

By Harriett Muhammad

Dear Harriett: I am half-Chinese and half-white. My father is Chinese and my mother is white. When I was born, my parents were separated. I was given to my mother and therefore I was raised among the whites. My father returned to China—therefore I had no contact with him at all.

AS A child, I was ashamed of being half-Chinese—probably due to the white atmosphere in which I was raised. When I was about 21 years old, I finally decided to face the facts that I was half-Chinese.

When I tried to mix with the Chinese, I discovered I had little in common with them at all. I didn't understand much about them or their culture. The whites with whom I was raised were mainly a low-class type, mostly of Irish extraction.

I am now a high school dropout. I drink pretty heavily, and I have virtually no worldly possessions. My half brothers, who are 100 per cent whites, are in about the same social situation.

MY environment as a child could have been the reason why I don't get along with the Chinese, but a Chinese with no education, right off the boat from China, is accepted by the Chinese here. In other words, I can't say for sure that the Chinese don't accept me because I am half-white. All I know is that I don't get along with them—I don't fit.

As for the whites, I can get along with them all right—but I know I am not like them completely. I don't think completely like them. I would not want to marry a white girl or be part of the white society. I don't believe in their religion and I don't like many of their ways at all.

IN SOME ways, I feel like an outsider or a man without a race or group to which I can cling. Because of my

feelings, I am against race mixing altogether. I believe there are three races—white, black and yellow. I believe it is wrong for any of these three races to mix. I believe integration will cause the birth of a lot of people like me, therefore I am for complete separation of all three races.

I know there are many people like me who are half-Negro and half-Caucasian. Most of them seem to me to be completely accepted by the Negroes. I have never had a chance to talk to anyone like this, so I have never had a chance to compare our feelings.

I COULD be completely wrong in my way of thinking. I could even seem insane to people who are not like me, but I am just trying to express my feelings. I am not looking for sympathy, but I am writing to you to ask what you think of my situation. I have asked many whites, but they have never helped me or made me feel other than I feel now.

I have read several copies of MUHAMMAD SPEAKS. There are many things about the Black Muslims that I don't understand, but I will state honestly that the Black Muslims have made more sense to me than the Catholics have ever made or could ever make.

Please consider answering me, as I feel whatever you say will help me find a better understanding about this life in which we all live. Mr. P. L., Cambridge, Mass.

TO BE ANSWERED IN THE NEXT ISSUE.

Something on your mind? Write and tell me about it.

Harriett Muhammad
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Chicago, Ill., 60615

A. C. SERVICE STATION

Announces the opening of a Muslim owned and operated custom car wash operated by Bro. Henry 24X.

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By Harriett Muhammad

(THIS IS IN ANSWER
TO A LETTER
PUBLISHED IN
MY LAST COLUMN)

Dear Mr. P. L.,

The human need to belong—to be a part of a people or group is a very strong force. It is one that should be respected. You are half white and half Chinese. You will never be fully accepted by white people because of the physical difference that is present.

YOU DON'T feel that you fit with the Chinese because of the cultural differences that separate you. In order for most people to "feel" like they belong to a certain group, they must be one and the same in ethnic and cultural background. You can't separate one from the other and have the same feeling.

A so-called Negro from the U.S. may look like his African brothers but cultural differences are present. It is the same between Europeans and white Americans, between the Japanese and Chinese, between Mexicans and Brazilians, between peoples of the same ethnic stock who live in different areas of the same country—the same city.

Political views, religious beliefs, educational levels—all cause differences among people. So most of us in many situations feel like we may not truly "belong." Your situation is not like that of the half white and half black American because there are so many people in this category until they form a "group" of their own.

ALSO, THE social factor that makes anyone with black ancestry, a "Negro" eliminates much of the mental problem of acceptance. There is something else at

work that tends to bind so-called Negroes together regardless of racial mixtures or cultural differences, and that is our common sufferings and our shared social position in this country.

You may never truly feel like you belong to a group, because the number of people in this country who are half white and half Chinese is limited.

YOU MAY find that you will be able to get along with Orientals if you try to live with them and learn and understand their ways and habits. This is something that would take time and effort.

You cannot expect to spend a day or week with them and feel like you belong—this may take years. But you may find a "group" of your own that way, for cultural differences can be successfully subdued.

You know one side of your ancestry and are not satisfied, so before you give up and consider yourself a misfit in life, try the other.

Something on your mind? Write and tell me about it.

HARRIETT MUHAMMAD
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Ugandan Independence

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