

ATTUNED LEADERSHIP: AFRICAN HUMANISM AS A COMPASS – KASI TIMES BOOK REVIEW

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May I just go ahead and be unashamedly honest? I have not been so intimidated by a book in a very long while. As I paged through this behemoth of a book my mind knotted with every diagram I saw and the bile in my stomach released thick bubbles as I carefully read the intimidating headings that stand guard at the gates of every chapter. What were they thinking when they asked me to review this book? I like to think that kneaded into that mysterious answer is a very sweet compliment. The version doing the rounds in my mind is that they took a look at all the intelligence, deep and intricate thought and naturally my name came to mind. Hey, play nice. Don't laugh at my theory.

The author has spent more time in the bowels of the academia than I have been alive. Dr. Khoza's qualifications include a BA Hons in Psychology, MA in Marketing, EngD (Business Leadership) and LLD (Honoris Clausa). He is Emiratus Professor Extraordinaire of the University of Stellenbosch Business School and Visiting Professor of Rhodes Investec Business School. Basically, what this all means is that he may know a thing or two about leadership.

Attuned Leadership by Reuel J Khoza is a doozy of a book. It is both heavy in weight and heavy in content. To put it very simply, it is a study of Leadership. What is it? What makes a good leader? What shapes them? History? Culture? Politics? Religion? All these options, and then some, are explored exhaustively. The aim is to figure out how one becomes not just a leader, but an 'Attuned Leader.' There are a plethora of leaders out there, but 99 percent of them are not attuned to that which they are attempting to lead or where they are trying to go. Many of them are making due with only a tattered understanding of that which they claim to be doing.

My thesaurus lists the following words as synonyms for attuned: accustom, adjust, adapt, acclimatize, condition, accommodate, assimilate and acclimate. If I understand Dr. Khoza correctly (it is very possible that the point he was trying to make flew way over my head) successful leaders pay attention. They pay close attention to the people they are leading, where they want to lead these people to, what they are leading the people out off, the potholes on the road ahead and the diamond encrusted wisdom embedded in the footsteps left by the leaders who walked this steep road ahead of them.

It's no secret that Africa – scrap that – the entire continent is suffering from an Attuned Leadership drought. When the sweet rain of good leadership does not rain, the treasured crops of our dreams will not grow and our future will succumb to the famine of knowledge and die a slow death as a fly-infested baby.

I make light of receiving this book, but fact is I'm glad for its entry in my life. I'll be pilfering quotes from this one for decades to come. It should be compulsory reading for everybody – especially folks in youth leagues (hint hint). They should make microchips of it and implant it into the heads of all newborn babies. The world's future might actually stand a chance then.