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The continuity of the Garifuna culture is moored in the practice of *au búni amürü núni* (I for you and you for me) reciprocal relationship as taught in the Dabuyaba. *Au búni amürü núni* has overwhelmingly anchored *Garifunaduúü* as the life style of choice, no matter the geographic location of Garifuna people, as they have advanced *Garifunaduúü* within national and international spaces and structures. There has been a distinctly progressive rise in the consciousness of things Garifuna, as these teachings have propelled Garinagu at home (Belize, Guatemala and Honduras) and abroad to embrace well-defined actions in the maintenance of their culture. This interest is demonstrable efforts in continuing education and institutional linkages within Garinagu's chosen communities. It is very evident today in today's event of a Folk Festival celebrating the Garifuna Culture here at Rutgers University. Bandi Seremei. I give thanks first to the Áhari (Ancestral Spirits), then to the organizers of this Folk Festival.

The teachings of *au búni amürü núni* re-enforces the obligatory custom of reciprocity whereby parents and guardians having nurtured (*aniüríaha*) their children, who in turn nurture parents in their twilight years. It is a nurturing, binding reciprocal relationship in the provision of sustenance to kinfolk which extends to kin in the Spirit World. At death the soul travels a long journey passing through Mulúandu to the final resting place in Seiri or Heaven. During that process, nine days of prayers are said, partly to assist the soul along on its journey to Seiri. In making reference to dead relatives, the terminology used is *uwayan* meaning "state of being away or no longer physically here". Death has a finality that does not exist as the reciprocal relationship with the living and dead continues through the Ancestral Spirits in Seiri. These are the Spirits of parents, siblings, grandparents, great grandparents who were all blood relatives in their earthly lives, hence the term Ancestral Spirits or Áhari. The soul becomes an Ancestral Spirit or Áhari after arriving at Seiri and is all-seeing, all-powerful, omniscient and omnipresent. Ancestral Spirits have the ability to guide and protect the living in their day to day existence here

on earth. There are four categories of Ancestral Spirits, namely, Áhari, Gubida, Hiúruha and Ebu.

Garifuna spiritualism is based on lineal kinship and hinges on the cultural practices of nurturing as a way of re-affirming obligatory social ties as explained above. It is a belief system whose distinguishing feature is the faith that Ancestral Spirits or Ahari have the ability to communicate with the living. Garifuna spiritualism teaches that the Ancestral spirits communicate with and protect living family members in a continuing cycle of parent to child and child to parent reciprocal and nurturing relationship even after death.

Communication occurs when the Ancestral Spirit or Áhari manifests itself to relatives through dreams and/or trance (*ónwehani*), usually offering advice or heralding news. Once an Áhari reveals itself in *ónwehani*, that Áhari is termed a Gubida. Not all Áhari become Gubida, as not all Ancestral Spirits return in this manner or return at all. The choice of kin by the Gubida is very subjective, and is dependent on who in the family the Áhari and/or Gubida wish to “*play*” with, meaning that the Gubida may have preferences. While the Áhari and Gubida provide general guidance and protection to the individual person or family through these dreams, interpretations of serious occurrences are taken to the Buyei for his intervention. The Buyei is the Spirit Medium who has the capacity to communicate directly with Ancestral Spirits by way of his Spirit Master or Ebu and the Hiúruha. This is done during either of two communication sessions or séances called *areiraguni* and *aríahani* and usually takes place in the Dabuyaba.

The Dabuyaba is the Ancestral home where the spirits of our Ancestors are placated through a ceremony called Dügú. The Dügú is presided over by a Spiritual Medium or Buyei.

Ancestral Spirits are reciprocated and voluntarily celebrated through various rituals, which are invariably incorporated into day-to-day existence. These include the offering of memorial mass as well as food and libation at large family celebrations such as weddings, and the bathing of the dead. When the obligations to the Ancestral Spirit are overlooked or ignored then the Ancestral Spirit may as a last resort demand repayment through a formal process called *adügürahani*, to prepare for a Dügú ceremony. The Dügú is a healing ceremony of placation conducted in the Dabuyaba under the oversight of the Buyei. Consisting of nine rituals, it is sacrosanct and rooted

in the spiritual health of the Garinagu. The contextual meanings of Garifuna Spiritualism are identified in the nine rituals and the lyrics of the *úgulendu* songs and the ambience created by the music. The lyrics of the *úgulendu* song for one of the primary healing ritual, *Malí*, repeatedly call out for *au búni amürü núni* demonstrating placation and reverence.

Dügú is by far the most elaborate and time consuming process in dispensing of one's commitments to the Ancestral Spirits. Dügú is an option when all else fail in adhering to customary duties, and therein lies the significance—its very survival or continuity is an indication of people's behaviour and the resultant effect of tradition in re-instituting values to correct behaviour.