



# **AFRIKAN WISDOM**

**VOICES OF THE ANCESTORS**

## **Afrikan-Centered Consciousness Versus The New World Order: Garveyism in the Age of Globalism**

**By Dr. Amos N. Wilson (1999)**



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**Transcribed by Sababu Plata**

We don't have time today to review the history of Marcus Garvey. Rather than try to recap this history, which I'm sure most of you are familiar with anyway, I'll just take a brief look at some things I think Marcus Garvey left us as an individual, as an organizational person and as a leader of Afrikan people.

**PERCEPTION.** One of the major things in the Marcus Garvey legacy was that of his perception of reality. I often talk about reality in my classes and general lectures so that attendees would recognize that at the center of one's adjustment to the world, at the center of one's ability to deal with the world, to change the world to suit one's advantage, is a knowledge of reality. The very essence of pathology, whether political, ideological, economic, social, or psychological, is a lack of knowledge of reality. How can one deal with reality if one does not know what it is? How can you deal with reality if you're blind to it or if it is distorted?

It is somewhat interesting that the brain is locked up in the darkness of the skull, yet the brain is the central unit that guides our behavior. It guides that behavior based on the information it receives from our senses. Therefore, our senses must relay to the brain an accurate knowledge of reality. This is the only knowledge, ultimately, that the brain gets from the outside world. The brain, using its innate capacities, such as reasoning capacities, comparative capacities, basic knowledge, memory and experience, uses the information given to it by the senses to determine how the person is going to deal and cope with reality, how the individual is going to shape reality to its own purposes. Therefore, if that information is distorted, then the brain determines behavior on that distorted information and the individual is maladjusted. This is the case then with a people.

It is necessary for a people, if they are coping with reality, if they are trying to advance themselves, to know that reality. They need sensors and people who can tell

what that reality is, who can inform that as to the nature of that reality such that the decisions the group must make in determining how it will behave, how it will shape its destiny, can be based on the real, not on the unreal. In Marcus Garvey, I see this great sensor, this great seer who informed us of the real world in which we existed. Not of a dream world, not of a world of wishful thinking, not a world distorted by hope, but a world that was seen as it is, a world that was sometimes brutally projected to us as a people so that we could use that knowledge to advance our interests as such. This is a legacy from Garvey that we must continue. Regardless of our pain, regardless of our discouragement, regardless as to what may be going on, we must be determined to look reality in the face and to use that reality as a base and foundation of our behavior.

PERCEPTION AND SELF-KNOWLEDGE. I also see in the legacy of Marcus Garvey the legacy of self-knowledge. Teachers, wise men and women from eons past have indicated that the foundations of sanity and wisdom rest on a knowledge of self: knowing self. We know that at the very center of Egyptian philosophy was the admonition, Know Thyself. That is the essence of wisdom. Garvey thus recognized that a lack of knowledge, an amnesia about who and what we are, is pathological. We recognize today in psychology that amnesia is a pathological state of mind; that a people who suffer from a lack of knowledge of themselves and of their history, a lack of knowledge of their creation, are a people who suffer from a loss of identity. We recognize, as Garvey recognized, that this lack of self-knowledge was deliberately induced into the mind and psyche of black people. We could not be Afrikans and slaves at the same time; we could not hold onto our Afrikan identity, our Afrikan selves, knowledge of our Afrikan culture, and

be enslaved; the subordinates of another people. It is only when that knowledge is removed, erased, degraded, stolen, taken and distorted that we lose our identity. It is then that an identity is placed upon us by another people and by external forces. Therefore, a lack of self-knowledge is a lack of self-awareness. A lack of self-awareness is an insensitivity to the self. But an insensitivity in the self is also an insensitivity to reality and to the outside world. Without the sensitivity of the outside world and the self, we are left to blindly stumble from one point to another.

Ultimately, self-knowledge in its deepest sense is a knowledge of others. We cannot really get to know ourselves deeply without in essence knowing our enemies and friends and without ultimately knowing the Creator, in whatever form or fashion. It reasons that to know the self ultimately involves moving beyond the self and seeing the world from the vantage point of universalism. Consequently we see in Marcus Garvey, in his efforts to rescue us from the pathology of racism, the putting of major emphasis on self-knowledge and self-knowing. We must recognize today that if we are to regain our Afrikan selves, we must then deeply engage in self-knowledge and self-knowing.

**PERCEPTION AND; LACK OF SELF-KNOWLEDGE.** In psychology, we also recognize that at the center of pathology is the individual's inability to control the self. One of the amazing things about the human mind when one looks at it from the point of view of the so-called unconscious, is that the individual who does not know himself and does not know reality, is the individual who escapes from self-knowledge, is an individual who does

not know the roots and bases of his actions. He is an individual who seems to be determined by external forces (or by internal forces) of which he has little or no knowledge. He is often constantly puzzled by his own behavior. He is often a wonderment to himself. He struggles against impulses, desires and wishes over which he has little or no control because he has, in his escape from self-knowing and reality, conceded his self-control and given it over to someone else. In releasing his identity and permitting another to place an identity within his psyche, he has at the same time placed in the hands of that other the ability to control his behavior.

We see in Marcus Garvey's legacy that if we are to control our destiny, we then must control ourselves. We must enter into phase where the control of our behavior comes under the domination of our will. The essence in many psychotherapeutic approaches is to make the individual aware of the unconscious forces, wishes and impulses that are determining his behavior against his will. And in making these forces conscious, the individual can bring them under conscious control; the individual can bring his behavior under the dominant control of reason and logic. He, then, is not a victim of his emotions. He is not swept by emotions and feelings only, but his emotions serve his interest. His emotions are his handmaidens and he is not just one who is swept along helter-skelter by feelings and impulses.

We see in Marcus Garvey the ultimate psychotherapist, one who is revealing and who reveals the unconscious controls, the controls that were implanted outside of our consciousness by our enemies and oppressors. Yet, despite those controls being outside of our

consciousness, they were manipulating our behavior to our own disadvantage. In bringing those unconscious forces into consciousness, he made it possible for us to bring those forces under our control, rule, logic, rationality, and under the control of the ideology of nationalism.

Often we see in the neurotic and pathological individual, one who has little self-esteem and self-acceptance. The acceptance of reality, which I referred to in the beginning, ultimately must be the acceptance of one's self. The acceptance of reality, as Marcus Garvey recognized and projected, ultimately must mean the acceptance of our Afrikanicity, the acceptance of the fact that we are an Afrikan people. It seems a bit simple when we state it. It seems a bit obvious. However, when we engage in psychotherapy, we recognize that sometimes we have the patient who comes into the office who is intellectually aware and can quite often lecture the therapist in terms of theoretical ideas and the theoretical grounds for his therapeutic work, but who has not recognized and confronted himself emotionally, who has not really in his heart accepted what he knows. What I am stating here is that while we may recognize superficially and intellectually that it is important we accept the reality of our Afrikan history, we must recognize deeply in our hearts, in the very bottoms of our psyches, our Afrikanicity.

Much of the pathology of Afrikan people today is this vain hope that somehow we will be able to escape our Afrikan heritage, that somehow the white man will become color blind and will not see us for whom and what we are, that somehow we will be looked upon as some kind of abstraction and as just a man. Not as an Afrikan man, not

as a black man, but as a man, a human being only; without culture, without recognition, without identity. Too many of us want to shed our Afrikanicity for this kind of bogus, abstract existence, which is no existence at all, and which is the ultimate acceptance of invisibility. We must recognize that we are an Afrikan people and we will be Afrikan people to the end of time and we must accept all that goes with that. We must accept the good, the bad, and all of the possibilities that go with being Afrikan. We must accept the fact that this white man is never going to accept us totally, and get used to the idea. Hope is a wonderful thing in some senses, but it can be pathological in others. The neurotic individual uses hope in a pathological way. He lives in hope and does not know when to give it up. There's a time that hope has to be given up; when one looks at reality and recognizes reality for what it is, and one accepts certain aspects of that reality and moves on it. The hope that this white man is going to accept you as one of his own, is one of those hopes that you must give up. The hope and the dream that you're going to be holding hands with little white boys and girls; that the white man is going to feed your children before he feeds his own; that he's going to clothe you before he clothes his own; that he's going to give up his ill-gotten gains and wealth in the name of some kind of bogus brotherhood or classless society, is a vain hope. Give it up! Turn it loose! When you turn it loose you will see a growth and development of self. It would mean then an acceptance of self. We see this in Marcus Garvey as he got us to accept and tried to get us to accept the reality of ourselves and the reality of our Afrikanicity.

He recognized, as we must recognize today, that we cannot get self-acceptance through another people's acceptance of us as one of them. Self-acceptance can

only be achieved through the self. We must not wait for our enemies to approve of us and to so-call accept us as a way of accepting ourselves. Because, ladies and gentlemen, our enemies, their very lives and very way of life depend upon our non self-acceptance. If the foundation of their very culture and the foundation of their economic, political and social system is one that is founded upon the subordination of black people, then you must recognize that they are not going to give that up. For it would be like giving up their very lives and their very existence itself. Therefore, for us to wait around in the vain hope that through their acceptance we will come to accept ourselves, is to wait for nothing, because we will gain nothing as a result of this kind of illusion.

One of the things that we must recognize is that our oppressor represents death; our oppressor is deadly. One of the things that impressed me most when I went to graduate school and rally had my first real contact with the white educational establishment was that these people are dead. There's death around them somewhere, which is the reason they are deadly as a people, why every advance of knowledge for them is an advancement in the knowledge of destruction. Every advancement in knowledge is an advancement in the ability to kill and destroy the earth, kill and destroy nature, kill and destroy others, rape and rob the earth of its wealth, people and life forms, so much so that now they are having great difficulty even reproducing themselves. At the very center of their lives is death and destruction. We cannot imitate a people who are our oppressors. And we have this kind of silliness that goes on in this system today. You are going to complain on one hand about these racist people, about how they enslaved us, exploited us discriminated against us, how they lynched and pillaged us, and then

turn right around and see their behavior as something to be emulated and imitated.

Imitation of the oppressor is then equivalent to the treatment of the self and one's fellows just as the oppressor would treat us. It is equal to the treatment of the self and the group in a destructive manner. It equals the lack of self-respect and respect for the group, since the oppressor lacks respect for us as individuals and as a group. If our oppressors exploit us, then the imitation of our oppressor means self-exploitation. Consequently we see in the legacy of Marcus Garvey, a moving away from the imitation of our oppressors and a moving toward the identification with all that is Afrikan

When we look at the legacy of Marcus Garvey we see again an emphasis on productivity. Marcus Garvey did not have to read Frederic Engels, Karl Marx and Vladimir Lenin, even though he was familiar with them. He did not have to read those to recognize the intimate relationship between the means of production and the character of a people, to recognize the intimate relationship between the nature of the economic relationships of people and their social relationships one with the other. It was apparent in his observing of our people across the world. He recognized, as we must recognize, that social character is to a significant extent determined by the nature of social and labor relations. He recognized intuitively that the eating at lunch counters with our enemies, the sharing of hotels and beds with those enemies, the marrying and sleeping with their daughters, would not advance our interests ultimately as a people; that consuming their products would not rescue us from subordination. Ultimate freedom and independence is founded on production, upon the

creation of employment, upon the creation of labor and the creation of products for our own consumption. When we look in the world today, we will see that the powerful nations and people are producing people, not consuming people. As I've often said, you cannot consume yourself into equality; you cannot consume yourself into power. Those nations who depend upon consumption will see as they consume the product of others and do not produce themselves, that they will be consumed by others.

IRONY OF EDUCATION. The paradox I have to deal with daily in my classroom is the amount of lying that must take place in the name of education; the amount of outright deception that goes by the name of education; how truth must be nailed to the cross in classroom after classroom; how people tremble, quake and suffer from anxiety when truth and reality is brought up by their teachers; how people are pushed out of the universities and punished because they dare talk about truth; how people think they should go to school only to be made comfortable.

And each day they sit in my class, Asians, whites, Afrikans, Hispanics and oftentimes it's an exercise in twisting, turning and squirming because I dare talk about slavery, colonialism, the sickness of Europeans; the lying deceptive and devilish nature and the pathology of the people who now rule the world; because I dare talk about the irony of where white men sit down and determine the destiny of a world that's over 90% colored; when I dare tell them that they sit in these classes and let these whites and their education brainwash and propagandize them into servitude, and how their education is an education into ignorance. But if we are to rescue our children, students and our people, these unpleasant

issues must be dealt with forthrightly.

When we deal with an assimilationist leadership that sees solutions to our problems as getting our children more soundly educated in these lies, we are going to see a decline and the destruction of Afrikan people who think that their salvation is one of being educated by the very people who destroyed them in the first place.

We must recognize that the white man's rule depends upon ongoing deceptions and lies. Ultimately, then, we cannot see him as the foundation and basis of truth. Thus we cannot let him be the educator of our children and let the reality that he projects become our reality. For he is sick of mind and heart. He is deceived by his own lies and therefore the reality he projects must be a lying reality. He suffers and he is deadly. How can we not suffer and die if we accept what he sees as real and unreal? Those leaders who seek to tell us that we can only rescue ourselves through accepting the identity of the white man are leaders who will lead us to our peril and our death. We must recognize that if we are to live, we have to remove these kinds of leaders.

**THE ASSIMILATIONIST TREADMILL.** The assimilationist often accepts, consciously or unconsciously, the idea that the white man will continue to rule the world. He bases his ideology and political action on the concept that somehow our destiny is not to overthrow the white man; that our destiny is not to remove this pathological person; that our destiny is not to suppress and bring these sick people under control but heal them in some sort of way, to convert them, to even become a part of them. Our destiny

becomes not one that sees the very system and very ideology upon which these oppressors move as one of sickness and insanity and therefore in need of replacement by an Afrikan-centered and healthy ideology that comes out of our own self-knowing. This leadership wants us to accept this sickness as normality and to follow these pathological beings into self-destruction.

And consequently you will see the enemy's children, the enemy's personality being held up as normal, as representing the norm. Our behavior, to the degree that it differs from that of our enemy, is seen as deviant and thus abnormal. To that degree we confuse equality with sameness, where we think that in order to be equal or greater than our enemy we have to be the same as our enemy; to the degree we think differentness automatically represents inferiority and therefore we become alarmed at anything that says we are somehow different from our enemy. We must recognize, ladies and gentlemen, that racism is a sickness, that the exploitation and wholesale rape and pillaging of the earth by the European represents a pathology and a illness. Therefore, our destiny is not one of trying to become a member of this gang of thieves, but to end its existence here on earth, to inhibit its rapacious ways and to bring this group of people to heel!

Yet we have a leadership that makes us think that our only crime has been that we've been left out on the looting of these thieves. We get a leadership that cries about how we're only getting a certain percentage of their robbery and thievery. We must recognize, Afrikan people, that it is not about getting a piece of the stolen gains of these people, but to stop their thievery and rape

of the world, period! So it is not about being left out of the mainstream; it is about bringing into being a new world order.

This leadership has thus robbed us of the Marcus Garvey legacy. We have a leadership that has sold us conspicuous consumption as a way of salvaging our egos. It makes us think that we will be equal to the white man when we can drive the same cars, have the same jobs, sleep in the same beds and buy in the same neighborhoods; a consumer equality: not an equality of ownership, not an equality based on wealth.

We have had that kind of leadership and thus have seen Afrikan people the world-over, in this country and on the Afrikan continent give up the very basic wealth of their own lands and their very basic real estate to their enemies for a few pennies and materials which fade away and are corruptible. We have a leadership that is not concerned with developing its own productive capacities, but with merely getting jobs and being identified with the productive capacities of others, with literally marrying the enemy and thus trying to achieve the status of the enemy through marriage instead of through strength and power.

We have seen this asimilationist leadership, which came to the fore and to a degree has pushed back the nationalist leadership, reign over the decline of Afrikan people the world-over; the decline in Afrikan education, the disruption of the Afrikan family, the retardation of Afrikan technology, the decline and paralysis of Afrikan economics, the rampaging of our community by drugs, the colonial occupation of our community by foreign police

forces and others who are not members of the Afrikan community. When we look over the past 20 to 40 years, we see an assimilationist leadership that has brought us to the terrible moral, economic, social, political, and educational impasse that we are griping about today.

To a degree, simultaneous with the rise of assimilationist leadership, I think we had a rise of pseudo-nationalistic leadership; a nationalist rhetoric without a nationalist substance, a people who talked a good nationalism but who do not behave and actualize what that nationalism means. We are now engaged in a struggle between true nationalism and counterfeit nationalism. It is time for us to remove those counterfeit nationalists, who are also in a subtle sort of similar way the partners of the assimilationists.

**THE TRUE NATIONALIST.** The true nationalist is not obsessed with the past to the exclusion of the present. One of the things I think you will see in the Marcus Garvey legacy is that while he raised the black man's past to great heights, project that past and made it a part of the consciousness of black people, there was a thorough going concern with the present and the future.

The true nationalist is forward-looking and futuristic. I see too few conferences, too few people concerned with the future, even nationalists: "What must we do today to secure the survival and the advancement of Afrikan people the world-over? What must we do to fight off the threat of the Asian takeover of the world? Are we to throw off or to see the death of European civilization, only to fall under the yoke of the Asian civilization? We

can look out in our streets today and see it coming. It is around us everywhere. The invasion of our communities by Asians is a sign of times to come.

The true nationalist is intrepid. Not that the nationalist does not have fear, but he learns to operate in spite of fear; fear does not paralyze him. He uses the fear as energy to move forward and to confront his enemies. He does not hide his fear behind high-sounding phrases, high-sounding scholarship and dredging up the past. He dredges up the past as a means of integrating it into his personality, as a foundation for his movement forward and his thrust into the future.

The true nationalist is entrepreneurial: he's building something; he's constructing something. We see that in Garvey; not just a concern with the past, not just an identification with Egypt and other great Afrikan empires of the past, not just picking up little detail upon little detail of some Afrikan past, but of a sound movement forward in concrete, brick and mortar construction; a sound hands-on developing and actualization of Afrikan ideology and political development. He is one who thrusts his fear aside and moves forward, the true Afrikan nationalist.

He not only respects his ethnic heritage and the glories of his ancestors, but he is equally, if not more, concerned with the inheritance he's going to pass on to his children, with the legacy he's going to give to his children.

We see the true nationalist in the guise and person of

Marcus Garvey, in the person of the Honorable Elijah Muhammad, who not only complains about the nature of the education of Black children but who does something about it. He builds the schools and universities and constructs and instructs as a part of his nationalist mission..

The true nationalist is not obsessed about the destruction of his civilizations, about the cruelty of his fate and the devilishness of his enemies. Certainly he analyzes that and looks at it. Certainly he laments the destruction of black civilization and the fall of our empires and kingdoms and our fall from grace to a degree. But he does not become traumatized by those falls and destruction. He does not become obsessed and compulsive about their analysis. He looks at them, he learns from them, he integrates them into his personality and ideology, he swears never again, and he moves forward using that knowledge to construct a new civilization. He looks at the mistakes of his ancestors; he looks at the mistakes of his past civilizations and he integrates those mistakes into his personality; he then moves forward to build new civilizations, new worlds, and found new empires; not just lament the ones past and gone.

Though the true nationalist recognizes the greatness of Osiris (Asar), Isis (Aset) and all of the rest, he recognizes that ultimately the pyramids were built by the hands of men. I have yet to see a god build a temple. I see men building temples; I see men building cities; I see men and people digging the mines; I see people doing the jobs. There is nothing wrong with using the astrologies, the esoteric religions and using the moons and planets as

guides for our behavior; but let us not become obsessed with them to such a degree that we do nothing else. In fact, in my daily life the most retarded people I see, in terms of economic, social, political and personal development, are the ones who know the most about the moon, the most about the planets, the most about the numbers-and-you (numerology). Why not demonstrate the effectiveness of what you're talking about into your own behavior, life and therefore be a beacon to other people, demonstrate through your life-behavior and habits the effectiveness of your ideologies, religions and concepts? I don't say don't believe in it; but let it work for you!

We can differentiate between the pseudo-nationalist and the true nationalist in the question of whether his religion, his ideology, his philosophy is serving him or is he merely serving them.

A brief look at the movement of the Asian today. If you study a bit of Asian culture you will recognize that at its very center is so-called ancestor worship; great respect for the ancestors. At the center is a huge and long history built around tradition. But one of the things that puzzles western man (the European) as he looks at the Asian, is how the Asian, though he respects highly his ancestors and engages in ancestor worship and is exceedingly traditional, at the same time technologically equals and advances over him. He shows clearly that one can still respect, love and worship the ancestors yet still be very much into the world of today, can still move and advance technologically and otherwise beyond his or her enemies. The worship and respect for ancestors and the respect for tradition do not imply that we cannot concern ourselves with the immediate and with the future. The

correct worship of ancestors and the correct praise of tradition is the foundation for and advancement in the future.

The true nationalist not only educates the wounded egos of adults, but also educates its young. Nationalist organizations that are concerned almost exclusively with the education of children are practicing a nationalism that is incomplete. That is why you see in Marcus Garvey and Elijah Muhammad concurrent education of the adults and the children, an education of the family as a whole and of individuals as well. A true nationalist knows he must educate, as the word nationalism implies, the nation and everyone in it.

The true nationalist recognizes the necessity of building both a national and international government; that we ultimately must build in this country a nation, and nations of Afrikan people the world-over. A true nationalist is not afraid to delegate power. I often warn people not to fall for people merely because they project a nationalist ideology. You must look into their souls; you must look at their character and see what the character really has in it. It is that which determines your relationship with them, not just the statements of their ideology.

Ultimately if we are to control our destiny, as Marcus Garvey indicated, we must become self-governing. A nationalism not talking about self-government, not talking about nation-building, not constructing a national network, not constructing a national economic, social, and political system, is a false nationalism, Brothers and Sisters.

A true nationalist not only motivates through language, rhetoric and oratory, but trains. You cannot train a people with a two-hour lecture on Saturdays. Institutions have to be developed and built so that this training could take place. The greater part of their time and the time and efforts of our children should be dedicated to being trained to acquire the behavior that we need to advance our interests. We are not going to get that behavior if we depend upon that behavior being trained into our children by our enemies, by people who need to have ill-adjusted and maladjusted behavior to maintain their power position in life.

The true nationalist grounds his social and political philosophy and practice on a realistic analysis of his situation. He cognizes his enemies. He is not a slavish reader of foreign sources and of other political ideologies. Does it mean that he should not read the other people? Certainly he can read the other people, but his ultimate decision is based on his own analysis, upon the sound knowledge of himself, who and what he is, and upon his reality.

The true nationalist is not a purist to the degree that he is paralyzed. Some of us want to be nationalists but also want to be so pure that in the end we end up doing nothing. We end up paralyzed. We would go into business, but that's capitalism, isn't it? So we don't go into that. We would do this, but that's in some way related to this ideology or that enemy ideology. So you see the individual often trying to be such a pure nationalist until he cannot engage in real, practical behavior. He is so concerned about getting his hands dirty that he dares not do

anything at all. We can see the nationalist who is so hung up in his traumas of nationalism and capitalism that he dares not engage in any economic development. Consequently, we get a nationalist who is hung up waiting for Afrikan communalism to come into being, or communism; who is also frightened to engage in any kind of business, because that's capitalism, so he remains frozen while the other economic groups move into his community, taking his economic resources, un-employing his children and using his wealth against him.

The true nationalist is not caught up in indecisiveness and in some pie-in-the-sky dream about classless societies. He gets engaged in the true work of building and construction.

The true nationalist is also not afraid to overthrow tradition when tradition is unproductive. He is one who says: "Even though I revere the Afrikan past and I revere the Afrikan tradition, that tradition can be built upon. I and my generation have something to add to that tradition. I have a right then to use the legacy of that tradition to confront the realities of my current times and thus modify that tradition and see to the survival of my people.

The true nationalist is thus not afraid to engage in productive behavior. Where one sees nationalism, one sees construction, actual growth and development. Where one sees nationalism, one sees building, one sees institutional development; one sees trade, development and commerce; one sees restructuring of values, restructuring of priorities; one sees the rebuilding of relationships; one sees the reallocation of resources.

When we as nationalists say that we are carrying out the legacy of Marcus Garvey, let us show that legacy in concrete development, institution building and, ultimately, nation-building.

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