

**"ONE GOING TO TAKE A POINTED STICK TO PINCH A BABY BIRD  
SHOULD FIRST TRY IT ON HIMSELF TO FEEL HOW IT HURTS."**

— YORUBA PROVERB (NIGERIA)

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AFRICAN TRADITIONAL — An Overview

***Inception:*** The Advent of Man

***Adherents:*** 100 Million [EBI Estimate]

***Primary Value Proposition:*** Respect for the dignity of man

***The Word of (about and/or attributed to) God:***

- The Orisha Nla (Chief of the Deities) created the Earth with the instruction and aid of the Supreme Creator.
- The Orisha Nla was also given the task of creating bodies out of clay.
- When this was complete the Supreme Creator secretly placed the spark of life within the forms.
- Throughout Africa God is known as Mulungu (East Africa), Leza (Central Africa), Nyambe (West Tropics), Nyame (Ghana), the Molder, the Giver of Breath and Souls, the God of Destiny, the One Who Exists of Himself, the Inexplicable, the Ancient of Days, the One Who Bends Even Kings, and the One You Meet Everywhere.

***Core Beliefs:*** African traditions share a widespread belief in a supreme God, unique and transcendent. Religion enfolds the whole of life, there is no dichotomy between life and religion. Ancestors mediate between God and man. Pardon is final and acknowledged by all: an offense, once forgiven, is never recalled. The whole person, body and soul, is totally involved in worship. There is respect for the dignity of man; each man has his own inalienable chi ("selfhood", "destiny"). That life makes moral demands is accepted, and this is shown among other things by the sense of the person and attachment to life itself. Attention is given to locating man within his environment and making him feel at home in it. Tradition is handed down through stories, poems, hymns, proverbs, riddles and art.

The whole community is involved in the training of the young, and education itself has a necessary community and social aspect. Old folk are held in high esteem. The community regards their wisdom as prophetic, that is, as able to give direction for living in the circumstances of the present day. Silence is treasured as a value. Marriage is an alliance between families and persons; cultural provisions are made to uphold its stability. Hospitality is a duty and is the most common value in African Traditional Religion all over Africa. Between kith and kin and people of the same clan there is a very strong sense of sharing and of solidarity and belonging. Efforts are made to secure and promote justice and peace within the community. The nuclear family and the extended family have been the pivots of the African social system. Respect for authority, sanctioned by the ancestors, is strong and represents the common will. The poor and the sick are taken care of, widows and orphans are looked after.