

The Creator - The Soul.

F: What are you trying to say, Ndeni, what is Gindri?

N: Gindri is - he is like this - he is, and that is all!

F: Well! Now tell me, Ndeni, where did all the men come from who are on the earth, the black men and the white men?

N: Why, from Gindri! He created first a man, a male, then a woman, and all men sprang from this first couple.

F: Not all men?

N: Yes, my father said that all men had come from these two; and that when the Bale had become very numerous and had settled in their own mountains, their chiefs chose a name for the greatest one of all, the one who made them: they called him Gindri; it means that he is the one who is always alone, who never ends.

F: I see. But you say that in the beginning Gindri was all alone and yet you tell me that he made everything that we see around us. How could he have done so?

At this point, our narrator tells us, the chief Tcherekwa broke into the conversation. First he sat upright in a chair, stiff and motionless, his elbows close to his sides. Then suddenly he shivered and began to shake and tremble like a man coming out of ice-cold water. Making his whole body vibrate he threw out his arms and exclaimed: "There, Baba, I have shown you how Gindri created everything 'by the word of his love.'"

F: Do you hear that, Ndeni? Do you agree?

N: Yes, master, he has spoken words of truth.

F: And did the first man know that Gindri had created him?

N: Yes, he knew it, because Gindri had placed his breath of life within him.... and so man knew that he was different from the animals.

F: But how do you know that men are different?

N: Of course they are different. If an antelope comes into my field to eat my sweet potatoes, I try to kill him with an arrow; it may escape, but the next evening it will come again and be shot. If a man came to steal in the night he might escape like the animal, and then he would not come again; he would know quite well that he was doing wrong and that another time he would be caught!.....

The priest then asked them about sacrifices to Gindri. There was an almost forgotten tradition, they said, that sacrifices had once been offered, but, Ndeni added, "Later on the 'words' of Gindri were spoiled and forgotten on account of the 'words' of the spirits" - that is, spiritism had obscured their worship of God. The only worship Ndeni offered the Supreme Being was the thanksgiving his father had taught him when he recovered from an illness: "Gindri, you have done me good. I am quite cured."

F: Just one more question, Ndeni, what do the Bale say about death? When a man dies do they think he has no further existence?

N: The Bale say that a man dies when the breath of his life leaves the body. Then the body turns to corruption in the earth where he was buried; but the soul and his breath are no longer there, since they escaped from the body.

F: Where does the soul go? N: Up to Gindri.

F: What does it do after death? N: We don't know.

F: Does Gindri judge the words of the soul? N: We don't know; some say that he does.

The priest thanked them, and then invited them to the instructions at the Mission. They answered not a word, but Ndeni, rich and powerful, turned as he left and said: "Not yet, Father. Later on I will think of what you say." (He has too many wives!)

PRAYERS: Remi Reynier's mother died this morning; a deceased aunt of Bishop Finnigan, C.S.C.; the grandfather of Tom Grimes. Four special intentions.