

# King's 'the letter from birmingham jail' essay

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'The letter from Birmingham Jail' was written by King junior during his incarceration in the jail of Birmingham. This showed that despite the fact that he was lonely in the prison, his resolve to fight for the freedom of the black people was still strong. He says that he was in Birmingham because there was injustice.

By saying this, he means that regardless of the discrimination and racial prejudices that prevailed, he was prepared to fight for the freedom of the blacks. His letter was a response to another letter written by the clergy complaining about the demonstrations that were agitating for the freedom of the blacks.

King's letter has the capacity to evoke patriotic feelings among the readers. He agrees that there are many states in the US but the cohesiveness of the nation as a single unit is vital. The constraint in the letter is that racism does not play any part in a nation that is united and one that focuses on progression.

Racial prejudices and discrimination have the impact of damaging the structure and foundation associated with the greatness of the US. He says that the oppressors do not give freedom voluntarily unless the oppressed fight for it. With reference to history, people in authority find it difficult to give up their positions and in most cases, they are corrupted by the power they yield. This leads to dictatorship that limits the freedom of people greatly.

King's main issue in his letter is racial discrimination and the injustices that the black people are exposed to. He is concerned about the interrelatedness

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of all communities because according to him, injustice anywhere is injustice everywhere. As a result, he is fighting for the emancipation of the black population and other colored people in the United States.

He claims that since the clergy is not willing to listen to them and give them their rights, they have to show the importance of the matter by holding non-violent demonstrations. He says that there are just and unjust laws and tries to distinguish between the two. He does this in a bid to ensure that there are no laws that perpetuate racial discrimination.

With regard to the letter from the clergy, the main issue is the demonstrations being held by the oppressed who support King. They claim that the activities being spearheaded by king are untimely and unwise. In their letter, they strongly argue against the demonstrations taking place.

They say that the habit of holding demonstrations is not the right way to address the issues the blacks want to be addressed. According to them, the action taken by king and his associates is untimely. This is basically because they have not given the new administration of the city enough time to act. Instead, they have resorted to extreme actions. Although the demonstrations are non-violent, the clergy is of the view that they will eventually precipitate violence hence they should be stopped.

The claim by the clergy that the demonstrations will trigger violence although they are peaceful is a fallacy. According to them, the end result of the demonstrations will be violence. King uses rebuttal to convince them that non-violent demonstrations cannot lead to violence. He tells them that this is

not a logical assertion and uses analogies. For instance, he says that it is similar to condemning a person who has been robbed because the fact that he had money caused the robbery.

In King's letter, the support comes from the associates and the oppressed people who feel that they should not continue to live in oppression. After so many years of suffering, the black people have come out in support of king by saying that they must be granted their freedom.

The oppressor does not give freedom willingly unless it is demanded by the oppressed. The warrant in the letter is that the teachings of Christ manifest themselves slowly. King uses biblical allusions as a form of backing in his letter. He refers to biblical characters that were determined to leave their home villages in order to liberate their people. He likens himself to them and says that he will leave his hometown to ensure that all people are free.

The letter from the clergy has its support in the argument that the actions of King and his associates are wrong and should not take place. They support their argument by saying that the actions are untimely and unwise because the new administration should have been given some time to take action.

There warrants and backing is based on the law. They use the law to shield themselves and prevent the demonstrations from taking place. According to them, the law prohibits such demonstrations hence they are able to take action against demonstrators on its basis.

One unethical quality that is evident in the letter by the clergy is that it tries to silence the demonstrators not because there is a good reason to do it, but

simply because there is racial discrimination. The act of preventing them from demonstrating is aimed at ensuring that they never get their rights. It is unethical for human beings to deny their fellow human beings their rights.

The second unethical issue in the letter written by the clergy is that it is morally wrong for the church to be an instrument of oppression. On the contrary, churches are expected to be on the forefront in fighting for the rights of all people and ensuring that justice prevails everywhere. Their act of trying to oppress people is therefore unethical.

In King's letter, one of the unethical issues is his constant blame on the church. He argues that he was raised in the church and he is still a minister of the gospel. It is unethical that he has identified many flaws in the church yet he has been part of the church and has never taken any action to correct the ills that are prevalent in the same church.

The second unethical issue that is evident in the letter is that King compares himself with biblical characters. Although he is very determined to fight for his cause, he might not be able to do what the biblical characters did or match their achievements.

It is factual that there is injustice which emanates from racial discrimination and that is why King is in jail. Since the clergy does not want to listen to the issues of the blacks and give them their rights, the only option is to fight for their freedom. King's letter is effective because it highlights the concerns of the black people and points out where the clergy has gone wrong.

It is more effective than the one written by the clergy in that it gives facts and highlights the things that the clergy should have considered before raising these issues. While King's letter is elaborate, the one written by the clergy is sketchy and does not give convincing reasons for its arguments.