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RACISM

Racism is the belief that different races possess distinct characteristics, abilities, or qualities, especially so as to distinguish them as inferior or superior to one another. A person's social and moral traits are predetermined by his or her inborn biological characteristics. Racial separatism is the belief, most of the time based on racism, that different races should remain segregated and apart from one another.

During the past 500-1000 years, racism on the part of Western powers toward non-Westerners has had a far more significant impact on history than any other form of racism (such as racism among Western groups or among Easterners, such as Asians, Africans, and others). The most notorious example of racism by the West has been slavery, particularly the enslavement of Africans in the New World (slavery itself dates back thousands of years). This enslavement was accomplished because of the racist belief that Black Africans were less fully human than white Europeans and their descendants. Black slavery, which is said to have begun around 1500, is recorded as the worst form of racism in history. This enslavement was accomplished because the racist Westerners believed that they were more human than the black Africans and their descendants. This belief was not "automatic": that is, Africans were not originally considered inferior. When Portuguese sailors first explored Africa in the 15th and 16th centuries, they came upon empires and cities as advanced as their own, and they considered Africans to be serious rivals. Over time, though, as African civilizations failed to match the technological advances of Europe, and the major European powers began to plunder the continent and forcibly remove its inhabitants to work as slave laborers in new colonies across the Atlantic, Africans came to be seen as a

deficient "species," as "savages." Throughout the 17th century, European settlers in North America turned to enslave Africans as a cheaper, more plentiful labor source. Historians have estimated about 6 to 7 million enslaved Africans were imported into Europe during the 18th century alone. Depriving Africa of most of her able men, even after the era of slave trading has ended, blacks in most parts of the world today are still treated differently as whites. There has been a long record of racist murders in different parts of Europe, where whites brutally kill black folks for no reason and get minimal punishment for it.

In the second half of the 19th century, Darwinism, the decline of Christian belief, and growing immigration were all perceived by many white Westerners as a threat to their cultural control. European and, to a lesser degree, American scientists and philosophers devised a false racial "science" to "prove" the supremacy of non-Jewish whites. While the Nazi annihilation of Jews discredited most of these supposedly scientific efforts to elevate one race over another, small numbers of scientists and social scientists have continued throughout the 20th century to argue the inborn shortcomings of certain races, especially Blacks. At the same time, some public figures in the American Black community have championed the supremacy of their own race and the inferiority of whites - using nearly the identical language of white racists. All of these arguments are based on a false understanding of race; in fact, contemporary scientists are not agreed on whether race is a valid way to classify people. What may seem to be significant "racial" differences to some people, skin color, hair, facial shape, are not of much scientific significance. In fact, genetic differences within a so-called race may be greater than those between races. One philosopher writes: "There are few genetic characteristics to be found in the population of England that are not found in similar proportions in Zaire or in China....those differences that most deeply affect us in our dealings with each other are not to any significant degree biologically determined."

The global corona virus pandemic is said to have originated from Wuhan, China. President Donald Trump, who referred to COVID-19 as the “Chinese virus”, “kung flu”, has helped normalize anti-Asian xenophobia, stoking public hysteria and racist attacks. The Covid-19 is fueling Anti-Asian racism and xenophobia worldwide. Here in Nigeria, there have been reports of conspiracy theories and videos of Asians eating bats and other exotic animals; this has led to a massive increase in sentiments against Asians. Although there are rumors that the Chinese created the virus as a bioweapon to control over population in China, there isn’t any evidence that such is true. Asians especially the Chinese living abroad are most times cut out from health care. Racist aggressors don’t distinguish between different ethnic subgroups-anyone who is Asian or perceived to be Asian at all can be a victim. Even wearing a face mask, an act associated with Asians before it was recommended in the U.S., could be enough to provoke an attack. Discrimination against the Chinese is not new and is said to have existed in several countries.

Racism promotes negative personal relations between people of diverse cultures. As for me racism is more than just words, beliefs and actions. It includes all the barriers that prevent people from enjoying dignity and equality because of their race. The issue of racial inequality is a social barrier that many countries in the world are yet to overcome. It has influenced wars, slavery, the formation of nations, and legal codes. According to Martin Luther King Jnr. judging an individual by the color of their skin rather than the content of their character can be a very dehumanizing experience that can have lasting effects on the individual’s life.