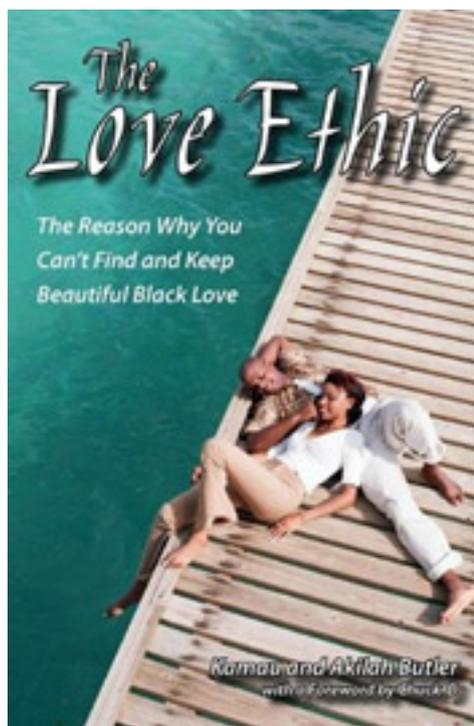


Book review: The Love Ethic by Kamau and Akilah Butler

Written by Kam Williams
Tuesday, 14 July 2009 15:32



"I think the notion of Black love in this book is an answer to the hatred that has taken place between Black men and Black women. Something has been poured in the waters of the Black community that has made hate and animosity more understood than love itself...

Reading this book will hopefully spark the necessary conversation needed to find the love within ourselves to connect to one another again... Any community dialogue involving healing, relationships, or renewal will find this book an essential tool, thus making it possible to find and totally unlock the love that has been missing between the Black man and woman.

Peace."

- Rapper Chuck D of Public Enemy in the Foreword (page 13)

I have read a lot of love advice books in my lifetime, but never one that offered such a compelling history lesson in the process of talking about how to have a successful relationship. When it comes to African-Americans, this approach might make sense, provided you buy the idea that the fallout from the trauma of slavery continues to radiate like a ripple on a pond and to have a profound effect on how Black men and women interact with each other.

Those who would say that's just an excuse since Black folks have been emancipated for generations would do well to heed the sage words of William Faulkner, a white Southerner, who freely acknowledged: "The past isn't dead. In fact, it isn't even past." This is the crux of the argument postulated by Kamau and Akilah Butler in *The Love Ethic*, a compassionate examination of the Black battle-of-the-sexes viewed through the prism of the oppressive African-American ordeal in the U.S.

The authors bring a plethora of personal and academic insight to the project, for not only are they a happily-married couple raising a young son together in Chicago, but they are also each in

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the process of completing a Ph.D., Akilah in Sociology, Kamau in Social Service Administration. These skills add immeasurably to their ability to deconstruct and discuss in often vivid detail the ramifications of the dehumanization of Africans and the systematic breakup of the Black family for centuries on end.

Thus, we see how the sexualization and rape of sisters by plantation owners and their being forced to mate with strangers for breeding purposes rather than for love when added to the inability of emasculated brothers to protect their females have contributed to a distance and distrust still in evidence. But not to worry, for *The Love Ethic* does provide the answer to the unfortunate standoff in 13 principles to be implemented by anyone eager to heal themselves in order to experience “the magnificent possibilities that Black love holds.”

The Love Ethic

by Kamau and Akilah Butler

Foreword by Chuck D

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