A Description of main Ideas in Martin Luther King Junior’s Speech I Have A Dream

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A DESCRIPTION OF MAIN IDEAS IN MARTIN LUTHER KING JUNIOR’S SPEECH I HAVE A DREAM

A PAPER

BY

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ABSTRACT

Speech is a way of conveying the message that is implied and explicit to many people at certain situations with material that suits the audience. In delivering a speech we must have high courage and enthusiasm, especially if the speech we are going to deliver is inviting, constructing and criticizing. In the title of the paper entitled the main idea in the speech of Martin Luther King I have a dream. The author uses the method of collecting material from books and internet sources. Through this paper the author describes the main idea in the contents of Martin Luther's speech and also some of his wishes for the freedom of Negro people in America. In Martin Luther King's speech entitled I have a Dream, it refers more to democracy to the freedom of the oppressed and alienated Negroes to have equal equality with the religious elite in education and also work. In his speech there were many dreams that Martin wanted to achieve. The author's goal in this paper is to inform the process of the struggle of a Martin Luther in taking over the Negro freedom of oppression, and so that the reader also realizes the importance of tolerance in the state and nation.

Keywords: idea, main idea, general idea, concept of main idea, types of main idea.
ABSTRAK


Kata kunci : ide, ide utama, ide umum, konsep ide utama, jenis ide utama.
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Date,

The Writer

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CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

Speech is human vocal communication using language. Each language uses phonetic combinations of a limited set of perfectly articulated and individualized vowel and consonant sounds that form the sound of its words (that is, all English words sound different from all French words, even if they are the same word, e.g., "role" or "hotel"), and using those words in their semantic character as words in the lexicon of a language according to the syntactic constraints that govern lexical words' function in a sentence.

In speaking, speakers perform many different intentional speech acts, e.g., informing, declaring, asking, persuading, directing, and can use enunciation, intonation, degrees of loudness, tempo, and other non-representational or paralinguistic aspects of vocalization to convey meaning. In their speech speakers also unintentionally communicate many aspects of their social position such as sex, age, place of origin (through accent), physical states (alertness and sleepiness, vigor or weakness, health or illness), psychic states (emotions or moods), physic-psychic states (sobriety or drunkenness, normal consciousness and trance states), education or experience, and the like. Although people ordinarily use speech in dealing with other persons (or animals), when people swear they do not always mean to communicate anything to anyone, and sometimes in expressing urgent emotions or desires
they use speech as a quasi-magical cause, as when they encourage a player in a
game to do or warn them not to do something.

There are also many situations in which people engage in solitary speech.
People talk to themselves sometimes in acts that are a development of what
some psychologists (e.g., Lev Vygotsky) have maintained is the use in thinking
of silent speech in an interior monologue to vivify and organize cognition,
sometimes in the momentary adoption of a dual persona as self addressing self
as though addressing another person. Solo speech can be used to memorize or
to test one's memorization of things, and in prayer or in meditation (e.g., the
use of a mantra).

The writer tell that many different aspects of speech: speech production
and speech perception of the sounds used in a language, speech
repetition, speech errors, the ability to map heard spoken words onto the
vocalizations needed to recreate them, which plays a key role in society
enlargement of their vocabulary, and what different areas of the human brain,
such as Broca's area and Wernicke's area, underlie speech.

Speech is the subject of study for linguistics, cognitive science, communication
studies, psychology, speech pathology, otolaryngology, and acoustics.

Harold Lasswell, a communication theorist, defines ‘communication’ as “Who
(says) What (to) Whom (in) What Channel (with) What Effect” (Lasswell.n.d.,
WWW). But given that theoretical definitions of the term tend to be slippery,
to say the least, perhaps this five-part definition is better left till
later in this chapter when more basic concepts have been addressed to some extent. To start with a ‘working definition’, the verb 'communicate' may be taken to mean “to pass on by speaking or writing’, and the noun 'communication' as “the act of passing on news, information, views, opinions etc’.

In this respect, the Merriam Webster Dictionary (Internet edition) traces the origin of the word(s) to the 14th century, and defines 'communication' both as process and product i.e. "a process by which information is exchanged between individuals through a common system of symbols, signs or behavior" and as "information communicated or transferred as a verbal or written message", respectively.

The 14th century Latin root words of 'communication' are cum (meaning "with"), and munis(indicating "public work") are significant here even if these elements have been combined later into larger units such as communist (to mean ‘common’).

It is interesting to learn that all these units of meaning underlie the word 'community'. Thus, as Gronbeck (1997: 6) notes, "Communities are defined into existence by public talk; human conversation creates, sustains, and alters the sense of community one has with each other".
What this means is that every time we speak up (and sometimes even when we don't speak, as we shall see later), we indicate our sense of 'togetherness' with and belonging to a special community of Speech Communication 3 speakers.

In other words, excluding those occasions when we speak to ourselves ('inner speech' or intrapersonal communication), we always speak publicly to one or more listeners. And when we do, we 'position' ourselves in some way as a member of a particular speech community whose norms, beliefs and values we share and reproduce in social situations. Speech compares with written language which may differ in its vocabulary, syntax, and phonetics from the spoken language, a situation called diglossia. The evolutionary origins of speech are unknown and subject to much debate and speculation. While animals also communicate using vocalizations, and trained apes such as Washoe and Kanzi can use simple sign language, no animals' vocalizations are articulated phonemically and syntactically, and do not constitute speech.

As an area of study at the undergraduate level, ‘speech communication’ deals with aspects of communication theory as well as the practice of speaking in social contexts with special reference to ESL (English as a Second Language).

As an introductory course at the university, it surveys the broad field of communication to sample relevant theory and research, and devotes attention to important communication skills and strategies. Hence, it caters to students with little or no prior background in human speech communication by providing a sound foundation in the general principles of this liberal rhetorical
art that will serve as the basis for more advanced and specialized study of spoken discourse. Given that the target reader of this chapter is probably an English language major in a degree programme, there will be, as the writer mentioned above, a sharper focus on ESL use in interpersonal as well as small group settings.

Thus the writer will explore the definitional, theoretical and componential aspects of oral communication as well as appropriate strategies that students can employ to meet their own verbal interaction needs in such settings and which tend to be common in their immediate academic context. From the outset, it must be said that these objectives take cognizance of two basic assumptions about every act of communication: There is always a social context that is present (‘Nature abhors a vacuum.’), and whether we are aware of it or not, there is always some kind of purpose for communication to be instantiated. The former may be an ‘area’ or even ‘type’ of communication (including intrapersonal, interpersonal, small group, institutional, public, mass, and intercultural communication).

In my paper entitled “A Description of Main Ideain Martin Luther King Junior Speech I Have a Dream”. I will focus on describing the main idea in all the speech Martin Luther King Junior I Have a Dream. (Megan R January 30, 2015) “In Martin Luther King JR’s I have a dream speech, he wants everyone to have the same rights as each other’s they needed to be treated
fairly and equal’. White people should not judge black people on how they are or their skin color.

His speech very useful and has deep meaning for human society who discriminated by the American people. That’s make me want to describe what the main idea of his speech and also what the most goal that he want for the stranger people.

1.2 Problem of the study

What are the main idea in Martin Luther King Junior Speech (I Have a Dream) ?

1.3 Objective of the study

To describe the main idea in Martin Luther King Junior Speech “I Have a Dream”.

1.4 Scope of the study

The scope of the study is limited to the main idea on Martin King Luther Junior Speech”.

1.5 Significance of the study

Theoretically, the significance of this description is to increase the speech understanding in terms of speech communication as use in public, area. Practically, it has significance for the readers to understand what is the main idea and the purpose of the speech.
1.6 Method of the study

The writer uses the qualitative method in doing this paper. The primary data is the speech of Martin Luther King Junior and the secondary of data sources from internet. The writer collects some data to support the description, finding the related data to the research then narrowing data of the internet research to the related element which are about theme. Having understood the main idea of the speech, the writer want describes main idea in the speech and make the conclusion.
CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

2.1 Definition of Idea

Idea active, determining principle of a thing. The word, brought into English from the Greek *eidos*, was for some time most commonly used roughly in the technical sense given to it by Plato in his theory of forms. By the 17th century it had come to be used more or less in its modern sense of “thought,” “concept,” “belief,” “intention,” or “plan.”

In the 17th and 18th centuries, the word “idea” was in very general use as a technical term of philosophy, not with its Platonic meaning, but in a variety of senses mostly traceable to John Locke, some of which were derived by him from René Descartes. Locke introduces it first as “that term which, I think, serves best to stand for whatsoever is the object of the understanding when a man thinks” and later as signifying “the immediate object of perception, thought, or understanding.” This vague usage leads him into serious difficulties. In the first place, he holds that ideas are “in the mind”; so that, if ideas are said to be the objects of perception, he is faced with the problem of explaining how perception could lead to knowledge of the “external” world. Secondly, he is led to overlook the important respects in which thinking and understanding must be distinguished from perception: he speaks indeed as if thinking and understanding really are essentially forms of perception, or as if all three consisted alike in “having ideas.”
George Berkeley retained the word “idea,” for which he sometimes used “sensation” as a synonym, to stand for the objects of perception. He retained the view that ideas are “in the mind,” and he sought to evade the problem which Locke had failed to solve—the problem of basing knowledge of the material world on perception of mind-dependent ideas—by refusing to draw any distinction between ideas and material objects. Material objects, he held, are “collections” of ideas, and hence they too can exist “only in the mind.”

David Hume introduced a distinction between ideas and impressions—the latter term being designed to cover “all our sensations, passions, and emotions,” the former “the faint images of these in thinking and reasoning.” In so doing, however, he did not much improve upon Locke: he still held that the objects of perception are “in the mind” and for the most part he retained in his account of thinking the fatally misleading analogy with perception. It was urged by an early critic, Thomas Reid, that most of the perplexities in which Locke, Berkeley, and Hume had been entangled arose from initial confusions in the use of the word “idea,” for which Reid thought Descartes ultimately responsible.

According to David Hume (1766:64) that categorized of idea and the shape. They are main idea, concept of main idea, supporting idea, and types of main idea.
2.2 Main idea

Core or main idea was the brainchild of paragraphs that are structurally meaningful in charge of the ideas of others. Therefore, the core or main idea is a concept that embraces the concepts of other ideas ordintefly (ordinate other ideas). Other ideas which appears in explanatory sentences or supporting the idea that the main-chain to form a whole continuous paragraphs. Finding the core or main idea can be tricked to determine the type of paragraph, deductive reasoning pattern is a way of thinking that begins with the formulation of general statements.

Usually placed at the beginning of the paragraph, while the subsequent sentences are descriptive sentences or supporting sentences. That often leaves the reader confused determines the main idea is not the discovery of finding the key words of the paragraph.

The main idea is an idea / notion that the subject of paragraph development. The main idea is contained in the main sentence. In a paragraph there is only one main idea.

The main sentence is the sentence in which is the main idea of the paragraph. The main sentence is explained by the other sentences in the paragraph, which referred to the explanatory sentence. Another name for the main sentence is the topic sentence.
Main idea which is placed at the beginning of a paragraph is named deductive, while the main sentence which is placed at the end of the paragraph is named inductive. The characteristics of making a main idea in a sentence, that sentence is made contains the problems that can be specified or described further.

2.3 Concept of Main Idea

Find the main idea you have to find the topic first, you have to know the topic before you can determine the main idea. Preview your text and ask yourself, “What or who is the article about?” or “What is the author teaching me about?” (For further help, see Identifying the Topic skill sheet). Ask yourself “What does the author want me to know about the topic?” or “What is the author teaching me about the topic?” You can answer this by finding the idea that is common to most of the text or what opinion all the parts support.

We use these clues to help find the main idea: Read the first and last sentences of the paragraph (or the first and last paragraphs of the article). Authors often state the main idea near the beginning or end of a paragraph. Pay attention to any idea that is repeated in different ways. If an author returns to the same thought in several different sentences (or paragraphs), that idea is the main or central thought under discussion.

Look for a sentence that states the main idea, this is the stated main idea or topic sentence. Look for reversal transitions at the beginning of sentence these signal that the author is going to modify the previous idea. When a reversal
transition opens the second sentence of a paragraph, there’s a good chance that the second sentence is the topic sentence and a stated main idea.

At times the main idea will not be stated directly, this is called an implied main idea. Read all of the specific statements, not just the ones that open the paragraphs. Think of a general statement that could sum up the specifics as effectively as any stated topic sentence. As there will not be a topic sentence, you will have to write one.

The main idea you write must be a complete sentence that contains a subject and a verb and expresses a complete thought. Once you feel sure that you have found the main idea, test it. Ask yourself if the sentence could act as a summary of the other sentences in the paragraph. Do the examples, reasons, and facts included in the reading explain or give evidence supporting the main idea you have in mind? If they do, then you are right on target. If they don’t, you may want to revise your main idea.

2.4 Supporting Idea

Supporting idea is a sentence that contains the idea of supporting or being the main sentence explanation. Supporting idea in each paragraph should be a unity of ideas. In composition it is called cohesive.

In addition, the relationship between the sentences of the other sentences in a paragraph should relate to each other is called coherent.
A paragraph in which said complete if there are explanatory sentences in full to show the main idea or main sentence. The characteristics of the supporting idea which contains an explanation of the details, description, examples, etc. In addition, the supporting idea has a meaning when it is connected with the sentences in the paragraph. Then the supporting idea often needs conjunction to connect word to word. Example of supporting idea:

Topic: Tonight Atmosphere

The framework of the paragraph:

1. Beautiful night
2. Star-studded
3. Cold air
4. Owl sound-replication
5. Moon light emitting
6. No pass

The night was beautiful. The stars in the sky studded with emitting flickering light. Cold air over me. Owl sound made the fur on my neck-replication goose bumps. Moon emits light to the entire universe. No one was passing around me.
2.5 Types of Main Idea

Arifhasbullah(July,02.2012 )“If it is understood, it would seem that in each unit contained a paragraph has different ideas. The main idea of it, implied an issue that needs itself attention. Although closely interconnected and equally support the central theme, the issues that need to be assessed and addressed specifically to the more obvious.

As a single unit containing one idea but the main idea, a paragraph also contains a number of ideas or thoughts explanatory”. We can find the main idea through beginning a sentence, at the last sentence and at within sentence in a paragraph. Then if we want to identify the supporting idea. We know it through a fact a sentences, many examples and moreover the supporting idea can be developed by the author.

A. Written main idea

Often writers (especially new writers) writes the main idea in the first sentence of a paragraph. If we find this paragraph, it would be easy to find the main idea: Find the sentence in a paragraph it could represent the entire reading.

B. Implied or omitted main idea

When the main idea implied or omitted, we would indeed a little bit more difficult to determine. If the author does not write the main idea, we are free to determine the main idea of the current paragraph. Just write a sentence that it could represent the entire text.
C. Brief readings

A brief summary the memory that have to take a note on sheet of paper write a sentence that can represent the entire contents of the text, a "that’s about what?"

D. Note the repetition

Note repetition a paragraph that gives so much information until we are confused how to summarize but need repetition of words, phrases, the same or a similar opinion to support the idea.

CHAPTER III
DESCRIPTION OF MAIN IDEA

3.1 The Speech Describe

"I Have a Dream" is a public speech that was delivered by American civil rights activist Martin Luther King Jr. during the March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom on August 28, 1963, in which he called for civil and economic rights and an end to racism in the United States. Delivered to over 250,000 civil rights supporters from the steps of the Lincoln Memorial in Washington, D.C., the speech was a defining moment of the civil rights movement and among the most iconic speeches in American history.

Beginning with a reference to the Emancipation Proclamation, which freed millions of slaves in 1863, King said "one hundred years later, the Negro still is not free". Toward the end of the speech, King departed from his prepared text for a partly improvised peroration the theme "I have a dream", prompted by Mahalia Jackson's cry: "Tell them about the dream, Martin!" In this part of the speech, which most excited the listeners and has now become its most famous, King described his dreams of freedom and equality arising from a land of slavery and hatred. Jon Meacham writes that, "With a single phrase, Martin Luther King Jr. joined Jefferson and Lincoln in the ranks of men who've shaped modern American." The speech was ranked the American speech of the 20th century in a 1999 poll of scholars of public address.

3.2 Main Ideas in the Speech Text Each Paragraph
In paragraph one tells that Martin Luther King was happy to join with all the people who will go down for freedom demonstration. In paragraph two he said that five score years ago they signed the Emancipation Proclamation as a great beacon light of hope to millions of Negro slaves and it came as a joyous daybreak to end the long night of injustice. Paragraph three tells about the Negro life, that one hundred years later they still not free because the manacles of segregation and the chains of discriminations. They still languishing in the corners of American society and finds an exile in his own island.

In paragraph four Martin persuade all the Negros to check and wrote the magnificent words of the Constitution and the Declaration of Independence. That note was a promise that all men, yes black men as well as white men, would be guaranteed the unalienable rights of life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. But the America obvious has defaulted on that promissory note insofar as her citizens of color are concerned. America give the Negro people a bad check that marked “insufficient funds”, but they refuse to believe that the bank is bankrupt.

This the best time for Martin and the Negro people to rise from the dark and desolate valley of segregation to the sunlit path of racial justice, and this the time to make justice a reality for all of God’s children. In paragraph six and seven tells about the fatalism for the nations to overlook the urgency of that moment, the Negro people want to make demonstration for their freedom cause the whirlwinds of revolt will
continue to shake the foundations of their nations until the bright day of justice emerges. But Martin want to say that Negro people must not be guilty of wrongful deeds, and satisfy their thirst for freedom bye drinking from the cup of bitterness and hatred. They have come to realize that their freedom is inextricably bound to their freedom they can walk alone, they must make the pledge that they shall always march ahead.

In paragraph nine Martin talks about the freedom of the Negro children that they can never be satisfied as long as their children are stripped of their selfhood and robbed of their dignity by signs ‘For White Only’

From paragraph ten until seventeen Martin talk about all his dream for Negro people who work or stay in every state in America to have their own freedom to start their new life. In his dream, he believed that Negro people will get their freedom soon as possible and make a big change’s for America Nation. He also have a dream that his four children will one day live in a nation where they will not be judged by the color of their skin but by the content of their character.

Paragraph eighteen until last paragraph is telling about his punctuation of all his dream and his goal to get the freedom. He said that it will be the day when all of God’s children will be able to sing with some meaning “My country, ‘tis of thee, sweet land of liberty, of thee I sing. Land where my father’s died, land of the pilgrim’s pride, from every mountainside, let freedom ring.” There’s some statement that Martin said
“Let freedom ring from the prodigious hilltops of New Hampshire. Let freedom ring from the mighty mountains of New York. Let freedom ring from the heightening Alleghenies of Pennsylvania. Let freedom ring from the snowcapped Rockies of Colorado. Let freedom ring from the curvaceous slopes of California.

Almost the state he want to have same freedom, and when it happens, they will be able to speed up that day when all of God’s children, black men and white men, Jews and Gentiles, Protestants and Catholics, will be able to join hands and sing in the words of the Negro spiritual, “Free at last! Free at last! Thank God Almighty, we are free at last!”.

That’s the last word that Martin said during his speech for all the Negro people who stand and listening him.

3.3 General Main Idea

Martin Luther King delivered his most famous speech in 1963 during the March on Washington. King states that this occasion will be remembered as the "greatest demonstration for freedom" in America's history, a key moment in the Civil Rights movement.

King begins by recalling the signing of the Emancipation Proclamation. His choice of language here evokes Lincoln's Gettysburg Address, another key moment in American history. However, although it offered hope to many black Americans, there has been less progress than was hoped for because the black
man in America is still not free. Instead, discrimination continues; black Americans live in comparative poverty despite the wealth of the nation as a whole and the after-effects of slavery are still felt.

He then evokes the signing of the Declaration of Independence, describing it as a "promissory note" whose promise has not been fulfilled for black men. Therefore, King says he is coming to Washington to chide the United States for "defaulting" on this promise in regard to black Americans who have not been granted life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness. The bank of justice, King says, surely still has money in it, and black Americans are owed.

King goes on to declare that now is the time to "make justice a reality" for all in the United States. He describes the situation as "urgent," stating that the growing discontent among black Americans will not just go away. Instead, in order to ensure "tranquility" in America, the black man must be granted his true rights as a citizen of this country. However, King is keen to stress that this revolt should not be violent.

While the struggle must continue, his followers should not allow their protests to become physically violent. Instead, they must make clear to white
Americans that the prosperity and freedom of both black and white are bound together.

The struggle must continue until police brutality is no longer a concern for negroes, black people are no longer turned away from hotels, ghettos are a thing of the past, and voting rights are universal indeed, until justice is served.

King acknowledges that protesting in this way has been hard for many. Some of those present have been recently in prison, or have come many miles. But he promises that the struggle will be rewarded, and asks his listeners to return to their home states filled with a new hope. He then describes his famous "dream" of the country that will one day emerge.

CHAPTER IV
CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

4.1 Conclusion

The conclusion from the speech that King's dream is of a truly free and equal country in which blacks and whites will sit and eat together. It is of a world in which children will no longer be judged by their skin color, but by their character, and where black and white alike will join hands. He calls upon his listeners to have faith that God will make this dream come to pass. King states that when freedom is allowed to "ring" from every part of the nation, eventually America will be what it should have always been and justice will have been achieved.

4.2 Suggestion

After describing the Main Idea in Martin Luther speech, the writer would like to give some suggestions. They are twosuggestion for this paper:

We as citizens who have cultural differences must mutual respect and have high tolerance in ethnicity, religion and segregation.

As young people must be able participate in various issues that occur in our country but must go through honest democracy and fairness.

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A. Biography of Martin Luther

Martin Luther King, Jr. was a civil rights activist in the 1950s and 1960s. He led non-violent protests to fight for the rights of all people including African Americans. He hoped that America and the world could become a colorblind society where race would not impact a person's civil rights. He is considered one of the great orators of modern times, and his speeches still inspire many to this day.

Martin Luther King, Jr. was born in Atlanta, GA on January 15, 1929. He went to Booker T. Washington High School. He was so smart that he skipped two grades in high school. He started his college education at Morehouse College at the young age of fifteen. After getting his degree in sociology from Morehouse, Martin got a divinity degree from Crozer Seminary and then got his doctor's degree in theology from Boston University.
Martin's dad was a preacher which inspired Martin to pursue the ministry. He had a younger brother and an older sister. In 1953 he married Coretta Scott. Later, they would have four children including Yolanda, Martin, Dexter, and Bernice.

In his first major civil rights action, Martin Luther King, Jr. led the Montgomery Bus Boycott. This started when Rosa Parks refused to give up her seat on a bus to a white man. She was arrested and spent the night in jail. As a result, Martin helped to organize a boycott of the public transportation system in Montgomery. The boycott lasted for over a year. It was very tense at times. Martin was arrested and his house was bombed. In the end, however, Martin prevailed and segregation on the Montgomery buses came to an end.

In 1963, Martin Luther King, Jr. helped to organize the famous "March on Washington". Over 250,000 people attended this march in an effort to show the importance of civil rights legislation. Some of the issues the march hoped to accomplish included an end to segregation in public schools, protection from police abuse, and to get laws passed that would prevent discrimination in employment.

It was at this march where Martin gave his "I Have a Dream" speech. This speech has become one of the most famous speeches in history. The March on Washington was a great success. The Civil Rights Act was passed a year later in 1964.

Martin Luther King, Jr. was assassinated on April 4, 1968 in Memphis, TN. While standing on the balcony of his hotel, he was shot by James Earl Ray.
B. The speech text ‘I Have a Dream

I am happy to join with you today in what will go down in history as the greatest demonstration for freedom in the history of our nation.

Five score years ago, a great American, in whose symbolic shadow we stand today, signed the Emancipation Proclamation. This momentous decree came as a great beacon light of hope to millions of Negro slaves who had been seared in the flames of withering injustice. It came as a joyous daybreak to end the long night of their captivity.

But one hundred years later, the Negro still is not free. One hundred years later, the life of the Negro is still sadly crippled by the manacles of segregation and the chains of discrimination. One hundred years later, the Negro lives on a lonely island of poverty in the midst of a vast ocean of material prosperity. One hundred years later, the Negro is still languishing in the corners of American society and finds himself an exile in his own land. So we have come here today to dramatize a shameful condition.

In a sense we have come to our nation’s capital to cash a check. When the architects of our republic wrote the magnificent words of the Constitution and the Declaration of Independence, they were signing a promissory note to which every American was to fall heir. This note was a promise that all men, yes, black men as well as white men, would be guaranteed the unalienable rights of life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.

It is obvious today that America has defaulted on this promissory note insofar as her citizens of color are concerned. Instead of honoring this sacred obligation, America has given the Negro people a bad check, a check which has come back marked “insufficient funds.” But we refuse to believe that the bank of justice is bankrupt. We refuse to believe that there are insufficient funds in the great vaults of opportunity of this nation.

So we have come to cash this check — a check that will give us upon demand the riches of freedom and the security of justice. We have also come to this hallowed spot to remind America of the fierce urgency of now. This is no time to engage in the luxury of cooling off or to take the tranquilizing drug of gradualism. Now is the time to make real the promises of democracy. Now is the time to rise from the dark and desolate valley of segregation to the sunlit path of racial justice. Now is the time to lift our nation from the quick sands of
racial injustice to the solid rock of brotherhood. Now is the time to make justice a reality for all of God’s children.

It would be fatal for the nation to overlook the urgency of the moment. This sweltering summer of the Negro’s legitimate discontent will not pass until there is an invigorating autumn of freedom and equality. Nineteen sixty-three is not an end, but a beginning. Those who hope that the Negro needed to blow off steam and will now be content will have a rude awakening if the nation returns to business as usual. There will be neither rest nor tranquility in America until the Negro is granted his citizenship rights. The whirlwinds of revolt will continue to shake the foundations of our nation until the bright day of justice emerges.

But there is something that I must say to my people who stand on the warm threshold which leads into the palace of justice. In the process of gaining our rightful place we must not be guilty of wrongful deeds. Let us not seek to satisfy our thirst for freedom by drinking from the cup of bitterness and hatred. We must forever conduct our struggle on the high plane of dignity and discipline. We must not allow our creative protest to degenerate into physical violence. Again and again we must rise to the majestic heights of meeting physical force with soul force. The marvelous new militancy which has engulfed the Negro community must not lead us to a distrust of all white people, for many of our white brothers, as evidenced by their presence here today, have come to realize that their destiny is tied up with our destiny. They have come to realize that their freedom is inextricably bound to our freedom. We cannot walk alone.

As we walk, we must make the pledge that we shall always march ahead. We cannot turn back. There are those who are asking the devotees of civil rights, “When will you be satisfied?” We can never be satisfied as long as the Negro is the victim of the unspeakable horrors of police brutality. We can never be satisfied, as long as our bodies, heavy with the fatigue of travel, cannot gain lodging in the motels of the highways and the hotels of the cities.

We cannot be satisfied as long as the Negro’s basic mobility is from a smaller ghetto to a larger one. We can never be satisfied as long as our children are stripped of their selfhood and robbed of their dignity by signs stating “For Whites Only”. We cannot be satisfied as long as a Negro in Mississippi cannot vote and a Negro in New York believes he has nothing for which to vote. No, no, we are not satisfied, and we will not be satisfied until justice rolls down like waters and righteousness like a mighty stream.
I am not unmindful that some of you have come here out of great trials and tribulations. Some of you have come fresh from narrow jail cells. Some of you have come from areas where your quest for freedom left you battered by the storms of persecution and staggered by the winds of police brutality. You have been the veterans of creative suffering. Continue to work with the faith that unearned suffering is redemptive.

Go back to Mississippi, go back to Alabama, go back to South Carolina, go back to Georgia, go back to Louisiana, go back to the slums and ghettos of our northern cities, knowing that somehow this situation can and will be changed. Let us not wallow in the valley of despair.

I say to you today, my friends, so even though we face the difficulties of today and tomorrow, I still have a dream. It is a dream deeply rooted in the American dream.

I have a dream that one day this nation will rise up and live out the true meaning of its creed: “We hold these truths to be self-evident: that all men are created equal.”

I have a dream that one day on the red hills of Georgia the sons of former slaves and the sons of former slave owners will be able to sit down together at the table of brotherhood.

I have a dream that one day even the state of Mississippi, a state sweltering with the heat of injustice, sweltering with the heat of oppression, will be transformed into an oasis of freedom and justice.

I have a dream that my four little children will one day live in a nation where they will not be judged by the color of their skin but by the content of their character.

I have a dream today.

I have a dream that one day, down in Alabama, with its vicious racists, with its governor having his lips dripping with the words of interposition and nullification; one day right there in Alabama, little black boys and black girls will be able to join hands with little white boys and white girls as sisters and brothers.

I have a dream today.

I have a dream that one day every valley shall be exalted, every hill and mountain shall be made low, the rough places will be made plain, and the
crooked places will be made straight, and the glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together.

This is our hope. This is the faith that I go back to the South with. 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 work together, to pray together, to struggle together, to go to jail together, to stand up for freedom together, knowing that we will be free one day.

This will be the day when all of God’s children will be able to sing with a new meaning, “My country, ‘tis of thee, sweet land of liberty, of thee I sing. Land where my father’s died, land of the pilgrim’s pride, from every mountainside, let freedom ring.”

And if America is to be a great nation this must become true. So let freedom ring from the prodigious hilltops of New Hampshire. Let freedom ring from the mighty mountains of New York. Let freedom ring from the heightening Alleghenies of Pennsylvania!

Let freedom ring from the snowcapped Rockies of Colorado!

Let freedom ring from the curvaceous slopes of California!

But not only that; let freedom ring from Stone Mountain of Georgia!

Let freedom ring from Lookout Mountain of Tennessee!

Let freedom ring from every hill and molehill of Mississippi. From every mountainside, let freedom ring.

And when this happens, when we allow freedom to ring, when we let it ring from every village and every hamlet, from every state and every city, we will be able to speed up that day when all of God’s children, black men and white men, Jews and Gentiles, Protestants and Catholics, will be able to join hands and sing in the words of the old Negro spiritual, “Free at last! free at last! thank God Almighty, we are free at last!”