

# Letter from a birmingham jail essay

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Martin Luther King Junior's letter, 'Letter from Birmingham Jail' is without doubt a literary masterpiece. He communicates, implores, argues and criticizes within the bounds of civility. He addresses very grave issues in a very balanced tone such that the reader is able to focus on the message he seeks to pass across all through the letter rather than his personal predicament. This submission will focus on three issues in the letter which in the author's opinion stood out.

The first item which this article will focus on is how the letter brings out the myriad of challenges that faced colored persons as a result of racial segregation. In the letter, Martin Luther King Junior is able to bring to life the challenges that colored persons faced in such a forceful way that makes the letter timeless and puts the reader in a position where he is in a position to identify with his cause. Indeed, things must have been very difficult. It beats logic and defies any sense of morality how one was supposed to live in a society where they were treated as if they were children of a lesser God simply on account of the colour of their skin. Coupled with this was the fact that there were those who willing to identify with their cause but could not offer them overt support. Furthermore, the institutionalization of racial segregation into such organizations as the police force, as illustrated in the letter, only served to worsen the predicament that faced colored persons at the time.

Secondly, the article will highlight some few issues which were interesting to note arising from the letter. First was the fact that there were some white persons at the time, though a minority, went against the grain and identified with Martin Luther King Junior's cause. They supported it both overtly and covertly even when it frequently resulted in them suffering great tribulations

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such as imprisonment. It is interesting how Martin Luther King Junior responds to the concerns about the concerns raised on their apparent willingness to break laws. Indeed, his exposition on just and unjust laws brings forth a very sound, sober and well-grounded argument on the issue of breaking laws. Even his harshest critics would have been left with food for thought after reading this argument. He succeeds in striking hard blows, but not low or unfair ones. This is one aspect of the letter which makes it particularly interesting.

Lastly, the letter is an embodiment of diplomacy. This arguably makes it remarkably different from such type of letters which address issues that are as grave as those that the letter is addressing. Indeed, there is no trace of bitterness on Martin Luther King Junior's part. He focuses on the issues and his presentation is not blinded by the circumstances he was in as he wrote the letter. In the letter, he is forceful without being disrespectful. He is clear and unambiguous without being callous or abusive. He responds to the issues raised rather than focus on personalities. Where he adversely addresses specific groups of people or individuals, he provides facts, valid arguments and examples that leave the reader with a lucid exposition and luminous illustration of what exactly he is lamenting about. This is not the kind of letter which many people facing the same predicament as Martin Luther King Junior faced would have written. It is different and the fact that it stands it is what makes it a timeless read; then, now and for generations to come.

## **Works Cited**

Junior, M. L. (1963, August). <http://web.cn.edu/>. Retrieved October 2, 2013, from [http://web.cn.edu/kwheeler/documents/letter\\_birmingham\\_jail.pdf](http://web.cn.edu/kwheeler/documents/letter_birmingham_jail.pdf):