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Ethical and Moral Analysis of “I Have a Dream” by Martin Luther King Jr.

Many years ago, Dr. Martin Luther, Jr. presented a riveting, inspirational, and mortifying message to the American nation. Today, his speech is celebrated with the title of "I have a Dream". Standing in the shadow of the Lincoln memorial, with a large gathering in front of him, who was eager to hear the message of prophecy, challenge, and condemnation. In this speech, King called that the American nation is pregnant with the promises of possibilities while being foundering the self-actualization. King also clarified that “even we face difficulties and hardships today, I still have a dream which is deep-rooted in the American dream (King 1999)". His voice rose in a rhythmic manner, claiming that America has issued the "Bad Check" against the constitution and the deceleration of independence. He claimed that this bad check is against the constitution of our motherland and is disordered and muddled. It is what he had been struggling for throughout life.

What made King prompt such metaphors was only known to him. Many believe that the time he made this speech, he was well- aware of the Macedonian call. For such reason, he considered it a moral obligation to make the people of America recognize that how they are being moved away from the basic values of an American dream. “I have a dream” focuses on the conceptual understanding of life in a beloved community, as he elaborated in his book “Stride toward freedom”. Although Martin Jr. was not the founder of this term, he made himself work to give this title a physical self. ‘The beloved Community’ for him was which encapsulated a desire for peace, reconciliation, and resolve; but this all should be wrapped in the justice and self-esteem of Americans (King 1999). What morals conceptualization beside all his ideas exists were which resonated with the ideas of a Baptist pastor. His moral courage was also inspired by the leaders of Subcontinent, Gandhi, and Jinnah, who, by their life, practiced non- violence and resistance (Zheng 2014).

Martin King Jr. found himself in a unique position of moral heroism once he got aware of the fact of how his message of hope is positioned to change the lives of many million Americans. For him, any American in the world has the moral responsibility to be a part of the struggle which can lead their state to a new upshot and a new will. It is from where they can achieve the American dream, which is the ultimate pursuit of contentment for ‘us' Americans. In his speech, when he states, "It came as a joyous daybreak to end the long night of captivity (King 1999)”, it shows that he considered himself under the moral onus to free those Americans who were in captivity on behalf of others. For him, the million Americans were important and had the right to achieve their dreams for which their forefathers had been struggling. The moral aspects of the speech suggest that Martin Jr. had been a voice of those who believed in the American dream (Echols 2004).

For making his idealization of words more authentic and concrete, he made use of emotions, metaphors, and images. For example, to differentiate separation and racial justification, Martin used different metaphors like a dark and deserted valley. He also used metaphors like a sunlit path for racial justification (King 1999). In paragraph two of his speech, he narrated ‘joyous daybreak to end the long night of their captivity,' following which he went on to narrate the conditions of Negro lives, which according to him, were struggling for freedom and equality. With the use of words like autumn, he explained how a good and alluring time for the Negros is a little away from them. Besides all the words he narrated, the ethical rhetoric suggests that his speech was strong and was focused on confrontation. Not confrontation in a literal sense, rather in the manner he has voiced for throughout his life. For him, the ethics existed in no- confrontation and absence of violence.

Despite the use of ethical and moral taxonomies in his speech, he focused on the problems the wider American confronted. For him, the prime aspect to be considered was when the Americans will be satisfied? For coming to this aspect, he used instances which dwells the complete speech into a rhetorical pattern. Along with many such illustrations of things, he narrated a list of injustices; the Americans were facing. For him, if there exists any injustice, it is for the fact that American has lost faith in the achievement of a dream. The ethics, morals, and integrities are being interpreted in a manner that does not conform to the ideals of their nation. For him, the only thing which needs to be categorized is the fact that if Americans remain neglectful of the needs of many African- American of their nation, it won’t serve the ideas of the decoration of independence.

The power of Martin’s speech lies in the vision of justice, brotherhood, and equality. If he started his speech with words like ‘I have a dream', it meant that there was a driving force behind all this. The driving force was not confrontation, and neither was it gripping the authorities in his hand, rather it was to take hold of the things in a justified manner. His struggle for the African Americans suggests that each aspect for them was different from what the farmers of the American constitution had not thought of. In short, in his speech, he extended the call for equality and for genuine freedom.

# References:

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