

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

ADDRESS *of*

REVEREND DOCTOR MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR.
DELIVERED TO A JOINT CONVENTION OF THE
TWO HOUSES OF THE GENERAL COURT
OF MASSACHUSETTS
APRIL 22, 1965

Including also the prayer offered by REVEREND MICHAEL E. HAYNES of Boston, a member of the House of Representatives, and the address of the HONORABLE JOHN F. X. DAVOREN of Milford, Speaker of the House of Representatives.

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PRAYER OFFERED BY REVEREND MICHAEL E. HAYNES
OF BOSTON, A MEMBER OF THE MASSACHUSETTS
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES.

Almighty God, Thou who art the Creator of all mankind, we invoke Thy Divine blessings upon this special assembly. We thank Thee for the occasion which brings us into these sacred chambers this afternoon.

Here in Massachusetts, the Cradle of Liberty, we thank Thee for the freedom and opportunity which has been afforded Thy children.

We thank Thee for Thy servant Martin whom we honor today and who shall speak to us from his rich experiences in the cause of freedom for all men.

We thank Thee, O God, that at a needed time in the history of Thy people Thou didst anoint and call a Moses to lead a particular group of Thy children up and out of the morass of bondage and oppression. Through this great prophet Thou didst command a hardened and selfish heart saying "Let my people go!"

Again, O God, Thou didst step into history, appoint and call a Giuseppe Garibaldi to lead another segment of Thy children in their struggle for freedom from restrictive servitude onto a road of liberty and opportunity. We thank Thee!

Again, O God, Thou didst move onto the stage of human events through a Robert Emmett, called in a needed and dark hour to lead another group of Thy children into an era of justice, liberty, and fulfilled hope. For this we also thank Thee!

We thank Thee that Thou canst and will deliver all of Thy children!

Here in this great commonwealth we cherish the memory of another special servant of Thine whom Thou didst appoint to lead our nation to new frontiers of a brighter and better day. Thou didst raise him up from a people once hurt and hated because of their national origin and their devout religious faith. Thou didst use him to break down long standing barriers of prejudice and discrimination, lifting him into the highest public office of this great

land. How can we here ever forget that this great man was finally called to shed his life blood on a Dallas Street at the hand of a prejudiced mind, dying as a martyr for justice, freedom, and brotherhood. We thank Thee for John Fitzgerald Kennedy!

At this time and on this historic day Thou hast called forth another of Thine appointed servants from a people long oppressed, long deprived, and too long denied. Thou hast raised up a Martin Luther King to stand in the corridor of time and cry out on behalf of Thy children who today are not truly free. Use him, O God, to speak Thy Truth! Grant, O God, that we will not only receive the man, but that we will receive the Truth which he brings. And thus, O God, may Thy continued blessings fall upon this great Commonwealth of Massachusetts, in the name of Him who didst give His life that all men might have life and that more abundantly, even our Lord. Amen.

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

ADDRESS OF THE HONORABLE JOHN F. X. DAVOREN
OF MILFORD, SPEAKER OF THE MASSACHUSETTS
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES.

THURSDAY, APRIL 22, 1965

On behalf of the membership of this great Joint Convention of the Senate and the House of Representatives of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, I am privileged to extend our most cordial welcome to the distinguished American and world spiritual leader, who has honored us with his presence here today — Reverend Martin Luther King.

When the history of our troubled times is written, the outstanding contributions of this devoted man of God to the cause of human dignity and equality shall be revered by free men everywhere.

Human freedom has led a delicate and fragile existence through the ages. In many areas of the world, it is completely unknown and non-existent even today. If we would heed the lessons of recorded history, we must acknowledge that human freedom remains insecure and uncertain so long as it is possessed by some, but denied to others.

Here in America, we must recognize what we should never have forgotten or overlooked because it is essential to the meaning of our existence as a nation:

that all men are created equal under God;

that each man, regardless of race, color, or creed, has the inalienable right to develop his human potentialities to the fullest;

that if human equality is to flourish, it can only do so where freedom under law exists, and is guaranteed, for all citizens; and

that to restrict or deny freedom to one man or one group, is to create an intolerable situation which must of necessity constitute a continuing threat to the freedom and security of all Americans.

There are those who would regard the present civil rights struggle in America as a Negro problem. Nothing could be further from the truth. The problem of civil rights in our country is a problem for

all Americans. So long as inequality and discrimination continue to fester in America, no American can say that this nation has achieved its historic destiny or that the ideals of our Founding Fathers have been realized in practice.

We are honored today by the presence of this great champion of freedom. In the unremitting struggle for social justice in America, few men have labored with greater diligence and dedication. Truly he has become the moral conscience of our nation — constantly reminding us of our national heritage and ideals, and prodding us to move forward to complete the unfinished work of the Republic.

It is appropriate indeed that the people of Massachusetts, through their elected representatives, should proudly welcome here today this selfless apostle of non-violent action as the best means to advance the cause of civil rights and to achieve equal justice under law. For all who share his unshakable faith in human freedom, his passionate concern for human dignity, and his resolute belief in the motive power of reason and persuasion, Massachusetts — which gave to the nation Henry David Thoreau and David Lloyd Garrison, and more recently, John F. Kennedy and the Reverend James Reeb — must truly be regarded as their spiritual and intellectual home.

And so, Dr. King, on behalf of the members of the General Court and all of the people of Massachusetts, I bid you a sincere and heartfelt welcome to our state. This indeed is your spiritual and intellectual home.

May the day be not too distant when we may see the glorious results of your tireless efforts, and the efforts of all men of good will who share your concern for our country, when all men may stand equally erect as brothers in the bright sunlight of human freedom.

ADDRESS OF REVEREND DOCTOR MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR., DELIVERED TO A JOINT CONVENTION OF THE TWO HOUSES OF THE GENERAL COURT OF MASSACHUSETTS ON APRIL 22, 1965.

To the distinguished members of this august body, I need not pause to say how very delighted and honored I am to have the privilege and the opportunity to meet with this auspicious body. For one who has been barricaded from the seats of government and jailed so many times for attempting to petition legislatures and councils, I can assure you that this is a momentous occasion!

Let me hasten to say that I come to Massachusetts not to condemn but to encourage! It was from these shores that the vision of a new nation conceived in liberty was born, and it must be from these shores that liberty must be preserved; and the hearts and lives of every citizen preserved through the maintenance of opportunity and through the constant creation of those conditions that will make justice and brotherhood a reality for all of God's children.

There is a desperate, poignant, and sometimes agonizing question on the lips of our generation. I am asked this question a great deal, and I am sure you hear it, and you sometimes ask it. "Are we really making progress in the area of race relations?" All over the world and all over our nation people are asking this poignant question. On one hand I think we can proudly point to the fact that even within the last decade we have come a long, long way. Many of the conditions of a dark yesterday are no longer alive in our nation today. We can point to that momentous moment in 1954 when the Supreme Court of our nation rendered a great decision which said in substance that the old Plessy Doctrine of 1896 must go; that separate facilities are inherently unequal; that to segregate a child on the basis of his race is to deny that child equal protection of the law. And so we can all be proud of the fact that the Brown Decision brought our nation a long, long way toward the realization of a great and noble dream.

We can think of the fact that a great citizen of this state, who finally became President and who became the tragic victim of an assassin's bullet on Elm Street in Dallas, Texas, stood up before the

nation on a sweltering June afternoon in 1963 and said in eloquent, unequivocal terms, that the problem we face in race relations is more than a political problem and more than a sociological problem. It is a moral problem! It is as old as the Scriptures and as modern as the Constitution. It is the question of whether we will treat our Negro brothers as we ourselves would like to be treated. And on the heels of that great speech, you will remember that he presented to the Congress of our nation, the most comprehensive civil rights package ever presented by any president of our great nation. We can be proud of the fact that legislation was finally passed, and it will stand as an eternal tribute to the memory of President John Fitzgerald Kennedy. I am happy to report that all over the South that bill is being implemented, and many communities are complying with the civil rights bill, particularly the public accommodations section, with amazing good sense and calm reasonableness.

This should make all of us happy and proud of the fact that on one hand when we answer this desperate question, we can answer with a sort of creative optimism. On the other hand, when one is realistic, when one is committed to truth, when one will look at the hard facts of life, he will have allowed himself to become a victim of superficial optimism. He will not allow himself to overlook basic realities.

Although we have come a long, long way in the struggle for brotherhood and the struggle to make civil rights a reality for all people, I must say to you this afternoon that we have still a long, long way to go — all over this nation. We do not have to look very far to see that. We only need open our newspapers, or turn on our televisions, or look around in our own communities, and we realize that there are still problems alive that reveal to us that we have not yet reached the promised land in civil rights!

We realize that the forces of evil are still alive. We see lawlessness in the form of the Ku Klux Klan. We see forces still resisting through various evasive schemes, and through various systems of intraposition and nullification.

Beyond that we see subtle forms of discrimination in all of our communities, expressed in housing discrimination, de facto segregation in the public schools, and expressed in job discrimination and unemployment. But I am convinced, as I stand before you this evening, that if America and democracy are to live, segregation must die! In a real sense segregation is a cancer in the body politic which must be removed before our moral health can be realized.

In a real sense segregation, whether it is de jure segregation of certain sections of the South or de facto segregation of the North, is a new form of slavery covered up with certain niceties of complexities. And all men of goodwill all over this nation must work together passionately and unrelentingly to solve this problem!

We must be able to say that we are through with segregation in all of its dimensions now, henceforth, and forevermore! And we must end it! As I said earlier and as the late President Kennedy said, we must end it not merely because it will solve certain political and certain economic problems facing our nation. We must end it because it will make us a better nation morally! Certainly it will help the image of our nation in international affairs. We all love America and we want it to have a marvelous image.

In the final analysis, discrimination must be uprooted from American society, not merely to meet the Communist challenge, not merely to appeal to Asian and African peoples, ultimately *it must be uprooted because it is morally wrong!* It must be done not merely because it is diplomatically sound, but because it is morally compelling. And if we as a nation will do this, it will carry us to higher heights of morality, and it will help us realize our great dream. Now if this is to be done, there must be a massive action program all over our nation and in every community.

If this kind of action program is to develop, I would like to submit to you that, we must get rid of at least two myths that still get around and are still disseminated all over our country. One is what I refer to as the myth of time. There are still too many individuals who argue and who feel that the problem of racial injustice can only be solved by waiting on time. They say to the Negro, and his allies in the white community; "Just be nice and patient, and wait a hundred or two hundred years and the problem will work itself out." I think that there is an answer to this myth and it is that time is neutral. Time can be used either constructively or destructively. I think we must face the sad fact that the forces of ill will, the forces committed to negative ends, the forces committed to those things that will distort our democracy, and the extreme writers of our nation, have often used time much more effectively than the people of goodwill.

It may well be that we will have to repent in this generation, not merely for the vitriolic words and the violent actions of the bad people who will bomb a church in Birmingham, Alabama or club down a Reverend James Reeb, or shoot a Mrs. Viola Liuzzo. We

must also repent for the appalling silence and indifference of the good people who sit down and say wait on time. Ultimately we must come to see that human progress never rolls in on the wills of inevitability. It comes through the tireless efforts and the persistent work of dedicated individuals who are willing to be co-workers with God. Without this hard work, time itself becomes an ally of the primitive forces of social stagnation. We must see that the time is always right to do right, and that we must constantly help time.

Now there is another myth and it is the notion that the problem which we face in race relations cannot be solved through legislative channels. The individuals who argue this say that you must change the heart.

Now is the time for the strong voting bill which will bring an end to the long night of the denial of the right to vote to millions of Negro citizens in blackbelt counties all across the south. That voting bill does not need a Dirksen amendment, which states in substance that if a community registers about sixty per cent of its people it no longer falls under this particular bill. That would only give many communities in the south an excuse to quickly register sixty per cent of the people of voting age, most of that sixty per cent being white, and then it will leave forty per cent of the people still facing discrimination.

Now is the time for a strong forthright voting bill that will end the necessity for voting bills in the future! And I think men of goodwill all over this nation must call upon the Congress of our United States to deal with this problem!

Now is the time for strong legislation to end discrimination in housing. There also must be vigorous enforcement of such legislation! *Now is the time* for men of goodwill to get together to make it possible for better housing conditions to be brought into being for low-income and middle-income families.

Certainly a great society is ultimately a compassionate society. I submit to you ladies and gentlemen this afternoon, in our nation there are between forty and fifty million people who are poverty stricken. Some ten million families earning less than three thousand dollars a year, and they have from four to five members in these families. These people find themselves perishing on the lonely island of poverty in the midst of a vast ocean of material prosperity and so often we do not see them. Michael Harrington in the book *The Ugly American* calls him "the invisible fool". So often these are the people that are forgotten. If we are to be a great nation,

we must all be a part of the war on poverty. This is a war in which we cannot afford to have any conscientious objectors! Everybody must join the war against poverty so that all of God's children will be able to have the basic necessities of life. *Now is the time* to end poverty!

Now is the time to end segregation in the public schools. Young boys and young girls must grow up with world perspectives. Segregation debilitates the segregator as well as the segregated. We must go all out to aid those communities and those school districts which are seriously trying to grapple with the problems of de facto segregation.

Now is the time to deal with all of these legislative problems that will bring about a true climate and bring about real conditions where real brotherhood can emerge. And may I say to you this afternoon, that in doing this we will be preserving the health of our whole nation. Nothing can be more tragic than to build a nation with a large segment of that nation feeling that they have no stake in this society; feeling that they have nothing to lose, and where thousands of people are jobless. Many live in rat infested housing conditions, and they find themselves frustrated day in and day out, constantly fighting against a nagging sense of "nobodyness". For them it is often difficult to hear the pleas of nonviolence. These are the people that may rise up because they feel that they have nothing to lose. They see life as nothing but a long and desolate corridor with no exit sign. We have a responsibility to give these people a sense of belonging, a sense of "sombodiness", and a feeling that they do count!

In the midst of this social change, I will continue, and I can assure you that the civil rights leaders generally will continue, to preach a doctrine of *nonviolence!* We believe firmly that violence creates many more social problems than it solves. And may I say to people all over this nation, that if the Negro succumbs to the temptation of using violence in his struggle, unborn generations will be the recipients of a long and desolate night of bitterness, and our chief legacy to the future will be an endless reign of meaningless chaos.

Not substituting one tyranny for another, we will go into the bright tomorrow, not seeking to rise from a position of disadvantage to one of advantage, thereby subverting justice. It is my firm conviction that a doctrine of black supremacy is as dangerous and evil as a doctrine of white supremacy. God is not interested merely in the freedom of brown men, black men, or yellow men, but God is

interested in freedom for the whole human race, and the creation of a society where all men will live together as brothers, and where every man will respect the dignity and the worth of human personality. We will work in this way! I believe firmly that we will see that brighter day. May I say to you, that I am convinced that if this problem is to be solved, there must be sort of a divine discontent. As I said earlier, it will not work itself out. And I must also say at this point, that no section of our country can boast of clean hands in the area of brotherhood. There is much to be done all over our nation and in every community.

There are certain technical words within every academic discipline that soon become stereotypes and cliches. Every academic discipline has its technical nomenclature. Modern psychology has a word that is probably used more than any other word in psychology. It is the word "maladjusted". Now certainly, we all want to live the well-adjusted life in order to avoid neurotic and schizophrenic personalities. And I say to you this afternoon, my friends, there are some things in our nation and in our world to which I am proud to be maladjusted and to which I call upon all men of goodwill to be maladjusted; to which I call upon the Great Legislature of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts to be maladjusted until the good society is realized. I must honestly say to you that I intend never to become adjusted to segregation and discrimination! I must honestly say that I never intend to adjust myself to economic conditions, and take necessities from the many and to give luxuries to the few, leaving millions of people smothering in an air-tight cage of poverty in the midst of an affluent society.

I must honestly say that I never intend to adjust to the madness of militarism of man's self-defeating effects of physical violence. In a day when Sputniks and the explorers are dashing through outer space, and guided ballistic missiles are carving highways of death through the stratosphere, no nation can win a war. It is no longer a choice between violence and nonviolence. It is either nonviolence or nonexistence! The alternative to disarmament, the alternative to a greater suspension of nuclear tests, the alternative to negotiated settlements, the alternative to strengthening the United Nations and hereby disarming the whole world, may well be a civilization plunged into the abyss of annihilation. And so it may well be that there is need for the formation of a new organization in our world, "The International Association for the Advancement of Creative Maladjustment." Men and women who will be as maladjusted as

the prophet Amos, who in the midst of the injustices of his day, could cry out in words that echoed across the centuries, "Let justice roll down like waters, and righteousness like a mighty stream;" as maladjusted as Abraham Lincoln, who had the vision to see that this nation could not survive "half slave and half free;" as maladjusted as Thomas Jefferson, who in the midst of an age amazingly adjusted to slavery, scratched across the pages of history, words lifted to cosmic proportions, "We hold these truths to be self-evident that all men are created equal, and that they are endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable rights, that among these are life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness." Yes, as maladjusted as Jesus Christ, who could say, "Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, pray for them that despitefully use you." Through such maladjustment we shall be able to emerge from the bleak and desolate midnight of man's inhumanity to man, into the bright and glittering daybreak of freedom and justice.

May I say in conclusion that I still have faith in America, and I still have a deep belief that we will solve this problem. We are developing a coalition of conscience. We are developing a grand alliance that will make it possible in the not-to-distant future to solve this problem. So I have no despair about the future.

Somehow I know that we as Negroes will win our freedom, abused and scorned though we may be. Our destinies are tied up with the destinies of America. Before the pilgrim fathers landed at Plymouth, we were here! Before Jefferson wrote the great words of the Declaration of Independence, we were here! Before the great words of the "Star Spangled Banner" were written, we were here! For more than two centuries our foreparents worked in this country without wages where they made cotton king. They built a home for their masters in the midst of the most humiliating and oppressive conditions. And yet out of a bottomless vitality, they continued to grow and develop. I am convinced that if the cruelties of slavery could not stop us, the opposition that we now face will surely fail.

Before the victory is won some more may have to go to jail. Before the victory is won some will be scarred up a bit. Before the victory is won, maybe somebody else like the Reverend Reeb of this community will have to face physical death. Physical death is the price that some must pay to free their children and their white brothers from a permanent death of the spirit. Nothing can be more redemptive!

Yes, we shall overcome! We shall overcome! We shall overcome with your help! We shall overcome because the arch of the moral universe is long, but it bends toward justice. We shall overcome because Carlisle is right, "No lie can live forever." We shall overcome because William Cullen Bryant is right, "Truth crushed to earth will rise again." We shall overcome because James Russell Lowell is right, "Truth forever on the scaffold, wrong forever on the throne; Yet that scaffold sways the future, and behind the dim unknown standeth God within the shadows keeping watch above his own."

With this faith, we will be able to hew out of the mountain of despair, a stone of hope. With this faith, we will be able to transform the jangling discords of our nation into a beautiful symphony of brotherhood. With this faith, we will be able to speed up the day when all of God's children all over this nation, black men and white men, Jews and Gentiles, Protestants, and Catholics will be able to join hands and sing the words of the old Negro spiritual, "Free at last, free at last, thank God Almighty, we are free at last."

THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO

PH.D. THESIS

Submitted by [Name] to the Faculty of the Division of the Physical Sciences in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

Chicago, Illinois

19[Year]

