

ANCESTOR PATHS



**HONORING OUR ANCESTORS AND
GUARDIAN SPIRITS THROUGH
PRAYERS, RITUALS, AND OFFERINGS**

EXTENDED VERSION OF PREVIOUS BOOK
ANCIENT PRACTICES IN CURRENT TIMES

BY
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CONTENTS



CHAPTER 1
INTRODUCTION
1

CHAPTER 2
CALLING OF THE SPIRIT
15

CHAPTER 3
DRUMMING OF THE BEAT
23

CHAPTER 4
DIMINISHING THE VODOO MENTALITY
31

CHAPTER 5
SPIRIT GUIDES—"WE ARE NOT ALONE!"
47

CHAPTER 6
CHILDREN AND SPIRITS
57

CHAPTER 7
SPIRIT STORIES
67

CHAPTER 8
RITUAL SUCCESS AND DEVELOPMENT
77

CHAPTER 9
TOOLS OF THE TRADE
101

CHAPTER 10
PRAYING AND PRAYERS
117

CHAPTER 11
DIVINATION
143

CHAPTER 12
WHAT'S NEXT
151

GLOSSARY
185

BIBLIOGRAPHY
195

TRIBUTE



My most important thank you is to Olodumare, God, my ancestors, and spirit guides, only because there are no words that could truly express how I feel. There are not enough thank yous in a lifetime that could say how much I am truly grateful and appreciative for the gifts, knowledge, and wisdom that they have bestowed upon me. I only pray that I can show them my many, many thanks by my continued efforts to share the gifts that have been given to me and to teach and share their knowledge and wisdom with the rest of the world. This was written for all those on the other side. I would also like to take this opportunity to say, *“we never know what cards we are going to be dealt in life or how we are going to play them. We may never know the reasons behind why things happen the way they do even though there is a reason for everything. We may be disillusioned by those around us because people are not who they appear to be. We may not always understand our choices, right or wrong; however, the outcome may be just how God intended it to be.”*

I thank God and my superior guides for every experience, person, place, or thing that has influenced my life to make me the person that I am TODAY!

FOREWORD



I SURRENDER

BY OBA ILARI ALADOKUN

I surrender my mind, my heart, and my soul over to the will of my ancestors, spirit guides/eguns, and the Orisa who exist within the universe, overseen by the creator, because I trust that they know what is best.

My creator and my guides will make everything right for me as long as I surrender willfully. I will allow the forces of nature and the essence of their power to flow through me like a river's stream, moving me in the direction that is most beneficial for my well-being.

I release and surrender willfully to accept the challenges placed before me, for I know that I exist because of—and I am at the disposal of—the supreme being and the universe. I have learned that resisting only creates conflicts, frustration, uncertainty, and chaos within myself, making me miserable, unhappy, and angry with the world; therefore, I will not worry, and I choose the path of least resistance on all levels of consciousness, for the universe will use me and place me where I need to be.

To ease my path through life, why fight? I will be moved by the universe whether I want to be or not; therefore, in the name of all that is holy, just, and pure in light, I SURRENDER!

I wrote this book because I remember how hard it was trying to learn about ancestor/spirit and nature veneration from within the spiritual systems of Santeria/Lukumi. Santeria/Lukumi stemmed from the African Diaspora and is a derivative of the Afrikan religion Yoruba. *Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia* defines the Afrikan Diaspora as the movement of Afrikans and their descendants to places throughout the world—predominantly to the Americas, then later to Europe, the Middle East, and other corners of the globe. Much of the Afrikan Diaspora is descended from people who were enslaved and shipped to the Americas during the Atlantic slave trade.

From the time that I began my journey on the path of ancestor/spirit veneration through the past several years, information on this subject was limited, vague, and confusing. And even though today there is an abundance of information available from other books and the Internet, I still find most of it vague and confusing. Therefore, it is my goal to make the road a little easier for those who would like to grasp the concepts of ancestor/spirit veneration. To take the confusion out of the process, I created this step-by-step guide to help those who have no guidance but who need good and valid information to at least help themselves on their own journeys. I also wanted to write a book that would be easy to read and comprehend—with a little humanity added, too. This work is not all technical. In the end, it is deeply personal.

Taking a broad, non-discriminatory perspective, this book highlights the importance of ancestor veneration and spiritualism. Every human being has an ancestor. It doesn't matter who you are or where you come from; we can all relate to death on some level, and this keeps us connected whether we realize it or not. The primary purpose

of this book is to help us maintain some sort of spiritual connection to our ancestors and spirit guides for a better way of life. Whereas most people seek religion to be saved, I am offering people the opportunity to save themselves through guided spirituality and the connection to spirit. Although this work primarily touches on Afrikan spirituality, because this is my background—and I can only speak about what I know and my own experiences—it does not exclude other ethnic groups. The principles and techniques in this book can be applied to anyone with any issue, within any culture.

Ancestor veneration is totally misunderstood by millions because of misinterpreted, hidden, lost, and forgotten historical information about its true purpose and foundation. However, there are those who are familiar with its vision but have taken a relaxed attitude toward its importance. Either way, and in many cases, I believe that many of the problems that we suffer today in our families and in our communities—from mental illness, family dysfunction, verbal and physical abuse, drug addiction, violence, alcoholism, suicide, and other forms of self-destructive behaviors—can come from spirits, ancestors, or karmic connections to our loved ones or other spirit entities who have not been appeased or who, on some level, have not elevated into the light of God so that their souls are at peace. And since they are not at peace, these entities cause us, in the living, to suffer in our families and in our communities, and as a result, we continue to experience social malice; psychic, mental, and emotional confusion; and spiritual problems that in many cases are directly tied to the disassociation of not having properly taken care of these unsettled spirits and/or ancestors.

Ancestor Paths is a tribute to my ancestors, who have paved the way for me. It is a tribute to the ones who have walked before me, to the ones whose blood runs through my veins, to the ones whom I remember, to the ones whose names and faces I do not know, and to the ones whom I have forgotten; it is a calling of their spirits in honor of their contributions and enduring presence that is always near us and with us. This tribute is a reminder to remember and preserve the memories of the past, for these memories will guide us through the present and unite and reunite us in the future. As long as we remember, our oppressors can never forget. It is through the ancestors that we are taught and reminded that we are a people born from

predecessors of a proud culture. The richness of our heritage and the legacies left behind will remain forever alive, as long as we continue to call their names.

Ancestor Paths is also a tribute to all the divinities of the universe that continue to guide and bless me and us while elevating our souls toward higher evolution. And for all of us, *Ancestor Paths* is about commemorating the creator, the ancestors, the spirit guides/eguns, and the Orisa, for without them, where would we be?

For me, each time we save a soul and help it elevate, this becomes one less spirit able to cause havoc in my family and in the world.

I write and dedicate this work to all those on the other side.

CHAPTER 1



INTRODUCTION

This book is meant to be used as a tool to help you begin your journey of understanding and to help you communicate with your ancestors and spirit guides/eguns, which is accomplished through prayers, divination, rituals, and offerings. The act of communicating with spirits falls under the domain of spiritualism. Although the practice and essence of spiritualism is ancient, since 1983 the US Government has recognized it as a religion. Spiritualism is defined as a scientific, philosophical, and religious practice that proves the continuity of life after death through demonstrated communication between mediums/spiritualists and those who reside in the spirit world. Spiritualism is a science because it uses observation and research to describe and explain spiritual phenomena through mediumship. *Science* simply means knowledge that is attained through study and practice. Therefore, through the practice of mediumship, the spirit world is explored for various truths about human and spirit life. In Latin communities, these truths are called *evidencias*, or evidence, and the practice of spiritualism is called *Espiritismo*; a Spanish word used to describe the combined mediumistic practices begun by French spiritist, Allan Kardec. Spiritual information is interpreted and given by mediums to be used as verification and support from the realm of spirit.

Spiritualism also supports philosophical views and questions about how people should live (ethics and morals), what sorts of things exist, and metaphysics as it relates to the ultimate nature of being and the world. Although spiritualism is incorporated into and is the base of many spiritual/religious systems, it can absolutely stand on its own, with no limitations regarding the levels that are accessible for connecting with God and the various levels of spirit beings. The only limitations are human limitations. Many view spiritualism as a common sense religion, meaning that it accepts all truths found within the universe, nature, other spiritual and religious systems, literature, science, and the divine and natural laws.

The bottom line is this: true spiritualism is about gaining and accepting truth, even when it hurts. Therefore, the information in this book is in its general form, because the first truth is that within our own cultures, we each have our own way of doing things. And the second truth is that I am merely sharing knowledge that I have acquired during my own personal journey towards the contentment of my soul.

I hope you will find the following information enlightening; my wish is for you to understand the complexity of ancestor and spirit veneration through simple and easy-to-understand explanations. My experiences, both good and bad, prompted me to write this book. Many of you may agree with what I say, some may not, and some may even be offended, which is not my intention. My only intention is to inform interested devotees of both sides of the coin. This is where my story begins.



Over the years, I have faced many trials and tribulations in trying to cross over from my old life into the new. As an Afrikan-Amerikan female brought up in a predominantly Hispanic neighborhood, with many Hispanic friends, in many ways I had always been exposed to the philosophy of the spiritual system or religion called Lukumi/Yoruba. When I was younger, I knew this system as Santeria. When I went to the homes of my friends, their parents had altars with statues, pictures, and glasses of water placed upon them. In retrospect, I never

really questioned what I saw; I just thought it was a part of the décor Spanish people had because of their culture. I was oblivious to the whole thing—to the underlying philosophy of what was going on. Now that I think about it, being as young as I was and being brought up in church, I never really paid attention to any of the cultures outside of my Baptist upbringing, but as I grew up and became more independent, things changed—life changed. In my late teens, I noticed that my surroundings seemed different: people were different, and what was, was no longer. I was realizing that everyone was getting older—I was getting older—and we all had newfound responsibilities and different roads to follow. I found myself facing many harsh dilemmas; while doing this, I knew that I needed something, but I didn't know quite what it was.

I had a pretty healthy and stable childhood, and by eighteen I had a daughter and had graduated from high school. I lived with my daughter's father for a while but eventually left him because of his abuse, at which point I went to live with my girlfriend's mom. The situation was ideal for both of us because I needed a babysitter in the daytime and my friend's mom needed a babysitter at night, so between the two of us things worked out really well. By this time, I was in trade school and had my own money. My life was pretty good for a person my age, and by twenty, my mom moved and gave me her five-room apartment, which was more than enough space for my daughter and me.

I was the type of individual who always wanted to excel, and for the most part, I always kept a positive attitude. As a matter of fact, most people called me Smiley, because every time they saw me I had a smile on my face, although on many occasions I was not smiling inside. But no matter what, I always maintained a positive attitude and I felt that there was nothing that I could not do. I could be whatever I wanted to be, even with a baby, so I focused on excelling, and I did.

I found out that many people in the neighborhood were jealous; they didn't understand how I was able to do and get the things I wanted. I figured, "Hello! It's called working." I remember thinking, "People are stupid. Why would someone be jealous about another person trying to do something good for themselves?" People really began to confuse me, and I remember feeling different or foreign and that I did not fit in. I