

**Ichirouganaim Council for the Advancement of Rastafari (ICAR - Barbados) and the Caribbean Rastafari Organization (CRO)**



**Healing the African psyche: practically addressing the effects of slavery, colonization and impact of white supremacy on Africa**

**ABSTRACT**

Why face ostracism/marginalization/brutal suppression because of a chosen human right association that is based on African love and expression?

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Reparations for Settlement in Africa

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**Healing the African psyche: practically addressing the effects of slavery, colonization and impact of white supremacy on Africa**

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**Abstract**

“No matter where you come from, as long as you’re a black man you’re an African” – Peter ‘Tosh

“Look to Africa for the crowning of a Black King” – Marcus Garvey

“We must become something we have never been and for which our education and experience have ill-prepared us. We must become bigger than we have ever been, more courageous in spirit, larger in outlook.” - HIM Emperor Haile Selassie 1<sup>st</sup>.

Internationally promoted opinions over the last three centuries have starkly negated African-centered thinking. Maps of the world reduce the gigantic size of homeland Africa and enlarge the land masses of other territories, while prime-time media scoffs at liberating African people and their community developments. Africans are forced to independently decide to love themselves and people who look like them, including loving their homeland Africa. Some Africans worldwide do reveal this proud unconquerable indigenous spirit, but many do not and speak despairingly about fellow Africans and homeland Africa. A proud manifestation of Africa, in like no other way, is expressed practically through the creation/existence of Rastafari communities. There is no other community to be found that is uncompromising in its way of life in promoting African-centered values and lifestyle. From the reinvention of words (word sound and power), creative expression (music, arts), settlement in homeland Africa, and the pursuit of reparatory justice, the “Rastafarian” wants Africa, things African, to see African people uplifted and to witness righteous world judgements. Rastafari individuals have however paid a high price for revealing an African-centered lifestyle. Nonetheless, initial public abuse, employment dismissals, murder and imprisonment that caused us to lose so many brilliant minds from contributing to our development, have now largely given way to society’s tolerance, acknowledgement, acceptance and respect by fellow African brothers and sisters - an experience that demonstrates some healing of the African psyche.

The paper debates the following ...

How does it feel to have black skin and look like a black African but be told not to be African because being such, is a shameful thing?

Why is it said that black people who look like you and are living in homeland Africa in fact hate you who live in the western Diaspora?

What makes our political leaders wait on the colonial directive to determine what next?

Why face ostracism/marginalization/brutal suppression because of a chosen human right association that is based on African love and expression?

Also, the fact that we observe our children become despondent with an unjust enforced poverty existence and turn aside from an African-oriented outlook to lessen their personal burdens of living under white supremacy.

Do any of the above reflect your personal existence and experience?

This presentation and discussion will examine African/Rastafari communities' decision to overcome the miseducation propagated during enslavement and colonization that was meant for the maintenance of white supremacy whilst suppressing African behavior. It will promote a vision and practical process of members of the Diaspora returning to homeland Africa as part of reparations and galvanizing business opportunities. The aim will be to create awareness of the healing to be realized in the return of African descendants who were once cut off, captured, removed and enslaved, back to homeland Africa as an essential element of a Reparatory Justice program, supported by facilitation of a "welcomed return" by Africans within Africa, and the creation of a new investment institution to support settlement and business pursuit by Africans in homeland Africa. The website [www.reparationsforsettlement.net](http://www.reparationsforsettlement.net) that derives from the 2014 Reparations for Settlement in Africa Project (RSAP) speaks to this process using capital sourced from former slave owning countries and companies. This paper suggests that the process be started as an African initiative to responsibly initiate our own healing. The processes required for the welcomed return settlement plan outlined in RSAP can capture all the broad goals of this conference. Specifically, we Africans need each other. We need to repair the damage to our minds that occurred during enslavement, colonization and even after our initial political independence, through forgiveness; through re-education especially of the youth; through identifying our great social/political/economic thinkers; through increased use of African imagery; through increased spending within our own communities; and most importantly through building Pan-African relationships.

### **Introduction**

African enslavement during the period of Europe's trans-Atlantic slave trade was calculatedly brutal for its victims. The murder of Africans by Europeans during the capture, transportation, forced labour and reproduction experiments that stretched from homeland Africa to the Americas throughout the 17<sup>th</sup> to 19<sup>th</sup> centuries was carried out with impunity. Laws were enacted to dehumanize Africans, break African family support systems, make right the actions of Europeans in their destructive interactions with Africans, and at the same time ensure that African people had no legal redress for any wrong done to them. The manifestation of these laws served to create despondency and self-hatred, and to fester mistrust among black people: subsequent generations of Africans began to accept subservience as the norm, whilst European generations concluded that their race possessed superior wisdom to that of Africans. Extreme physical brutality was used by Europeans to crush the spirit of Africans. Those who rebelled against the injustices meted out to them were singled out for particularly cruel and inhuman torture to deter others from following their example.

Christian indoctrination was used to eradicate and replace African spirituality. Psychologic warfare of this type had an even more devastating impact on the African psyche than physical violence. An image of the white redeeming Christ was impregnated on the African mindset. This was the alleged 'savior' who would cleanse their darkened souls from the barbarity of their fallen state. The dehumanization through brutality and mind control was impactful in its totality. There was nowhere to turn to escape the holistic degradation that belittled and demonized Africans. This process affected both homeland Africa and its Diaspora. Africans were urged to seek a better life through prayer to a God who served the interests of their oppressors to the exclusion of their own wellbeing, self-worth and prospects of deliverance. Subservience was largely accepted as the inescapable fate of Africans. At home and abroad Africans were branded as backward, illiterate, uncivilized and by

nature, evil. The dehumanization process continued unceasingly over half a millennium, rendering Africa and its descendants veritable outcasts of the human family and community.

But throughout the African holocaust the unconquerable proud spirit of dark-skinned people threw up heroes and leaders that championed the cause of liberation and equality. The likes of Nanny of the Maroons, Sam Sharpe, Paul Bogle, Harriet Tubman and countless others kept the flame of African liberty alive. Emancipation from slavery was engineered through the agency of African freedom-fighters - in the same way that freedom and independence at home was the result of anti-colonial wars, uprisings and African heroism. Latter-day leaders such as Marcus Garvey, HIM Haile Selassie 1<sup>st</sup> and others helped to reclaim and reassert the dignity of and sovereignty of the African psyche. African individuals who had long concluded that their sustainability would depend on African-centered thinking, embraced homeland Africa and Pan-Africanism. and African cooperated to amass wealth with renewed vigor. With the emergence of Marcus Garvey and HIM Emperor Haile Selassie 1<sup>st</sup>, renewed spirituality along with life-changing tenets and values deeply rooted in an "Africa first" principle came to the fore. The Rastafari lifestyle and culture encapsulated this renaissance, leading to the reorientation of world attitudes towards Equal Rights and Justice.

The 20<sup>th</sup> century witnessed nations with majority black populations attaining so-called political independence, but often with leadership still sadly dependent on post-colonial modalities and financial support. Examination of trade agreements like Lome(s), Cotonou and others show reluctance by African leaders to assert self-management over their resources. Civil society groups show better self-assurance in advocacy but nonetheless stop short of positions that can potentially cause fall-out with Europe and/or the USA. Issues like seeking reparations for historical atrocities or challenging European church teachings are pursued at best half-heartedly. The world economic imbalance will persist while Africa continues to provide free services through African peoples' servitude for over 300 years without compensation. The imbalance persists today when the enslavers/colonizers, their individuals and nations, are paid at the end of enslavement and colonization periods by the said people who were enslaved or colonized! The imbalance persists when African people are reluctant to pool their resources and increase cooperation among themselves towards community developments. The result is that persistent poverty is the unending enemy of African people worldwide as Marcus Garvey recognized, and this status for African populations has now largely given rise to many of the objectives of the United Nations International Decade for people of African Descent (UNIDPAD) (2015 – 2024).

### **Healing the African Psyche**

#### **Communication for Education: -**

Fake news has always been in existence and used as a deliberate ploy to influence peoples' thinking in a desired direction. Faked and biased news to encourage conflicts among black nations, groups and individuals, while serving narrow agendas of special interest groups of white countries and people, abound. The storyteller will have a motive to achieve an objective. What therefore is the motive for African communication for education into the future? Until the tales of the hunt are told by the lion, the hunter will always be the master.

Communication must make us feel good about ourselves. We must be prepared to build the self-esteem of our African people. We want neither self-hate statements nor self-pity requests. We want no subservience in our attitudes to other races. We want to teach black people to see themselves as

African first and foremost, with being nationals of countries and/or ethnic groups coming thereafter. No matter how long a log stays in the water it can never become a crocodile. We want to know our worldwide African family. We want to teach about the period before African peoples' enslavement. We Africans worldwide need to know how our history is shared and the current impact of this. We need to know about African inventors from all walks of life and those who were refused patents because of their African race – African people whose contribution helped to improve the lives of all people and communities worldwide. We must remember that civilization originated in Africa and flowed down the Nile to the rest of the world.

Communication must teach us how to become engaged in activities that will seek to give us more income and economic power so as to improve the living standards of black populations. We must be educated on how those with an economic advantage can wield power and control situations by having it. We want to educate on the illegal grab for capital/money/land/resources and biased international negotiations that created rich European countries at the expense of impoverished African nations.

The plan for effective communication must include:

- using visual stimuli that are African
- telling stories with African voices, including using African languages
- using African-centered individuals in the creative industries to share their knowledge
- educational advice on spending and circulating capital/money among African people for things and services made and provided by African people

Ultimately, we must be more resistant to statements that are not uplifting when not only made by ourselves, but especially when made by other races regarding African people.

When the statement is made: You have black skin and look like an African, but one should never be such because Africa and Africans are shameful things, we must utterly reject this viewpoint. As said, the fact is that Homo Sapiens is of homeland Africa origin. Modern human beings owe their existence and survival to the people of the homeland Africa land-space. These individuals populated all the remaining land-spaces found on this globe. The black-skinned people were formidable explorers and developers. Modern research has revealed that the “First People” of all continents processed the black skin of Africans. In fact, ancient physical monuments are still being discovered worldwide that bear the hallmarks of African ancestry. To have melanin-filled black skin is a wonderful thing, a blessing. We chant “Black is beautiful”, “I’m Black and proud”, “Black power”, “Black lives matter”, “Up you mighty race” and sing songs of liberation and freedom.

What truth is there in the statement that African people in homeland Africa dislike Africans of the diaspora and vice versa? Where and with whom did these statements originate? How can misunderstandings be removed?

There is all truth in the statement that “a house divided against itself cannot stand”. The conqueror perfects the “divide-and-rule” model. Some African people can allow themselves to be weakened because of (i) a preferred alignment to the colonial French and English languages and their nations, (ii) whether one resides on homeland Africa or elsewhere, and (iii) whether one was educated in the western diaspora. These positions all weaken “Global Africa”. This is the term that is used to unite African people wherever we are found. It is used to strengthen our togetherness. Most Rastafari people have decided to “aprici-love” other Rastafari people wherever they are across the globe.

Many Africans are generally depicted and painted similarly by non-Africans wherever these Africans may be, although we Africans need not know each other or speak the same language. Being depicted similarly, and not necessarily favorably by other racial groups is a unique occurrence for our race. We need to “over-stand” this anomaly and develop a unique unity. We also need to forgive each other if we display ignorance because we are each at different stages of Afri-conscious awareness and personal development.

Currently we believe many Africans favor the healing that would have occurred to lead to the decision to identify the Diaspora as the 6<sup>th</sup> region of Africa by the AU and the formal steps being taken to increase communication and learning between the groups. Because of this decision we recognize the creation of the Caribbean Pan-African Network (CPAN) (of which CRO serves on its executive body), representing the geographical location of the Caribbean within the 6<sup>th</sup> region of Africa.

#### Political leadership: -

Are our political leaders deliberately short-sighted?

The calculated attempt by Europe to destroy the African psyche was ongoing for over 400 years. The African victory in Haiti in 1800 was followed by the country’s brutal international economic isolation and subsequent financial penalties that de facto broke the African psyche. We have witnessed assassinations, Governments’ overthrown, armies, economic sanctions, international trade agreements, friendship clubs, financiers and academia among others, all being used to prevent African peoples’ upliftment. And yet, we elect national leaders prepared to maintain African populations as lesser worth citizens internationally, albeit for their own selfish gain. The value of a high capital lifestyle for a few who are politically favored by foreign capital(ists) over masses who live in squalor is embraced by many politicians. Such politicians are not the leaders that African communities and nations require. They are but servants of Europe and/or the G7. This behavior by some politicians - succumbing to external influence in international negotiations and not attempting to chart a better specific course for their populations - may be by designed and seen as more stress-free by the political actor. It is noted that many African politicians are elderly. Advanced age usually corresponds with clinging to power by any means, taking positions that are less disruptive to international agreements and the status quo in general, surrounding themselves by family or tribal cronies who usurp national wealth. Being shortsighted, thus seeing only the time of one’s own life, is not critically thinking of one’s nation. Politicians/political leaders however, especially need to be critical thinkers. The responsibility of good governance that comes when populations place their trust in political leaders to improve their standard of living must surpass selfish considerations. The masses to date have generally lost power when it is transferred to a political leader after an election. The masses are no longer decision-makers, and many can be impacted by perennial poverty. But living in poverty is not a choice. It is a state that can be imposed on people by deliberate decisions of those in authority.

For the future, the masses of people and all civil society groups with good conscience, must change this status quo through not allowing corruption of political leaders to go unrecognized, unchallenged and unpunished. Highly recommended are visionary exercises like the UN sustainable development goals and Africa’s 2063 Agenda that encourages critical thinking and forces leaders of Governments to include civil society resources in the planning and achieving of national objectives.

“Throughout history it has been the inaction of those who could have acted, the indifference of those who should have known better, the silence of the voice of justice when it mattered most, that has made it possible for evil to triumph.” – HIM Emperor Haile Selassie 1<sup>st</sup>.

### Rastafari: -

Rastafari chose to be different, but paid a high price for dissent against ‘Babylon’.

Rastafarians faced ostracism/marginalization and brutal suppression because of their chosen human rights association that is based on African love and expression. Initial western attitudes towards the emergence of Rastafari followers were to stifle their existence by any means necessary, including murder on sight. Fellow Africans with western educations and “British” mentalities were simply not ready for such revelation of an African spirit with distinct dreadlock features and with rejection of “white Jesus”. Rastafarians nonetheless boldly expressed themselves as African while living in Caribbean islands and subsequently in the UK. This African-centered mindset was rejected by the majority of Caribbean Africans who were mentally far removed from Africa. There was little knowledge of homeland Africa except for the existence of wildlife there and ‘backward hellish people’. Ignorance prevailed. Yet Rastafari followers persisted with African-centered behavior as their strength. Some initial Rastafari followers rejected formal education in favour of grassroots learning, spiritual reasoning and commonsense knowledge. But this attitude, coupled with marginalization strategies by the state and society, ensured their subsistence existence at the base of society. Thus, Rastafari individuals living in the west experienced brutal black-on-black atrocities, albeit now in the past. The experience of Rastafari living or originating in homeland Africa has not met with the same level of hostilities. The reality of this shows that the enslavement experience along with colonialization can be more damaging on the collective psyche of African societies. Rastafari in the west, as evidence of damage to the community psyche, often observe their children become despondent with an unjust enforced poverty existence, and therefore turn aside from an Africa-oriented outlook to lessen their personal burdens of living under white supremacy.

The “Rastafarian” demonstrates African-centered resilience. Rastafari culture relies on no other than HIM Emperor Haile Selassie 1<sup>st</sup> for spiritual guidance and African-centrism as a philosophy. These basic tenets have propelled positive African awareness worldwide and have even captivated other races to embrace African-centered thinking. Whilst the Rastafari “livity” since its dawn in the year 1930 has undergone harassment, murder, imprisonment, marginalization, poverty and intolerance within their own nations and by their own African populations, this reality was however superseded by the self-satisfaction, dignity, and comfort among Rastafari of charting a new path that didn’t depend on the blessing of white people. Rastafari individuals reinforced their survival and gained an economic foothold through farming and by starting restaurants, showcasing vegetarian diets, as well as various forms of creative expression including producing garments, arts, crafts and music that captured imaginations. Members also formed themselves into Mansions and later Non-Governmental Organizations that helped in their teachings, outlook and international spread.

However, despite an Afri-centric outlook and a similar general character, some Rastafari individuals are however still tainted by an inferiority complex and wallow in self-pity due to the impact of enslavement and colonial miseducation. Some community members, like others in wider society, are too plagued by feelings of self-doubt and mistrust of fellow members to contribute to cooperative

enterprises for achievement of collective ideas and programs. However, the overall movement continues to uplift, inspire and motivate ordinary people seeking equality and justice worldwide.

### **Way Forward – African-centered cooperation**

Today the world's Rastafari community is unswerving in the pursuit for righteous judgement as it relates to reparations for the atrocities of trans-Atlantic slavery, and in the desire be returned to homeland Africa. The community therefore puts forward as one of its initiatives that can heal the African psyche, the Reparations for Settlement in Africa Project (RSAP) which proposes the use of reparations to allow the beneficiaries, settlement on the African continent through facilitating transportation to Africa, access to land, housing, business pursuits and personal development in Africa. The process is open to all the beneficiaries of reparations for transatlantic slavery and all member nations of the African Union (AU). Details of this process are found at [www.reparationsforsettlement.net](http://www.reparationsforsettlement.net) . We are proposing meaningful and continuous dialogue between Africans in homeland Africa and the Diaspora – this is an objective of CPAN. We want to have an on-line register of Africans living in the diaspora who are desirous of returning to reside in specific countries in homeland Africa. We want to see initiatives to assist with the reintegration of returnees into existing societies in these countries. We wish to see financing becoming accessible to these individuals to pursue entrepreneurship. We want to see Africans helping Africans. We are sure that the processes required for the “welcomed return” settlement plan therein outlined can capture all the broad goals of this conference.

Settlement in Africa by Africans living in the Diaspora supported by the Africa Union (AU), individual African Governments, Caribbean Governments and other Governments from around the world, Civil Society Organizations and Non-Governmental Organizations of these nations in full cooperation to make settlement happen as smoothly as possible, will largely bring about the healing required to change African psyche and show ‘African-to-African’ love. We propose that this formal program of a high-profile transfer of people from the Diaspora to homeland Africa can be further used as the template to seek reparations and to have the former slave-owning countries responsible for trans-Atlantic slavery further finance this project and subsequently invest in a new financial institution that will support entrepreneurship within homeland Africa.

### **Conclusion**

Forgiveness and reconciliation; facilitation of the resettlement of Africans forced to reside in the Diaspora through enslavement; commencement of “welcomed returned” operation that was recommended after the 2001 World Conference against Racism and Xenophobia in Durban, South Africa; open and encourage meaningful communication between the populations of homeland Africa and the Diaspora utilizing video conferencing and physical meetings; targeted communication to the youth utilizing African imagery; commencing civil society contacts and people exchanges including school student programs; organized book promotions by African authors to Africans; film-promotions by African producers to African audiences; increased Governments’ cooperation backed by the AU and CARICOM mandates; increased trading and economic cooperation; artists and musician hosting; all forms of business development and economic cooperation between Africans: all necessary to heal the African psyche, and are all practical processes that can be implemented in this important UN Decade for People of African Descent (2015-2024 ).