

SYSTEMIC RACISM AND ITS DEEP ROOTED CULTURE

"Mummy, why can't I have a pointy nose, why is mine so flat?"
"Mummy, why is my hair so thick and curly?", my six year old daughter interrogated me; her big brown eyes peeling away from her tiny reflection, directing their questioning gaze at me. How do I convince her that she is every inch perfection while simultaneously letting her grow up in a society that would always tell her otherwise?

In the very words of Rabbi Abraham Heschel, racism is man's gravest threat to man - the maximum of hatred for the minimum of reason. Racism is a system of power and privilege based on perceived race and/or ethnicity that defines one group (in this case whites) as dominant to and more deserving than all other groups. Your boss calling your braids "unprofessional" but on a white woman "edgy" and "cool" is racist, that sweaty man that has called the "ajibo" behind you to the front of the line is racist, the policeman who let the Asian boy with his black hoodie get by but ^{made a black man} you in yours stop is racist. The "random questioning" that overlooks the white man in his suit but stops the Pakistani in her burqa, is racially biased. There are countless examples and real life instances where we've seen racism, maybe been victims even. Moreover, the system which we entrust to protect us is racist. Systemic racism is every bit real.

Institutional racism as it is otherwise known, is when societal institutions engage in practices that favour the "dominant" (in this case, whites) and practices that are biased against the subordinate groups. It is important to note that institutional racism in one domain reinforces institutional racism in all other domains thus working as an interconnected system that constantly reinforces each other. Statistics have shown that for the past sixty years, black unemployment is always THREE as high as white unemployment, and narrowed down to only college graduates (university graduates), the statistics show negligible change. To put this in perspective, imagine two boys Russel (a white kid) and Jacques (a black kid). Both of them live in the same district, not too far from each other, however, it seem like there's a line

or border of some sort that has been drawn between them. This line has caused Jacquis to live in a black dominated neighbourhood while Russel lives in a white dominated neighbourhood. The schools in Russel's neighborhood have better federal funding, better in-school facilities, employ (comparatively) better qualified teachers than in Jacquis' neighbourhood. Everything just works more in Russel's favour than in Jacquis'. Nevertheless, Jacquis works hard, and ends up going to the same renowned university, as Russel. After college, both young men graduate with outstanding certificates, so they apply to a number of agencies and top firms. However, where Russel gets a callback from all the firms he applied to, Jacquis gets only two callbacks. This is basic systemic racism at play. Interestingly, this is quite factual. Did you know that applying with a "white sounding name," you're fifty percent (50%) more likely to get a callback, than with a "black sounding name"?

Another study has shown that black students are three times more likely to be suspended for the same infractions by white students. When this (a suspension) occurs, it goes on the student's record and would affect his/her progress in their future lives. Affecting their ability to enroll for schools, jobs (as teens), acceptance into universities etc. All these affect the black community, who make up thirteen percent (13%) of the American society but only control 2.7% of the wealth. These studies show that there are policies and barriers that certainly perpetuate (inequality on the basis of race, as well as preserve it. It causes a kind of domino effect / ripple effect that would trap black communities as well as minorities in a cycle such that they are stuck in positions below the white individuals.

In America, this year, there have been protests. Some against the quarantine or lockdown due to the coronavirus and some others against the killing^{of} and police brutality against black people - the black lives matter movement. Comparing these, ^{they are} the former protests had individuals with guns, and violent characters, the latter was dominated by less violent, destructive and more peaceful and respectful persons. Regardless of this, the police at the first category of protests

used less not gear and brute force than the second; of course the first category having predominantly white persons while the second had more black people and other persons belonging to minority.

These kinds of responses and treatment towards members of minority gives an impression and shows that the system does not care for them. It permits the poor care and unequal treatment of those belonging to the minority. Directly feeding the psyche and mentality that there is nothing wrong in treating people differently based on their racial or ethnic backgrounds. If you preach hate, you would get hate; there is no way around it. It is a rubbish in - rubbish out kind of system.

On a more global scale, racism continues to thrive. Where the more white-dominated regions are seen as first world, wealthier and more successful countries, the Indian, African, ^{Middle} Eastern, regions are seen as third world, poverty stricken countries and regions. Always ignoring the resourceful wealth in terms of labour, minerals etc that we have. The first-world countries loot, manipulate, exploit our territories because they have control over the financial sector globally. The Abu Ghraib is a good example. Following the killing of Saddam Hussein, led by America, the US soldiers within the state murdered, molested, sodomised, made human pyramids of thousands of Middle Easterners. The outcome, was two officials being demoted along with a national apology. Nothing else was done. There are several killings and massacres by the white men against all other people of colour, some known, others waiting to be discovered.

Systemic racism does exist, in many forms, in different parts of the world. It is so well integrated that separating it from the system would be like separating a shadow from a body. It is an evil that should be killed.