

## CHAPTER I

### THE AKAN PRINCIPLE OF RANK

Before you can really begin to understand the **circles** of **AKAN** Bridge, you must know something about the deck of playing cards with which it is played. This consists of what is called a "**Akan** deck of cards." There are 56 cards altogether. While every card is to some extent different from every other card the principle division of the deck is into four different **Kentes** (suits). In each **Kente** there are 13 cards to deal plus a line of credit card.

Each **Kente** is distinguished by its discipline mark. The four are: *Concepts* , *Doctrines* , *Strategies* , and *Plans* .

Each **Kente** is made up of these 14 cards:

| CARD         | TITLE        | RANK | VALUES        | CONSUMERS  |
|--------------|--------------|------|---------------|------------|
| Gold         | Dominion     | 1    | Credit        | 18,017,960 |
| Ghana        | Warrior-King | 2    | Government    | Supreme    |
| Asantehene   | Nana         | 3    | Unity         | Royal      |
| Queen-Mother | Nana         | 4    | Fidelity      | Royal      |
| Omanhene     | Nana         | 5    | Determination | Royal      |
| Mother       | Nana         | 6    | Patience      | 10,000     |
| Elder/Father | Nana         | 7    | Programs      | 9,000      |
| Market-Woman | Auntie       | 8    | Projects      | 8,000      |
| Daughter     | Sister       | 9    | Tasks         | 7,000      |
| Niece        | Sister       | 10   | Activities    | 6,000      |
| Nephew       | Brother      | 11   | Leadership    | 5,000      |
| Son          | Brother      | 12   | Protectorate  | 4,000      |
| Clan         | Brethren     | 13   | Fellowship    | 3,000      |
| Country      | Kinsman      | 14   | Kinship       | 2,000      |

Each card is made up of an element in life required by the other cards to achieve harmony within the world of man and God. For the **AKAN**, --- economic and social justice prevails where he is in harmony with himself and God. He views any other combination as a form of shadow justice imposed over him, in lieu of his own.



AKAN Bridge cards are ranked in the above order. Except for your gold card -- the Ghana is highest and the two lowest are son and clan. The significance of the rank of the cards is this: In **Akan** Bridge, as in life, you will have various cards dealt to you. In the final analysis, your motives in the **circles, kente and trade-rounds** must be, like **E'sau and Delany**, to acquire the cards held by opponents (**Jacob and Douglass**) in the brethren **circle**.

By virtue of ancestry, each player has a gold card with virtual unlimited credit to begin. Each other card will capture any other card which is lower in rank, and may be captured by any other card which is higher in rank except in a **Timbuktu** Coup when any ten of the three lowest cards, with any combination of the next three ranking cards (*elder, niece and daughter*), are played as trump over all higher cards, including the gold card. And, as history has clearly shown the effects of a **Timbuktu** are achieved also when foreign kings in collaboration with Jacob send their young men to destroy yours, --- and capture your consumers.

The **trade round** is always ended when '**Timbuktu**' is executed by young men rebelling against their superiors in the matrilineal hierarchy. Refreshments must be offered, cards must be redealt and the process must start over again as in the real life search for harmony. No **trade rounds** are awarded via a '**Timbuktu Trump**' though the holder of a hand of all low cards has the power to stop it when he, rarely she, perceives the other cards stacked against him. Should he play the hand for power even though it yields no quantitative or qualitative benefits? As in Liberia? Irrational but true. How and why do young men become destroyers rather than protectorates? Who indoctrinates them and when?

The uniqueness of **Akan** Bridge versus standard bridge is that it recognizes the reality of what happens in Africa and among Africans in the diaspora --- within a cultural environment where young men are tempted to take power from their traditional superiors via unorthodox means. The question is why? What is the value of young men in matrilineal societies (including African-American communities) both secular and non-secular, that cause so many young males to rebel with such disastrous results?

Our view of the past, present and future does not allow us the luxury of pretending that, --- Jacob has not, does not and will not play the game of building bridges to captivity and extinction of the African. Can the African dare ignore Jacob's theories and practices? We hold that it is self-evident that young men are always the key to gaining or losing the future. How do you rank the ancestral '*young lions*' born and unborn in your life?

#### **ANTI-CRIME LAWS OFFER ECONOMIC INCENTIVES!**

The American hysteria, whipped to a frenzy by the all out push for new legislation and funding by which to classify, disarm, pursue

and incarcerate young Black males, is not going to lessen. Indeed, the remainder of this decade in America is going to be at least as violent, if not more so, than the 25 years following the infamous '*Fugitive Slave Act of 1850*'!

The game of AKAN Bridge includes our history as slaves and pawns in the American economy that has to create and maintain sufficient job opportunities for lower class young white males *capable of violence*. Crime is usually about jobs, money and property; and, so too has most always been the case with anti-crime legislation. Reduced national defense jobs now necessitate more creative actions in the form of laws to captivate Africans.

From a historical perspective, the major doctrinal and strategic difference between the current crime bills by the U.S. Congress and the compromise laws of Senator Henry Clay in 1850 is that no *underground railroad* currently exists, as did before, to usher young Black men out of the country to liberty. So-called anti-fugitive/anti-crime legislation by federal and state governments of America, aimed at young Africans in particular, were and have always been among the few most frequently passed laws.

Article IV of the Constitution provided: "*No Person held to Service or Labour in one State, under the Law or Regulation thereof, escaping into another, shall in consequence of any Law or Regulation therein, be discharged from such Service or Labour, but shall be delivered upon Claim of the Party to whom such Service or Labour may be due.*" Double-talk for fugitive slaves.

In 1793 Congress passed an enforcing act providing for the delivery of such a fugitive upon presentation of proof of ownership to a local magistrate and for a fine on those who hid or assisted him. In 1842 the United States Supreme Court in '*Prigg vs. Pennsylvania*' ruled that the local authorities could not be compelled to aid in the execution of this act.

This decision was both preceded and succeeded in various states by laws forbidding the use of state agencies for the professed purpose to protect their own free African populations. Such acts were known as personal liberty laws. To be sure, Black men learned that their liberty was best assured by gun ownership and loyal kinsmen, ---equated to peace and justice.

In the '*1830s*' there had come into existence in Massachusetts, Pennsylvania and a few other northern states an organized attempt by newspapers, such as William Lloyd Garrison's '*Liberator*' to incite slaves to peacefully escape. The newspapers used cartoons to describe to illiterate Africans a network of stations for the passing over of fugitives from slave states to Canada's border.

This then, was the '*Underground Railway*' and it handled many passengers such as: Frederick Douglas from Maryland in 1838; Sojourner Truth from New York in 1843; and, Harriet Tubman from Maryland in 1849. The vast majority of young black men attempting

to escape were seldom successful, and most escapees hid out for years in the swamps and mountains near their places of birth, and mamas. They raided other blacks for food and clothing, and were generally mean and violent in order to survive.

The weapons used by these violent young Black males were normally modified farm tools; and, the vast majority of their victims were house slaves, loyalist Black women and old men whom they maimed, murdered and robbed with absolute contempt. Indeed, there were a considerable number of Black folks, slave and free, who feared and condemned 'runaways' with greater hostility than that vested against the young white men hired to pursue them!

The most interesting aspects of the history of so-called anti-crime legislation in America is that it has consistently been used as a mechanism for creating income and jobs for young white men, and now white women, too. After privatization of jails and prisons, the obvious next step will be contract/captive labor.

Incarceration is second only to defense spending as a form of economic stimuli by governments. Census data for 1984 shows that America, with some 3,042 county governments had approximately 3,338 jails with a normal 223,551 inmate population costing an estimated 1.8 billion dollars per year in cash benefits to administrators, sheriff's deputies, and other caretakers. The data reflects 903 state prisons containing 523,922 federal and state prisoners that generate employment for 144,855 mainly white administrators and guards with operating costs of 4.2 billion dollars per year. The system is dependent upon Black input.

The figure jumps to many more billions of dollars per year when one seeks to include thousands of courts, judges, administrators and lawyers who historically feed off this human exploitation called 'criminal justice'. Not surprisingly, the southern states, by far, have the largest percentage of jails in America, which is consistent with their historical doctrines reflected in the slave codes, black codes, and other regulations. I would suspect that a Black man, particularly a young one, can still expect to get the most 'justice' in states like California, Florida and Texas where young black male incarceration is deeply etched in historical doctrine. Nothing is going to change it, --- excepting, perhaps, Garvey's call "*Go East young man, Go Home*".

For whites, the most important aspect of the 1850 fugitive slave law was that it provided federal commissioners to serve its purpose and so rendered enforcement free of state aid. It was indeed a '*federal jobs and economic development bill*' that fostered construction of jails in hundreds of towns and cities. The other effect was to arouse a far wider and deeper opposition in the North, which was expressed in organized jail-breakings led by Africans like Martin Delany and in a new crop of personal liberty laws sponsored by Quakers to meet the changed situation. Law enforcement in America is still highly selective and very economic oriented!

Now for the first time, from a Black perspective, we know the effects of that law was to codify a white domination doctrine that has never been erased from the institutional thinking of most white Americans, particularly people who traditionally viewed other people as their property or market pawns. Judging actions rather than written and spoken words, one will quickly conclude that for many young men, little has changed in America.

Their plight is like that of their fathers', grandfathers', great-grandfathers' and great-great grandfathers'. Your challenge, maybe even your calling, is to learn and play the game well enough to make the bids and power plays that will salvage universal African bodies, souls and spirits, --- not mitigate, litigate and uphold laws, decisions and procedures imposed by *Jacob* to maintain his wealth and power.

The relative rank of the cards you hold will largely control the question of whether you will expand or contract in the **circle**. The element of skill will consist in making your high ranking cards capture as many of the opponents' cards as possible, while at the same time you are trying to avoid having your lower cards captured or destroyed. So, parley with your gold card!

In general, the rank of a card is important only when it is pitted against another card of the same **Kente**. Exceptions are that if you have the Asantehene of any **Kente**, and an opponent has the Queen Mother of the same **Kente**, you cannot capture his Queen Mother with your Asantehene because he is her nephew and she is his sponsor in the **circle**. Your Asantehene will not necessarily capture the Queen-Mother of any other **Kente**. To capture the Asantehene or Queen-mother, you would need a Ghana of a different **Kente** excepting in a coup as described above.

The regular rank of the cards in **Akan** Bridge is affected by the existence of a trump **Kente**. One of the four **Kente** may be named as trumps. In that case, any card of the trump **Kente** will win over any card, even a higher ranking card, of one of the other three **Kente**. The Ghana of Concepts is no good when pitted against the Two of Strategies (Clan), if Strategies are trumps.

The most valuable cards you can hold are the cards of whatever **Kente** is chosen as the trump **Kente**, together with high cards such as Ghanas and Asantehenes of other **Kente**. Such high cards, while they will not win over trump cards, will be valuable in winning over lower cards in the same **Kente**.

In reality what values do universal Africans ascribe to young African males? Think about your family, friends and associates and consider in your mind their rank order. And, then wonder about Africa --- the troubles we have all seen. Are our lives in balance? Do we really want harmony? What kind of society exists without benefits of life, liberty and pursuit of property by its:

kings, dukes, mothers, traders, elders, daughters, and young men?

See if the game, **Akan** Bridge, offers any choices and hopes for your future --- and your children's children well into the next centuries. Quite frankly, it is a **circle** of everlasting life, and differs from whist, auction bridge and contract bridge that are games for the short-term thrill of winning. Generally speaking, bid-whist is little more than a one-night stand among strangers, and while the latter two games are of somewhat longer duration their world parameters are set at about one-hundred games. Is that all there is to life, a '**set**' beginning and ending, birth and death? Selling our birthrights of gold?

**Akan** Bridge, on the other hand, is designed for people to move into long-term concentric relationships and reasons to congregate for many months, years and generations into the future. It is beliefs, church, choices, education, family, fraternity, friends, history and values rolled into a process that will span hundreds of **circles** involving thousands of **Kente** (suits) and tricks. It is for people of faith, family and loyal relationships.

**Akan** Bridge is ever-growing bridges over troubled waters that can only be developed by fellowship and credits for one another --- and, like the **Akans**, come Arabs or Europeans, stay together. For students, it means cooperate so brethren can graduate and grow. And, for others, it calls for a lifetime of caring and building bridges that link all brethren consumer markets via knowledge, aid, tourism and trade --- one people in many lands and nations.

The story of the Akans triumph (**trump**) is your heritage, not the British conquerors who developed auction and contract bridge! It is the story of a people who cling to their belief in **G O D**, celebrate '*passing*' of a member as a home-going, and view each new birth as a direct link with their ancestral heaven. There are no known **Akan** atheists, and life on earth, like the planetary universe, is evolutionary in the '**circle**' of everlasting life. Thus, we have chosen to name this book in honor of our ancestors who have held fast and firm to the central belief, the basic concept, faith that **G O D** is our gold card, not American Express!

Whether African-Centric Christians or Muslims, the fundamentals of faith dictate the need for values in life that are based upon our own spiritual heritage of common mother **tricks** and being one in the father --- though we compete and differ as it was with **Esau and Jacob**! Gaining market penetration and dominion are the strategic objectives for **AKAN** Bridge. So, play/plan to build it!

To be sure, economic development in the process of accumulating health, wealth and happiness for a society is based on trust which is a product of faith, not hatred or love. People who lack faith, the fundamental pillar of existence, act in fear and do not even trust themselves, let alone others. With few exceptions, the universal African lives in fear because his faith, as it was with

Esau in the beginning, has been weakened. Millions sell their birthrights for "*bread and a pottage of lentils.*"

Lets be clear to understand that long-term development begins with indoctrination of children, even babes in the womb. The universal African can never be more than the doctrine instilled in him by his mother and those around her. We hold this to be self-evident - "*the mother that brings forth life is the focal point of African-Centric development*". Like Rebekah, her prejudices are our destiny. Thus, **AKAN** Bridge, as in real life among the Akans and Ghana in general, is focused on bridging and expanding her propensity as a consumer of knowledge, goods, services and other paths to happiness --- economic development!

Our view is that the absolute power of the fertile young Black mothers in shaping the attitudes of their off-spring, even before formal education begins, is so all-powerful and encompassing that she is, must be, has to be, the central theme, second only to the Almighty, in any developmental concepts and doctrines. In fact, the tables, charts and maps used in **AKAN** Bridge reflect this concept of consumers, mostly women and predominantly mothers buying goods and services from other women. What they think, value and want, indeed seek to consume, is what drives the economy. Sure, men are there but let us understand the reality of life --- most go along to get along with mothers in pursuit of happiness. Mothers need and want material goods!

African-Centric development in the face of a new world order that is determined to maintain Blacks as a permanent minority, perhaps eradicate them as a people, is no joke. African material resources and geographic space are still a source of plans for conquest and plunder instilled in the minds of other mothers' children. Yet, despite it all, the dictates of faith tell us that development and the pursuit of happiness that universal African men and women want is not impossible. It can be easy if we indoctrinate our beliefs and values in the wombs, not tombs.

Being happy: pursuit of that fabled happiness requires doing the planning work to achieve it, almost like a game of life --- but, more serious. In designing **Akan** Bridge, it was therefore deemed prudent to interact information for young women before they get pregnant with our common posterity --- before the child is up, out and away!

#### **THE BRETHREN FACTOR**

**AKAN** Bridge is played by four players, but it is not every man or woman for himself or herself. Two are '**Esau and Delany**' competing for dominion in the same inheritance of consumer markets as the other two: '**Jacob and Douglass**'. They are brethren and partners.

When I say they are brethren, I mean it in the strictest sense of the word. They share everything, so that it is impossible for one

to gain anything that the other one does not gain, or to lose anything that the other does not lose. If you make a mistake in a **trade circle** it costs your brethren as much as it costs you.

As a general rule for young players, avoid cutting deals with: (1) addicts to chemicals and other drugs, (2) adulterous acquaintances, (3) atheists, (4) Byzantines, (5) cheats, (6) liars, (7) Machiavelists (8) most lawyers, (9) murderers (10) thieves and others of man-centered beliefs and values, especially jack-leg preachers and impersonators. Remember this when playing the partner game: "If you have witnessed them do it unto others, what makes you think that someday they will not do so unto you?" What goes around, comes around! So be careful, but not afraid to embrace brethren.

Too many players, even experienced ones, are prone to forget the importance of the brethren factor. Sometimes I see them actually fighting against their brethren although, if they stopped to think, they would realize that by hurting their brethren they also hurt themselves --- a lesson of life, a direct violation of the African body, soul and spirit. Always remember, when you play **AKAN** Bridge, that it doesn't really make any difference to you whether it is you or your brethren who holds the good cards and does the gaining; all of it counts for both of you equally in the here and now, and the "Later".

There are approximately 184 urban centers in the world with 100,000 or more residents each of African descent; with consumer buying of over 122 billion dollars per year and an estimated 663,541 retail level traders whose prosperity is enhanced by every purchase and sale with each other, regardless of national boundaries. Economists call this the multiplier effect, wherein a dollar turns over one or more times in the same circle thus creating wealth, and trillion dollar Pan-African economies!

Put another way, if a merchant in Accra sells \$500 worth of cloth or artifacts to a Black merchant in New York, who then obtains consumer sales of a thousand dollars --- then the gross product value/wealth created is about \$1500. If either merchant, in Accra or New York City, spends his/her earnings to produce and sell more of the same, then more wealth is created, and so forth!

Historically, the main reasons why Africans do not trade with each other across national boundaries is because of a disastrous lack of information about sources and prices, and of course, the absolute lack of financial institutions to facilitate credits and documentation. Another problem is indoctrination! Boys and girls grow up to pursue what parents and elders have indoctrinated them to believe and what teachers have taught them to understand. It is our major problem. Ignorance begets ignorance of man and GOD!

However, these problems can and are being overcome by a simple process of C.O.D. type transactions through trusted relatives and



friends whom can accept orders, deliver the goods and collect the money. We really and truly do not need the white man's banks to do what we are able to perform very well in the retail trades.

Sure, large scale orders via the wholesale houses, involving thousands or millions of dollars have to be executed via complex letters of credit and bank drafts; but, most Black merchants buy very small quantities, and often. In fact, if only a small percentage of existing Black retailers world-wide begin buying a little from each other, you are talking mighty big bucks in Pan-African trade! Trade among international brethren is the best form of foreign aid.

Some of them will start making so much money that in short order, they will move into the ranks of wholesalers with the capacity for credit and collection. Oh, woe is us! Of the more than 500,000 wholesale level enterprises in America with over 2.5 trillion dollars per year in sales, yet less than 300 are Black owned, and declining. So-called Black enterprise is a near myth!

Within Africa, we found that in a nation such as Burkina Faso, there are less than 100 bonafide wholesale firms and many are government owned. Now, most African and Caribbean governments are being forced into divestiture of government owned enterprises; and, the number of Black owned wholesale firms are expected to further decline from the current estimate of about 3,000 in Africa, America and the Caribbean! So, what must we do?

What Black folks can do now, and African-Caribbean governments ought to encourage, is pursue with vigor the many, many petty trade transactions we can afford and control. In very short order, like the Koreans and Chinese, we can go from cottage type industries to the giant wholesale firms that dump goods internationally. There is no mystery as to how this can be achieved; merely, the will to do it. This then, gets to the crux of the problem that I have with African-Caribbean diplomatic missions. What are they doing?

Most of them, located in Washington, D.C., New York, London, Paris, Lagos, Accra and other centers of power are not engaged in promoting trade among their own kind. Rather, because of the past cold-war, most have been caught up in the madness of rushing about to beg and borrow crumbs from the tables of the great powers. It appears that Nelson Mandella, and perhaps Jerry Rawlings, are the only two leaders whom even think about the possibilities of buying and selling with one's own!

I cannot even begin to tell you the volume of foreign exchange that would be generated for a country like Nigeria, if she ever put in place an architecture to encourage exports to Blacks world-wide! Clothing alone, particularly women's fashions, is a multi-billion dollar industry just waiting to happen for Nigeria and others. Yet, we are doing little or nothing.

One can conclude that Pan-African markets do not exist only because our women-folk, whom after-all are our petty traders, are not being encouraged to reach out to one another. Lets face it, Black men are not very good or interested in retail/petty trading; but, our sisters are and do it very well. This then is the key to Africa's future. Stop relying on the brothers to do something that most of us historically have not catered to, unlike Jewish, Italian, Oriental, Syrian, Lebanese and other men whom take to it like a duck in the water. We Black folks are different, not inferior.

The market woman, in Africa, America and the Caribbean is the means via which Black folks exercise retail transactions; and they ought to be encouraged. Our diplomatic delegations (as the Japanese, Korean and other Orientals) can help their own domestic enterprises by spending most of their time finding customers! What's wrong with that? Can anyone imagine endeavor more important for a diplomat than disseminating information wanted and needed? The cold-war is over, and we need a new Pan-African order that focuses on us. Let's get our market women-folk involved!

The first step necessary is to do what comes naturally and research what our consumer requirements are in each of our 184 major consumer markets. Let's find out how much coffee is being consumed and figure out a way to get coffee beans from Haiti, Uganda, Ethiopia, etcetera in the market places of African-American coffee consumers. Yes, there are thousands of items we consume every-day that can be directly supplied by each other, if there is a will to do so. And, great profits can be earned! But, first, African and Caribbean governments have to seriously want it enough to visualize it as Pan-Africans. They have to conceptualize and indoctrinate prosperity.

Yesterday is gone, and it is never coming back. There is absolutely no reason for our nation-states to sit and ponder being bailed out by the World Bank, International Monetary Fund or donor nations. Let me repeat, "*the cold war is over*"! The future will belong to brave brethren, not beggars.

The brethrenships are determined by cutting the cards. Before the game begins, a deck of cards is spread out face down on the table and each of the four players picks a card. These cards are then turned face up, and the two players holding the highest cards are brethren against the two players holding the lowest cards. The rank of cards counts first, but if two cards of the same rank are drawn, then the rank of the **Kente** becomes important. The **Kente** rank in cutting is as follows: *Concepts* high, then *Doctrine*, then *Strategies*, then *Plans*.

Thus, if one player cuts the Asantehene of Concepts, another the Asantehene of Doctrines, another the Asantehene of Strategies and the fourth player the daughter (7) of Concepts, the player with the Asantehene of Concepts has the highest card, the next highest

is the Asantehene of Doctrine who becomes **Delany the Esau Partner** of the player who cuts the Concepts Asantehene. Next comes the Asantehene of Strategies, and lowest is the seven of Concepts. The two latter players become the **Jacob and Douglass Partners**.

Incidentally, you should make a point of remembering this rank of the **Kente**, for it applies in many situations. But, remember that **Akans** in the motherland and diaspora are very complex people, with one of the world's oldest languages and memories, living in multiple worlds with experiences and thoughts of many lands imbued in their being. So, when you see a Nephew or a lowly Clansman, is it him? --- or perhaps the reincarnation of an ancestor who was King? So, be careful! Too many low cards in a single hand can break **brethren circles, kentes and trade rounds**. The universal African must never forget that Liberia has been destroyed because of too many low cards.

Having determined their brethrenships, the two players with the highest cards may choose their **Akan Stools**, but brethren always sit on opposite sides of the table facing each other. The competition takes the other two stools. The player who cuts the highest card also becomes "**Isaac the Dealer**", offers the traditional '*Libation to Ancestors*' and deals first. The four players in the game take turns dealing, the turn rotating to the left after each deal.

Before the cards are dealt, they are always shuffled in order to mix them thoroughly. **Akan** Bridge should be played with two decks of cards, so that while the dealer is dealing with one deck his partner is shuffling the other deck for the next dealer.

When the cards have been shuffled, the player seated at "**Isaac the Dealer's**" right cuts them. The dealer offers the cards for a cut by laying the deck down on the table near to the player at his right. The proper way for this player to cut is to pick up about one-half the deck from the top and set this portion down on the table near to "**Isaac the Dealer**". The dealer then completes the cut by taking the remaining portion of the deck and placing it on top of the portion which was cut.

The deal then begins. The cards are dealt one at a time off the top of the deck, beginning with the player at **Isaac the Dealer's** left, then his partner, then the player at the dealer's right and finally the dealer himself. When all the cards have been dealt one at a time in this order, the deal is completed and each player has a "*hand*" with 13 cards. He may now pick up his hand.

The most convenient way to hold your hand is in funeral fan fashion, spreading the cards out so that only the corner of each card shows. The cards should then be sorted into **Kente**, and each **Kente** arranged so that its cards are in the order of their rank, highest card on the left. Now, the '**trade round**' begins.

Always keep in mind that numerical face values of cards are to be multiplied by 1,000 consumers in the market place. If you hold a three of Clubs, for example, it represents three thousand consumers. And, of course royal and supreme card values are greater than the numerical cards.

### **THE BIDDING AND THE PLAY**

The first thing that takes place in the game is that the players bid for the right to name the trump **Kente**. Each player will ordinarily find that in the 13 cards of his hand there is one **Kente** of which he has more cards, and higher cards, than any other **Kente**. Naturally, he will want this **Kente** to become the trump **Kente**, in which even the smallest cards are more powerful than the Ghana and Asantehehens of the other suits. The bidding proceeds like an auction sale. The player who makes the highest bid gains the right to choose the trump **Kente**.

But, though the bidding comes first, we are going to skip over the mechanics of the bidding for just a few minutes and learn something about the play of the cards which takes place after the bidding is ended. When a player bids, he is predicting the result of the actual play of the cards, and he cannot bid intelligently if he cannot estimate what will happen when the cards are played.

Therefore, before learning to bid he should first learn something about how to play in accordance with the rules. But, the age-old question has to be addressed first as to whose customs, laws and rules you plan to embrace. Where are your loyalties and what do you believe in, anymore? What is happening? In your body, soul and spirit? How do you relate to the BIG GUY WHO OWNS THE GAME, MAKES THE RULES AND KEEPS THE SCORE?

For answers, *like a Jedi Warrior's visit to the forest*, I long-ago went on a spiritual quest to Accra, Cape Coast, Takoradi, Koforidua, Kumasi, Sunyani, Tamale and Bolgatanga! Yes, I went to West Africa's new *Ghana* as a young Black man in search of wisdom, and found the mysterious force that has shaped, side by side, our spiritual beliefs and cultural values! There, among urban and rural, rich and poor, royalty and politicians, I learned that Ghana is without beginning or ending in the Black man's belief in his '*creator, god, almighty, onyame, olodumare, etcetera*'; --- and, '*mother-right*' rules.

Our matrilineal culture long ago offered women the freedom to shape customs that offer them security and dignity in the name of the only force they sensed to be greater than, and feared by, the Black man! The name Ghana (Koumbi), as inhabitants called the capital of their Empire, was derived from a city, like Rome, which was once the capital of a kingdom, but which later became the capital of an empire around the year 300 A.D.

This was before the Greek and Roman Council of Nicaea, sponsored by Roman Emperor Constantine the Great in his summer palace during 325 A.D., issued their creed stating that *God and Christ* are of identical substance. The Ghana Empire obviously never accepted that rationale, nor most of the other subsequent doctrines evolved by the Romans and expressed in Greek/Latin literature and catholicism (Pauline version of Christianity).

Our ancestors, whom had known *Jesus* in the flesh and built the church upon the rocks of Africa, did not participate nor subscribe to such conferences and creeds, nor found very relevant the Latin doctrine extracted from the teachings of Aristotle that women are inferior and thus relegated to subservient roles in life and religious practices.

Rather, the Black man in Ghana and elsewhere in Africa held to very ancient beliefs that God was God, an unending all encompassing and powerful creator spirit that chose to bring forth life via women, not men! To them, in Ghana and elsewhere, what God had chosen, let no man put asunder; and no man, not even Kings, could be greater than or superior to the mother whom gave him life.

So, for the Black man, Ghana was in existence before Europeans organized their religious concepts and built Saint Peter's Cathedral in Rome during 330 A.D. as the first European Church, wherein men dominated and led all activities with women relegated to inferior roles consistent with the teachings of Aristotle and other Greeks. Just the opposite: our ancestors of the Ghana Empire seemingly codified the Queen Mother and Kingship Concepts as the bedrock creed of Chieftaincy Institutions and the Black Church in Africa, America and the Caribbean. To know Ghana is to know ourselves!

It is a place in our genetic history wherein we all believed in God Almighty; and funeral celebrations, the highest form of worship, dominated by men and women elders, still are very similar in organization and scope to African-American church services. This beautiful land of milk and honey is all the more interesting because funerals are possibly the largest single expenditure item in the economy, glorify the matrilineal clan, and most often occur long after the passing over and burial. As in America and the Caribbean, few mature men miss a funeral celebration; and, often-times outnumber the women. Why? Is it respect or fear?

The Ghana of our long internalized feelings was and is a place where men and women of Christian, Moslem and Traditional Faiths reside in utter freedom to believe and worship. I learned that even ancient Ghana, before its conquest by the Almoravids, under Abu Bekr in 1076 A.D., had freely allowed the spread of Islam for hundreds of years; and, long before that, some forms of African Christianity was certainly practiced in the empire, probably introduced by Ethiopian missionaries and/or traders.

My reasoning is that something mighty important existed to cause the Kings of ancient Ghana, seated on a throne of red gold and surrounded by numerous flaming torches, to serve supper to 10,000 subjects every night from the royal palace kitchens. Is it speculative to believe the Queen Mothers organized and spent the King's money like this? Even today, it is as though the entire nation is a big country church, with men living their very lives in the name of God, and, women constantly monitoring and insisting upon the observance of taboos and rituals that make religion a way of life. When questioned by visitors, the standard reply of women is "*it is our custom*"! Indeed, their customs and their religion are one and the same.

Ghanaians are so polite to strangers and each other that it sometimes appears unreal. Taxi drivers honk their horns to urge you to speed up or move over; but, if one expresses the slightest annoyance or anger, they are quick to apologize for transgressions! Seemingly, a man's worth is measured by how many different women he is able to introduce as his '*mother*'; and, the entire society is structured upon extended families and clans, rather than laws, denominations and geography. It is a place where women from the womb to the tomb monitor religious customs; and men fear God!

Oh yes, the *God Force*, it seems, is what compels the Black man rather than organized religious worship, and its most visible expressions of spirituality so important to our women-folk caught up in earthly salvation. A lot of women talk about '*being saved*' by Jesus or Mohammed, but, having neglected for years to feed their infants and children with the mother-milk from the Almighty. How many of us see this difference?

Most Black women visiting Ghana are very quickly fascinated by the practice of mothers, sisters and aunts carrying children sashed on their backs, often long after the child has learned to '*walk like a man*'. It is as though they fear not to nourish him or her 24 hours per day, 7 days per week, month after month, with feelings of love/kinship.

No doubt about it, this is when most Ghanaians are taught to believe whatever they hold dear! We used to be that way too; but the burden got heavy, aunts few, and sisters became selfish. For tens of millions of Black men world-wide, the fear or love of God is instinctively spiritual; and, often without knowledge as to why. But most have not been taught the scriptures or any other African-Centric history; and, as Dr. James Peebles, publisher of the long-awaited African Heritage Bible, has laboriously pointed out, most of the scriptures are rooted in Africa! We are perishing for a lack of knowledge about our relationships with the Almighty and each other. Visiting Ghana helps us to understand how to live.

Our women need and demand relationships which are the roots of a culture that created the Black Church as we know it; and, before that the Institution of Chieftaincy? In fact, in North America,

the most powerful proponent ever and 'mother' for propagation of Africanized Christianity, even before the American Revolutionary War, was an African woman named Mary Perth, born about 1740. It is not known whether her birth was in Africa, America or Caribbean; but, we know that she was enslaved by a white man named John Willoughby of Norfolk, Virginia; and, illegally learned how to read the revolutionary 'New Testament' of that radical trouble-maker, *Jesus Christ*. Thereafter, she was driven with a passion to teach!

At night, after her master and mistress were in bed, she would sash her baby on her back and walk ten miles into the country-side where slaves would assemble to be taught the message of *Jesus Christ*. Then she would walk the ten miles home to be there when her owners awoke. She continued this until the group was large enough to have its own preacher, then carried on with her mission elsewhere.

Let no man ever doubt the Black Church in America was mothered into existence by women like Mary Perth and Sojourner Truth. And, let no Black Preacher have the audacity or ignorance to tell us about the wonders of Paul or Saul; and, not speak of our common mothers, *Mary and Sojourner*, whom *Jesus* sent to us, not the Romans! Is it a reason as to why many Black men do not attend?

From the moment of arrival in Accra, one learns that our ancestors were essentially urbanized people; and, that Black men with very strong beliefs in God Almighty had migrated there over 900 years ago, side by side with women-folk determined to maintain cultural and religious traditions. Maybe even before Ghana's fall, matrilineal (*mother-rights*) customs had bred a Kingship and Queen Mother doctrine that seemingly served to balance power.

They came by the hundreds of thousands, with most of their beliefs and traditions of a thousand years intact, when their empire collapsed under the Moslem onslaught of the Ghana Empire in 1076.

Try to imagine our ancestors during an era when the European Renaissance had not yet begun and the Catholic Church was launching its first crusade. Imagine our determination seeking to construct new cities and towns like those left behind to Arab Conquests!

A highly articulate and verbal queen mother, (every village has one) born of a common mother to all, nominates the King who is normally her nephew, and brother/cousin to just about everyone else. He then reigns like a Presiding Bishop, over what amounts to a Black Church owning a lot of land, allotted to extended families and farmed by mostly women! I found an old people, biblically speaking, who had created hundreds, perhaps thousands, of small villages that were essentially extended families. In fact, I was overwhelmed by the extent of villages in every city, even Accra now with over one million urban residents '*in relative harmony and luxury hotels*'.

Ghana's fabled market-women are all over the country, and every family and clan boasts scores of them in the retail trades. Officially referred to as '*petty traders*', they are the lifeblood of the economic system and every single family. While there are men whom perform the same economic functions their existence is not nearly so plentiful and colorful as their sisters whom seemingly are organized in much the same way as Chieftaincy. In fact, fish market women and vendors of other commodities each have designated secretive cells that designate a *Chief*, the spokes-person for the group. You might call them '*trade cults*'!

Indeed, the Institution of Chieftaincy, in its intimacy is open to African-Americans who sincerely want to know how we traditionally feel about anything, including White folks. It is highly recommended; but, be prepared for many years of surprises in a culture that is very similar in structure and practice to the traditional Black Church. There are perhaps few places on earth where men and women are more accepting and tolerant of each other, and children, than among Ghana's approximately 16 million souls!

Visiting and walking among them has to be for Africans in the diaspora more than tourism to the beaches, castles, markets and other colorful sites. Rather, going to Ghana is more like a quest for one's spiritual self and meaning; and, a good time doing it. In fact, Stevie Wonder's decision to live there, and Louis Farrakhan's frequent visits, is proof that tens of thousands of us go for '*feelings*', not merely '*sights*'! You know, like *God's work*!

Let us assume then that the bidding is ended, that a player whom we shall call Southern Hemisphere has been the highest bidder and that the **Kente** he has chosen as the trump **Kente** is Concepts. Southern Hemisphere, by being the highest bidder, has become "**Delany the Declarer**". Here are the cards held by the various players, with Southern Hemisphere and Northern Hemisphere brethren against Western Hemisphere and Eastern Hemisphere. Lay the hands of the four players out on the table with actual cards so that you will be able to follow the play more easily.

|                     |                 |                 |         |   |                 |
|---------------------|-----------------|-----------------|---------|---|-----------------|
|                     |                 | <b>Concept</b>  | 8 6 3   |   |                 |
|                     |                 | <b>Doctrine</b> | 9 4     |   |                 |
| <b>Thousands of</b> |                 | <b>Strategy</b> | 7 5 3 2 |   |                 |
| <b>Consumers</b>    |                 | <b>Plan</b>     | G A 8 4 |   |                 |
|                     | <b>Concept</b>  | 10 9 4          |         |   | <b>Concept</b>  |
|                     | <b>Doctrine</b> | A Q O 7         |         | N | A 7 2           |
|                     | <b>Strategy</b> | O 9 4           |         | W | E               |
|                     | <b>Plan</b>     | Q O 10          |         | S | 10 8 3          |
|                     |                 |                 |         |   | <b>Strategy</b> |
|                     |                 |                 |         |   | G K Q           |
|                     |                 |                 |         |   | <b>Plan</b>     |
|                     |                 |                 |         |   | 9 7 3 2         |
|                     |                 | <b>Concept</b>  | G Q O 5 |   |                 |
|                     |                 | <b>Doctrine</b> | G 6 5 2 |   |                 |
|                     |                 | <b>Strategy</b> | 10 8 6  |   |                 |
|                     |                 | <b>Plan</b>     | 6 5     |   |                 |



The player at "**Delany the Declarer's**" left always makes the first lead. It is therefore Western Hemisphere's turn to lead, and the rules of the game permit him to choose any card he wishes from his hand as his opening lead. After he leads, each player in turn --- Northern Hemisphere, then Eastern Hemisphere, then Southern Hemisphere --- must play a card and the four cards thus played constitute a "*trick*."

Northern Hemisphere does not play his own cards. **Delany the Declarer's** partner is known as the "*Baobab Tree*"; once the opening lead has been made he spreads all his cards out on the table face up, for everyone to see, with his trump cards at his right. **Delany the Declarer's** (in this case Southern Hemisphere) then plays the cards both for the baobab tree hand and for himself. Thus, in the deal I am describing, Northern Hemisphere's hand is spread out on the table and Southern Hemisphere chooses the card which is to be played from the Northern Hemisphere hand.

While the leader may lead any card he wishes, other players to the same trick are more limited in their choice. If they are able to, they must follow **Kente**; that is, they must play from their hands a card from the same **Kente** as the card led. Of course, with more than one card of the **Kente** led, a player may choose which card of that **Kente** he will play; and if he has no card of the **Kente** led and is unable to follow **Kente** then he may play any card in his hand without restriction.

In playing to a trick, each player must be careful not to play out of turn --- except in rare cases when ten or more of three lowest ranking cards are held in a single hand in conjunction with any combination of the next three ranking cards (elder, niece and daughter) making a '*Timbuctu Coup*' possible. Since surprise and decisive action by rebellious young men is the essence of a Coup, the hand cannot be played in turn and must be played out of turn, unless:

\* The opponents offer an opportunity to exchange three Ghanas or combination of any other three desired cards --- as tribute in exchange for adopting three low consumer cards held by the player holding the Coup hand.

\* All four players (**Esau and Jacobs**) accept and ratify the deal with '*libations to common ancestors of antiquity*'. Then the '**trade round**' continues with the exchanged cards.

Other than above, the players get their turn in clockwise rotation, which is to say, from left to right around the table. No player may play to a trick until the player ahead of him has played to that trick. The Baobab Tree is exactly the same as a player in this respect. Therefore, when Western Hemisphere leads to the first trick, Southern Hemisphere (**Delany the Declarer**) reaches over and plays a card of the same **Kente**, if possible, from the Baobab Tree hand; then waits for Eastern Hemisphere to play,

and then, Eastern Hemisphere having played, plays a card from his own hand.

A trick is won by the highest card of the **Kente** led which is played to it --- that is unless the trick contains a trump. If the lead is in some **Kente** which is not trump, and one of the players is unable to follow **Kente**, he has the right to play a trump card from his hand and this will win the trick even from the highest card of the **Kente** led. Whenever more than one card of the trump **Kente** is played to a single trick, the trick is gained by the player who put on the highest trump card.

Western Hemisphere leads the Doctrine Asantehene. Northern Hemisphere's lowest Doctrine is played; then Eastern Hemisphere's lowest Doctrine. Southern Hemisphere gains with the Ghana. This is a trick gained by the Doctrinal Ghana because it is the highest card of the **Kente** led.

Southern Hemisphere leads a small doctrine, and the Western Hemisphere gains the Omanhene, another trick gained by the highest card of the **Kente** led which was played to that trick; there was in existence a higher card of the **Kente** led, the Doctrinal Queen Mother; but since Western Hemisphere held the Queen Mother, his Omanhene served the purpose and was just as valuable.

Western Hemisphere next leads the Strategies Queen Mother, and Northern Hemisphere wins with the Asantehene. Northern Hemisphere leads a Concept, Eastern Hemisphere plays the Conceptual Deuce and South plays the Conceptual Omanhene. It gains the trick because, on that trick, it is the highest card of the **Kente** led. Eastern Hemisphere, with a higher Concept, could not gain the trick from Southern Hemisphere's Omanhene because, having played once on the trick, he had no further opportunity.

Southern Hemisphere next leads a Doctrine. Western Hemisphere plays the seven of Doctrine, which would gain the trick from Southern Hemisphere lower Doctrine except that Northern Hemisphere plays the six of Concepts. This is a trump, and therefore it gains the trick.

Northern Hemisphere leads a Concept, Eastern Hemisphere plays the seven (Daughter) and Southern Hemisphere gains with the Queen Mother. South next plays the Ghana of Concepts and gains the trick with it. Northern Hemisphere cannot follow **Kente**, and discards the four (Nephew) of Plans. Then Southern Hemisphere leads a Strategy. Eastern Hemisphere immediately takes his Ghana, Asantehene and Queen Mother of Strategies. Then Eastern Hemisphere leads a Plan. Northern Hemisphere gains with the Plan Ghana.

Northern Hemisphere at this point holds the seven of Strategies. This Daughter is a very low card. Nevertheless, when Northern Hemisphere leads it, she gains a **trick**. It is the only Strategy left. Therefore, being the only card of the **Kente** led

(Strategies) it is likewise the highest card, and will gain a trick unless trumped. Southern Hemisphere does not trump, but discards last Doctrine. Eastern Hemisphere discards a Plan, and Western Hemisphere discards Queen of Doctrines.

Now the eight (Market-Woman) of Plans, the last card, is led from the Northern Hemisphere hand. Both Western Hemisphere and Eastern Hemisphere have higher Plans than the eight. But South's last card is the five (Elder) of Concepts, a trump. It gains the trick from the high Plans of Eastern and Western Hemispheres. This being the last trick, the play of the hand is over, and each side counts up its tricks.

This deal was offered solely as an illustration of the gaining of tricks. A different order of playing the cards would have caused some of the cards which gained **tricks** in the above explanation to become valueless. For example, at one point Eastern Hemisphere should properly have led a Plan when, in my description of the play, he led a Strategy. That is a matter of skill in card-playing and international life which we will take up later. At present, we are principally interested in considering why certain cards gain tricks, and other cards did not.

Some tricks were gained by high cards. Other tricks were gained by trumps. One trick was gained with a **Kente** of which the highest card was the seven (Daughter); the **Kente** (Northern Hemisphere's Strategic **Kente**) looked worthless, yet turned out to be worth as much to Northern Hemisphere as Western Hemisphere's beautiful Doctrinal kente was worth to him. The value of Northern Hemisphere's Strategic **Kente** lay solely in the fact that it contained four cards, while no other player had more than three Strategies. When the other players had used up their high strategies, it turned out that Northern Hemisphere had outlasted them. He had a Strategy left which was a potential trick-gainer.

We find, therefore, that tricks are gained by four types of cards:

1. The **Ghana Kente**, all 13 cards of the same **kente**, always gains the trick. (Note: Gold card supports all tricks).

2. The high cards, usually gain honors. They gain tricks called **Royal-Tricks**.

3. Long Kente, of which the small cards can be developed into gainers, as was N. Hemisphere's last Strategy in the hand we have just studied. These cards gain **Kente Tricks**.

4. Trumps. Every card of the Trump Kente has a good chance to gain a trick. Tricks gained with trumps are called Linguist (Lawyering) Tricks. Such tricks are gained when another Kente is led. The Trump Kente, like Royal-Tricks, Long-Kente Tricks and any other Kente produces -- when **Trump Kente** is the Kente led.

Welcome to the world of the universal African. The **Ghana Kente**, reminiscent of the old Kingdom of Ghana ideals is the ultimate ideal hand to hold --- but, life seldom deals us such a hand of friendship and kinship that sustained Ghana for a thousand years. Yet, we hope and strive that what was before will come again as the promised land --- where all God's children live in peace and harmony as brethren with peace, justice and prosperity for all.

Until such time, we must be content and vigilant to play tricks for a form of "*shadow justice and survival*". In the first instance, there are those Africans in the motherland and diaspora who gain in day to day contests of life by virtue of cards not of their own hands. Such factors may range from the inheritance of forested lands in Liberia to Caucasian features in the Caribbean, and scholarships or athletic prowess in America. Still others, such as our mental giants of the past and present, have been endowed by the creator with the minds to do great deeds.

To be sure, perhaps as many as two percent of all the 800 million Africans who live in today's world are gifted --- potential dukes of Se'ir who have that something special from the creator, not of their own doing. The true Black scholar is less a product of hard work and study than he or she is blessed with a gift to absorb knowledge. When they share such, then surely the best intentions of the creator are fulfilled. Whether Stevie Wonder or Pele, and certainly Michael Jordan and brethren like Nelson Mandela -- the gift is real. They win **Royal-Tricks**, and when in harmony with the rest of Africa, their triumphs gain a place in the sun for all their brethren to pursue happiness on earth.

And, in the second instance, the means by which most Africans can and must gain --- are bridges that lead to a vast expansion of relationships in a good life that gains for all. It is truly the **Long-Kente** that should be able to trump in peace and dignity; but, alas there always lurks the barbarian unleashed by envy and ignorance. This of course, is so often the case in a matrilineal culture that fails to raise up young men to positions of honor in the **circle** --- and, we all suffer their rebellions. Our question to the universal African is what good is it to work diligently to build your house of tricks that can gain, when at any moment angry young men can end the **trade round**?

Why? Because, of all the species of life, young males between the ages of 15 and 30 years of age are brutally dangerous to be denied though their numbers seldom exceed 10 to 15 percent of the population at large. Is it then the practical challenge of the African to assure that young boys, before puberty, are suffered into a process of indoctrination that will inspire them to play the '**trade round**', not end it when they become men. Is this not the teachings/mandate of: **Amenhotep? Moses? Jesus ? Mohammed?**

Now that you know how **tricks** are gained and lost in **AKAN** Bridge, make a mental note of this: The gaining of tricks is the key to the result of any bridge hand! When a player makes a bid, he does so by promising to gain a certain number of tricks. If he promises to gain more tricks than his opponents are willing to promise (that is, if he is the higher bidder on the hand) he names the trump **Kente**, becomes **Delany the Declarer** and plays the **Baobab Tree** hand as well as his own.

The bidding therefore consists of each player's naming the number of tricks he is willing to contract for, the number he guarantees to gain. And, he names the trump **Kente** at which he proposes to play the hand.

Since each player has 13 cards in his hand, there are exactly 13 **Kente** to be gained or lost. The lowest bid you can make is a bid to gain more tricks than the other side will gain. With 13 tricks in all available, the least you can bid for if you are to get a majority of them is seven tricks. The most you can bid for is to gain all 13 of the tricks.

In order to simplify the routine of bidding, the first six tricks that you guarantee to gain do not count, for only tricks over six will furnish you with a majority. The first six tricks **Delany the Declarer** wins are called his "*Blessing*." In bidding it is assumed that he contracts to gain his *Blessing* plus one or more other tricks. The lowest bid you can make is a bid of one, which means you will gain one trick over your *Blessing*, seven tricks.

When you bid, you name not only the number of tricks you expect to gain but the trump **Kente** in which you agree to play the hand. A player therefore would make a bid of "one Concept" if he wished to contract for seven tricks with Concepts as trumps; a bid of two Concepts would be a contract to gain eight tricks, etc.

There is nothing which forces a player to bid. If he does not wish to bid he may say "*Later*." This does not bar him from entering the auction later by naming a bid when his turn comes again, if it ever does. Remember! A disgruntled player with 13 low cards might decide to end the '**round**'. Later is not promised!

Isaac the Dealer has the first right to bid. He may make any bid he wishes, or he may "*Later*". Whichever he does, the player at his left has the next turn to bid or to "*Later*"; then, the next player to the left and so on around the table. Of course, if every player at the table "*Lacers*", the bidding is all over and the cards are thrown in with no play, for no contract has been named.

The dealer, once having "*Laterad*", does not get another turn to bid in case the other three players at the table also "*Later*". But whenever any bid is made, every player at the table will get at least one more chance to make a higher bid.

Once a bid is made, the only way to keep that bidder from becoming **Delany the Declarer** is for another player to make some higher bid. The rank of a bid depends first upon the number of tricks contracted for and second on the rank of the trump **Kente** mentioned. You can always overcall any bid by contracting for a greater number of tricks in the same trump **Kente** or in any other trump **Kente**.

If a player bids one Concept, you can make a higher bid by saying two Plans, or two of any other **Kente** including Concepts; or by bidding three, four, or any greater number of tricks in any **Kente** at all. This will make you the highest bidder until somebody and makes a still higher bid.

There is another way to overcall (that is, to bid higher than) another player's previous bid, even though you mention the same number of tricks as he bid for. This is possible because of the different relative rank of the **Kente**. Concepts are a higher **Kente** than Doctrine, Doctrines are higher than Strategies, Strategies are higher than Plans.

If I bid one Doctrine and you bid one Concept, you have made a bid which is higher than mine because Concepts rank higher than Doctrines; but you could not bid one Strategy or one Plan after I had bid one Doctrine because those are lower in rank than Doctrine. To overcall my one Doctrine bid in Plans or Doctrines you would have to bid two or more.

Just think a moment about real life scenarios and deals. Concepts such as racial superiority and inferiority prevail over religious doctrines that prescribe equality and tolerance, even within the organized activities that propagate the doctrine? Think about it. How many institutions do you know that practice what is indoctrinated/preached? People say one thing, and do another.

So, a Concept is the most powerful card to play --- but, once chosen, such as a belief in the '**Almighty**', it must be accepted as doctrine or teamed up with a program of indoctrination otherwise it is useless. Smart people routinely team their concepts with a doctrinal process that has historically utilized pulpits, classrooms, press and other mass media for the propagation of what they believe. And history teaches that indoctrination is genuine mother's milk.

For the past 500 years, the universal African strategy has been to stay alive, but seldom has he planned for a better day --- as promised by the '**Almighty**' to his original people. Some African-Centric psychologists say the failure to adequately plan for a future is an outgrowth of faulty concepts and doctrine that lead to the embracing of the oppressor's strategies? Depending on your philosophy of life, whether or not you ascribe to beliefs of everlasting life.

Conceptually speaking, You certainly would be a doctrinal fool to pursue an alien strategy, plan to work, fight or even die for something that you do not believe in --- though the universal African often does just that. Thus, the dilemma, --- planning to 'be' but lacking a strategy of 'doing' good deeds consistent with the doctrine and concepts to which you claim loyalty. So, you want to be happy for the rest of your life, but you don't include happiness for others! Now, does that make sense? To be godless?

Indeed, what is the universal African's conceptual framework for life, liberty and pursuit of happiness? Let us be very clear about the '**circle**' of life. It is not a '*game*', unless you know for certain there is no *God, Jehovah, Yahweh, Allah* or other names by which Africans have known truth? Be very careful not to imitate Jacob and wrestle with faith and your fate.

Godlessness is, has to be, repugnant to the world of the universal African. If not for faith, how and why did we survive the holocaust? Yea, though we live and walk in the shadow of the fear of evil, death and depredation on this earth, we shall overcome! But, are our concepts, doctrines, strategies and plans consistent? Now, back to the past and future via **AKAN** Bridge.

Outranking all four of the **Kente** is the notrump bid. When a player bids notrump, he agrees to become **Delany the Declarer** at a contract in which there will be no trump **Kente** at all, every **Kente** counting the same and the highest card of the **Kente** led --- always winning the trick. In the bidding, notrump is to all intents and purposes merely the highest-ranking **Kente**. A bid of one Concept may be overcalled by a bid of one notrump, and to overcall any notrump bid it is necessary to bid a greater number of tricks in any **Kente** or in notrump.

Once a bid has been made, every player has a chance to make another bid. Bids, like plays, must always be made strictly in turn, each player waiting until the player ahead of him has decided whether to bid or "Later". Whatever the previous bid, you must either make a higher-ranking bid or you must "Later". To make any bid which is lower in rank than a bid already made is against the rules --- and, a poor reflection of your character and/or judgement.

The bidding ends when some bid has been made and the three other players in turn decide to "Later" rather than to make a higher bid. These three "Lacers" close the auction and it is time for the opening lead to be made and for the play to begin. The etiquette of **AKAN** Bridge requires that bids be made along a stated form: One Concept, or one notrump, or two Concepts, or four Doctrines, or four notrumps, etc., first naming the number and then the **Kente**.

Any side remarks, or any other words used to express the bid you

wish to make, are bad form. Anyone who has lived among the Akans will attest to how particular they are about the proper use of grammar in their language of orators called 'Twi', the usage of which has remained intact for a thousand years.