

Toward the Ubuntu-ization of the world: A Khemetic/African perspective on the Middle East Crisis/Crime

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The “world” or those who see themselves as the international community, never ask mother Africa what her views are about any major crisis that is affecting our world. Centuries of dominance and unrest have blinded the world from the potentiality of Khemet/Africa to bring out anything good to the edification of a fair world. As one of my inspirers, Jacques Depelchin, said “the syndrome of the discoverer” still persists.

The venerated Ethiopian poet Tsegaye Gabre-Medhin recently said:

A simple human being, conscious of African civilization, African culture, and conscious of world civilization, world culture, of equality, of world togetherness, I think that has been what the ancient history of Africa means to us. So, as we go to America to learn, the Americans must also come here to learn. To humble themselves before the ancestors, not to be arrogant, what Ethiopians mean, “You don’t begin knowing yourself halfway. You don’t start from Europe, that’s because Europe started from Africa...” I would tell an American friend to go to Washington for the July 4 celebrations, and see Americans worshipping the temple of the sun at the Washington Monument (which is a facsimile of the Aksum obelisks, Ra or Aton)... It is my stone, my temple of the sun... and you are still worshipping my temple of the sun – a mutual heritage.

But as a disciple of Humanity/Ubuntu, it is my duty to convey to you the un-heard message of Khemet/Africa, when its lost sons and daughters overseas are floundering under the rays of hatred. As the pastoralist Somalis say: The solution to a conflict is to talk about the conflict.

Today our attention is directed to the fratricide crisis/crimes being perpetrated by descendants of Abraham/Ibrahim in the Middle East. As for the Rwandan Genocide, the UN has proven its incapacity to get in touch with reality on the field, as is usual for many crises (not, of course, that we should blame the UN). Those who do not have the welfare of humanity at heart have cynically ignored the plight of real human beings who are losing their lives under these fratricide massacres.

How should this conflict be resolved according to the wisdom of Khemet/Africa? Let us explore Humanity/Ubuntu according to Khemet: Ubuntu/Humanity as a concept defines the most beautiful human patterns that contain the key to positive human evolution. “I am because of you, I am because you are. My humanity is inextricably caught up in yours.”

We have to strive for alliance for a responsible, plural and united world. Ubuntu commands acceptance and forgiveness. This is the message from Africa and Africans: 1)

An individual only becomes a person through others. 2) Your children are mine; this is the “they are all our children” concept. 3) The aboriginal concept is, “land is my mother, we were all born on this land and we all belong to the same family, humans are part of nature.”

Understanding the deep khemetic sense of having a Ntu/Soul unites us with nature ki-Ntu (Mu-ntu gives human, ki-Ntu gives nature, things are all united by Ntu or Soul), which forms the sublime harmony of existence (love of life over love of death). Ubuntu – humanity towards the other, or “I am because we are” could be applied, at least partly, to the Abrahamic tradition (Christian/Moslem/Judaism) of “Love your friend as you love yourself.” In other words, an individual becomes a person through other persons. There are no boundaries between Palestinians /Arabs and Jews as the world borders are the result of men selfishness. Recalling the aboriginal concept “land is my mother,” we were all born on this land and we all belong to the same family – humans are part of nature.

When internalizing the Ubuntu spirit, people in the Middle East will understand the deepest sense of their brotherhood/sisterhood-ness. This realization becomes stronger when they are able to make a clear connection between the collective sadness seeing children “on both side” dying (your children are my children – they are all our children). The real value of being a family is, as the Chewas in Zambia express in the following adage, “Nkuyu zodya mwana zina pota wamukulu,” meaning that a child who ate bad fruits made his parents have sleepless nights. One’s bad acts can always negatively affect the harmony of the family. This is how the Middle Easterner will build a culture of awareness of peace and interconnectivity. This type of awareness would then be translated into fair and peaceful family norms and systems.

Then Lebanon, Palestine and Israel “voir” all the Middle East will see the rising of the sun of togetherness inspired by the Khemetic/African concept of Kwanza (Kwanza means harvest, embedded in the Ubuntu or the MA'AT, the universal concept of harmony). Dr. Mauling Karenga gives us its seven pillars:

1. Umoja (Unity), instead of me and you. There is us, and we do not want violence to harm us, no matter what is our family name.
2. The concept of Kujishagulia (Self Determination). To satisfy the basic needs of our people, we will understand that the other has the same needs and it is for a common benefit, therefore, I choose not to subjugate the other.
3. To succeed in our common endeavours, we will need Ujima (Collective Work and Responsibility) as it is only by uniting and working together that we achieve peace. Peace is not “guns down” but trust. Only by developing healthy relationships through trust will we overcome all the stereotypes and each other’s rejection.
4. We will need Nia (Purpose), which sustains us when uncertainties between communities arise. When this happens, we can offer the populations a better and more coherent purpose to strive for: peace and Justice for all, for the next generations, for humanity.
5. When we have achieved this, we will feel the spirit of Ujamaa (Being a Family). In Africa we say “Dirty cloths should be washed in the inner court for not everyone to see. Thus we can resolve our differences between us as a family.
6. That will require Kuumba (Creativity). There is no need for helicopters, or Katyusha rockets to come to a solution. Now we will talk in clever and creative ways, without

resorting to violence, for the common good of our jamaa (family) towards the realization of the Ubuntu.

7. But above all they will need Imani (Faith) to achieve stability and peace. Faith in life over faith in death. Imani will give us the strength to cope with all the difficulties and fears in all new challenges forward.

In conclusion, without making the common and prejudicial mistakes of exporting new concepts into other culture because it sounds “nice” or because it is a global “fashion,” one has first to understand it, respect it, and most of all, not alter its essence and properties. When applying it to another setting, of course it has to be adjusted according to the specific conditions and requirements, but never by forgetting its origins and purposes. Africa has something to give; this is what I have learned from our mother Khemet/Africa. Humanizing relationships and one’s own life is a process that begins by recognizing the integrity of the other as a human being despite of their beliefs, skin colours and socio-economic positions. “I am because you are” or “a person becomes human through other persons.” These are some of the basic principles or maxims of Ubuntu, indispensable for unity, loyalty and solidarity. We are the same and no one is better than the other. I celebrate your success and at the same time feel sorry because of any disgrace you may have. We all belong to a greater whole of interdependence, giving and receiving. This goes beyond Western concepts; the difference is in relation to respect and decency. Ubuntu goes beyond Western concepts in the way that “I evolve and grow because of you,” and vice versa. So my personal and spiritual development is affected by the actions, perceptions and attitudes of the others. I realize and come to be “through you.” Daughters and sons of Khemet, MOTHER Africa, says through the Ngoni people of Southern Africa: “Think twice; ‘ Kalikeka nkanyama tili tiwiri nti anthu.’” The literal meaning of this saying is: Human beings live in communion/unity and cannot live as loners. United we stand divided we fall.