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The Strength **to Love**

by Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

The most important feature that describes activity of Martin Luther King Jr. is, of course, his role in establishing the racial equality in the United States. Martin Luther King Jr. is the best known leader in the struggle for civil rights during the 1950s and 1960s; his public speeches and public acts are the part of a general picture of American history.

Martin Luther King Jr., the future leader of U.S. blacks for their rights, was born on January 15, 1929 in Atlanta, Georgia's administrative center. He is the son of the pastor of the local Baptist church. King thus destined the career of pastor. His life way was through the middle school, male Negro College in Atlanta, Theological Seminary in Chester, and finally Boston University, where he received his doctorate in philosophy. In Boston, he met his future wife - Coretta Scott.

North America was not the subjected to constant humiliation and racial

segregation, and Kings were thinking about how not to go back to not inhospitable South. However, family traditions and influence, as well as a sense of duty forced the King to take the position of pastor of a Baptist church in Montgomery in 1955. At that time, racism in the United States did not show itself so clearly as in Montgomery. The city became the capital of the status of racism, constantly reaffirming its status by segregation limitations and activities of the Ku Klux Klan.

A scandalous episode in a local city bus in December 1, 1955 (an arrest of Negress for refusing to give up his seat for white) was the beginning of a chain of events that led eventually to the fall of segregation orders in America. Martin Luther King, who had an oratory gift and ability to encourage people, was elected as the leader of the protesters committee. The boycott ended with the victory: segregation on buses in Alabama was canceled by the United States Supreme Court. The success of the campaign has turned King into a leader of the launched mass movement for the rights of the African Americans and, at the same time, into the object of uncompromising hatred of racists.

Before King's fight for the freedom, previous Negro rights groups were practicing different ways from legal techniques to armed resistance. But only King strongly directed the movement of blacks into the mainstream of non-violent direct action. This thing enabled an unprecedented mass movement and strength, and kept America from creeping horrors of civil war.

In 1963 well-organized tactics of nonviolent direct action, which was used in Birmingham against segregation in the snack gave its results. In August 1963, King headed a huge protest march on Washington, which ended on the steps of the White House. Then a famous King's speech of dream of a life in America, which would judge his children not by the color of their skin but their character, was delivered. Since that day he had been remembered by everybody like a man, who has a dream.

In that year, Martin Luther King published a sermon on the power of love, which was the amount of his most famous sermons. Firstly the book was suggested at the beginning of 1957 to Melvin Arnold. However, King did not release it until the middle of 1962. The book is a collection of 15 sermons, showing the main provisions of King's Theology and a sense of social justice. For example, in his first chapter the author partially showed a failure of a person to distinguish the true from the lies, emphasizing that individuals mind became more filled with false facts. Humankind gradually ceased to think firmly and soberly, having based on the existing arguments. According to King it is difficult to find a person who will think clearly:

The tough mind is sharp and penetrating, breaking through the crust of legends and myths and sifting the true from the false. The tough-minded individual is astute and discerning. He has a strong austere quality that makes for firmness of purpose and solidness of commitment. Who doubts that this

toughness is one of man's greatest needs? Rarely do we find men who willingly engage in hard, solid thinking. There is an almost universal quest for easy answers and half-baked solutions. Nothing pains some people more than having to think.

King's justice, love for godlike, interrelation of the nations in one human community, as well as powerful optimism of King's words come through these sermons. King's Speech was often perceived as common phrases and new meanings. King's statement about the practical meaning of nonconformist, or love for enemies, put the new meanings to the substance of this speech. King stresses that the guidelines and commandments of Jesus to love your enemies were very difficult to be fulfilled in practice. The author described the difficulties of nonconformist life and follows the transcendentalists such as Emerson and Thoreau, as well as theologians, partially Niebuhr.

Martin Luther King opposed the existing norms of society in his book. However, he aims to achieve love and promotion of the gospel message. The leader considered not only how, but also why people must like enemies, relying on the fact that love is the strongest and the most powerful force in the world. Having creative and transforming power, love acts as a hope for a clear and lasting peace. Giving the example of Napoleon Bonaparte, who erected a mighty empire, King notes that almost all states which stability means are power is doomed to failure. However, he stresses that Jesus Empire, founded on love and

faith, passed down from generation to generation.

King got the unpopularity of the dominant white population and its culture in America. However, it also ran the risk of unpopularity among his community through preaching direction, such as "How should Christians view Communism?" Recognizing the problems with communism, King also outlined the shortcomings of capitalism. The leader focuses both directions on the assessment of the social aspect of humanity, basing on the man-generated Enlightenment.

Strength to Love is not just Martin Luther King's preach. Within non-being oppressive and indulgent he makes reference to the Greek and Roman classics, Shakespeare, the Declaration of Independence, as well as the American writers with their ease, all the time focusing on the biblical message.

A place of honor goes to the sermon of the collection which is known as the *Pilgrimage to Nonviolence*. King briefly describes the spiritual and intellectual biography, talking about his desire to understand the situation from fundamentalism to liberalism and beyond. King gives examples of Gandhi and the bus boycott in Montgomery, as a proof that nonviolent actions could be of dramatic and fertile force for the entire community. *Strength to Love* ends with a hope for the future that people are called to continue to create.

Martin Luther King Jr. was a deeply religious man, Baptist pastor, and

he earnestly followed the principles of Christian morality. Spirit of Christian kept King off senseless cruelty and violence. King, as a true Christian, did no difference between white and black. However, grew and the scope of tasks that King put to their movement, namely the fight against poverty, the war in Vietnam, the advancement of blacks in North American cities.

In April 4, 1968 Martin Luther King was shot by a sniper on the eve of his hotel room in Memphis, where he arrived to support the strike black scavengers. Death of King proved the chosen by him direction. Desegregation was gaining and gaining momentums, and as it was not the tragic death of "Black Moses."

He remained in American history as a liberator and, thus, bloodless liberator. Willing to sacrifice himself for others and for the sake of faith adds to King's appearance the features of Christian martyr. King is deeply symbolic figure: if in the XIX century blacks were free thanking to "white" Lincoln, who gave blacks not very clear freedom, so in the XX century, the black population in the face of King demonstrated the learning to appreciate this freedom and readiness to fight for it.

Thus, eventually Martin Luther King managed to reach brilliant successes in the struggle for black freedom, and did not pour the blood path to this freedom. Largely inspired by Gandhi, King is deservedly considered being the most striking follower of him. Words of *Strength to Love* remain relevant and powerful since their first

utterance. An inspiration for nowadays, as well as mention of bygone times is in King's sermons. Martin Luther King had a place in history and deserved it in the future.