

## **Prompt # 3- Letter from Birmingham Jail**

### **Introduction**

Martin Luther king was the advocate, who took peaceful action in order to make the social change in the city. He was the leader who protested against segregation in the people of America but his protest did not change the people and inequality was remained in the city. In order to protest against the behavior of the white American, black people and king took an action. But king was arrested and wrote a letter in the jail.

In the study “letter from Birmingham jail”, Martin Luther king made a critical response of the statement of Alabama Clergymen. In the letter, king explained the reason behind the Birmingham jail which justify the civil disobedience and also explained the wrong manner behind the racial segregation. So, king used the several literary tools for creating the powerful tool in order to compliment the strong opinions. King described in the letter that segregation is wrong because it puts the costly emotional effects on the experience of everyone life. Different examples were used by the king to show that how segregation damages one’s character. Difference between white and black was created in the king’s terminology. King was said to be the greatest communicators because of the skill of expressing the ideas.

### **Discussion**

#### Allusion Function in Support of the King’s Aim

Comparison between Black and White

In the letter from Birmingham jail, king compared the black and white (African and American). First, king compared the “gospel of freedom”, “gospel of eighth century prophet” and “Apostle Paul” that how all these gospel’s left their village because of injustice. Secondly, king compared the illegal peaceful action for the unique God-consciousness and never ceasing devotion. Thirdly, king compared himself with Socrates. Socrates is the one who condemned king’s idea and were forced to drink poison. These comparisons were the divine cause of fighting between the king and his followers. According to the king, all of the human beings on the earth were same and if one thing affected the one person then it means it affects the overall world (Oppenheimer, pp. 791).

#### Religious connection

According to the king, all rights related to constitution and laws are the God given rights and those rights and laws are supported by the God’s followers. King stated that laws are laws whether it was made by the god or by morality. In the last paragraph, king continued the religious connection where king referred the black as a “children of God” which means the most sacred person in the Christian heritage. King said that it is unfortunate for the city of Birmingham that the whole city is related to the white power structure.

#### Evoke emotions

The writing of king was used for evoking the emotions of followers. Beside the king comparisons, king also wrote about the emotional suffering in the letter. These emotional sufferings were segregation injustice which happened with the blacks. King wrote that black have to wait for the integration with white (Fulkerson, pp. 121-136).

#### Non violent campaign

There are four basic steps involved in the non violent campaign. These four steps are facts collection, negotiation, purification on the self basis and action in case of injustice in the city. According to the king, Birmingham had gone through all the four phases but still racial injustice was found in the community. Birmingham was the most segregated country in United States and Negroes had experienced injustice in the court. White had used the bomb for defusing the homes and churches of Negroes. This behavior showed the ugly record of brutality.

#### Reaction of children

According to king, children felt deeply down when they considered themselves inferior to whites. Certain examples were used by the king like black daughter did not able to visit the amusement park because it was full of the white children. Another example was related to the son who asked his father that why white treat in the misbehave manner. This all showed that in future black child will hate the white child because of the behavior. These examples showed that black child were disturbed and their morality was decreased. Kings writing created the sympathy for the segregated people (Oppenheimer, pp. 791).

#### Contrasting terminology

In the letter, king also wrote about the difference between just and unjust laws. Certain contrasting words were used by the king for differentiating it. Those words were uplift, degrade, segregator, segregated, superior, inferior, majority and minority etc. for contrasting the terminology in his own argument, king himself develop the relationship between the black and white (Fulkerson, pp. 121-136).

#### Interaction between Economic Community and Negro Leaders

In the month of September, an opportunity was awaked for the negotiation between Birmingham economic community and the Negro leaders. Certain promises were made between them. Those promises were removal of racial signs. But as the month passed, all the promises were broke. No bodies were maintained for laying the case against local communities. So king decided to maintain the self base process for the purification. For this purpose, various workshops were started for stopping the violence (Snow, pp. 318-334).

#### Threatening of king for Birmingham city

According to king, he was disappointed because of the behavior of the white and wanted to all the human being in the city to love their fellow beings whether they are white or black. All of the human beings were created equal then why most of the people were extremism. People have to follow extremism for in the morality, love, justice, care, truth, goodness for others.

#### Unjust Law

Unjust laws are those laws in which minority in the city does not have any rights. Those rights can be right of vote, right of justice in the court etc. King focused on law of justice which had to followed by all human beings specially the teenagers come under 18 years because injustice law segregated the people of Birmingham. For breaking the unjust law, love, willingness to accept others, open mind people was needed. Human being who breaks the unjust law had the highest respect of law (Snow, pp. 318-334).

#### **Conclusion**

In the study, king used different types of comparison, emotional tools and terminologies for providing the understanding of the civil disobedience and segregation.

King compared himself with his followers and feeling of importance was created by him.

He gave examples of two children in order to connect the emotional behavior of the reader of the letter. Finally, two contrasting terminologies (segregator and segregated) put the broader views on the wrong act of white. This study also provided the literary tools which help everyone in understanding the injustice in the city of Birmingham.

## Works Cited

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