

Martin Luther King, Jr. Eulogy
Given by Robert F. Kennedy
April 4, 1968

I have bad news for you, for all our fellow citizens, and people who love peace all over the world, and that is that Martin Luther King was shot and killed tonight.

Martin Luther King dedicated his life to love and to justice for his fellow human beings, and he died because of that effort.

In this difficult day, in this difficult time for the United States, it is perhaps well to ask what kind of a nation we are and what direction we want to move in. For those of you who are black - considering the evidence there evidently is that there were white people who were responsible - you can be filled with bitterness, with hatred, and desire for revenge. We can move in that direction as a country, in great polarization - black people amongst black, white people amongst white, filled with hatred toward one another.

Or we can make an effort, as Martin Luther King did, to understand and to comprehend, and to replace that violence, that stain of bloodshed that has spread across our land, with an effort to understand that compassion and love.

For those of you who are black and are tempted to be filled with hatred and distrust at the injustice of such an act, against all white people, I can only say that I feel in my own heart the same kind of feeling. I had a member of my family killed, but he was killed by a white man. But we have to make an effort in the United States; we have to make an effort to understand, to go beyond these rather difficult times.

My favorite poet was Aeschylus. He wrote: "In our sleep pain which cannot forget falls drop by drop upon the heart until, in our own despair, against our will, comes wisdom through the awful grace of God."

What we need in the United States is not division; what we need in the United States is not hatred; what we need in the United States is not violence or lawlessness, but love and wisdom and compassion toward one another, and a feeling of injustice towards those who still suffer within our country, whether they be white or they be black.

We've had difficult times in the past. We will have difficult times in the future. It is not the end of violence; it is not the end of lawlessness; it is not the end of disorder.

But the vast majority of white people and the vast majority of black people in this country want to live together, want to improve the quality of our life, and want justice for all human beings who abide in our land. Let us dedicate ourselves to what the Greeks wrote so many years ago: to tame the savageness of man and to make gentle the life of this world.

Let us dedicate ourselves to that, and say a prayer for our country and for our people.

Malcolm X Eulogy Given by Ossie Davis

February 27, 1965

Here - at this final hour, in this quiet place - Harlem has come to bid farewell to one of its brightest hopes -extinguished now, and gone from us forever. For Harlem is where he worked and where he struggled and fought - his home of homes, where his heart was, and where his people are - and it is, therefore, most fitting that we meet once again - in Harlem - to share these last moments with him. For Harlem has ever been gracious to those who have loved her, have fought her, and have defended her honor even to the death.

It is not in the memory of man that this beleaguered, unfortunate, but nonetheless proud community has found a braver, more gallant young champion than this Afro-American who lies before us - unconquered still. I say the word again, as he would want me to: Afro-American - Afro-American Malcolm, who was a master, was most meticulous in his use of words. Nobody knew better than he the power words have over minds of men. Malcolm had stopped being a 'Negro' years ago. It had become too small, too puny, too weak a word for him. Malcolm was bigger than that. Malcolm had become an Afro-American and he wanted - so desperately - that we, that all his people, would become Afro-Americans too.

There are those who will consider it their duty, as friends of the Negro people, to tell us to revile him, to flee, even from the presence of his memory, to save ourselves by writing him out of the history of our turbulent times. Many will ask what Harlem finds to honor in this stormy, controversial and bold young captain - and we will smile. Many will say turn away - away from this man, for he is not a man but a demon, a monster, a subverter and an enemy of the black man - and we will smile. They will say that he is of hate - a fanatic, a racist - who can only bring evil to the cause for which you struggle! And we will answer and say to them: Did you ever talk to Brother Malcolm? Did you ever touch him, or have him smile at you? Did you ever really listen to him? Did he ever do a mean thing? Was he ever himself associated with violence or any public disturbance? For if you did you would know him. And if you knew him you would know why we must honor him.

Malcolm was our manhood, our living, black manhood! This was his meaning to his people. And, in honoring him, we honor the best in ourselves. Last year, from Africa, he wrote these words to a friend: 'My journey', he says, 'is almost ended, and I have a much broader scope than when I started out, which I believe will add new life and dimension to our struggle for freedom and honor and dignity in the States. I am writing these things so that you will know for a fact the tremendous sympathy and support we have among the African States for our Human Rights struggle. The main thing is that we keep a United Front wherein our most valuable time and energy will not be wasted

fighting each other.' However we may have differed with him - or with each other about him and his value as a man - let his going from us serve only to bring us together, now.

Consigning these mortal remains to earth, the common mother of all, secure in the knowledge that what we place in the ground is no more now a man - but a seed - which, after the winter of our discontent, will come forth again to meet us. And we will know him then for what he was and is - a Prince - our own black shining Prince! - who didn't hesitate to die, because he loved us so.