority, the limited authority of any human was placed in perspective. By obeying the commands of God, even when they contradicted the commands of men, slaves developed and treasured a sense of moral superiority and actual moral authority over their masters.

In the role of preacher, exhorter, and minister, slaves experienced status, achieved respect, and exercised power, often circumscribed but nonetheless real. In the peak experience of conversion, slaves felt raised from death to life, from sorrow to joy, from damnation to election. The conversion experience equipped the slave with a sense of individual value and personal vocation; which contradicted the devaluing and dehumanizing forces of slavery. In the prayer meetings, the sermons, prayers, and songs, when the Spirit started moving the congregation to shout, clap, and dance, the slave enjoyed community and fellowship which transformed their individual sorrows. That some slaves maintained their identity as persons, despite a system bent on reducing them to subhuman level was certainly due in part to their religious life. In the midst of slavery, religion was for slaves a space of meaning, freedom, and transcendence." Albert J. Raboteau, Slave Religion, The Invisible Institution in Antebellum South.

The above is by no means my endorsement of Christianity, especially the European brand; but rather an appreciation for how the African cultural essence (Mirimba Ani's Asili), continued to express through Africans enslaved in the Americas, despite the most dehumanizing conditions ever put on a people. My premise is that the African spirit has used these forms of Western religions, under conditions of forced acceptance, to express its own authentic essence. I am not arguing that ensuing new Black theologies, were ideal expressions of an authentic African essence, Mirimba Ani's Asili; just that they were expressions of an authentic African essence. These expressions were adaptive to the realities of social control, domination and oppression. There does remain the question of why we still cling to these creations today when physical enslavement is over? Why not now revive our African gods in our practice? Whereas I do appreciate how our African ancestors have made use of foreign religions to affect our survival and to affirm our humanity, I do agree with the following quote by Molefi Asante that speaks to African Traditional Religions being more suitable for expressing our Africanity and Spirituality.

"What is religion but the deification of ancestors, the making sacred of traditions within the context and history. How can we honor any god who was used against us? The only people who accept alien gods are defeated people; all others honor and accept their own name for the Almighty. We must learn to appreciate ourselves and our traditions. What is wrong with the African God?" ~ Molefi Asante.

Study the Akan (Ghana) names and meanings for God and you will see that our Ancestors did not need Western conceptions to augment or boost theirs. What were the names of the African conception of the Supreme Being, before encountering the European or Arab? Study these names

and your mind will achieve another degree of freedom from Western mental enslavement. Here are some of those names from the nation of Ghana.

- Nyame or Onyame: “The Supreme Being, the Deity, God, the Creator of all things” who “never ceases to create things”
- Nyankopon or Onyankopon: “God the Supreme Being, the Creator and Sovereign of the Universe; the Shining and Only Great One, Onyankopon Kwaame”
- Twiaduampon: appellation of God Nyankopon – “The Great Adu (Anu) of the Twii” (The Twii are the ancient people of Ghana).

Other names of God Nyankopon are:

- Abommubuwafré, He upon you call in your experience of distress: A consoler or Comforter who gives salvation
- Nyaamanekose, He in whom you confide troubles which come upon you
- Tetekwaframua, He who is there now as from ancient times; He who endures for ever
- Oboadee (Oboo-Ade), He who created the Thing (All of existence in nature) a name also assigned to Nyame as well as to Odomankoma.
- Opanyin, prince, grandee, chief, elder, superior sovereign of all, even of the wide or expansive earth. He who is able to do.
- Nana, “The Great Ancestor Nyankopon whose day is Saturday”
- Odomankoma, the Manifold, Universally filled, the Inexhaustible, the Undimensional

There are more qualifications, and none needed a European to invent. For more details read, “Akan Doctrine of God”, by [J.B. Danquah](#).

Can Africans use the religion of our oppressors for their complete liberation? I think the quicker road to spiritual and material freedom for Africans would be to go back and fetch (Sankofa) their original religious expressions before European invasion into their lands and minds.

The influence of Islam on the Collective African Consciousness

The development of slavery as an institution and market did not start with the European slave trade, but with the Arab invasion of Egypt 639-42 A.D and their subsequent incursions into the Sudan / Ethiopia, until the Arabs finally consolidated complete control of the Sudan in the fifteenth century. The Arab slave trade had 800 years of a head start over the European slave trade, and has continued as a major institution where Arab-Islam has taken hold in Africa for a span of over 1400 years. Initially Africans in West of the continent were looking to get the Romans off their back and made certain alliances with Arabs to do so; yet once the Africans and Arabs could push out the Romans from North Africa, the Arabs replaced the Romans as oppressors. The Arabs went on to colonize all the East coast of Africa and North Africa initially. Eventually they pushed inland to Ethiopia and West Africa. Along with Arab entry into Africa began an international system of trade in African slaves. The Arabs brought with them a religions creed that degenerated from its original proposition of equality of Blacks and Whites, as purportedly instructed by the prophet Mohammed, into a religion that rationalized reducing all indigenous non-Muslim believers to slavery, domination, or death; just as Christians would do to the good Samaritan (the perceived other) African and Indian during the transatlantic slave trade. An African non-believer in the

growth Arab-Muslim belief was an “Infidel” and enemy who Muslim’s were authorized to do Jihad on and destroy native African religious practice, and even the very native Africans themselves. This development was gradual, starting with trading colonies of Arabs. It eventuated to the creation of an Arab/African mulatto people who did not identify as being African, yet who were able to push further into the heart of Africa and spread the xenophobic beliefs of the Arab-Muslim fathers.

Some make the old and fallacious argument that both indigenous and Arab-Islam Africans had started the slavery institution and that the Arabs were just picking up from where the Africans began. While it is true that there were native African servants, these servants, who may have come to their lot as prisoners of war, for example, were not treated as chattel, as spiritless beings. They were considered in the grand scheme of things as part of the African society and could have many of their complaints redressed. As stated earlier, they in many cases able to accumulate wealth, and to rise in position within the society. Furthermore, the institution of invading a village for the expressed purpose of capturing humans to feed the slave market was not started by Africans, and was not a major practice by indigenous Africans. Once the Arab-Muslim invaders firmly established themselves in Africa, and succeeded to disrupt the normal balance of native African economies, they were also able to put pressure (mostly through sustained military pressure) on one African village to seek slaves from another African village. The same held true centuries later for European invaders, who had possession of the gun, and could use this technology strategically to pit one African village against another. Once a mulatto class of Arab-Africans was created, this group of people had no serious compunction of enslaving non-Muslim believing Africans. Why these mulattos sided with the disruptive Arab culture over the mother culture of all is one of the great questions of history and human psychodynamics. That dynamic was the spearhead thrust into the side of indigenous African culture. It was to be the weapon used by Arab invaders, who would by proxy further weaken African nations to the point of making them vulnerable to European conquests and end the last of the great African civilizations, the Songhai Empire.

The Arab slave trade drained Africa of a low estimate of 100 million people over 1400 years of Arab intrusion. It is estimated that 40 million were taken alive, and that for every one that was taken alive, three would die before the enslavement transaction was completed. Many of the enslaved were taken to India to serve as Arab mercenaries of war against the Hindus. Others were sold to Arab households and to Europeans. Some were also sold to Muslim African heads of state for their own purposes. For details on this see “The Legacy of Arab-Islam in Africa: A Quest for Inter-Religious Dialogue” by John Alembillah Azumah.

It is a wonder how a desert people with few resources, and with no civilization to speak of prior to their invasion of Africa, could gather the strength to overtake Africa. As I alluded to earlier, North Africa was weakened by repeated Asiatic invasions by first Hebrews (Hyksos), then the Greeks, then the Romans, the Assyrians, and the Persians (Iranians). These invasions changed the population of North Africa, creating a mulatto group that did not side with the protection of native Africans. This all served to weaken Africa to the point where they could not resist even a modest army of Arabs. The invasions caused a splintering of once cohesive African cities and states, into small groups of colonized Africans, or small groups of Africans who migrated South and West, to avoid foreigners and direct domination. These smaller groups in either case were not sufficiently strong to put up a lasting resistance to foreign successive foreign invaders.

What does all of this say about the collective African higher consciousness? It certainly did not have the wide dynamic expression in Arab-Muslim controlled regions that it did prior to invasion. However, with the light of Egypt going out, there arose grand African civilizations in West Africa that gave expression to the higher consciousness of Africans for a time before both

Arab-Muslim and European intrusion would take near complete hold. These were the empires of Mali, Ghana, and Songhai in West Africa. These native African Black empires rivaled any of those existing at that time in the world. A high expression of the empires of Mali and later Songhai was the higher learning taking place in the university at Timbuktu. People from all over the world, even Europeans went to Timbuktu to become learned. It is quite a paradox that the highly learned of the University of Sankore at Timbuktu, while under the kingship of an African Muslim, also kept slaves to manage their home affairs while they sought their higher learning.

Africa has always been the light of the world and the giver of wisdom to the world. Prior to the Greeks, the Hebrews, the Romans, and the Arabs becoming major players in the world, they made prolonged contact with Africa, even though that contact never did benefit native Africans. With the Arab intrusion reaching West Africa and ending the last purely African great civilizations of Songhai, the peoples of West African progressively came under the influence of Islam. It was an Islamized West African army that was to invade Spain for 700 years. Black people invaded Spain (Blackamoors or simply Moors and Berbers) in 711 and 712 A.D.; however, the mentality behind the invasion was not native African. The invasion was started with a reconnaissance mission of 500 men led by the Black Moor Tarif. With that mission's success, the invasion began in mass by a Muslim general, Tariq-Bin-Zibad backed by mostly Black Moors (6700) with some (300) Arab soldiers. This incursion was followed in 712 by conquests from the Arab general Musa Nossseyr with mostly Berber troops. This invasion therefore does not represent an expression of higher African consciousness. In many cases the invading Moors were welcomed by the native Spanish people, who viewed them as relieving Spain from the tyranny of the Visigoths, licentious Christians that ruled over Spain for the previous 200 years. The effect of the Arab-Muslim invasion into Africa was to replace the indigenous African societal structures of governance with the religious state of Islam. So we cannot say that the Moorish invaders of Spain were operating strictly from the indigenous cultural thrusts of Africans. What motivation did the Moors, 80% of whom were African, to occupy Spain for 800 years? The Moors didn't demand religious conversion of Spaniards to Islam. They didn't enslave the populace and extract free labor. They built up their society, established universities, built roads, baths, promoted agriculture, introduced literacy and science, and provided for all those things that we call civilization. What then is the underlying reason for going to Spain to do this? Mind you as soon as Africans were put out, the enslavement of Africans as a system commenced. Though Arab/Moors did not require the Spanish to change their religion, customs, or language, this invasion when viewed from the stance of traditional African values was a violation of those values and a departure from the fundamental African world-view as exemplified by the Maatian principles of Ancient Egypt. Belief in the religion created by the Hebrews, passed on to the Romanized Christians, and then to Arabs, was a copy of the original African spiritual way of life in Egypt, that no longer had the spiritual clarity conducive to natural African development of higher consciousness. This is likely the source of the unenlightened invasion of Spain by Africans. While it is true that African and Arab presence in Europe spurred the development of a backwards Europe, it is also true that ultimately, no conquering people can bring civilization of true development to another people. Inevitably the Blacks and Arabs were pushed out of Spain in total by the year 1491 and the very next year, Spain returned the favor and started the international slave trade of Africans with the exploits of Columbus in 1492. Could it be that Africans knew the need to contain and civilize the Europeans, else they would attempt to do exactly what they did once that containment and civilizing influence was removed? We see how the Spaniards felt no compunction to strip Africans of their freedom and humanity to a greater degree than Africans did to them for 700 years.

Comment [RL6]: Give details of what king and during what year.

Comment [RL7]: Check period

The 15th century was not only when Arabs consolidated their hold on the Sudan, but when Europeans ushered in the system of the transatlantic slave trade that was to rival the Arab slave trade. This was the start of Western colonialism, neocolonialism, and Western racism/White supremacy. These systems were to challenge the strength of the African spirit to its limits. In the wider view of history, this challenge of European and Arab intrusion into the development of African consciousness, would force Africans and the rest of the world to come to grips with the true meaning of civilization, humanity, justice, world peace. Africans brought to the Americas, striped of every possession, would still be connected to the African Self-consciousness, would still have a lesson for the world about spiritual evolution, for the world has not evolved higher ethically or spiritually more than the African people who gave to the world its first humanity.

Summary on Religion and African Collective Consciousness

There are two aspects of religion that we must distinguish; one is the purely theological aspect or doctrine. The doctrines are both what their books say and the interpretations of their scripture down through the ages. An aspect of religious text or doctrine that we should gain clarity of is that these texts contain collections of myths that were meant to be instructive of moral behavior, and as such the myths themselves were not necessarily conveying historical facts or events. There are things in the Christian doctrine that are detrimental to African people, for example the verse that says slaves obey your masters, or the curse of Ham. The second side of the religious coin is how religions were used as the spearhead to penetrate non-white cultures and subsequently plunder their resources. Too often people read a literal interpretation of these texts that renders the rational mind inoperative. The Christian and Islamic texts were written in a political context that had the intent of promoting the political aspirations of a people, sometimes to the detriment of other peoples; as with the mentioned "Curse of Ham". to justify the enslavement of Africans. The cultural aspirations for power and control of Europeans were cloaked in the religious rhetoric of universal brotherhood, and one God (theirs) for all. This cloak sufficiently blinded non-white people to where they could say, "The Christians taught us how to pray with our eyes closed. Before then they had the bible and we had the land; but when we opened our eyes, they had the land and we had the bible.

When addressing the aspect of the major Western religions, including Islam, and their usefulness to African people, the focus should be on just that; how useful are they in helping African people organize to be autonomous from White people? I don't think it is possible; and so, we need to expound on how embracing Western religions holds Africans back. Often it is difficult and confusing to take on arguments of both doctrine AND the political use of religions by Whites. It is enough at such confusing moments to focus just on the later. Perhaps then the value of traditional African religions can begin to show in sharper relief.