
Struggle of Martin Luther King Jr. and Aneeka Pasha

In the book, *Home Fire*, by Kamila Shamsie, Aneeka Pasha was a Muslim girl living in the UK, who fought for the fair treatment for her deceased twin brother, Parvaiz. Similarly, Martin Luther King Jr. was an outspoken civil rights activist attempting to gain long overdue attention for the mistreated African American community. Martin Luther King Jr. and Aneeka were two very strong demonstrators of civil disobedience in their methods, the communities involved, and who they considered family. Their opposition deemed their causes unacceptable or not necessary, which took every ounce of courage and bravery to stand up for what they believed in. With all that both individuals have gone through, I resonated more with the movement started by MLK.

Of the many ways to show civil disobedience, both MLK and Aneeka showed various methodologies, including sit-ins, video via the media, and traveling. MLK used sit-ins and marches as “nonviolent direct action” to further negotiations for the African American community. When these did not work, he knew it was vital that he went to the most segregated city in the United States, Birmingham, to bring to attention to the inequalities felt all across the nation in the hearts and minds of those who were being oppressed. The message he wished to spread was only of peace and hopefulness of the future. His four steps then were the “collection of the facts to determine whether injustices exist; negotiation; self-purification; and direct action” gave reasoning for his actions. (King, 1). For a chance to change history, he took a well-calculated trip with a developed plan to Birmingham. The media broadcasted his very peaceful protests in hope that it would change the minds of the opposition (King, 2). King wanted an equality in economic and civic rights, along with a quick end to racism. There, the public was shown how the black community was treated for exercising their First Amendment rights. On the other hand, Aneeka used the same tactics in quite a different manner. She desired to have her brother, Parvaiz, brought back to the UK to have a proper burial. Upon finding out about her brother’s murder, she had her mind dead-set on getting to him. She did not care what or whom was standing in her way, whether it be her older sister Isma or the Home Secretary of the UK, Karamat Lone. Her grief transformed into anger over the unwillingness of the British and Pakistani government to help Parvaiz get home (Shamsie, 198). Aneeka acted drastically to achieve a purpose that was all for personal reasons yet being in the name of well-deserved “justice” (Shamsie, 218). Bringing him home was ultimately a way to calm her frustrations of her life and the treatment of the British Muslim community. In her eyes, her brother did some wrong that was forgivable and should not have been held against him on and determined who he was as a person. She had an intuition that going to Pakistan was what she had to do but knew it was strictly against what was expected of her as a British citizen. She created a video over-dramatizing the whole event of receiving her brother’s body to gain compassion for her cause (Shamsie, 235-236). MLK and Aneeka were open to the various

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techniques for drawing attention to ideas of interest.

Family was a major component of MLK's and Aneeka's view on how to undertake civil disobedience. MLK ensured that not one person would be excluded from his family, having the "brotherhood" title shared by all people (King, 9). Even though King was an activist, he was sure to always keep his actual family close. In his letter, he addressed how it pained him hearing his daughter ask why she missed out on activities and places for white people, when she was the most innocent mind being plagued with the idea of being inferior for no apparent reason (King, 3). MLK's actual family was not disregarded in the process of direct nonviolent action. As opposed to MLK, Aneeka saw her only family solely as her brother. By the end of the book, Aneeka had burned her familial bridges with Isma, and was not sure of the status on her lover, Eammon (Shamsie, 203). Once she saw that none of her immediate family supported her decision to go mourn the loss of her beloved brother, she neglected them and their interjections. He was on display for everyone to see during his death, and she knew she needed to be there for and show devotion to the idea of him (Shamsie, 222). Parvaiz meant the world to her because he was the only one related by birth and shared a sense of openness with her (Shamsie, 44). Since he was gone, that part of her was missing.

Communities for King and Aneeka proved to convey very different meanings for each. Loyalties for MLK were ever-present in the African American community. He put others before himself and wanted to see a united world for everyone to live in. MLK's Children's March displayed how the civil rights movement was not limited to the adults he was dealing with, having children of all ages taking part in singing hymns to God and songs about sticking together as a group encountering the same hardships with no violence (PBS, Children's March). He described how all black members of the community were his brothers and sisters (King, 3). MLK was looking out for the greater good for all and not just himself. King brought in other members of society, such as white Christians to add to his list of supporters because the more support he had that was not black, the better. Conversely, Aneeka was centrally focused on herself and Parvaiz in every action she took. It got to the point of ignoring the warning given by her cousin of what it could do to the Muslim community (Shamsie, 220) She did not mind who saw her performance-like actions, whether it was the people in Pakistan or the people back at home in the UK. Anything that did not help her in her current position was not necessary or useful to her.

Even though both fought very hard battles, mentally, emotionally and physically, I felt that MLK's movement was more substantiated. I like the fact that he had a plan in approaching civil disobedience with a clear-stated goal in mind. He did not stray from his core beliefs, and he was direct. He also utilized his Christian values to show that the depth of his intentions was intended by God and not just his own. The Bible's message was his justification for his thoughts as well as the U.S. Constitution to prove what the black community was doing along with him coincided with it. He was not about being lawless and being too over-the-top with his methods. He just

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wanted something to hit home with segregationists.

Community, family and the methods of civil disobedience were intertwined in what brought humanity to MLK's and Aneeka's fight for what was right. They both had the same common goal of making a change and had quite a few differences in how they went about achieving that through methods such as media, sit-ins, marches, and travel. These individuals figured a way to either bring family or the community together for a common goal. Both resulted in changes in the public's mindset with newly-opened eyes and hearts. Even though both activists showed what they were passionate for, King proved to give people the knowledge and power for dealing with injustices today.

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