

From: [David Kraemer](#)
To: [Covid Affiliate Archives](#)
Subject: FW: One Person's Response to Communal Fear 7.3.20
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From: Morris Allen <mojo210al@icloud.com>
Sent: Friday, July 3, 2020 9:17 AM
To: MOJO210AL <MOJO210AL@aol.com>
Subject: One Person's Response to Communal Fear 7.3.20

WAGON WHEEL CENSUS 5 Cars 3 Walkers 2 Trucks 1 Person Fishing

Frederick Douglass gave his famous [July 4th](#) Speech purposefully [on July 5th](#). The year was 1852. He chose to do so because for the sake, there could be no celebration of Independence. I doubt in making his decision he was aware of a Jewish principle that pushes off certain days on the calendar by a day so that the day itself doesn't fall on our Sabbath. The sanctity of the Sabbath should not be compromised by a minor fast day for example. Indeed, the only day of fasting that can occur on a Sabbath is Yom Kippur—the Day of Atonement- the Sabbaths of Sabbath. But I digress..... only partially.

The fact that a date on a calendar associated with a certain event that leads to fasting or celebration can be pushed off by a day or so is a fascinating insight to the very moment in which we are living. For it reminds us that the enshrinement of a day on a calendar is simply a human recognition of an event that took place and for which we owe a debt for it happening. Indeed, America itself changed the observance of specific days in our calendar when it enacted the MONDAY notion of commemoration. What used to be days of recognition for Lincoln's and Washington's birthdays were transformed into a single day called President's Day. Even this year, [July 4th](#) is observed as a Federal holiday on July 3rd. While it may simply be a result of the lack of fidelity to historical moments—so common in the American mindset—it also reminds us of the fact that more important than certain specific dates, is the recognition of their meaning—a day before or sometimes a day after.

I thought about this fact two weeks ago and was going to write about Frederick Douglass the first time that I ever observed Juneteenth- commemorating that date 135 years earlier that the last slaves were freed. I thought about the first time I ever heard about the [July 5th](#) speech at the University of Wisconsin-Madison when I took a class in the Black Studies department to fulfill a breadth requirement. It was then, and remains now, a stunning example of the real disconnect between the aspirational vision of America and the experience of a significant part of American society. It was then and it remains now a reminder that for all of the patriotic revisionism that we will hear and see in the coming days, that this country was built upon the backs of those who were viewed as "being less than" and most times were treated as simply being less than. Human dignity might be a phrase that captures the emotional appeal of this generation, but that dignity was absent and remains absent for all too many people living in our own and other neighborhoods throughout

the country. America has a powerful aspirational vision and has accomplished more in terms of achieving it than almost any other country or state of which I know. But it is hard to miss the point that racial prejudice and racist actions are still evident inside our society.

There is a movement afoot to make Juneteenth an official federal holiday. Indeed, Sen. Cornyn (R-TX) has introduced such a bill in the Senate. It seems to me that we have a perfect opportunity to strike a Solomonic compromise—or maybe I would call it a Douglas like statement on the date on which we celebrate both the independence of our nation and the emancipation of the final slave it once permitted to be. That would be to push “July 4th” back a week and push Juneteenth up a week. In that way we would be making a very powerful statement. The first is a recognition that we have travelled a great distance in these past 135 years since June 19, 1865. We have made progress inside this country and it is important to take note of that. And yet, we have not yet fully arrived at the point where the aspirational language captured in the Declaration of Independence has been fully achieved. Imagine the lesson we would be teaching each and every generation on June 26th. “On June 26th, we recognize that we have made progress inside this country from the day when the last slave was freed. On June 26th, we recognize that we still have where to go until the fulfillment of the vision contained inside that Declaration of Independence is fully achieved. On June 26th, we find ourselves at a moment when the story of America remains unfinished but moving forward—a new chapter awaits the work of this generation. Let the fireworks go off and let the work to make America- America continue.” Happy Independence Day. Shabbat Shalom --Morris
<https://www.owleyes.org/text/what-to-the-slave-is-the-fourth-of-july/read/text-of-douglass-speech>

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