



Moral Lessons in African Folktales

By Kwame A. Insaidoo

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This book challenges us to take a cursory glance at our contemporary world, where modern man's scientific and technological ingenuity has led him to soar thorough the galaxy and made the heavens part of his domain; and contrast that with his level of morality today. Open any newspaper or listen to the radio and television news and you can't help but lament on the appalling moral depravity and obscene behavior of our contemporary man. With this intractable moral depravity on the ascendancy, the author nostalgically reminisces the upright morality of yesteryears, and admonishes us to heed Plato's philosophical advice: 'now since men are by nature acquisitive, jealous, combative, and erotic, how shall we persuade them to behave themselves? By the policeman's omnipresent club? {now, AK 47}. It is a brutal method, costly and irritating. There is a better way, and this is by lending to the moral requirements of the community. Throughout this book the author emphasizes the significance of proper moral education in shaping the character of children, youngsters and even adults, and reminds us: 'morals are the rules by which society exhorts its members and associations to behavior consistent with its 'order, security and growth' {Will & Ariel Durant}. The author noted that in traditional African societies, the wise elders, like the ancient Greek philosophers, strongly emphasized the teachability of moral values and deliberately inculcated them into their youngsters. The stories in this book are folktales filled with moral lessons that have been handed down from many generations to the present in many African countries from Ghana, Nigeria, Cameroons, Liberia, the Gambia, Kenya, Ethiopia, Tanzania to Zimbabwe. The traditional African elders successfully utilized these folktales to socialize their youngsters to the moral requirements of their society to insure stability, harmonious relations, order, security and growth.

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