

Native African Tapestry 2012



Native African Prayer

Almighty God,
the Great Thumb we cannot evade
to tie any knot;
the Roaring Thunder that
splits mighty trees;
the all-seeing Lord up on high
who sees even the footprints
of an antelope on a rock mass
here on Earth.

You are the one who
does not hesitate
to respond to our call.
You are the cornerstone of peace.



Before countries Africa was divided into tribes, tribes defined the borders. At one time there were more the 6000+ tribes across the continent of Africa. Woven in every community are myths, legends, fables, songs and proverbs that define the individual cultures. Much research went into this project as we listened to story after story seeking the common threads amongst this vast collection.

We found more similarities than differences in all African traditional religions. Always a sense of the importance of community, and ordinary community life; rituals of passage illustrating the cyclical nature of African spirituality:

- rites of birth, where the infant represents a connection to the spirit world, bringing forth an important message from the spirit world
- rites of adulthood to ensure the shaping of responsible, productive, and community-oriented adults
- rites of marriage to build families and communities; rites of elders as they represent tradition and the wisdom of the past, along with new infants because these two groups represent the closest links to the wisdom of the spirit world
- rites of ancestors, the passing over into the spirit world. African philosophy the spirit of the deceased is still with the living community, and that a distinction must be made in the status of the various spirits, as there are distinctions made in the status of the living
- and that life was cyclical/communal in nature, with a deep reverence of the ancestors and the spirits

Almost all had a creation story. Often, God is worshiped through consultation or communion with lesser deities and ancestral spirits. The deities and spirits are honored through libation (A libation is a ritual pouring of a liquid as an offering to a god or spirit or in memory of those who have died), sacrifice (of animals, vegetables, or precious metals). The will of God is sought by the believer also through consultation of oracular deities, or divination. In many African traditional religions, there is a belief in a cyclical nature of reality: the living stand between their ancestors and the unborn. African traditional religions embrace natural phenomena - ebb and tide, waxing and waning moon, rain and drought - and the rhythmic pattern of agriculture

In the background in the Adinkra symbol "Gye Nyame" - Except for God, I fear none. It is the symbol of the supremacy of God, and of the inclusion of God in all matters in native African Spirituality.

The giraffe holds sacred space for all of the reverence and interconnection with animals and the natural world.