

## Dr. Martin Luther King Birthday – 1/19/2009

My name is kebret Ketema. I do feel honored today to be here with you to honor Martin Luther King's birthday. It is a very important day for all of us because it is a day to remember. A day to remember what MLK did for us and we hope what MLK did for us, so will our next president to be Barak Obama.

Martin Luther King Jr. said "Faith is taking the first step, even when you don't see the whole staircase."

Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., was and still is a great and honorable man. He accomplished many things during his life, but his major achievement was being the voice for the unheard and the ignored. Through his speeches and marches, he did not only fight for racial equality, but also acted as a leader for many people who had to struggle and face social injustice everyday.

Martin Luther King Jr., was born on January 15, 1929, in Atlanta, Georgia. He received a B..A. Degree from Morehouse College. In 1955, he received his PhD. from Boston University, where he met his future wife, Coretta Scott King. Martin Luther King Jr. believed the nation was in need of a civil rights change. He traveled millions miles and spoke about may hundreds of times. He led boycotts, marches, protests, and gave numerous inspiring speeches that caught the nation's attention. Arrested and assaulted, Dr. Martin Luther King wouldn't quit until a change was made.

Some could say King changed this nation by giving speeches and leading marches, but I think he changed this nation by making everyone look into their hearts and realizing what was truly happening. In his famous "I Have a Dream" speech, MLK said, "but one hundred years later, the Negro still is not free. One hundred years later, the life of the Negro is sadly crippled by the manacles of segregation and discrimination..." Just by reading his speeches or letters, you could see that he took time and made sure that his point was made. A way he shows this is by repeating "I have a dream" all throughout his speech. He was determined to change the nation's point of view and end segregation once and for all. He would do whatever it took to bring equality among all people "divided by fear and united by hope".

What can we, the people like me and you, do to make a difference in our homes, schools, and communities? First of all, we must admit that there is still discrimination in our world. We can stop this by simply including someone or not judging others. You might think, "How can we stop this from happening if we're just one person?" The answer is simple. **One little thing can make a big difference.** I also learned that every little drop counts. As I grow up, I learn that it's sometimes hard to accept others who are different than us. It's mostly because we're afraid of what people might think. I also learn that respect is not easily earned; it's something that we must gain and work for ourselves.

**To some, Martin Luther King Jr. was the light at the end of the tunnel for those who were seeking hope, refuge, and faith.** He wanted to change the way society treated "minor" ethnical groups. He spoke out when no one else would and showed concern to those who had lost all hope. **It doesn't take a famous person to do something big..** All it takes is someone with the love, passion, and courage to speak out and make a difference.

For us first Eritrean-American generation and for you who experienced hardship and fought to liberate Eritrea, the memory of MLK gives us new meaning and energizes us to continue the struggle. We cannot live in the comfort zone while our people in Eritrea are denied the basic daily needs. Where one extra bread for one family is considered a leisure.

I, as a young child of proud parents of Eritrean origin, I want to see realized the dream of Dr. King in every people of the world who live under a lawless regime. I want to see the freedom and pride that is shining in the United States of America today on the inauguration of president Obama, that every barrier be broken, and at last, the people of Eritrea sing the song of joy: Free at last.

Thank you and God bless you!