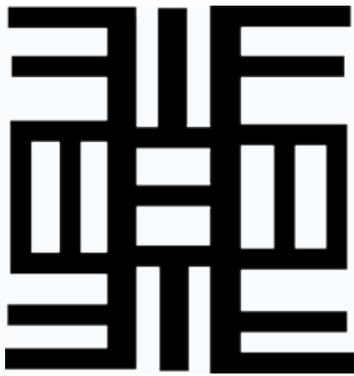


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West African Wisdom: Adinkra Symbols & Meanings



**NEA ONNIM
NO SUA A,
OHU**

**"He who does not know
can know from learning"**

Symbol of knowledge, life-long education and continued quest for knowledge

Taking Back Our Community by Q-Topilous

Today I came across a status from my cousin which read "we need to take back our community". My initial reaction was "yes", but shortly thereafter I began to delve into how that would take place. And then I thought about the suicide-murder that took place yesterday, here in downtown Chicago, and about my plight here in Chicago, about the plight of my family back home, and about the Columbia party last night crashed my the usual fight. And as usual my analytical mind began to dissect a common denominator amongst all of these seemingly unrelated events and circumstances.

The truth is there is really only one way to "take back out community", and it's not by building or owning a business. It's has nothing to do with going to school and getting an education, it has nothing to do with going to church every Sunday or having another tired ass "Stop the violence" march. We have tried and are doing all of

the above. But there is still one area in the African-American community that is so woefully insufficient, that it has pretty much escaped alarm and has slid into a nasty common denominator for every problem effecting our communities, families, and way of life.

That problem is the presence of a father in the life of child. It's so simple, yet so personal for most. So please try not to take this personally. This problem is the root and center of EVERY major problem that faces the African-American community. Try not to take this personally and use deductive reasoning here. Take a room of 20-30 blacks and give a good experienced-guess (my new phrase for today) of the amount of people in the room that were raised in single parent homes. Yep. Now let's take this further. Poverty and single parent homes have a direct correlation, take a look at these stats at:
<http://datacenter.kidscount.org/data/acrossstates/Ranki>

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[ngs.aspx?ind=107](#)

In my home state, the poorest state in the union and the state with the largest African-American population, children within single parent homes amongst blacks are at 72%, here in Illinois they're at 71%. But these numbers don't surprise us right? They shouldn't. We see it every day, me and my brothers, most likely if you're reading this and your black it's probably true for you. The problem is not necessarily single parent homes, but fathers who take no active interest in the life of their child. But I can't be mad at my father because he was raised in a society were it gave him a pass for it. I only met him once at Churches chicken in Jackson. My mom just happened to run into him. I got out the car, she introduced us, I shook his hand and got back into the car...lol. That was it.

With that being said, it has taken me 28 years to even begin learning things I should have learned at age

3, just by being around my father. I can't even imagine the plight of the average black male who is less ambitious as I am. Again I not upset at him, but I realize that having a father or more or less a father figure who is active within in a child's life will do better than any degree or amount of money a person can obtain in life. No matter what you hear, what you've been taught, or seen on TV, or heard on the radio no mother can take the place of father. Not to discount the efforts of the millions of single mothers who head single parent homes every day, including my own, but their plight is like the one lone worker who has to do the jobs of three other people because his fellow team members called in. He do a decent job at it initially, but day in and day out of the same conditions will adversely affect him, the quality of his work, his moral, and the company he works for. It's just simply NOT the way it's supposed to be, no matter how you look at it or how the situation came about.

Black on black crime here in Chicago primarily is result of children having no one to watch them while mother is at work, probably working two jobs trying to support her family. Little Johnny has no one to look up to so he turns to the streets as his father, he knows no other way since his has done the same. He doesn't know how to effectively think through and work out complex social problems without being hijacked by immature emotions, so with every other conflict, he's lashing out at a world that doesn't care and could a shit about his impoverished condition. His mother deals with it the best way she knows, but she's over worked and lonely herself. She finds it especially difficult to deal with him when reaches his pre-teens, the age where young boys start to "feel themselves" and their testosterone runs rampant in their developing bodies.

Johnny is out of control at school, since he's been next to independent of an

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strong authority figure for much of his life, his actions say "who are they to tell me to sit down and do your homework"! Moreover, since the majority of his culture shares a similar experience, the resulting lifestyle is glamorized everyday on television...his third parent. So now little Johnny not only wants to be a rapper, he wants to live that lifestyle and little Lakeisha, growing up in a similar situation thinks she loves little Johnny, because he looks and acts like what she's been seeing on TV for the last 14 years of her life, this has to be the way it's SUPPOSED to be, he too was raised in the same environment.

Lakeisha never knew her father, so she doesn't know what it means to be loved by a man; maybe it's when he's sexually objectifying her??...she has TV, and of course, the streets. The world also arbitrarily communicates to her that her mother and father weren't shit and she too isn't shit, so instead of searching for more or

something better, she is convinced that she couldn't possibly do better. **THIS IS THE WAY IT'S SUPPOSED TO BE.** As a matter of fact Johnny begins to replace her father who was never there and likewise for Johnny. The cold of the world is erased by their love. But they never learnt how to properly deal with emotions, plan for a family, or effectively communicate in stressful situations, and let's not even talk about finances. They have never lived in a home where two people worked together as such. They could learn with time, but they need each other NOW...and so the cycle continues.

This illustration is a generalization, but painfully represents what I have seen throughout my life. It is the core of all African-American problems including crime, poverty, and teen-pregnancies. No amount of businesses in the hood, cultural enlightenment, degrees, or amount of money can replace the role

of a father in a child's life. That's why I admire and look up to so many fathers who play an active role in their children lives. They may be just doing what is simply natural to them, but they have no idea what it means to our race, nation, and generation...

From 05/08/2010 blog "Day to Day" at <http://quincylsb.com/>

The Ex, The Next, and The One for Right

Now By: Toni Facade

The ex- doesn't know when to quit

The next- doesn't know where to start

The right now- doesn't know their a temp

And their all just playing a part

The ex-will do anything to stay

The next-can't see past the disguise

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The right now- is so easy
to please

And they all believe the
same lies

The ex-wants to be needed

The next-is trying to find a
place

The right now-is far to
conceited

And they all think loves in
their face

The ex-tries to cope

The next-longs to be near

The right now-is starting to
digress

And they all share the
same fear

The ex- has lost ground

The next-is on a mission

The right now-has faded to
the back

They all fight for "right
now's" position

The ex-formerly known as
right now

The next-is a new face

The right now-moved from
the next

They sound so familiar cus
we've all been in each
place.

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The Circular Journey to Nowhere: Completing the Missing Link

by My Mind

Four Hundred plus years in
darkness, knowing but not
knowing specifically,
achieving great feats, yet
still empty and incomplete,
wow, this is just the
beginning story of the
Black Man in the new
land, circumstances and
sequences of events have
shape and reshape his
psyche, finding console in
the material as well the
superficial, then the
thought and provocation
occurred, is this reason for
the appearance of
disconcert with His place
in society. Then it
blossomed, we the
African-American, have
nowhere to pilgrimage or
we haven't collectively
found a place of
pilgrimage, in this context
meaning a place of inward
connection and a journey
of personal self-discovery,
for it is the pilgrimage
itself which becomes as
important as the sacred
place sought. In general in
the various cultures,
religions, and sects
worldwide in ancient times
as well as present times
they all had a place of
pilgrimage for this exact
thing.

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So could this be it, could this be the missing link for the African-American, as individuals we all have a place to reflect in some form or the other BUT collectively we don't have anywhere, though it can easily be achieved WE just have to decide where THIS place is or is going to be and what it is going to be. By doing so, this creates a very powerful thing....something called FOCUS the true missing link of the Black Man.

X-expression is FREEDOM!!!

Mississippi and the Blues by Puzzles

Virtually anyone who has grown up in America is familiar with the genre of music known as the Blues. It's a globally respected and beloved art form, and one of the earliest styles of Blues is the Delta Blues, which originated in Mississippi. To truly appreciate the Delta Blues (distinguished by the use of slide/bottleneck guitar) and its various derivative

styles, one must look back at the history of the music. Perhaps more than any other state in the United States, Mississippi has the greatest claim of being the "Home of the Blues."

There are countless bluesmen that were born in the South, but Mississippi can boast having the most influential artists of the Blues and also being the place of many significant events in Blues history. Artists such as Charley Patton, Mississippi John Hurt, Son House, Robert Johnson, Howlin' Wolf, Muddy Waters, Willie Dixon, Elmore James, Albert King, Jimmy Reed, B.B. King, Hubert Sumlin, and Little Milton were all born in Mississippi, each of whom are known as Blues innovators.

The most specific details regarding the origins of the Blues are not known; however, it can be traced at least as far back as slavery. Often while slaves were working in the fields, they would do "call and response" where one phrase is sung and then the second phrase is sung in

response to the first. This same styling is also used in the musical genres of Gospel, Rhythm & Blues, and Jazz. The term "the Blues" is said to have come from the term "blue devils," referring to feelings of sadness, but anyone who is familiar with the genre of music known as the Blues knows that the subject matter of the songs can range from being in love to talking about tragedies such as death. The Blues developed into its 20th century form through the intertwining of spirituals, folklore, work songs, and dance music.

Mississippi was at the very center of the phenomenon that came to be known as the Blues. It was in 1903, in the small town of Tutwiler, that W.C. Handy, often referred to as the Father of the Blues, first heard the style of music being played on guitar that would later lead him to write some of the earliest standards of the era. Within 20 years, the musical style eternally became part of our history

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when it was recorded by the Library of Congress.

There is one place in particular in the Mississippi Delta that can arguably be called the birthplace of the Blues – Will Dockery's Plantation. It was here at the Dockery Plantation in Ruleville where Charley Patton taught musicians such as Howlin' Wolf, David "Honeyboy" Edwards, Roebuck "Pops" Staples (of the Staple Singers), and Robert Johnson (the King of the Delta Blues) how to play the guitar. It was at a crossroad near Dockery Plantation where Robert Johnson allegedly sold his soul to the Devil in exchange for mastery over the guitar; however, it is in the city of Clarksdale, approximately 40 miles north of Ruleville, where a Crossroads monument has been placed at the spot Highways 49 and 61 intersect.

Following in the tradition of Robert Johnson, Howlin' Wolf, and Muddy Waters were two of the greatest guitarists in modern Blues: B.B. King

and Albert King. Both artists were born in the Indianola area in the early 1920s. They also both (along with Little Milton of Inverness, MS) helped spark interest in what was a dying musical genre. They both were able to have major hit songs in the 1960s/70s when the Soul and Rock 'n' Roll genres dominated the charts. In the 1970s, 80s, and 90s, Malaco Records in Jackson was able to sign and have significant hits with Blues artists, only further deepening Mississippi's eternal connection with Blues music.

The Blues is more than a bygone era of music; it's a direct part of the history of African-Americans, Mississippians, and music lovers in general – with the musical tradition of the Delta Blues carried on by Mississippi musicians such as Eddie Cotton, the Homemade Jamz Blues Band, and Super Chikan. Museums such as The Delta Blues Museum in Clarksdale and The B.B. King Museum and Delta Interpretive Center in Indianola are open to

ensure that the history and passion for the music is never lost.

MM's Philosophical Solution: How to Win a Revolution

by My Mind

Knowledge is power. Power is Knowledge. When there is deprivation of knowledge (education) power becomes an instant desolate. There is only one way to win a revolution and that is through Education the true solution to win a revolution.

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