

MY VIEWS, MY VOICE

BY JOY NDWANDWE (Guest Writer)

SIYINQABA: WE ARE A FORTRESS, INCWALA CEREMONY

His Majesty King Mswati III's speech when dispersing the regiments was in line with the Indigenous Cosmology: the King thanked God and ancestors for the blessings of rain and success of Incwala Ceremony.

His Majesty recognised the perseverance of his late father King Sobhuza II in persevering Incwala and acknowledged his father's cosmological presence during this ceremony. The King emphasised mutual respect as the grounding base for regiments, highlighted the shield as protection as the spear is tied to the shield, symbolizing cosmic and social order. Most significantly he emphasised that Incwala 2012 was intergenerational and international with participants from Africa and Qatar.

Indigenous Cosmology

Prophet LaNdwandwe in Akusiko Kwami Kwebantfu unearthing King Sobhuza II's Philosophy states thus: 'Authentic Identity based on Traditional African Cosmology and Ontology edifies on how we are members of society unborn, living and dead as cosmic beings. How upon birth the cosmic being must learn cosmic and social order in order to enjoy harmonious human existence and coexistence.....as cosmic beings or 'ntfu' or the 'soul' emerged from the Supreme Being or Ultimate Source, God, from the society of the unborn into the world.'

The King's seclusion marks the beginning of Incwala as this period enables him to connect with members of the society unborn, living and dead; as a cosmic being, leader and healer of the nation, as the old adage teaches us that when the head of the fish is rotten so will the rest of the body. This affirms that leaders are healers who have the cosmic responsibility to ensure rain, harvest and prosperity of the nation; thus sustaining the body. The seclusion enables the leader to meditate, contemplate and pray for the success and prosperity of the nation, cosmic responsibilities of the head of the nation.

This seclusion enables the King to connect with the Supreme Being or the Ultimate Source of all that is in order to ensure that all the negative elements of the year are cleansed of his psyche; in preparation for Divine Guidance for the new season that awaits him and his people. He also connects with members of the society of unborn and dead, as a source of inspiration for the future of those to come; and most significantly that who have been on earth, blessed with the wisdom of hindsight on how to deal with the society of the living.

Cosmic and Social Order

When the Little Incwala begins, the nation joins His Majesty in the dance to fortify him, through affirmations and meditative dances that shed the negativity of the year. The songs address negative utterances that the King is

expected to have experience during the year; and this also fortifies the people who participate from their own negativity. As healing the head of the nation is also healing the nation, and those who participate are representatives of the nation.

The Incwala dance is circular, symbolizing the circle of life with the men and women facing each other. This is symbolic of how the circle of life, balances the masculine and feminine energy; which is critical for preserving the essence of life, in the society of the unborn, living and dead. Although Incwala is predominately about the men and boys regiments, feminine energy is critical as women are the moral shields of society; hence the women bring this energy to fortify the King and celebrate the right of passage of *tingatja*.

The masculine energy for protecting the children unborn, living and the departed ancestors; expressing how life in the African paradigm is a continuum, hence a person does not have an expiry date. This understanding grounds cosmic and social order which is also expressed through the *Tingatja* when going on their pilgrimage of innocence which collecting the Lusekwane. This is symbolic of connecting with the society of the unborn, which has been preserved by *Tingatja* throughout the year and now being celebrated as pure or innocent energy during this ceremony.

The catching of the bull is also a significant component of the cosmic and social order, which we celebrate in Incwala; as the boys are inherently catching the bull inside themselves, to enable them to enjoy harmonious human existence and co-existence without bullying others. The involvement of both young and old members of the living society is an important part of how Incwala is a living tradition; that was preserved by ancestors for the living, and the living are preserving it for the society of the unborn.

Harmonious Human Existence

Prophet LaNdwandwe stated thus: 'The Traditional African Cosmology edifies us on how the soul in the middle of a triangular matrix of cosmic and social relationships; with humanity of the right as part of society of the living' (hence we greet with the right hand). *Kubutseka* is our source of emotional intelligence, which grooms us to enjoy harmonious human existence in the society of the living; therefore, an integral part of our indigenous cosmology.

When we are able to integrate beyond our immediate family into the broader levels of society we are considered emotionally intelligent; our tradition of *kubutseka* enables us to learn the skill and art of living in the society of the living. *Kubutseka*, requires one to become a member of a regiment and this is an integral part of Incwala as the dance and the pilgrimage is organized according to *Libutfo* or regimentary programmes.



The older regiments in the society of the living become role models for the younger members of the regiments; and this is not by age, but experience in the art of enjoying harmonious human existence within the society of the living. They are also experienced in the meditative dance and most significantly in the songs that are affirmations of fortification for the King as head of the nation. These songs enable the regiments to connect with their own authentic identity whilst they dance on behalf of the society of the unborn whilst honouring the society of the departed ancestors.

Kuhlehla, paying homage to the King by working in the fields, is an important part of our emotional intelligence; as the regiments put into practice the art of synchronicity in the land of the living. They work side by side as a united team, and this year they were able to complete their task at dashing speed; indicative of how through *kuhlehla* they expressed unity of purpose. Unfortunately, this unity of purpose does not filter through into communities and most significantly in the present day '*infabantfu*' one of the fields are government offices; where the same regiments need to apply this invaluable experience of emotional intelligence.

Co-existence

Co-existence requires spiritual intelligence or *Kusima Kumdali* as it expresses our relationship with *Umvelinchati* or the Supreme Being and ancestors, part of the triangular matrix of our relationships. The Incwala is a fortification process as its entirety is based Divine Guidance, with the cosmological elements of the sky, sun, moon, stars, ocean and herbs coming from the Supreme Being and Ultimate Source of all that is. The water pilgrimage can-

not be manipulated by members of the living society, as it is guided by divine guidance; with the sky, sun, moon, stars and the ocean as the 'high priest.'

This requires a high level of spiritual intelligence of letting go of the human weakness of wanting to manipulate systems and processes for personal gain and enrichment. As the Incwala fortification also requires the collection of natural herbs in mountains that come from the Supreme Being and Ultimate Source of all that is. These herbs connect Incwala with the environment, which is a critical component of our indigenous cosmology; as we coexist with the environment, hence we do not manipulate it for personal consumption and enrichment.

In our art of co-existence, there are the ancestors who are part of our society of the dead or departed, which we continue to honour as they are an integral part of our authentic identity. Ancestors we honour through knowing our genealogy, totems and most significantly family history; which enables us to be grounded in our authentic identity, whilst we co-exist with others without insecurity. To co-exist we require being firm as the authentic identity level, to feel secure such that we are not insecure on who we are, where we are coming from and where we are going.

Honouring ancestors is about the yesterday, today and tomorrow, which is an integral part of the indigenous cosmology of being part of society unborn, living and dead or departed. When we participate in Incwala, we honour those who preserved it for us whilst we were in the society of the unborn. We also affirm our role as preservers of Incwala for the society of the unborn, whilst ensuring that when we become ancestors ourselves we expect the society of the living to participate in our honour.

Incwala is our fortification process where we express our indigenous cosmology with its four edicts of supreme being or divine guidance, cosmic and social order, harmonious human existence and coexistence. Hence we celebrate our co-existence through the cosmological expression 'Siyinqaba, We are a Fortress' as we do not only fortify the King during Incwala; but our own authentic identities. Incwala enables us to experience the circle of life guided by the Supreme Being and Ultimate Source off all that is; through cosmic and social order, harmonious human existence and coexistence, from the Kings seclusion until the regiments are dispersed.

Conclusion

My journey into unearthing the indigenous cosmologies has been synonymous to a wilderness that will be published in my next book: By His Grace I Know Earth, reflecting Supreme Being and Divine Guidance, whilst honouring the teachings of King Sobhuza II on how '*wahlekwu live utawati umhlaba*' 'when the nation gags you, you will know earth.' The ending of my wilderness, marks the advancement in the honouring the late King Sobhuza II's legacy on how Swaziland will be a guiding star of Africa as part of the African Renaissance Agenda. This wilderness has enriched me with invaluable life learning experience of how being perceived as a drunkard, loser and failure comes with lessons in humiliation; which have restored my dignity and authentic identify as an indigenous prophet and the late Queen Regent LaZidze or LaZwide incarnate.

