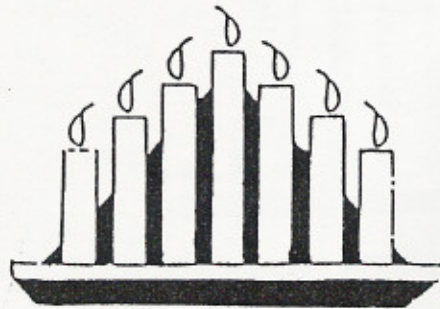


What Then To Me Is Kwanzaa?



Why is there oneness in America for African people, yet, no oneness of African people in America?

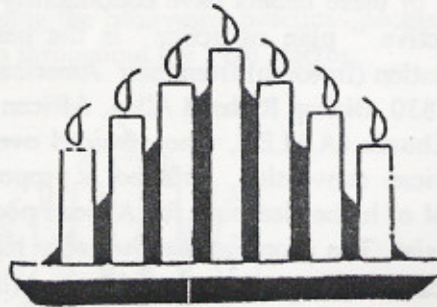
By William Larsha

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Kwanzaa? 1

..IT IS A TIME FOR COMING TOGETHER
TO EXPRESS THE "WE" FACTOR.



Kujichagulla - Self Determination

By William Larsha

Since African people "of" America are facing a new century and a new millennium, Kwanzaa more than ever should be recognized as the Messiah of African Americans.

Kwanzaa, when understood is purely a co-existence pattern of thought. It recognizes who African people were and are. As Dr. Maulana Ron Karenga puts it, "The concept of Kwanzaa, the African American holiday, is to help Blacks to relate to the past in order to understand the present and deal with the future."

For more than two centuries African people have employed two major approaches toward extricating (freeing) themselves from their American predicament. Predicament here means a situation wherein African people on this continent have been deliberately restrained, suppressed--thus, systematically denied access to the nation's economic and political opportunities necessary to achieve "real survival as a people and progress as an American entity."

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These deployments are: (1) the alternative analysis approach and (2), the synthesis analysis approach. Both approaches are executed (carried out) by three distinct patterns of thought, that is, sets of principles for guiding the behavioral practices of African Americans. The very first national convention among African people revealed these three paramount patterns of thought: integration, separation, and co-existence. Thus, and through the years, advocates of each of these beliefs have continuously claimed that their respective "plan of action" is the best plan to achieve extrication (freedom) from their American predicament.

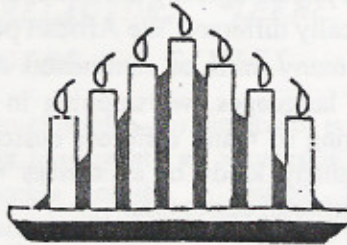
In 1830, Bishop Richard Allen, African Methodist Episcopal Church (A.M.E.), who presided over the first African American convention, offered a proposal to construct a school of higher learning for African people since such did not exist. The proposal was heatedly rejected by (1) early advocates of integration who felt a vital (life and death) need to protest for enrollment in schools already instituted, and (2) by advocates for complete exodus; that is, the immigration of African people from American governance. Richard Allen, with reference to American governance, believed in co-existence. Nonetheless, these three ideas centered around the education of African people provided the very foundation of the most dominating patterns of African American thought in relation to survival and progress.

*.... AND THUS DEMEANING THE RELIGIOUS
CREDO OF BE MY BROTHERS'S KEEPER.*

Both integrationists and separationists, employing the alternative analysis approach, have spent more than 160 years *Claiming and Gaming* over which plan is the best plan; in other words, an alternative practice of individualistic "I, Me" existence over and above the behavioral practice of collective "We" existence. On the other hand, synthesis analysis by meaning is an approach for bringing all parts together into one whole. It represents an effort to institute the "We" factor instead of the "I, Me" egoism.

Kwanzaa? 3

This is where Kwanzaa comes in. It is a relative new concept in America with reference to freeing African people from their American predicament. The concept for African Americans was devised and initiated in 1966 by Dr. Maulana Ron Karenga. Kwanzaa is not only a week long celebration, it is a time for coming together to express the "We" factor. It is a time for rededication to seven (7) principles for guiding the behavioral practices necessary to achieve extrication throughout the "We" factor.



These principles of Kwanzaa are: 1) UMOJA (oo-Moe-jah) unity; 2) KUJICHAGULIA (koo-jee-goo-LEE-ah) self-determination; 3) UJIMA (oo-JEE-mah) collective work; and responsibility 4) UJAMAA (oo-jah-mah) cooperative economics; 5) NIA (nee-ah) purpose; (6) KUUMBA (koo-OOM-bah) creativity; and 7) IMANI (ee-Mah-nee) faith.

Both Bishop Allen and Booker T. Washington can be associated with the "We" factor and the synthesis analysis approach; and are the forerunners of the Kwanzaa thought process. To Booker T. Washington, in relation to UJAMAA, "No race that has anything to contribute to the markets of the worlds is long in any degree ostracized."

Nkosi Ajanuku, who introduced Kwanzaa to this part of the country, recognized all African American distinct patterns of thought and their advocates as being parts to the whole. "There are Merits worthy of consideration in all African American initiatives of struggles for survival and progress."

*AND SECURE THE BLESSING OF LIBERTY TO
OURSELVES AND OUR PROSTERITY*

Kwanzaa? 4

But in examining behavior within the African American Experience, the "We" factor has yet to approach maturity. This is why we ask: Where is Washington's "economic foundation, economic prosperity, and economic independence? Why are there so many ignoring collectivism, yet so many aspiring to individualism; and thus demeaning the religious credo of "Be My Brothers' keeper?"

To this writer, the answer can be found in the lack of African American "oneness"--that is, one people. We African people on this continent have always remained biologically and physiologically the same, but sociologically and psychologically different. We African people arrived on this land from many parts of continental Africa--speaking many different languages, worshipping in many different religions, adhering to many different customs, and paying allegiances to many kinds of existences namely, tribal, national and territorial existences.

INTEGRATIONISM, THUS, IS THE BARBITURATE OF AFRICAN AMERICAN PEOPLE

By the time the American Constitution had been adopted in the closing years of the 1700's, African people in America were speaking a new language; adhering to new sets of customs; worshipping mostly in a new religion, and paying allegiances to new kinds of existences: the existence of the commerce master in the North, the slave master in the South, and the existence of the overseers of the domestic affairs of these masters in both the North and South.

African people were not one people. They were biologically the same, but sociologically different. Some were free countrymen. Some were slave property. But even so, their minds had been mostly reshaped by European patterns of thought, mainly idealism, realism and forms of pragmatism. Their minds, thus, had been conditioned for action so as to rely on dependency; on independency, or on interdependency.

The mentality feeding on Independency led to what is now seen as the philosophy of "separationism" (realism in nature) and to the human rights movement as expressed in the American Declaration of Independence. The mentality feeding on Dependency led to what is now seen as the pattern of thought of "integrationism" (idealism in nature) and the civil rights movement as expressed in Christian ideals. And lastly, the mentality feeding on interdependency led to what is also seen as the African American philosophy

*JUST LIKE THERE ARE FALSE PROPHETS
IN RELIGION, THERE ARE FACTITIOUS
LEADERS IN CIVICS.*

of co-existence (pragmatism in nature); the "republic rights movement" as expressed in the fifth clause of the Preamble of the re United States Constitution: *And Secure the Blessing of Liberty (freedom) to Ourselves and Our Posterity.*

However, no meaningful togetherness of African Americans has resulted from the influence of these three patterns of thought. Utopian integration, what can be called dis-integration, is a self-destruct philosophy, attempting to lead African people to a melting pot, where thereafter, "WHAT WAS WOULD BE NO MORE." Integrationism, thus, is the barbiturate of African People. In the process of trying to integrate, disintegration has slowly induced what little "we-ism" African people may have possessed to disinherit, dishonor, disrespect, disrepute --in all, be disloyal to their biological being, "We."

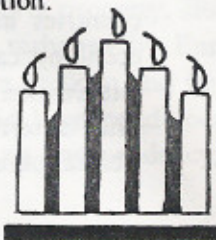
Miraculous separationism is merely an "I have a dream" plan to resort to departure. Where, we must wonder, is this land on which the African people population will settle and sovereignize --continental Africa? Some countries in Africa in this European driven world-wide economy can barely feed themselves without Caucasian intervention. As to American soil, what area can be set aside or territorialized for petitioning self-rule? The South? Central plains? or the wild, wild West?

Kwanzaa? 6

Ethnic co-existence, on the other hand, has been overshadowed by both integrationism and separationism. Efforts to co-exist, historically, have been hurt by espousals of individualism --the "I-Me" syndrome. Believers in asymmetrical (one-sided) relations with non-Blacks; admirers of Moby Dick's Captain Ahab, Negro Unilateralists (Blacks who initiate action in behalf of all Blacks knowing that non-Blacks will mostly benefit); and Gunga Din servants (the Asiatic Indian who went to his death trying to prove he could be a British soldier), all have damaged measures to achieve ethnic co-existence.

The African American Experience is filled with many great thinkers and activists, yet no African American "oneness." From the early efforts of Bishop Richard Allen, Frederick Douglass, Alexander Crummel, W. E. B. DuBois, Booker T. Washington, Marcus Garvey, and Elijah Muhammed to the contemporary initiatives of Martin Luther King, Jr., Malcolm X, Jesse Jackson LeRoi Jones, Tony Brown, Louis Farrakhan, and Cornel West, still no "oneness." The work of Maulana Ron Karenga? Mis-interpreted, mis-understood, not fully recognized as a pattern of thought for African American survival and progress.

The question, then is "*Why is there 'oneness' in America for African people, yet no 'oneness' of African people in America?*" The answer can be found in two words: No Coalescence, meaning no coming together to grow together into a single centric state of ethnic existence. The solution to this problem of "oneness" can be found in the concept of Kwanzaa--because Kwanzaa when granted usefulness brings a new sense of togetherness with purpose for unity and existence of oneness. Since 1966, Kwanzaa for African Americans has been bringing forth five instrumental opportunities to achieve final extrication.



These opportunities are directly associated with the principles of Kwanzaa are:

(1) The opportunity to recognize as a matter of *Fait Accompli* (fa-ta-kon-ple: a thing done and no longer worth opposing) that the synthesis analysis approach to achieve extrication is essential. Synthesizing is paramount for establishing permanent unity--UMOJA with purpose NIA.

(2) The opportunity to recognize the benefits of "coalescence." African people must become "oneness"--an ethnic entity in a nation that is composed of many ethnic

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF EACH AMERICAN
PART WILL DETERMINE THE EFFECTIVENESS
OF THE WHOLE.

groups, wherein each is striving to be an effective group so as to engage in reciprocal (mutual) relations other groups--not asymmetrical (one-sided) relations. African Americans through Kwanzaa have the opportunity to come together and grow together into a distinct "oneness" --into biological and sociological "sameness," and into an ethnic state of existence (belonging) to which all African Americans shall be identified. The sense of "Coalescence" is really a sense of self-determination - KUJICHAGULIA

(3). The opportunity to recognize that a "status quo" African American initiative would be much more effective than the individual status of a leader. "We must emerge" must become more important than "I, Me will" emerge. Through Co-emergence," success does not result from the emergence of a single leader, but from a co-emergence of all African people involved directly in bringing the initiative into realization -- collective work and responsibility: UJIMA.

One of the historical problems for African people is that of accepting and tolerating false leaders: that is, accommodators and imitators locked into attitudinal and judgmental situations which cause them to misrepresent rather than represent. Example: the Negro Unilateralist. Just like there are false prophets in religion, there are factitious leaders in civics.

Co-emergence creates collective leadership for purpose—NIA: For the African American people, for the country. As Jesse Jackson stated in 1984, "To make America better. To keep America strong."

A FINGER CUT AND PAINING CANNOT BE AS EFFECTIVE TO THE HAND AS CAN THE FINGER NOT CUT AND NOT PAINING.

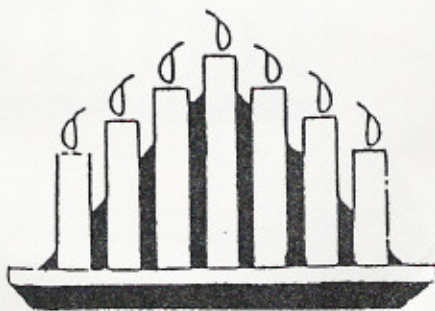
(4) The opportunity to recognize with allegiance the most paramount axiom associated with the "We" ethnic existence; that is, all African people "of" America are AFRICAN AMERICANS. It is the state of existence (not a state in exile" or nation in a nation") to which all African people "of" America, by virtue of being, do belong --must become: UMOJA (in unity for unity).

(5) The opportunity to accept the concept of Co-existence as a synthesis analysis approach to achieve extrication from the American predicament. Co-existence can embody all seven principles of Kwanzaa. America, the nation, is made up of more than 150 ethnic groups co-existing, and most are striving to become effective socio-economic parts of the American whole. Ethnic effectiveness through Kwanzaa can and should become an African American "purpose/goal: NIA/UJAMA, NOT TO BRING HARM TO America as some groups would and have done, but to orchestrate "betterment" for self and the America whole. The effectiveness of each American part will determine the effectiveness of the whole.

As Booker T. Washington so profoundly implied in 1895, "A finger cut and paining cannot be as effective to the hand as can the finger not cut and not paining."

Kwanzaa as a philosophy in mind truly seeks to discover the "reason for the reason for the reason" as to guide behavior to behavior for behavior."

All in all, as stated by Dr. Karenga, "Kwanzaa is not merely a holiday, but a way of life. It is a family affair. It is the "time when African people should get together and give thanks and enjoy the blessings of living and acting together as a family."



Kujichagulia - Self Determination

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