

Kwanzaa's founder delivers annual message

Karenga: Fundamental meaning of human life is to bring good to world

By Dr. Maulana Karenga
Special to Sentinel-Voice

The essential and enduring meaning of Kwanzaa rests unavoidably in its principles.

Certainly, Kwanzaa's stress on: the harmonious gathering of people; reverence for the Creator and the creation; commemoration of the past; recommitment to cultural ideals; and celebration, is noble.

This year's Kwanzaa theme: "bringing good into the world," is taken from the ancient African moral which teaches that the fundamental meaning of human life is to constantly bring good into the world and share this good.

Harnessing this good calls for using the seven principles espoused by this harvest celebration.

They are: Umoja (unity) in purpose, planning and pursuit of the harvest; for Kujichagulia (self-determination) in unique contributions for each and all to the harvest and in doing so, the defining of themselves uniquely as persons and collectively as a community; for Ujima (collective work and responsibility) in accepting the

obligation to complete the tasks in a cooperative spirit and effort; for Ujamaa (cooperative economics) in the sharing of the wealth of the harvest that disciplined and cooperative work produces; for Nia (purpose) in the will, the determined choice to plant, cultivate and bring the good of harvest without damaging the good of the earth and environment which make the harvest possible; and for Imani (faith) in the people's belief in their capacity to create and preserve good in community, family, field and world and in the essential and enduring value of good itself.

The wording "bringing good into the world" is taken from the sacred text of the Yoruba people, the Odu of Ifa. The Odu, title "Irosu' wori," says, "Let us do things with joy ... For surely humans have been chosen to bring good into the world."

This concept of chosen is rare, beautiful and inspiring, not only because it is a selection by the Creator and thus carries with it a sacred significance, but especially because it is inclusive of all humans and

thus reaffirms the unique and special dignity and value of each and all of us as human beings. In fact, the word for human beings in the Yoruba language is "eniyan" or chosen ones.

As so we are all chosen to bring good into the world. But as Kawaida, the philosophy out of which Kwanzaa is created and developed, teaches, we are not only chosen by Heaven but also by history.

The modal periods of our history — the classical civilizations of the Nile Valley, the Holocaust of Enslavement and the Reaffirmation of our Africanness and social justice tradition in struggle in the 60's — all bear witness to this. Heaven, then, has chosen us as human beings to bring good into the world, but history has chosen us as a people to do likewise.

Ours, then, is both a moral and spiritual vocation and an historical one. This is the meaning of the Fifth Principle, Nia (Purpose) which is traditionally translated as meaning "to make as our collective vocation the building and developing of our



Photo special to Sentinel-Voice

Maulana Karenga and his wife Tiamoyo teach the cultural vision and values of Kwanzaa to a group of children at the Mary McLeod Bethune Institute.

community in order to restore our people to their traditional greatness."

And greatness in the African sense is always morally grounded. Thus, the ancient Egyptian Seba Ptahhotep says, "the wise are known by their wisdom but the great are known by their good deeds," i.e., speaking truth, doing justice, resisting wrong, creating beauty and practicing loving

kindness.

The ancient Yoruba sage Orunmila, witness to the wonders of creation, tells us that to achieve the historical quest for a good life, we must take responsibility for building the world we want and deserve to live in.

May we be blessed with the strength, will and wisdom to do these things so that we honor the central mission and

meaning of human life — to create, nurture and harvest the good.

And may we in doing this, in the words of the ancestors, "be granted all things good and pure, which heaven gives, the earth yields and the waters bring forth from their well-springs."

Dr. Maulana Karenga is the creator of the holiday of Kwanzaa.

Court closes early for the holidays

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Las Vegas Municipal Court announced early last week that it will close at 5 p.m. instead of 6 p.m. on Christmas Eve and New Year's Eve, and will be closed Christmas Day, Dec. 25 and New Year's Day, Jan. 1, 1998.

In addition, all Traffic Court arraignments scheduled for Dec. 26th and Jan. 2nd have been canceled. However, the court's front business office will be open from 8 a.m. to 5

p.m. on those two days to accept fine payments and to escort participants to previously scheduled criminal trials.

Those scheduled on their traffic ticket to appear for arraignment the day after Christmas or the day after New Year's can reschedule their appointment by calling (702) 382-6878, or come to Municipal Court prior to their assigned date. A traffic citation number is needed to reschedule a Traffic Court appearance.

Seven Seas New Year's Eve Party December 31, 1997

Featuring:
Blues Recording Artist
Bobby Jones

\$15.00
per
person

Seating begins at 8:30 p.m.
Food, Champagne &
Party Favors provided.

Tickets available at the Bar
at Seven Seas

808 W. Lake Mead Blvd.

(Must be purchased by Dec. 27, 1997)



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