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ACCREDITOR

FEATURED

**Celebrating
the Rich
Legacy of
African
Americans**

EXCLUSIVE

**Interview
By Dr. Asha**

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EDITOR'S NOTE

As Black History Month comes to a close, it is important to reflect on the rich legacy of African Americans and the impact they have had on American society. From civil rights activists like Martin Luther King Jr. and Rosa Parks, to cultural icons such as Maya Angelou and James Baldwin, their contributions have helped shape the fabric of our nation.

But even as we celebrate the accomplishments of African Americans throughout history, we must also recognize the ongoing struggles they face in the fight for racial equality. From systemic racism to police brutality, there is still much work to be done to ensure that all Americans are treated fairly and justly.

As we look ahead, it is crucial that we continue to build bridges and foster understanding between different communities. This is particularly true when it comes to interfaith dialogue, which can help break down barriers and promote mutual respect and understanding.

In today's increasingly diverse and interconnected world, it is more important than ever to embrace differences and seek common ground. By doing so, we can build a more inclusive and compassionate society for all.





CELEBRATING THE RICH LEGACY OF AFRICAN AMERICANS

Every February in the United States, people across the country observe Black History Month. This annual celebration recognizes the countless contributions made by African Americans to the social, cultural, and political fabric of the nation. It is a time to reflect on the struggles and triumphs of Black people throughout history, and to honor the legacy of those who fought for justice and equality.

On the basis of skin colour black people were discriminated and looked down upon at work places, schools, streets and even in hospitals. They were considered as slaves and inferior to white people. No matter how much efforts they put in or how genius they're, they would always have the second place when compared with a white! thats what the initially fought for, to have their basic human right and be considered equal and eligible for every resource and opportunity that's provided to other citizens of the nation.

BLACK HISTORY MONTH

ORIGINS OF BLACK HISTORY MONTH

Black History Month has its roots in the early 20th century, when a group of African American scholars and activists led by historian Carter G. Woodson established "Negro History Week" in 1926. Woodson believed that the history of Black people was too often overlooked or misrepresented in American classrooms, and he wanted to promote greater awareness and appreciation for the achievements of Black Americans.

The second week of February was chosen for the celebration because it coincided with the birthdays of Abraham Lincoln, who signed the Emancipation Proclamation in 1863, and Frederick Douglass, a prominent abolitionist and social reformer. Over time, Negro History Week grew in popularity and eventually became Black History Month in 1976, when President Gerald Ford officially recognized the event.

BLACK HISTORY MONTH

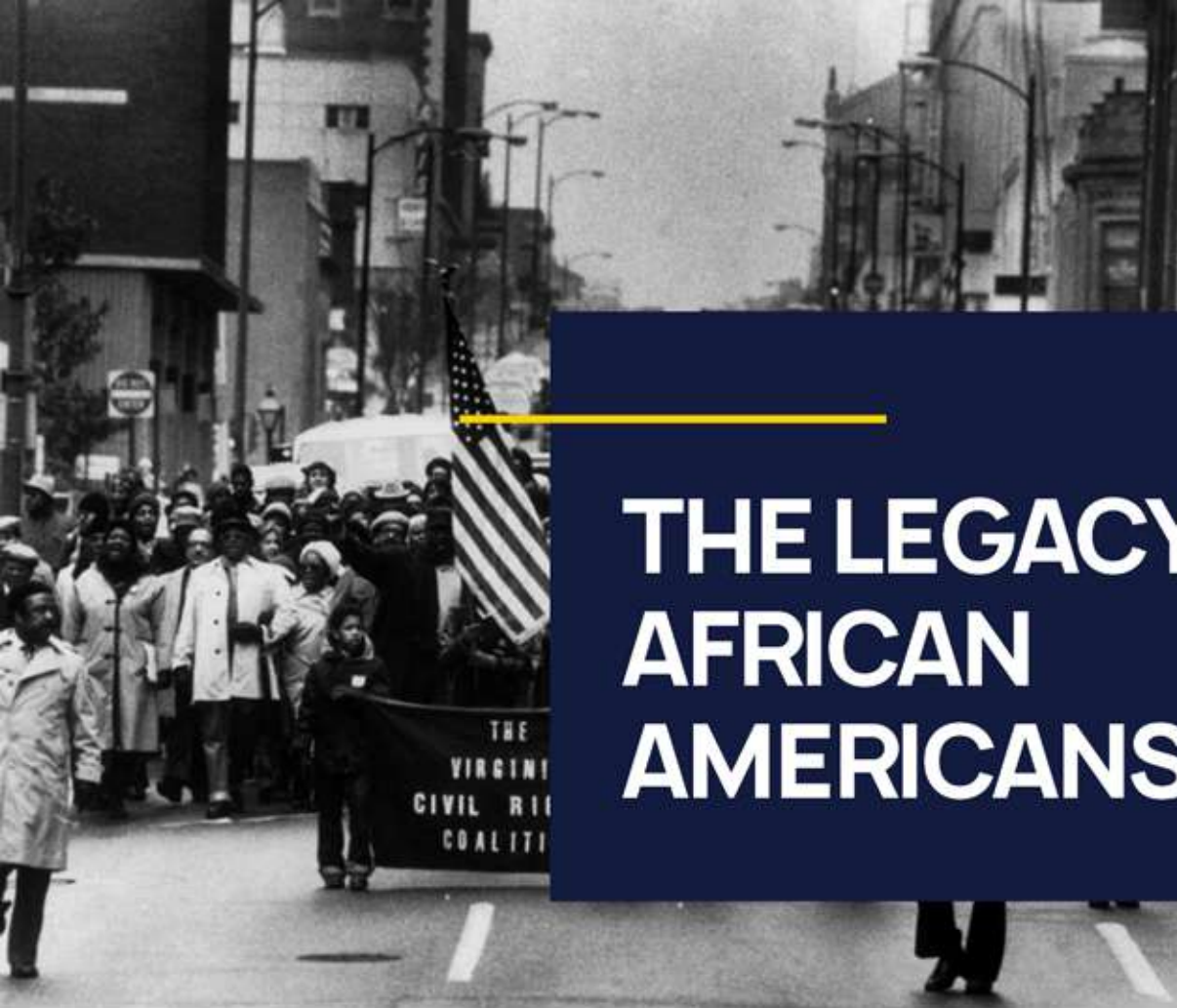


THE IMPORTANCE OF BLACK HISTORY MONTH

Black History Month is a time to celebrate the achievements of African Americans in all areas of life, from science and medicine to politics and the arts. It is also an opportunity to acknowledge the struggles and challenges faced by Black people throughout history, including slavery, segregation, and discrimination.

One of the primary goals of Black History Month is to educate people about the contributions of Black Americans and to raise awareness about the ongoing struggle for racial equality. This is especially important in a country that has a complex and often painful history of race relations, including slavery, Jim Crow laws, and institutional racism.

By highlighting the achievements of Black people, Black History Month helps to counter negative stereotypes and biases that have persisted for centuries. It is a time to celebrate the resilience and strength of African Americans, who have overcome tremendous obstacles to make significant contributions to American society.



THE LEGACY OF AFRICAN AMERICANS

The legacy of African Americans is a rich and complex one that encompasses many different areas of American life. From politics and civil rights to the arts and sports, Black people have made an indelible mark on the nation.

In politics, African Americans have played a pivotal role in shaping the course of American history. From the abolitionist movement of the 19th century to the civil rights struggles of the 20th century, Black activists and leaders have fought tirelessly for justice and equality.

Some of the most prominent figures in Black political history include Frederick Douglass, who was born into slavery and became a powerful orator and leader of the abolitionist movement; W.E.B. Du Bois, who co-founded the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) and was a leading scholar on race and society; and Shirley Chisholm, the first Black woman elected to Congress and the first woman to run for president.

In the arts, African Americans have made significant contributions in music, literature, and visual art. Jazz, blues, and hip hop are just a few examples of musical genres that were born out of the Black experience in America.



CHALLENGES & OPPORTUNITIES FOR THE FUTURE

While Black History Month is a time to celebrate the achievements of African Americans, it is also a time to acknowledge the challenges that Black people continue to face in the United States. Despite the progress that has been made in the struggle for racial equality, many African Americans still experience discrimination, poverty, and inequality.

One of the most pressing issues facing the Black community today is systemic racism. Structural inequality in education, housing, and the criminal justice system has created significant barriers to opportunity for many Black Americans. Police brutality and the disproportionate targeting of Black people by law enforcement have also led to a widespread sense of distrust and frustration.

Addressing these challenges will require a sustained effort from all Americans. It will require a commitment to social justice and a willingness to confront the legacy of racism that has shaped our nation. It will also require a recognition of the unique contributions that Black people have made to American society, and a commitment to supporting the continued progress and success of the Black community.

CONCLUSION

CONCLUSION

Black History Month is a time to celebrate the rich legacy of African Americans and to honor the contributions that Black people have made to American society. It is also a time to acknowledge the challenges and struggles that Black people continue to face, and to commit ourselves to the ongoing work of promoting equality and justice for all Americans.

As we reflect on the legacy of African Americans this Black History Month, let us remember the courage and resilience of those who fought for justice and equality, and let us commit ourselves to building a more just and equitable future for all.



THE IMPORTANCE OF INTERFAITH DIALOGUE IN MODERN SOCIETY

Interfaith dialogue is an essential aspect of modern society, as it promotes understanding and tolerance between different religions and cultures. It provides an opportunity for individuals to learn about other faiths and gain a deeper appreciation for their own.

Interfaith dialogue are peaceful and informative interaction between people from various religions and cultures where they talk about their beliefs and learn from others about theirs. They lookout for similarities and differences between their faiths which help them adapt different aspects of it to have a more holistic approach in life and to become a better individual an informed and knowledgeable personnel.

In this article, we will explore the importance of interfaith dialogue, its benefits, challenges, and ways to engage in meaningful and effective dialogue.



WHAT IS INTERFAITH DIALOGUE?

Interfaith dialogue refers to a conversation between people of different religious traditions with the aim of promoting mutual understanding, respect, and cooperation. It involves sharing knowledge, experiences, and perspectives on different aspects of faith, such as beliefs, rituals, ethics, and values. Interfaith dialogue can take place at various levels, including interpersonal, community, national, and global levels.

Interfaith dialogue includes having debates and mutually respected discussions on various aspects of faith and belief as in, what is god? who is god? why is there a need to believe in something? all these questions are answered by various people belonging from different communities with different religions and beliefs. This helps in having more than just one lens to view the world and its complexities and to have a more holistic approach.

Having an interfaith dialogue is crucial for building a more sound personality! some may consider that it may distract you from your own belief but it actually makes you appreciate your own belief and helps you in building respect and a soft spot for people from different cultures.



THE IMPORTANCE OF INTERFAITH DIALOGUE

Interfaith dialogue is important for several reasons. Firstly, it promotes understanding and respect for different religions, cultures, and worldviews. It helps individuals to recognize and appreciate the diversity of human experience and to learn from each other's traditions. By engaging in dialogue, individuals can develop empathy and compassion for those who are different from themselves, leading to greater social cohesion and harmony.

Secondly, interfaith dialogue promotes peaceful coexistence and reduces conflict between different religious groups. It provides a platform for individuals to address misunderstandings, stereotypes, and biases that can fuel religious and cultural tensions. Through dialogue, individuals can find common ground and work towards shared goals, such as promoting social justice and human rights.

Thirdly, interfaith dialogue can contribute to personal and spiritual growth. It allows individuals to explore their own faith and values more deeply and to gain new insights and perspectives from other traditions. It can also help individuals to develop a sense of openness and humility, recognizing that their own religion is not the only valid path to truth and meaning.

A silhouette of three people in prayer or meditation against a sunset background. One person is kneeling on the left, another is kneeling in the center, and a third is standing on the right.

BENEFITS OF INTERFAITH DIALOGUE

There are several benefits to engaging in interfaith dialogue. These include:

1. **Increased understanding:** Interfaith dialogue promotes a deeper understanding of different religions, cultures, and traditions. It helps individuals to recognize the similarities and differences between different faiths and to appreciate the diversity of human experience.
2. **Enhanced relationships:** Interfaith dialogue can help to build positive relationships between people of different faiths. By developing friendships and partnerships, individuals can work together to address common challenges and promote social justice and human rights.
3. **Reduced conflict:** Interfaith dialogue can reduce conflict and promote peaceful coexistence between different religious groups. It provides a platform for individuals to address misunderstandings, stereotypes, and biases that can fuel religious tensions.



CHALLENGES OF INTERFAITH DIALOGUE

While interfaith dialogue has many benefits, it also presents several challenges. These include:

5. **Misunderstandings:** Misunderstandings can arise when individuals from different religious traditions do not fully understand each other's beliefs and practices. This can lead to misinterpretation and miscommunication.
6. **Stereotypes:** Stereotypes and prejudices can also hinder interfaith dialogue. Individuals may hold biased views of other religions and cultures, which can create barriers to understanding and cooperation.
7. **Power imbalances:** Power imbalances can also affect interfaith dialogue. Certain religious groups may have more power or influence than others, which can make it difficult to achieve equal participation and representation in dialogue.
8. **Fundamentalism:** Fundamentalism can also pose a challenge to interfaith dialogue. Some individuals may hold rigid and uncompromising views of their own faith, which can make it difficult to engage in dialogue with others.



WAYS TO ENGAGE IN INTERFAITH DIALOGUE

Despite the challenges, there are several ways to engage in meaningful and effective interfaith dialogue. These include:

1. **Education:** Education is an essential aspect of interfaith dialogue. It is important to educate oneself about other religions and cultures, to gain a deeper understanding and appreciation of different traditions. This can involve attending interfaith events, reading books, watching documentaries, and participating in online forums.
2. **Active listening:** Active listening is a crucial skill for effective interfaith dialogue. It involves listening attentively to others, seeking to understand their perspectives and experiences, and avoiding assumptions and stereotypes. Active listening can help to build trust, respect, and empathy between individuals of different faiths.
3. **Respectful communication:** Respectful communication is another key aspect of interfaith dialogue. It involves expressing one's own views and beliefs in a way that is respectful and sensitive to others' perspectives. It also involves avoiding language or behavior that may be offensive or insensitive to others.
4. **Collaboration:** Collaboration is an important aspect of interfaith dialogue, as it allows individuals to work together towards common goals. This can involve collaborating on community projects, social justice initiatives, or interfaith events. By working together, individuals can build trust and respect and promote positive relationships between different religious groups.

CONCLUSION

CONCLUSION

Interfaith dialogue is an essential aspect of modern society, as it promotes understanding, respect, and cooperation between different religions and cultures. It provides an opportunity for individuals to learn about other faiths and gain a deeper appreciation for their own. While interfaith dialogue presents several challenges, such as misunderstandings, stereotypes, power imbalances, and fundamentalism, there are several ways to engage in meaningful and effective dialogue, including education, active listening, respectful communication, collaboration, mediation, and celebrating diversity. By engaging in interfaith dialogue, individuals can build positive relationships, promote peaceful coexistence, and contribute to personal and spiritual growth.

Q: Could you please walk us through your academic background and achievements? Your extensive and varied experience can be a source of inspiration for many; please share the highlights and milestones of your professional journey.

I would like to answer this by diving into two parts; acts and deeds.

Actions are important in our life. Whatever social challenges and financial conditions we encounter, it is important to grow taller than the problem. I lost my father at a very young age, leading to a compromise on emotional needs. My focus was on education and all my actions were proportional to the focus that I had in my life.

My grandfather was my inspiring personality. It was a generative period in my childhood observing him who productively engaged himself although there was no significant contribution. I felt alone most of the time in my life and I took the obstacles as opportunities. It allowed me to think deeply, apply learnings, and involve in my deeds.

There are set standards in society which everyone thinks of as requirements to be happy. But there are also certain things that people are unaware of that those things can make them happy too. For me having a supportive family, partner or children wasn't mandatory and felt that they were at the surface level of relationship quantum. When we have a relationship with ourselves it gives us a greater authority to lead life

Education is all about bringing acts and deeds together, and progressive thoughts are the emotional tools that carry you from good to great. I have always excelled in my academics, be it undergraduate, or post-graduation courses. I did my post-graduation in India, and my mental health authority is from The University of Queensland, Australia through distance learning. I have learned then that getting into a multicultural environment is important for me to learn different processes and living. I got into many educational facets in different countries. My specialization in art therapy from Europe and the mental health authority helped me to understand the functions and dysfunctions in the process of learning; how a person takes little things seriously and bigger problems very simple. I started putting complex things into simpler proportions and found that most of the learning is evident when we apply it to ourselves rather than keeping it as a theory. My professors and mentors, like Dr. Tabad Willis Hubert, guided me through the specialization of art therapy and introduced me to world philosophy. I was a narrow-minded person and this guidance helped me to see that philosophy is not about reading, writing, and sleeping over it but it helps one to upgrade and level up our growth mindset to see things in a very simpler form. My interest slowly developed toward Vedic philosophy. Krishna is worshipped as a world philosopher, and as Indians, we are not aware of the kind of philosophy that exists in India. When I started to understand Gita, my interest developed towards the spiritual world, and thereafter did try to understand in the philosophy of Adishankara like his bhashya on Brahma Sutra and to a little extent of 18 Upanishads. Later when I did my specialization in child development, I understood that none of the theories had the complete locus, and the theorists have spoken theories keeping in mind their voids. Each one's understanding of the problem is different, and each one's life is different and so far I haven't come across a similar case study to date.

A portrait of Dr. Asha, a woman with long dark hair, wearing black-rimmed glasses and a yellow shawl. She has a red bindi on her forehead and is looking directly at the camera with a slight smile. The background is a plain, light-colored wall.

Dr. Asha

Academic Life

Learning is a continuum, especially in psychology and my mentees and wonderful people around me are my inspiration. My academic aspirations still exist and I am pursuing Ph.D. in Vedanta though I have achieved Ph. D in various other subjects.

Experience

Q. Currently heading the institute, what are some of your long-term and short term goals for the education system?

Short-term goals are evolving intellectually, and emotionally revising academic theories and structure according to the generation and the mindset. The human race goes through evolution which has to be kept in mind when tools are devised. It has to be inspiring for any young adult to go through. If it is a narrow-headed and unempathetic environment that makes them fall into the stereotypical processes, it will not be helpful for evolution in the right direction. Their needs, aspirations, and mindsets keep changing, so the academic structure has to be revisited time and again. The long-term goal is that one is not enough to be intelligent; one has to be intellectual to understand the challenges and prepare to cope with the crisis that is fogging and to face situations like pandemics. The survivors of the pandemic are those who have life skills in place. Psychoeducation in education is my long-term goal.

Q. What do you think your biggest challenge is working in the education industry in such a key position?

My biggest challenge is to bring awareness and understanding of the mindset and bring mindfulness every day. Working on self is a challenge for every individual. There should be an authentic process and protocol where each one of them takes care of their self. Self-care is a challenging facet when it comes to education. Another biggest challenge that needs to emphasize is integrity. I would love to be in the process rather than being part of the system because it conspires constituents and elements which help us keep the locus productive. When I say productive it doesn't mean the economical standards but the wellness standards. As a promoter of wellness, my focus is to bring self-care to the center of progression with integrity in place.

Experience

Q. Educationists are advised usually to share their experience and learning. What method of information dissemination would you say is most effective for this purpose?

Educationists' experience is not limited to academics, research, and knowledge but should consist of their life experiences which can reflect and inspire people around them. Inspiration is not limited to academic progression; it is the quality of life which matters. As an educationist, if I am speaking about awareness to people around me, I need to be watchful of my quality of life. As a demonstrator and promoter of wellness, it is important to work on my balance mind, and system. It is equally important to carry that vibration, independent thinking, irrespective of what is written in a book and what is not. It is not about being a Ms. Know-all but giving proper leverage. Without leverage there is no learning, without learning there is no love, and without love, there is no life.

Q. During your entire career, which milestone felt most accomplished and why?

Teaching is the most accomplished peripheral of my life. When I teach, I learn, I evaluate myself on a 0-10 scale, and render gratitude to those whom I have learned, and I will also get to know how much more to jog in life. I feel more accomplished when students come back and tell me how the learnings have helped them to better themselves. It gives me immense satisfaction when my mentees let me know that they can seek happiness daily, or when they have identified their potential, and working towards it.

Interest & Opinions

Q: Recently, there have been many reports and trends of students opting for alternate methods of education such as

It can't be compared according to me. Because people come from different mindsets, and interests and they want to work hard to establish themselves with proper labels for their achievements for the skills acquired. Formal achievements and degrees set proper healthy boundaries in society for one to be designated in a said way. It can't be compared but we need both, for people who are not supported and encouraged by their families to learn, enhance and satisfy their craving for learning. Society will grow when formal and informal education runs parallelly but intersects for the healthy progress of the society valuing each other's existence.

Q: As an educator, what's your perspective on the current education system in your region and how do you think it can be improved or revolutionized, if required?

The conventional education system has a very big impact on the learning progress of each child. Conventional and non-conventional both should exist as a blend with healthy boundaries and create space for people to explore and upskill themselves. Freedom of expression is important to let the child or any learner come up with ideas. For me, intrapreneurship is more important than entrepreneurship because ideas are needed to develop and keep developing. When conventional and nonconventional blend with the right kind of support system, it can enhance and enrich the quality of life. It helps to work on the overall wellness of individuals by letting them learn, explore and apply in their lives.

According to Vedanta, the theory of knowledge talks about how to have an open mind to obtain profound learning and build ourselves stronger.

Pramata – The knower, who knows. What we are doing with the knowledge we gain.

Prameya – The knowable, about which can be known. It is about knowing what is applicable in that particular context or scenario.

Pramana: the process of gaining knowledge.

Pramati: the knowledge achieved.

Ending Notes

Q:Please share your philosophy of the ideal education a person can achieve regardless of its methods and processes. E.g. it

According to Vedanta, there are 4 Mahavakyas that I have applied in my life and so as my students who have learned from me have applied them in their lives too.

Mahavakyas are the great sayings of the Upanishads, from the Advaita school of Vedanta. Maha means great and Vakyas means sentences, that are short and highlight the wisdom of spiritual contexts.

1. Prajnanam Brahma – Brahma means divine. Consciousness itself is divine. This is a Lakshana Vakya, a defining sentence, a sutra for life. Bringing consciousness to all aspects of our life let us know how to live and how to fight against the battles. This vakya is from Aitreya Upanishad of RigVeda.

2. Aham Brahmasmi – Self is divine. This is an Anubhava Vakya, a sentence that speaks of experience. To attain bliss, one has to understand and respect self. This sentence is from Brihadaranyaka Upanishad from YajurVeda.

3. Tat Tvam Asi – The entire substratum of the Universe itself is divine. It is Upadesha Vakya, from a Guru to Sishya, that emerges out of experience and experimentation. It helps to acquire skills to live life. This Vakya is from Chandogya Upanishad from SamaVeda.

4. Ayam Atma Brahma – The atma itself is divine. It is Anusandana Vakya, connecting us to the larger reality. This Vakya is from Mandukya Upanishad from AtharvanaVeda

Aham Bramhasmi completes me. That is the philosophy of my life.

Ending Notes

Q: Thank you for taking the time to answer a few questions for IAO Accreditor. Do you have any parting words of wisdom for educationists and students?

In the process of education, one has to find answers for what is valued and how to value what one values. If someone can get an answer, their education can be a colourful part of their life. The art of saying No to people, being yourself, keeping your priorities, your passion, your drive, and keeping the emotional energy intact and valuing what you are supposed to value is an important part of the change.

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