



**RESOLUTIONS IN TIMES OF RESISTANCE:
BUILDING, WORKING AND WAGING STRUGGLE**

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DR. MAULANA KARENGA

A GAIN, in the words and ways of the ancestors, the edges of the years have met and merged, and we pause to pay homage, give thanks and think deep about our past, present and future. And we offer prayers and make sacred wishes for blessings of good for each other; our people—Africans everywhere, and all the world. Moreover, we commit and recommit ourselves to build the basis, do the work and wage the struggle necessary to secure these goods and leave them as a legacy for future generations.

However, this New Year comes in the midst of the heightened resistance of our people, against police violence and general systemic violence that violates the sanctity of life itself, degrades and destroys our lives and denies us the security of persons and peoples which is a basic human right. And as history has taught us, in conditions of oppression, there is no remedy except resistance, no strategy worth its name that does not include struggle, and no way forward except across the blood-stained and casualty-covered battlefield, marked off and made especially meaningful by the many martyrs who sacrificed their lives; political prisoners who sacrificed their freedom; and veterans and soldiers still standing, willing to make similar sacrifices.

Thus, in the ancient and honored tradition of our ancestors and in consideration of the conditions and urgencies of our time, let us wish for and commit and recommit ourselves to work, struggle and build the basis for: respect and reaffirmation of the sanctity of African and human life; security of persons and peoples; self-determination and liberation in the most dignity-affirming and life-enhancing sense;

racial and social justice; well-being and wholeness; peace, happiness and human flourishing; environmental care and concern; and an overdue, well-deserved and decisive victory in our ongoing struggle to achieve and sustain these and other goods, and dare, with others similarly committed, to bring into being a new world and new history of humankind.

In this time of turmoil, testing and heightened struggle, I think of and offer again reflections on the moral commitments the *Seba-Maat*, the moral teachers in our organization Us, who re-established, renewed, expanded and now follow the Maatian tradition of ancient Egypt. For these five moral commitments offer a foundation and framework for building the basis, doing the work and waging the struggle necessary to bring and sustain good in the world. These five moral commitments of a *Seba* are: to be a good person in the world; to be a consistent servant of the people; to be a constant soldier in the struggle; to be a continuous student of the teachings; and to be a tireless teacher of the good, the right and the possible.

The ancient *Seba* taught that the building of a good world, a Maatian world of truth, justice, loving kindness and care, well-being and flourishing, requires good persons who prefigure, embody and exemplify that good world they want and self-consciously struggle to bring it into being. *To be a good person in the world*, our sacred texts teach us, we must always strive: to seek and speak truth; to do and demand justice; to honor our elders and ancestors; to cherish, support and challenge our children; to be kind and caring, especially towards the needy and vulnerable; to have rightful

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relationship with the environment; to constantly struggle against evil and injustice; and always raise up, praise and pursue the good.

To be a consistent servant of the people means offering ourselves in sustained service to our people, especially the masses in their ongoing struggle to live free, good and dignity-affirming lives. Moreover, to be a consistent servant of the people means to love the people, share their lives, and learn their lessons. And it means being constantly engaged in actions and activities which aid the masses in carving out of the hard rock of reality spaces of freedom, dignity, creativity, justice, peace, development and meaning in the midst of the savage oppression which surrounds them.

To be a constant soldier in the struggle is to be an all-seasons soldier, active in all climates, at work in all weather, and especially resistant to the winter ways and artificial “warm” the oppressor pre-packages and peddles as PR to camouflage his amoral and conventional coldness. Moreover, it is to be always prepared, for as the *Odu Ifa* teaches, “a constant soldier is never unready, not even once”. And it is to wage an ongoing righteous struggle not only against our oppressor, but also against that in us which is in contradiction to our highest values and the choice we’ve made to free ourselves and be ourselves, and open a new way forward on the horizon of human history. And as Amilcar Cabral reminds us, this “struggle against our weaknesses . . . no matter what difficulties the enemy may create (for us) . . . is the most difficult of all”.

To be a continuous student of the teachings is to love learning, cultivate and sustain a life of the mind informed by the deepest moral and relational sensitivities of the heart and engage the teachings of our ancestors as an indispensable anchor and insight into the best of what it means to be African and human in the world. And it is to remember the teachings of Seba Amenomope in the *Husia*, that the moral and cultural wisdom of our ancestors are “instructions for life, for well-being and flourishing”. And we are impoverished and disadvantaged, if we do not constantly study them and embrace them in the grounding, enrichment and expansion of our lives”.

Finally, it is important, even indispensable, for the well-being, freedom, and flourishing of our people that we be a *tireless teacher of the good, the right and the possible*. Here, we come to the core of our obligations as Africans which is: to know our past and honor it, to engage the present and improve it, and to imagine a whole new future and forge it in the most ethical, effective and expansive ways. And this requires a teaching of the good, the right and the possible. Indeed, it is a moral obligation to teach the possible, even as it is to teach the good and the right. For key to the liberation of our people is to break thru the catechism of impossibilities taught by the oppressor, and teach and cultivate in them an expansive sense of agency, i.e., the internal capacity to free ourselves and be ourselves and pose a new paradigm of how humans can rightfully relate and cooperatively reconceive and reconstruct their lives and the world.

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