



Annual Founder's Kwanzaa Message
1966 – 44th Anniversary – 2010

KWANZAA AND THE NGUZO SABA
AN ETHICS OF SHARING GOOD IN THE WORLD
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In its most essential understanding and expression, Kwanzaa is a celebration of family, community and culture with each providing a context and commitment of common ground, cooperative practice and shared good. Kwanzaa is a celebration of the family which first forms us, names, nurtures and sustains us, and teaches us upright and uplifting ways to understand and assert ourselves in the world.

Kwanzaa is a celebration of the community which calls us into being as a people, serves as the source and center of our strivings and struggles together to live good and meaningful lives, create, advance and sustain culture, and play the rightful role that our history, shared hope and dedication to the good demand of us. And Kwanzaa is a celebration of the culture that brought humanity and human civilization into being, formed the first disciplines of human knowledge, gave deep spiritual and ethical insight and grounding to our ancestors and the world, and offers us valuable and timeless insights to engage the critical issues of our time.

Rooted in and developing out of the ancient origins of African first-fruit harvest celebrations and the modern origins of the Black Freedom Movement, Kwanzaa teaches and cultivates cultural grounding and ethical principles and practices dedicated to the cooperative creation and sharing of good in the world. Given this history and the shared hope it raises and reaffirms, each Kwanzaa comes with an ethical insistence that we think deeply about our lives and the world we live in, ask what does it mean to be African living in this our time and meet our ethi-

cal obligations to ourselves and the world. At this point the *Nguzo Saba* serve as an essential centering and a necessary foundation and framework for grounding and guiding our relationships and community, and honoring the ancient African imperative to constantly bring good in the world and share it in joy and justice.

The *Nguzo Saba*, the Seven Principles, begin with the principle of *Umoja* (unity). Our text, *Kwanzaa: A Celebration of Family, Community and Culture*, states that the principle *Umoja* calls on us “to strive for and maintain unity in the family, community, nation and race,” i.e., the world African community. We are urged to recognize and respect the needful foundation and nurturing framework of family and community; the relatedness and interdependence of the peoples of the world; and a profound sense of oneness in and with the world.

The second principle, *Kujichagulia* (self-determination), the text says, is a call “to define ourselves, name ourselves, create for ourselves and speak for ourselves”. It teaches us to define and understand ourselves by the good we do and bring in the world, and by the truth we speak, the justice we do, and the loving kindness, care and concern we show towards each other, others and the world.

The third principle, *Ujima* (collective work and responsibility) calls on us, the text says, “to build and maintain our community together and to make our brothers’ and sisters’ problems our problems and to solve them together.” This principle teaches us the shared responsibility to work and build the good family, community, society and world

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we all want and deserve to live in, to be actively concerned with the well-being of the world and those in it, and to see the cooperative creation and sharing of good as justice and appreciate it as joy.

The fourth principle, *Ujamaa* (cooperative economics), the text tells us, urges us “to build and maintain our stores, shops and other business and to profit from them together.” This principle teaches us an ethics of shared work and shared wealth and calls on us to engage in economic practices that are constantly concerned about satisfying our needs without exploiting or injuring others and the world, and to uphold the right of all peoples to the good and wealth of the world.

The fifth principle is *Nia* (purpose). The text tells us this principle calls on us “to make our collective vocation the building and developing of our community in order to restore our people to their traditional greatness.” This principle calls us together in collective vocation and the practice of building and developing ourselves in our own interests as well as in the interests of the world, seeing greatness in the good we do and share in the world.

The sixth principle is *Kuumba* (creativity) the text tells us calls on us “to do always as much as we can in the way we can in order to leave our community more beautiful and beneficial than we inherited it.” This principle teaches us a constant striving to make our community continuously better and more beautiful and beneficial than we inherited, but also and by extension, it speaks to our responsibility toward the world in the ethical obligation of *serudj ta*, i.e., to constantly repair, renew and rebuild

the world making it more beautiful than we inherited it.

When we do good for the world, they teach, we also do it for ourselves. Thus, the *Odu Ifa* teaches “those who do good do it for themselves and those who do evil do it to themselves.” And the *Husia* says, do good in the world, “doing good is not difficult; just speaking good is a monument for those who do it, for those who do good for others are also doing it for themselves.” For they are building the good world we all want and deserve to live in.

Imani (faith) is the seventh principle of the *Nguzo Saba*. And the text tells us that this principle calls on us “to believe with all our heart in our people, our parents, our teachers, our leaders and the righteousness and victory our struggle.” This principle teaches us to have a deep-rooted, relentless and resilient faith in our people, and their capacity for good; in our fore parents and our current ones and the good they’ve done, do and want for us; in our teachers who teach us excellence in learning and life, and in our righteous leaders who guide us toward the good and aid us in becoming self-conscious agents of our own life and liberation, servants of the people, and *walimwengu*, residents and responsible ones of and for the world.

And the principle *Imani* teaches us to believe in the righteousness and victory of our struggle to bring, increase and sustain good in the world; and our capacity as a people to remain an informed, active and powerful presence for good in the world.

Heri za Kwanzaa. Happy Kwanzaa.

Hotep. Ase. Heri.

(A DVD of the full Annual Founder’s Kwanzaa Message is available at www.OfficialKwanzaaWebsite.org)

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