

KRS-One Responds To Debate Challenge  
KRS-One

Adisa Banjoko,

I truly thank you for such intellectual nourishment. I can always count on you for some real discussions on the state of our Hiphop community. You are truly a much needed architect on the scaffolds of Hiphop's cultural development. I appreciate your concerns and comments. Everyone can learn from this.

Before I consider accepting your offer to debate the; I am Hiphop philosophy at the Riekes Center for Human Enhancement, let me be sure that you truly understand the position that you are taking, and how you may be setting yourself up for a public spanking. I am truly in awe of your blindness! It is as if someone is putting you up to this. Be honest, are these your concerns or are you simply representing the insecurities of others? As a thinking man you cannot be serious.

I ask this because before becoming the Host of One Mic Radio you were the Bishop of Hip Hop. And I knew that you were not literally a high-ranking Christian cleric in charge of a diocese. But I did expect from you a discussion on Hiphop that transcended Rap music entertainment. And your earlier writings as the Bishop of Hip Hop suggested as such. What happened? Be careful that the environment of radio broadcasting has not confused your mind as to the principles of true Hiphop? More personally, have you stopped living Hiphop, or were you just fronting as Hiphop's bishop to get what you needed from KRS-ONE?

Whatever happened to Chicken Soup for the Hip Hop Soul? Is this project still happening? And if so, what then is Hiphop's Soul? Not Hiphop's soul as a Muslim, or as a Christian, or as a Jew, or as a Buddhist, etc., but Hiphop's soul as Hiphop? Before we debate any other issue pertaining to Hiphop, should we not first have closure with the past issues and projects you and I both have invested our time and money into? Your whole challenge sounds like a set-up to me! One rooted in fear and ignorance, and not in truth!

But for the protection of Adisa; my dear friend in the struggle, and for the education of all interested Hiphoppas consider this. WE ARE HIPHOP! We are not just doing Hiphop; WE ARE HIPHOP! We are the spiritual, mental and physical activity of Hiphop in the material world. And why do I say this? Because it is the truth! No other culture, ethnicity or religion truly cares about us. They use us and our elements to further their individual causes with little or nothing going back to the preservation and sustainment of Hiphop itself, but they themselves will not claim a Hiphop ethnicity. And why should anyone who is not Hiphop, care about Hiphop above whatever they have invested their real commitment to? We (Hiphoppas) are

not their responsibility. We are our responsibility.

It is up to us to take care of us. For if we are truly committed to the principles of peace, love, unity and having fun as laid down by Afrika Bambaataa in the mid 1980's, then it is us (the Hiphop nation) that must achieve such high ideals for ourselves. Such privileges as peace, love, unity and having fun are never truly given to anyone; they are achieved by those who desire them. The question for you Adisa is; are you truly free or have you been freed?

A truly free person can decide at any moment to be anyone or anything he/she chooses to be. A freed person relies upon the definitions and interpretations of those people he/she feels inferior to for the survival, meaning and purpose of their own freed lives. A person who has been freed cannot create or even re-create themselves. They are forever defined by interest foreign to their own. Was this not also the intent of the slave trade?

To suggest that we cannot re-create our very ethnicity today for our own human advancement and that of our children is to actually re-enslave ourselves and our children daily to interest foreign to our own. Such a suggestion is actually the cause of political stagnation for any group. If we lose the ability to define ourselves; who then is defining us? If we do not offer ourselves peace, who or what shall we wait upon for such an achievement? Who can we really depend upon for our sustained peace, love, unity and happiness? Black people? White people? Chicanos, Asians, Hindus, Christians, Jews? Who is supposed to ensure our well-being? Who are we waiting on? Is it not obvious today that people are more united by interest and like-mindedness than by race, class or religion? Is it not time for those who are making a living from Hiphop to finally stop using the culture and start building it?

Adisa, if my plan for peace, love, unity and happiness is unacceptable to you, I humbly suggest that you lay out a plan of your own. Such is the character of true leadership! But to have no plan of your own yet critique and even demean the value of the plan that I lay out is exactly what those who would exploit Hiphop and its elements want from you. Free yourself! Don't be used as a miter-shaped chess piece that moves diagonally across any number of unoccupied Hiphop spaces-a bishop. In truth Adisa, you do have the authority to become whatever you have the capability to achieve. The decision is truly yours to make.

I have decided to live my life as a citizen of Hiphop kulture. If you have not, such is your choice. I am not better than you. I do not look down upon you. In fact, through Hiphop I am better able to love you; to understand you; to empower you. Your decisions on life and its meaning are for you, and my life decisions are for me. Hiphop is my faith! And how can anyone debate the reality of another man's faith? Such a debate is pointless. It is faith! And isn't it true that faith makes all things possible. You speak as if you have no faith in Hiphop.

I know that such ways of looking at the world as an attuned Hiphoppa may sound strange to many. But I am Hiphop's Teacha. My work is to help Hiphoppas understand themselves and raise up a free and prosperous Hiphop nation. In fact, through Hiphop I have personally achieved already that which I teach to others. In Hiphop I am truly free and prosperous. I

have inner peace, I give and receive much love, the Temple of Hiphop is strong and unified, and with my wife and children I am having fun! Others may decide to live in other ways; such is their decision to make. But when thousands of people that participate in Hiphop's elements approach me for the secrets to the success Hiphop has given me, my love for them compels me to speak the truth regarding my life.

England did not work for George Washington, James Madison or Thomas Jefferson. Babylon did not work for Abraham. Egypt did not work for Moses. Judaism did not work for Jesus. And likewise, being African-American did not and does not work for me. It may work for others, but it does not work for me. For me, it is limiting. For others it is liberating! But for me, it is Hiphop that is truly liberating! And if you are getting something out of being your ethnicity, race or religion, I truly wish you well. But for all those who are not satisfied with the potentials of their ethnicities, religions, careers, etc. I offer exactly what has helped me-HIPHOP!

I am not saying that if you do not practice Hiphop in the way that I practice it that you are not Hiphop. I am not even saying that my way is the only way. What I am saying is that; we have an opportunity to re-create ourselves for the purpose of achieving true peace, love, unity and happiness for ourselves and for our children through Hiphop. Other art forms and sub-cultures had and continue to have the same choice. Whether they choose to take advantage of such an opportunity in their own lives, is their own business. Our decisions as Hiphoppas are not contingent upon the decisions they may or may not have made. We are truly free.

By seeing Hiphop beyond entertainment and Rap music product we create a political, intellectual and spiritual blank tablet to which we can write our own futures upon. Is this not true freedom? Why then do you not understand this concept? Why does my faith in Hiphop disturb you so? You are free to interpret Hiphop in any way that you may decide. However, I am successful at the style of Hiphop that I present. Everything that I teach, I have successfully lived. Those who decide not to follow such teachings are free to go elsewhere. But let me be crystal clear here; I AM HIPHOP!

Therefore, due to your lack of evidence regarding my flawed philosophy I will reject your offer for a public debate until you can more accurately prove the intent of your inquiry. If such a debate does not benefit the further development of Hiphop Kulture, I cannot waste Hiphop's time debating you publicly. My 13th album KEEP RIGHT comes out on July 13th 2004. I have real work to do. However, you and I can talk privately anytime. The struggle continues. Much love.

The Teacha,

KRS-ONE