

THE SANCTITY OF THE MOTHER

TURNING TO OUR CULTURE TO SAVE OUR COMMUNITY

by Leon Dixon

The mindset of many of our youth is running amok, generating behavior to the detriment of us all. It is my belief that if we are to eliminate this plague we are going to have to look deep within our own culture for the cure. No one else will be able to do this. And we will have to be proactive and approach this much like the way the medical community would handle an epidemic. That is, we have to take preventive measures while simultaneously treating the ailments.

Attacking culture plagues will take time and we will have to employ studied and measured responses. A speaker on C-Span explained that it takes four things for the advancement of a civilization, a nation, or a people. They are:

1. A shared sense of the sacred.
2. Definition of what that means.
3. Institutions to develop, foster, and implement the desired concepts and ideals.
4. And leadership for all of the above.

This provides us with a framework that we can use to address our pressing concerns.

Giving Meaning To

“A Shared Sense Of The Sacred”

The concept of “a shared sense of the sacred” takes on spiritual, although not necessarily religious, overtones. Some examples of this are the concepts of:

1. “Integration” that led to the historic “Brown” decision in 1954.
2. “Black Power” in the 60’s and 70’s.
3. “Quality Education” in the 80’s and 90’s.

What was missing with all of these was a clear definition of what they meant. People were left virtually on their own to give meaning to these concepts. And a lot of confusion set in as to just what were the objectives or goals.

“A shared sense of the sacred” at its essence is something that we all believe in. And that is why I submit that we have to look deep within our own culture to find such a concept. When we explore its depths, one of the things that we find resting within the cornerstone of our survivability is **“THE SANCTITY OF THE MOTHER.”** It is this ideal that I propose we resurrect, give definition to, promote, and instill within our youth.

In the scientific community there is a premise dubbed “the law of parsimony,” which emphasizes that the simplest possible explanation or the shortest possible answer is the best one. In this light, I suggest we keep this concept simple by defining as a PRIMAL IDEAL that: ***“Each person in our community is to be regarded according to the relationship they have with their own mother.”*** Indeed, I submit that this PRIMAL IDEAL is a valid predictor for the quality of relationship that can be developed with any of us. I know that this is a sociological argument, and therefore perhaps has its exceptions. But I steadfastly hold that this is the prevailing indicator. The type of love and respect a person has developed for their own mother forms the basis of the type of love and respect that they can develop for you. The type of loyalty to, honor for, and treatment given to one’s own mother is the highest form of these attributes anyone can expect from a person. How can you expect to trust anyone who is not even trusted by their own mother?

Let me address some words to the young ladies of our community.

If you want to determine how a young man will treat you, consider these three things:

1. How does he treat his mother?
2. How does his father treat his mother?
3. How does he treat the other women in his family?

Again, this is a sociological consideration and there may be some rare exceptions. But if any, and especially if all, of these signs are bad—**beware!** You simply cannot expect any better treatment from any young man than that which he gives to that one person he loved first and foremost.

This deification of the mother lies deep within our culture and goes back to the dawn of civilization when we first began to divinize manifestations of life-giving and life-producing things and substances as females. That is why we have to this day such expressions as “mother earth” and “mother nature.” In one of her many roles the ancient Egyptian goddess, Isis, is an aspect of this deification. This PRIMAL IDEAL of THE SANCTITY OF THE MOTHER reaches into every crevice of our cultural experience since time immemorial. It crosses all boundaries. It has no detractors. Every one of us supports this premise.

If we could universally get our youth to live up to and honor this most primal of ideals, then I think we would make a major step in the rehabilitation of our communities. I say “step” because there is no limit to where this simple concept could lead us. And again I say, let us keep it simple. We only need require for starters that each one of us relate to our own mother in this manner. If we just start with this, I will project that it will lead to greater things.

Among the tenets that should be enforced are:

1. There is absolutely no reason whatsoever to raise one’s voice at one’s mother.
2. There is absolutely no reason whatsoever to disrespect one’s mother.

These are to be adhered to, even if one feels that their mother is wrong. If things seem to be getting out of hand one must exercise enough inner discipline to simply remove oneself politely and respectfully from their mother’s space, as I once heard Haki Madhubuti explain. Indeed, honorable treatment of one’s mother is to be highly admired and praised.

Of Our Institutions

Among the many responsibilities of our institutions is that of transmitting values. In chapter three of my book, *Future In Our Hands*, I discuss the concept of an implicate order. This is an unseen, or implicit, order that influences the flow of things. In one sense, it can be thought of as the underlying structure of our environment, its infrastructure, if you will. It is sort of like a current that carries things along. In other parts of the book I discuss how this implicate order is shaped, both consciously and unconsciously. One of the key ways we can consciously shape this implicate order and our cultural environment (an explicate, or explicit, order which is a manifestation of it) is through our institutions. Our families, our civic, social and religious organizations, etc., are institutions that we have enough control over to consciously shape and give direction. If the prime movers and participants of our community-based institutions consciously promote this PRIMAL IDEAL of THE SANCTITY OF THE MOTHER to the point that it is actually instilled in our institutions and aggressively acted out and expounded on by the many movers and shakers throughout the community, then we would, I think, begin to see a positive difference in the disposition of our youth.

I submit that if we could establish this principle throughout our community of love and respect for that one person who is supremely important to each and every one of us, everyone's first symbol of a deity—one's own mother—it will only be a matter of time before it spreads out to other parts of our community.

On The Leadership Required

If the above suggestions are to work, they will require leadership. Now, a leader is quite simply someone who can get others to follow. This means that leadership is displayed in many forms and takes place on all levels.

On the peer level, this means that those in leadership should subscribe to this PRIMAL IDEAL to the extent that when anyone influenced by them violates any tenet of THE SANCTITY OF THE MOTHER, that they become chastised, ridiculed or scorned. It should be made obvious to them that such behavior, whenever it occurs, meets with disapproval. And conversely, behavior in keeping with this PRIMAL IDEAL is to be met with admiration and praise.

Younger people tend to look up to older people. So this same dynamic should take place here. We all should insist upon the internalization of this PRIMAL IDEAL to the extent that our community expects our older youth to correct our younger youth whenever and wherever they observe them violating any of its tenets. Indeed, these actions should be sanctioned, just as upholding its precepts should be encouraged.

The more prominent and visible leaders of our community should help promote and explain the meaning and significance of upholding THE SANCTITY OF THE MOTHER. They should help to make clear its underlying precepts, its depth and its profundity. And together we all should be poised to move it to higher levels.

Of The Men And The Women

Let me speak of the men.

All the members of the brotherhood that I have ever known have this feeling about their mothers that mere words cannot explain. It is something you just know and feel. I can recall as though it was yesterday how even the wimpiest boy would gain respect from his peers when he would fight over his mother. (In these times, a few even kill, as was graphically illustrated in the movie "Menace II Society.")

It takes some tremendous imagination and creativity to capture the essence of this PRIMAL IDEAL. And therein lies the challenge for our bards, seers, speakers, and griots to rise to. Their vision and eloquence are needed now as never before if our youth, in particular our boys, are to see clear.

Now let me speak to the women.

As has happened so many times before, a most awesome burden rests upon your shoulders if we are to be successful in this endeavor. It has been written: "To whom much is given, much is required." You are the focus of this PRIMAL IDEAL of THE SANCTITY OF THE MOTHER. All eyes are upon you. ***The extent to which you carry yourselves to be worthy of this "sanctity" that is bestowed upon you is a measure of our very essence.***

It takes an extraordinary amount of wisdom and patience to instill in our youth this character. And herein lies the challenge for the caregivers: to raise our youth to bestow this honor on their mothers; and to raise our young girls—our mothers of the future—to be prepared to receive it in their appointed time.

Peace...