

What would Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. say, If he were present and alive today?

In fifty years since his death it would seem;
He'd have comments on the state of his dream.
What would Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. say,
If he were present and alive today?
There would be many issues to address;
Economics, education and yes
The moral status of our nation,
Healthcare, poverty and race relations.

He would talk to the young and walk among
The youth to inspire with word or song;
To gain their perspective on what is wrong;
To uplift their spirits and make them strong.
Non-violence would be his priority,
When questioning unjust authority.
From his past, it's easy to speculate,
His views on love and his stance on hate.

So, listen to pundits, as they surmise
How this world would look through the dreamer's eyes.
Where there's injustice, he'd want it to stop.
This visionary from the mountain top;
This leader who has seen the promised land;
Would staunchly advocate a moral stand.
He would commend progress, but not ignore,
The obligation to do much and more.

What would Martin Luther King, Jr. say
If he were present and alive today?
He'd smile to see we had a president
Of African American descent;
But the prison industrial complex grew,
As a wellspring for local revenue,
And we destabilized communities,
By shipping their industries overseas.

Divisive feelings on integration;
Polarized factions on immigration;
Forgot the historical manuscript;
Enmity to the poor and a new script
Where faith does not compel us to embrace
Specific members of the human race;
Face our neighbors with equality;

Reality and not mythology.

How would human trafficking break his heart,
As racial injustice tears us apart;
Bondage, child predators and kidnapping,
The violence in the neighborhoods sapping
Our strength; more violence, more eulogies,
More hatred leads to more casualties,
And we exist in a reality,
Without censorship and morality.

What would Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. say,
If he were present and alive today?
He would note knowledge proliferation;
Yet, many minds turn from education,
While he would acknowledge improvements made;
It would sadden him that we are afraid
Of each other at an alarming rate,
As many are training their hearts to hate.

He would weigh in on the raucous debate
On flags and logos as symbols of hate;
Atrocities done in religion's name;
People have abandoned conscience and shame.
We live in a world where anything goes;
Morality changes, as the wind blows,
But there's evidence the dream is alive;
As long as there is hope we will still strive.

The marches for voter registration
Have been nullified with legislation,
As newer barriers are put in place,
That claim to have nothing to do with race.
But they are designed to restrict the vote;
When he was in prison the words he wrote
To reach us and beseech us from the jail;
So that we as a nation would not fail.

What would Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. say,
If he were present and alive today?
Systemic problems would be called to bear
And through word and action he would declare;
"Injustice if it is found anywhere,
Is a threat to justice everywhere."¹
Leadership with love will help us broker
Excellence over the mediocre.

We have made progress in treating disease,
But I'm sure Dr. King would not be pleased,
"Of all the forms of inequality,"
He once stated without apology,
"Injustice in healthcare is the most shocking
And inhumane."²
But forces are blocking
Character and not the color of skin
From being part of our discipline.

In equal rights, we have made strides,
But bias and injustice still reside:
We should have traveled much further along;
In fighting for rights and righting the wrongs.
The notion, that times are not as they were
Is shattered by a racial slur;
Proximity to how it used to be,
Should stop us short of claiming victory.

¹ Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., Letter from the Birmingham Jail, April 16, 1963

² Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., in a speech to the Medical Committee for Human Rights, 1966