

Tribute at the Funeral of The Late Kgosi Lebone Molotlegi II

PHOKENG, 8 APRIL 2000

Members of the Bafokeng Royal House;
Magosi;
The Premier of the North West Province;
Setshaba sa Bafokeng;
Ladies and Gentlemen.

A letter found in the pocket of an unknown El Salvadorean who died in the fight for freedom reads:

"Ask not my name
Nor if you knew me
The dreams I have had
Will grow without me.
Alive no more
I will go where my dreams have shown me.
Those who carry on the fight
Will plant other roses
All will remember me."

When last I saw at this Royal Place, we had agreed that I would come back to celebrate the progress that had been made to improve the lives of the Bafokeng, to speak about what needed to be done next and to see him installed on his throne. But now tragically and unexpectedly we have to speak of what he meant to all of us.

South Africa has lost a very bright young leader, not only of the Bafokeng but of the whole people of our country. We are gathered here today to remember this son of our soil and to pay our last respects to him.

Through his leadership and vision he has brought more light to this part of our country and not only did his star shine more brightly than his name suggests, but his work, his actions, his commitment to uplift the people of Bafokeng, are an important lesson to all of us.

King Lebone Molotlegi II comes from a long line of powerful ancestors who dedicated their lives to the cause of their nation, who at all times did not flinch in the fight for a better life. It is this commitment which drove King Mmanotshe Molotlegi, the grandfather to King Lebone II, to fight the Commissioner in Rustenburg for the return of the money that belonged to the Bafokeng and most importantly, taking the might of the Platinum Mine Authorities to Court about money owed to the Bafokeng and winning this battle.

King Lebone Molotlegi I followed in his father's footsteps and embarked on a development programme that has been carried forward by his son, King Lebone Molotlegi II.

The legacy that King Lebone Molotlegi II is leaving us with is aptly described by that short El Salvadorean poem:

"Ask not my name
Nor if you knew me
The dreams I have had
Will grow without me."

And indeed those who carry on the fight that King Molotlegi II fought will help to plant other roses of development, of work amongst our people, of selflessness and sacrifice, so that those who come after us can further build on the firm foundation we have established for a better life. And I am sure that in this way, we will all remember King Lebone Molotlegi II.

For us as a nation, we can only overcome the obstacles facing us if we work together as traditional leaders and government, as youth, women, business people, each playing a vital part; and if, through this work and these joint programmes, we realise the common goal of the advancement of our people.

This collaboration must ensure that we have a nation which is free of illiteracy, free of ignorance, a nation which is free of the hunger cries of our children, free of the cycles of poverty and disease.

I hope that when we leave the Royal Place, we will carry the message to our communities, to many of our people who are not with us today, that success in the work we do depends on the solid partnerships between all sectors of our society, in which the traditional leadership plays an important role.

We wish the people of Bafokeng courage as we mourn with you today. Our government and the people of South Africa share your pain. We trust that the work of King Lebone Molotlegi II will continue, and the dreams he had for the Bafokeng people will grow and flower.

Robala ka Kagiso, Seganka sa Diganka, Senatla sa Dinatla.

I thank you.

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