

A DIALOGUE ON RACE SERIES

A Dialogue On Race

By KEILISI GYAN FREEMAN

"Race: Humanity as a whole. A group of people united or classified together on the basis of a common history, nationality or geographic distribution."

"Creed: A statement or system of belief, principles, or opinions." (As defined by Webster's II University Dictionary)

So why the lesson in grammar? Clarity. So much has been offered on being of a certain 'race' and that is true. There is one all-encompassing factor: We are all of the HUMAN RACE. We all have similar needs, food, clothing, shelter and a sense of belonging. This need outweighs, in my heart, majority of the others as basic needs for who we are.

There are others who might counter and say that having a sense of history is vital, and I fully agree with that. Who's history do you give? What part is left out or omitted? Which gets more attention than the other? What do I mean by these questions?

The majority of the human race is mixed, mingled with, akin to, or has some connection to another culture. The days of the pure race are quickly becoming smaller and smaller as the world gets faster and smaller as well.

I'd like to offer my history as an example. My father is from Port-a-Prince. His heritage stems from the roots of Jamaican culture. His family was descended from Georgia in the U.S.A. My mother has American Indian in her blood. Her mother's family was Dutch and English, also clearly in her bloodline. My parents met in New York and married there. They moved to San Francisco and have been in the area ever since. I was born in California and was raised in the same

area yet I have traveled a good deal.

With this information, if I was to become a "separatist", who would I exclude? There is White in my blood. There are probably other cultures that are mixed that help create who I am as well. The point being is this: Each one of us hold to different creeds and cultural styles. That is a given. Each of us belong to the same race, the human race. That is very clear as well. If I choose to deny someone their own 'cultural difference' I need to make that clear distinction above and beyond denying them their rights based on 'the race or the color of their skin.'

It would be similar to saying that because my left ear is pierced and my right one isn't, my right one is now better than the other or to be looked at more than the other. It sounds silly, doesn't it?

Yet there are those who would have you believe that because my skin tone is darker than theirs, that I am less than they are. Or the opposite of that, meaning because there are those who's skin tone is lighter than mine, they now become "devils or are full of evil." I wish I could say that I was making those last words up, yet I have heard them for myself from another in the human race.

If we continue to diminish ourselves, and in turn each other because of what the other looks like, how far have we really come from slavery? Isn't holding that belief a form of slavery? Being chained to a way of thinking that has no valid foundation, or holding and possibly teaching ideas that are limiting.

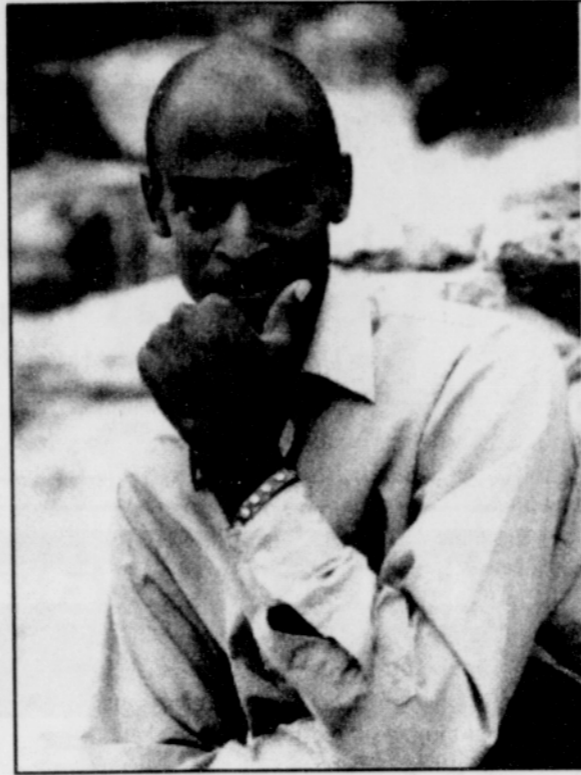
There is an East Indian proverb that offers this: "Everyone else knows something that I do not." In addition to that it's up to me to find out, what it is and

allow that knowledge to benefit me or to not be apart of me if I feel it's not what I need to know or hear. There are some basic thoughts though, that I don't have to experience for myself. There are others that it would give me a chance to be a better person if I did look at them and experience them for myself.

I'd like to offer an idea to each of you reading this article. Approach someone from another culture, reach out beyond your belief system, explore with them the similarities of your own culture with theirs. You will be amazed to find out how many similarities we all have. Start simple with food likes and dislikes. Step into home life without getting too personal if you make a new acquaintance. Explore religious beliefs as you deepen your relating with them.

Don't come in with any preconceived ideas or answers. Ask questions that you may have wondered but did not have the courage to ask or even the time to ask. Be open to share with them how you may have felt in the past, or how you were taught to feel. As you create this dialogue with them, replace the ideas that from their own information are different from what you may have known or thought.

James Redfield in the Celestine



Inside Of You...

I am the spirit that sets people free
I am the feeling that gives unity
I am the senter that brings people to commune
But some lose sight of me all too soon

I am the source of society's strength
I bring cultures together form all great lengths
I am the wish that makes things better
I am the magic that brings cultures together

Sadly, but true, I am not always seen
If you've suffered from hatred, then you know what I mean
I live inside all who care about life

Who do care to deal with the world's greatest strifes
It would be easier to find me, if everyone opened their hearts and eyes

And really take a look at those they despise
Your enemy of color
May be your brother
And if you look deep inside their eyes down in to their heart
You may find that you're not far apart

Inside of you is where I can be found
Yet at all the same time I am always around
It's not hard to find me if you care to see
Look for my support when things look bleak

I am the strong, serene white dove
I am the peace that brings you love.

By Annalisa Perez, 17
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