

Chapter 8

Indigenous Knowledge Intelligence and African Development

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ABSTRACT

This chapter examines some of the reasons why Indigenous Knowledge Intelligence (IKI) has been marginalised, especially from an Afro-centric point of view and how Africa has lagged behind economically although it is considered to be the cradle of civilization. This chapter provides a broader definition of IKI and development. The chapter also incorporates a case study of the Jewish people and the Talmud as their IKI. The chapter provides insights on how IKI leads to development. The chapter notes that a people which assimilate foreign cultures can no longer hope to continue an independent existence. It argues that African countries are unique and have unique IKI that has been marginalized and rendered useless due to colonialism and cultural imperialism. It is these intelligences that the author thinks need further scientific development to realize economic value. IKI must be the focal point of development.

INTRODUCTION

In what, then, does our great strength lie, if not in our ancient ethical culture? If not in the finest precepts of behaviour and in the ideals of justice so solemnly prescribed in the Bible and in the Talmud? If not in the fact that the Jewish mode of life is a continuation of our culture, the Talmudic culture, which is realistic as well as spiritual, national as well as universal? (Unterman, 1971)

This chapter offers knowledge on indigenous knowledge intelligence (IKI) that will encourage and empower readers to consider IKI as a competitive strategy and imperative for developmental policies especially in developing nations. The chapter further looks at the importance of IKI as a panacea for development in Africa.

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The use of IKI systems has been considered by many as an alternative way that can promote development in poor rural communities in many parts of the world especially in developing nations (Fanon, 1963; Summers, 1970; Gayre, 1972; Randles, 1979; Sibanda & Moyana, 1992; Garlake, 2002; Windsor, 2003; Fanon, 2008; Mapara, 2009; Rodney, 2011; Mawere, 2014). Governments and policy-makers are busy looking for a panacea for development. Many policies and blueprints have been designed and implemented but with little or no success towards development in Africa. This chapter, however, will go a long way in providing the missing link towards development in Africa.

Israel has been identified as a perfect example of a nation that has developed through the observance of its oral tradition, that is, the Talmud¹ (Oral Torah). This case study will open the eyes of many people in developing nations. Miller (2011) states that, the strength of our people [Jews] as a whole, and of each individual man and woman, lies in a closer adherence to our ancient spiritual heritage, which contains the secret of harmonious life, hence of a healthy and happy life. This chapter provides an insight to developing nations by tracing how IKI has influenced Israel, a nation born in 1948, to rise to become one of the greatest nations to be reckoned with.

The author has designed this chapter in a way that will influence governments, policy makers, researchers, scientists, academics and people from the grassroots to take a broader view of IKI and its role towards development especially in Africa. A brief background, terminology and definitions and the focus of the chapter follows, as well as the case study and the conclusion.

BACKGROUND

According to Fuller (2015), the world is a mystery, and mysteries are dangerous to the uninitiated: here are two facts which would seem to be uncontradictable; for divulgence has invariably led to active discontent, caused by a loss of balance between the spiritual and the mundane. Like all other peoples, the Jews have realized this, and long before their Oral Tradition (Kabbalah) was known as an occult science, the mysteries of creation, evolution, and dissolution were locked up in their sacred writings (Fuller, 2015). Then came the great dispersion: a small people bereft of nationship were cast into a dissolving world, and almost simultaneously a new cult arose called Christianity (Fuller, 2015). The reaction on orthodox Jewry was instantaneous; for a tension was established which later on led to the persecution of the Jews, whereupon the secrecy of the doctrines took on an accentuated form, for self-preservation had now to be added to non-revelation. This led to the growth of oral traditions.

The secret doctrines were passed from mouth to mouth and were locked away in the brains of the priesthood and the learned (Fuller, 2015). Later, as persecution began to slacken, the written word once again began to appear, and by degrees the Kabbalah emerged into daylight. This word is a curious one: its value is 70 according to gematria, which is the numerical value of *Sod* (dvs = 4+6+60) and “wine” (Oyy = 50 + 10 + 10) and also of “night” (lyl = 30 + 10 + 30) and “be silent” (hsh = 5 + 60 + 5) (Fuller, 2015). Therefore it may be said to mean: “The secret which intoxicates, which is as dark as night and which must not be divulged” (Fuller, 2015).

The fountain-head of the above mentioned doctrine is the Zohar,² a vast jumbled commentary on the Pentateuch, written partly in Aramaic and partly in Hebrew. Tradition asserts that its author was Rabbi Simeon ben Yohai, who lived in the second century A.D.; of the Zohar, see Ginsburg (1920).

According to Fuller (2015), as Adam eating of the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil lost Eden, so throughout the ages have the wise kept wisdom to themselves, imparting to the multitudes only just

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