

After Initiation...

"What do I do now?" she asked

Almost twenty years ago, my wife, Iyalawo Vassa, and I were married in Florence, Italy. We had lived together for several years before she would finally consent to marrying me. While the trip, ceremony and friendships we made will always be part of our lives, one of the things which sticks out in my memory was Vassa's comment after the wedding. "***What do I do now?***" she asked.

After some questioning it turned out that she was confused as to what her role, responsibilities etc. would be now that she was a married woman, as opposed to what they had been when she was single. I remember answering her: "***the only thing which has changed is a legal document, you simply need to be who you were yesterday, who you are today, and who you will grow to be tomorrow.***"

During the last decade we have initiated hundreds of sincere individuals into the various paths of Ifa. Looking back, there have been about equal percentages of men, women, European and African initiates. A smaller percentage has been from the Latin community who seem to find it more difficult to divest themselves of their Lucumi/Santeria roots.

Interestingly, it is after the act of initiation that many have some of the same confusion that faced Iyalawo Vassa: "***What do I do now?***"

In our goal oriented Western society, we are focused on short- term gratification. We want the car.we get the car.and we drive it proudly. We want the girl/guy.we get them and plunge into the relationship. We want the job.we get it and go right to work. So, when we want to become a priest, we do the initiation and then..

You see initiation is the beginning of a journey, not the conclusion of one. Crowning Orisa simply prepares you for the learning, growth and wisdom that the following years will provide. Certainly, there will be immediate and profound positive changes in your life, but they will be simply the preparation of the foundation that will support your future realization of your Destiny.

There is another essential part to this. Unlike job, car, relationship.Orisa is about your entire life. "***It is the matrix within which all the parts of***

your life must comfortably and logically fit". Too many initiates tend to see it as a stand alone "thing." It is not! It is a total structure within which all the things of your life must logically fit and work together. It insists upon your looking at each thing in relationship as to how it will integrate with the whole.

In other words, you can't act upon short- term gratifications, if they would harm or contradict the whole of your life. That extends from throwing the McDonalds wrapper on the ground of the planet your children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren must occupy to a quick relationship with someone outside the committed relationship and family you have.

There's one other part as well. Becoming a priest should not set you apart from your family, community or friends. It is simply the basic energy matrix that guides your life. It doesn't require your wearing different clothing, associating only with those who share your views, or feeling disassociated from society in any way. The opposite is true.

When was the last time you stood at the checkout line at your local grocery store visiting with a friend or acquaintance? Did you feel compelled, or even that it would be proper, while discussing your kids, the local team or the local election to ask that person what their religious beliefs or practices were? Certainly not. These areas are personal and as off limits for well-bred people as asking about your personal sexual practices and behaviors.

So, the answer is to allow your philosophy, your energy and the Orisa to be the guiding roadmap of a rational, logical and loving life. Allow their energy to open your opportunities, minimize your difficulties, and remove your fears and uncertainties. Do not allow it to BE your life.

When you do that you will comfortably, without conflict and stress, fulfill your life and your Destiny.

Ase!

Blessings,

Oluwo Philip Neimark