



**IN LOVE AND STRUGGLE:
REMEMBRANCE AND REFLECTIONS ON LIBERATION**

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DR. MAULANA KARENGA

THIRD in a series for the 50th Anniversary Nguzo Saba 2015 Conference (September 24-27), celebrating the founding of our organization *Us* and the introduction of the Nguzo Saba (*The Seven Principles*) and Kwaaida philosophy. The following are excerpts from a 1974 article titled "In Love and Struggle: Toward a Greater Togetherness" which I published in the *Black Scholar* during my political imprisonment on trumped up charges and subsequently published in my book titled *Essays on Struggle: Position and Analysis* in 1978 by Kwaaida Publications. A new 50th anniversary edition will be published by the University of Sankore Press and be available at the conference.

Revolution is rank and unreal if it is not a collective effort and experience and if it does not reach and raise to a higher level each and all of us. Our freedom as a people is indivisible and to talk of the liberation of less than all is sheer and shallow nonsense. Therefore, it is to us a vulgar vision that conceives and attempts to construct a world of constant war between women and men, diametrically opposed and unalterably hostile to each other. Man and woman are one in any real and human sense, and the inauthentic differences that narrow minds imagine divide us dichotomously are the ones that usually unite us. For it is a spiritual and physical fact of no meager importance that where we differ most is where we fit together most profoundly. There is nothing as real or rewarding as human sharing—not ritualistic religion or assumed revolution, abstract individualism or imagined isolated achievement. And the sharing of man and woman is second to none in its satisfaction of this deep and undiminishing need, a need that cannot be successfully denied or negated by anti-female or anti-male assertions to the contrary.

We cannot support separatist moves which divide our energies and efforts and attempt dual approaches to liberation. We as a people are dealing with different realities and have different priorities than those who would advocate and attempt to carry out a struggle, sectarian in its source, narrow in its notion of interests, and divisive of our central struggle

against our exploitation and oppression as a people. Our central and overriding interest and aspiration is and must continue to be *national liberation* as a people—not in negation of social liberation of our women, but as insurance and extension of it. For true social liberation of woman and man is possible only after we with other oppressed and progressive people have acquired the collective power to dismantle and discard the false and oppressive social organization imposed on us by the oppressor.

What we do, then, we must do together as a people. There are no separate solutions. Since the oppressor exploits and oppresses all of us, then, all of us, men as well as women and children, must be consciously and voluntarily involved in our struggle for liberation. We diminish and destroy the potential and power of our struggle when we give it names and goals that narrow the scope and content of our vision and when we, imagining fragmentation to be freedom, divide ourselves and our energies and pursue opposite paths. Liberation will never come, nor will any revolution be realized, if abandoning our original aspiration, we establish new and narrowly defined priorities, imported and imposed from a distinctly different context and history.

We must continuously be aware of, admit and eliminate our social shortcomings in our relations with each other. But it is a stiff and stubborn fact that we cannot truly eradicate the objective and subjective causes of our undeveloped and deficient relations with each other until we collectively acquire the power to put an end to our exploitation and oppression as a people. Therefore, we say that the struggle for and achievement of national liberation is a precondition for genuine social liberation of both man and woman. For it is only through collective struggle and the gaining of social power that we can promote social liberation on the higher human level it demands and deserves.

None of the foregoing argument is to suggest smug satisfaction with our social or-

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ganization as it is or to propose a delay in the moral and revolutionary demand for the reassessment, redefinition and restructuring of our social roles and relationships. It is obvious that we must right now reassess, redefine and restructure our whole value system and view of ourselves and each other. We must alter the concern and content of our family structures, review and redefine our concept of man and woman, marriage and family and make the call for brotherhood extend to, include and complement the call for sisterhood, end domestic and all forms of violence against each other, and learn to love in principled, positive and expansive ways. We are a beautiful people, but we cannot be smugly satisfied with ourselves, for whatever beauty we possess is minor compared to the beauty possible, the expansive beauty of our continuously becoming in progressive perfection.

Moreover, we don't for a moment believe that strong male/female relations or a beautiful family life alone will ultimately and automatically lead to total liberation in every area. The reality of life as the requirements of struggle are ultimately more complex and contradictory and cannot be summed up simply as a need for a better couple and family life. There are larger questions of societal liberation. But although we must seriously address ourselves to these issues, we must begin our struggle against society with the profound struggle against ourselves, *against that in us that divides and disables us*. By rising above restrictive and unrewarding relationships that deform our development, we become more capable of real liberation on a larger scale.

If our lives are ruled by disabling relationships we cannot talk of serious struggle. Moreover, to talk of revolution in society and the world and deny the need for revolution in our relations and relationships is not only contradictory, but eventually contemptible. We need, now, a new vision of revolution and freedom and new values that teach appreciation for the human personality regardless of sex and urge social equality for our women on every level of life. Moreover, we advocate a realm of freedom that allows and encourages free and principled association and strengthens critical links between Black men and Black women so that they, *together in life, love and struggle*, can become and be a force for good and freedom in the world.

Finally, we must believe that with common values, aspirations and interests and through common struggle against ourselves, i.e., our weaknesses and the oppressor, we Black men and women, can forge a new and needed unity and achieve fully the togetherness in life, love and struggle which is proposed and promoted in our *Kawaida* marriage commitment which states: "For you there shall be no longing, for you shall be fulfillment to each other; For you there shall be no harm, for you shall be a shield to each other; For you there shall be no falling, for you shall be support to each other; For you there will be no sorrow, for you shall be comfort to each other; For you there shall be no loneliness, for you shall be company to each other; For you there shall be no hassle, for you shall be peace to each other; And for you there shall be no searching, for you shall be an end for each other."

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