

## Conscious Hip Hop - There's Always Strength in Words

Written by Davey D ID2955

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There's Always Strength in Words: An Interview w/ Hasan Salaam, Akir and Hicoup By Davey D / Breakdown FM

Whoever said Conscious Hip Hop artists can't get down or that Hip Hop from the NY (East Coast) is dead simply has not tapped into the burgeoning cultural inspired rap scene that has everyone from dead prez to Immortal Technique making noise. Alongside them are artists like Hasan Salaam, Hicoup and Akir just to name a few. We sat down with them the other day when they swung through Oakland for the Strength in Words Tour.

I gotta be honest it was nice building with these cats. In fact we barely spoke about their projects, which include Hasan's 'Lost Paradise' album, Hicoup's Ghetto Factory Supreme' mixtape and Akir's debut LP 'Legacy'. Instead we talked in depth about the Middle East including the conflict in Lebanon. This was critically important especially when you take into account that Hasan has a song on his album called 'Hezbollah'.

We spoke about the upcoming anniversary of Hurricane Katrina and where we are at as a community and what we should be doing at this time especially when we note that so many people from New Orleans are still displaced.

Most important in our conversation was hearing the solutions that these gentlemen offered up. Hasan and Akir spoke in great detail about how one can manifest revolutionary and spiritual politics in their day to day lifestyle. Hicoup really broke things down by warning against the forming of Black Power cults filled with people who divide the community. He said just because someone listens to 50 Cent Vs. Talib Kweli does not make you better or worse. He noted that far too often we get caught up on trying to see who is and isn't a real revolutionary and who isn't.

After building with these cats, there's was no denying their skillz on the mic. There's no denying their politics. There's no denying the type of excitement they are generating coast to coast.

No, they are likely not to show up on MTV or BET. I doubt if Hot 97 will play them anytime soon, but so what? Does that mean they aren't knocking? Does that mean they won't pack the house?

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In a day where commercial artists are experiencing waning album sales, the underground is finding itself resurging. Hasan, Akir and Hicoup are proof positive that maintaining some principles and holding true to your values will pay off in the end.

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