

« I HAVE A DREAM » : A SPEECH DELIVERED BY MARTIN LUTHER KING IN 1963.

1 I am happy to join with you today in what will go down in history as the greatest
2 demonstration for freedom in the history of our nation. Five score years ago, a great
3 American, in whose symbolic shadow we stand today, signed the Emancipation Proclamation.
4 This momentous decree came as a great beacon light of hope to millions of Negro slaves who
5 had been seared in the flames of withering injustice. It came as a joyous daybreak to end the
6 long night of their captivity. But one hundred years later, the Negro still is not free. One
7 hundred years later, the life of the Negro is still sadly crippled by the manacles of segregation
8 and the chains of discrimination. One hundred years later, the Negro lives on a lonely island
9 of poverty in the midst of a vast ocean of material prosperity. One hundred years later, the
10 Negro is still languishing in the corners of American society and finds himself in exile in his
11 own land. So we have come here today to dramatize a shameful condition. I say to you today,
12 my friends, so even though we face the difficulties of today and tomorrow, I still have a
13 dream. It is a dream deeply rooted in the American dream. I have a dream that one day this
14 nation will rise up and live out the true meaning of its creed: "We hold these truths to be self-
15 evident: that all men are created equal." I have a dream that one day on the red hills of
16 Georgia the sons of former slaves and the sons of former slave owners will be able to sit down
17 together at the table of brotherhood.

18 I have a dream that one day even the state of Mississippi, a state sweltering with the heat of
19 injustice, sweltering with the heat of oppression, will be transformed into an oasis of freedom
20 and justice.

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

23 I have a dream today.

24 I have a dream that one day, down in Alabama, with its vicious racists, with its governor
25 having his lips dripping with the words of interposition and nullification; one day right there
26 in Alabama, little black boys and black girls will be able to join hands with little white boys
27 and white girls as sisters and brothers.

28 I have a dream today.

29 Let freedom ring from the snowcapped Rockies of Colorado!
30 But not only that; let freedom ring from Stone Mountain of Georgia!
31 Let freedom ring from Lookout Mountain of Tennessee!
32 Let freedom ring from every hill and molehill of Mississippi. From every mountainside, let
33 freedom ring.