

I Have a Dream
by Martin Luther King, Jr.

*Delivered on the steps at the Lincoln Memorial in Washington D.C. on
August 28, 1963*

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

But one hundred years later, we must face the tragic fact that the Negro is still not free. One hundred years later, the life of the Negro is still sadly _____ by the manacles of segregation and the chains of _____. One hundred years later, the Negro lives on a lonely island of _____ 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 an appalling_____.

In a sense we have come to our nation's capital to _____ 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 _____ to which every American was to fall heir. This _____ was a promise that all men would be guaranteed the inalienable rights of life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.

It is obvious today that America has defaulted on this promissory - _____ insofar as her citizens of _____ are concerned. Instead of honoring this sacred obligation, America has given the Negro people a bad check which has come back marked "insufficient funds." But we refuse to believe that the bank of _____ is bankrupt. We refuse to believe that there are _____ 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 - _____ and the security of justice. We have also come to this hallowed spot to remind America of the _____ 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 rise from the dark and desolate valley of _____ to the sunlit path of racial justice. Now is the _____ to open the doors of opportunity to all of God's children. Now is the time to lift our nation from the quicksands of racial injustice to the solid rock of _____ .

It would be fatal for the nation to overlook the urgency of the moment and to underestimate the determination of the Negro. This sweltering summer of the Negro's _____ discontent will not pass until there is an invigorating autumn of _____ and equality. Nineteen sixty-three is not an _____, 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 _____ as usual. There will be neither _____ nor tranquility in America until the Negro is granted his citizenship rights. The whirlwinds of revolt will continue to shake the foundations of our _____ 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 _____ 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 _____.

We must forever conduct our _____ on the high plane of dignity and discipline. We must not allow our creative protest to degenerate into _____ 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 _____ must not lead us to distrust of all white people, for many of our white _____, as evidenced by their presence here today, have come to realize that their destiny is tied up with our destiny and their freedom is inextricably bound to our freedom. We - _____ walk alone.

And as we walk, we must make the pledge that we shall march ahead. We cannot turn back. There are those who are asking the devotees of

civil _____, "When will you be satisfied?" We can never be satisfied as long as our bodies, heavy with the fatigue of _____, 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 a Negro in Mississippi cannot _____ and a Negro in New York believes he has nothing for which to _____. 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 cells. Some of you have come from areas where your quest for freedom left you battered by the _____ of persecution and staggered by the _____ 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 _____, 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 _____ of despair.

I say to you today, my friends, that in spite of the difficulties and frustrations of the moment, I _____ 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 _____ equal."

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

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

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

I have a dream today.

I have a dream that one day the state of Alabama, whose governor's lips are presently dripping with the words of interposition and nullification, will be transformed into a situation where little - _____ boys and black girls will be able to join hands with little _____ boys and white girls and walk together 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 _____, the rough places will be made plain, and the crooked places will be made _____, and the glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together.

This is our hope. This is the _____ with which I return to the South. With this _____ we will be able to hew out of the mountain of despair a stone of hope. With this _____ we will be able to transform the jangling discords of our nation into a beautiful symphony of brotherhood. With this _____ 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 fathers died, land of the pilgrim's pride, from every mountainside, let freedom _____."

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 - _____ ring from the heightening Alleghenies of Pennsylvania!

Let freedom ring from the snowcapped Rockies of Colorado!

Let freedom ring from the curvaceous peaks of California!

But not only that; let freedom ring from -
_____ of Georgia!

Let freedom ring from Lookout Mountain of Tennessee!

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

When we let freedom 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 _____, "Free at last! free at last! thank God Almighty, we are free at last!"