



**#13** *Knowledge, Wisdom, Understanding*

*Excerpt from "Why We Can't Wait," Chapter 8: The Days to Come by Dr. Martin Luther King, jr.*

Recently, Roy Wilkins and I appeared on the television program "Meet the Press"..... The show did not permit the time for an adequate answer to the implication behind the question: "what more does the Negro want?" When we say that the Negro wants absolute and immediate freedom and equality, not in Africa or in some imaginary state, but right here in this land today, the answer is disturbingly terse to people who are not certain they wish to believe it. Yet this is the fact. Negroes no longer are tolerant or interested in compromise. American history is replete with compromise. As splendid as are the words of the Declaration of Independence, there are disquieting implications in the fact that the original phrasing was altered to delete condemnation of the British monarch for his espousal of slavery. American history chronicles the Missouri Compromise, which permitted the spread of slavery to new states; the Hayes- Tilden Compromise, which withdrew the federal troops from the South and signaled the end of Reconstruction; the Supreme Court's compromise in Plessy v. Ferguson, which enunciated the infamous "separate but equal" philosophy. These measures compromised not only the liberty of the Negro but the integrity of America. In the bursting mood that has overtaken the Negro in 1963, the word compromise is profane and pernicious. The majority of Negro leadership is innately opposed to compromise. Even were this not true, no Negro leader today could divert the direction of the movement or its compelling and inspired forward motion.

Many of our white brothers misunderstand this fact because many of them fail to interpret correctly the nature of the Negro Revolution. Some believe that it is the work of skilled agitators who have the power to raise or lower the floodgates at will. Such a movement, maneuverable by a talented few, would not be a genuine revolution. This Revolution is genuine because it was born from the same womb that always gives berth to massive social upheavals- the womb of intolerable conditions and unendurable situations. In this time and circumstance, no leader or set of leaders could have acted as ringmasters, whipping a whole race out of purring contentment into leonine courage and action. If such credit is to be given to any single group, it might well go to the segregationists, who, with their callous and cynical code, helped to arouse and ignite the righteous wrath of the Negro.

It was the people who moved their leaders, not the leaders who moved the people. Of course, there were generals, as there must be in any army. But the command post was in the bursting hearts of millions of Negroes. When such a people begin to move, they create their own theories, shape their own destinies, and choose the leaders who share their own philosophy. A leader who understands this kind of mandate knows he must be sensitive to the anger, the impatience, the frustration, the resolution that have been loosed in his people. Any leader who tries to bottle up these emotions is sure to be blown asunder in the ensuing explosion.

***Martin Luther King Day? by the Unknown Scholar***

This day is set aside for the remembrance of a great man. A man that laid down his life for the Civil rights of black people. Although his message was of nonviolence, he died a tragic violent death at the hands of the alleged killer James Earl Ray. Does any of this mean anything to you? To many in America and the rest of the world, this day doesn't. Some white people feel that Dr. King's work didn't have anything to do with them, and they feel they shouldn't take the day seriously. Some use the day for an extended holiday, or an extra day to waste their parents money polluting their minds and bodies with drugs and alcohol. What white people don't realize is that if it wasn't for Dr. King, some white people would be unemployed and living in the ghettos. Reason being because black people have contributed to the economy tremendously. Businesses such as clothing stores, real estate, car dealerships, convenient stores, and restaurants are just a few to mention. If black people weren't given their rights then many of these privileges would still be restricted. Therefore these businesses would be bankrupt, which would result in the many high class citizens of today resulting to lower class citizens. "Rich Suzy" with the Mustang would then be "Dirty Sandy" with the moped. What I'm trying to get at is that this great man should be recognized as such and remembered by all. It shouldn't be an option to have the day off. This day should be reserved for atonement by all races because of the man he was. He stood for what every man should stand for: freedom, justice, and peace.

***Exalt the Woman a short assertion by the Minister of Defense Huey Newton***

Woman today has strayed from the path of virtue. Instead of being warm, truthful, and soft, she is cold, deceitful and hard. In one respect, our society is to blame for this. Woman learns to fend for herself, to become independent in the sense that she feels she has no need for Man. Money and assets have become the primary focus of the Woman. This is to be expected in a capitalist society; its occurrence was inevitable. Woman in this sense has become Man.

But Man is as much to blame for the backwardness of Woman as society as a whole is. After all, it is our (Man's) ignorance and exploitation of her that caused Woman to stray from her true position as the first educator of the child and keeper of the family. We have degraded and neglected Woman's worth in the household; as its maintainer and backbone. We too have fallen victim to capitalism. Just as Woman has made her focus monetary acquisition, so have we. In the process we have belittled the role of Woman, since it serves no fiscal purpose. But be advised. Though Woman's role is not one of tangible produce, her strength, love, and intelligence is needed to keep the family together and properly educate the child. We must return Woman from Man.

## ***The Administration of Justice is the Firmest Pillar of God by the Righteous One***

Dr. King spent his life serving justice. His life was taken in his pursuit of it. Who among us is so valiant, brave, and courageous to make the same sacrifice? Who among us is willing to sacrifice themselves, both in life and death, for the cause of justice? Are we content in recognizing Dr. King's ideas and dedication as mere memories?

Dr. King saw the promised land when he traveled to the mountain top. He saw the beauty and tranquility of justice in its most splendid and glorious condition. Seeing this, Dr. King was convinced of his cause. He was convinced that justice must, under any circumstances, be served. He did not flinch in the face of death even when he knew it was upon him because he knew and understood that no price, not even his own life, was too great to pay for justice. And make no mistake; Dr. King knew his death was at hand, when on the night before his murder he spoke about not getting to the promised land, which he had recently seen in all its beauty..

Dr. King's vision of the promised land was just that; a vision. He saw something that in our eyes, seems unrealistic if not unattainable. Hence, logic would dictate that we lack Dr. King's vision. We have no concept of what it was Dr. King saw when he was on the mountain top. Certainly, the country we live in now is not what Dr. King saw when he was there because the problems King fought against then still exist today. Are we so blind to think that because our country has exalted the likes of "Puffy" Combs, Michael Jordan, or any other athlete or entertainer that justice has been served in America? What would Dr. King say to that? While some minorities have prospered in America's limelight, millions of others suffer because of it.. In his book "Why We Can't Wait," King talks about tokenism and under his definition, the likes of Combs and Jordan are tokens. King would call such tokens a means of distorting and covering up the venomous racism that still exists. Dr. King would see and point out the murder and rape that black people are the victim of every year at the hands of racists. He would see the faltering inner city communities which have declined even more since his murder. And among other things, he see and would point out the condition the black woman, who is exploited and degraded seemingly every minute of every of hour of every day of every month. This is what Dr. King would see with his vision.

We must all strive to acquire Dr. King's vision. Without question, we lack it. Dr. King was wise enough to see that one man's success does not equal the prosperity of the community, that just because black people are on t.v. doesn't mean racism is gone, that just because there are affirmative action laws doesn't mean black children will graduate high school or read with greater proficiency. But we fall into believing these and other misconceptions. Dr. King's vision was not unattainable; he was only a man, a human being. We can and should have the same vision as he. If we had it, we would know that Dr. King's immortality does not rest in his physical being, but in his vision itself.

Thus, Dr. King can only live forever if someone carries on and uses his vision. We can remember his accomplishments, his speeches, and his accolades. But to do so is to reduce him to a memory; after all, that is what a memory is: something we remember. To know, understand, and use Dr. King's vision is something much greater; it is infinite, eternal, and divine, because he was merely upholding God's firmest pillar. Who among us has the passion, bravery, and vision to do the same? Without such people, Dr. King's legacy will remain a memory, and our country will forever be blind to his vision on the mountain top.

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## ***Information Highway (Slow Down) by the Conscious One***

At the start of a new millennium the crisis of race in America is still raging. Yet in this age of globalization, with its impressive scientific and technological innovations in information, communication and science, a focus on the lingering effects of white supremacy seem outdated and antiquated ie.. "The world has moved on and you should too."

But the race question still lingers over America's collective conscience. We have allowed extreme cases to legitimize our inactiveness. We have found it more acceptable to pass the buck and call this (the buck) progress, than to admit, embrace, and destroy white supremacy. The KKK vindicated many people's lives when they came to Kalamazoo. Many were disgusted with their rhetoric, but found solace in their dogma because it proved that they themselves were not racist since they did not hold such overt white supremacist ideas. Many who did not support the ideas of the KKK supported the work of Murray and Herenstien, authors of the "Bell Curve," which asserted that the Black culture is of limited intelligence, or the belief that "Birth of a Nation," a film with racist overtones and ideas of white supremacy, is one of the best 100 ever.

Our technological advances have overshadowed our social degradation. Economists have shown that fully one third of the African American community is worse off economically today than they were the day Dr. King was killed. The disparity of quality education between inner-city schools and white suburban schools are almost at the level that ignited the *Brown v. Board of Education* Supreme Court decision. Multicultural education is being challenged across the nation. Police brutality, even having exposed it, is still on the rise. *Kalamazoo Police Department is under investigation for their role in the violation of one of its citizen's rights.* Political Action committees (Interest Groups) control the politicians that "we the people" elected. Business leaders are making deals that benefit their economic prosperity at the expense of overlooking the interests of the American masses.

So as we celebrate Dr. King's life and his ideologies we must not allow the information age to reduce the cause of racial equality to a web site, or worse yet a web page: [www.racism.com](http://www.racism.com). Defeating white supremacy is real. It is not a game or something you need parental approval to be involved in. You do not need a credit card number to be a part of the Revolution. There are no screen names in the Revolution, and no matter how flat they make t.v.s, the Revolution still won't be televised.

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