

Concepts I learned while listening to an interview with a Master Percussionist

"The following is a brief article written by Iyanifa Ifanikee and posted in the new Ifa College. In addition to enjoying her insights, we invite you to visit the new [Ifa College](#) for a host of new information and wisdom...."

I would like to share the following concepts I learned while listening to an interview with a Master Percussionist named Layne Redmond. She is the author of "When the Drummers Were Women: a Spiritual History of Rhythm." My commentary relates her studies with Ancestor worship and the Ase of blood.

BLOOD AND CONSCIOUSNESS

Artifacts depicting the frame drum turn up in many different cultures throughout the world, in all time periods. Many of the designs and images painted on the drums represent the womb, often painted red, the color of blood. The first sound you ever hear is that of your mother's blood pulsing through her arteries. Our cells came together and we grew to the pulse of that sound. In this sense, we were in tune to the ase or life force of blood at conception, just as we were in tune with all the other aspects of our destiny. Ms. Redmond says that drumming is an echo of that first sound and it can take us to a deep level of our awareness, to a pristine state. In her work, she finds that accumulated and conditioned consciousness can be changed, when necessary, by the practice of drumming. We in Ifa use ceremony and ritual offerings to achieve the same purpose.

THE SACRED EGG AND ANCESTRAL WISDOM

Some of us have grown into adulthood without ever meeting our Maternal Grandmother. Ancestral worship is a powerful tool in which to communicate and receive support and guidance from these women on a spiritual level, which manifests in our physical lives. However, we as a Sacred Egg, have experienced a physical connection within the womb of our Maternal Grandmother and this is how: by the fourth month of fetal development, all the eggs that a woman will ever have, form in her ovaries. That means that the Sacred Egg who you are, was formed in your mother's ovary when she was a four month old fetus growing in the womb of her mother. In the form of a Sacred Egg, you and I spent five months in our grandmother's womb! This concept takes us back through all the grandmothers, back to the very first grandmother and back to the pristine state of unconditional consciousness, our original nature, which is totally pure potential.

THE YORUBA VERSION OF MYSTERIUM MORTIS

According to Suzanne Wenger, "Until recently no one would have thought it possible to bury a dead elder or priest without the full Eegun rituals. Ancestry was evoked by extensive drum-orchestration, calling them up to lend a hand to a newcomer in the difficult task of crossing the chasm. These days it is rare to hear a drum from a dead-wake in the middle of the night . . . Only a few hours may today be given to the fellow devotees of a dead priest to perform the indispensable ceremony . . . None-the-less, even converts to imported religions still supply a live goat and kill it in the premises of bereavement, a sacrificial appeal - however domesticated - for cooperative support towards swift reincarnation."

STAYING IN BALANCE

In ancient cultures, the tempo of human life was synchronized with the rhythms of the earth. It is Ms. Redmond's premise that contemporary society has forgotten the need to be in rhythm with ourselves, one another, and nature. She feels that drumming is one of the ways to achieve this balance. This all makes sense, but I would add that building the rhythm of prayers and ebbos to our Ori, the Orisa, and our Ancestors will bring us into more complete alignment with our Universe."

Blessings,

Oluwo Philip Neimark