

From: [David Kraemer](#)
To: [Covid Affiliate Archives](#)
Subject: FW: One Person's Response to Communal Fear 4.13.20
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From: Morris Allen <mojo210al@icloud.com>
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Subject: One Person's Response to Communal Fear 4.13.20

WAGON WHEEL CENSUS 4 cars 1 business truck 1 school bus 1 runner 3.5 inches of snow 25 degrees

“Magical Thinking” (MT) and “Religious Faith” (RF) are twins, born of the same mother, who were separated at birth. Containing the same genetic material, each of them has gone onto successful careers, albeit in very different directions. MT has become the tormenter of the psyche, while RF has become the conscience of the soul. While neither are fully aware of the existence of the other, at least in terms of recognizing their presence, both are capable of influencing any single individual at any given time.

I tell you that because for days leading up to Passover, Phyllis and I both lived with a certain sense that after the initial days of the 8-day festival, things would be different. Living in the way we now live, seemingly isolated and certainly quarantined, there was the sense that after the Sedar or the Sedarim the world would somehow be different. Neither of us could fully explain how the world would be different it was clear that MT hitting on our psyche and trying to tell us that what we had experienced for the previous month was coming to a close. We knew it wouldn't be, but we were both under the influence of a dose of MT. Indeed, while our MT was relatively benign, for some it was evident that their psyche had been taken over by it. Indeed, this wasn't the first example that one needed to see of the strength of MT, but certain leaders of states and countries clearly had been drinking from the Kool-Aid cooler created in their own minds. They proclaimed that by the middle of Passover, which this year was Easter Sunday, that the world, their country or their state would be ready to emerge as if the scourge had completely lifted.

Here is the rub. For those who live with RF, they too have spent these days leading to this sacred week of festivities with a sense that the world was going to be different after their particular Sacred festival. The power of RF is in its ability to engage the soul and to create a moment of timelessness in the midst of our time-bound existence. For a brief shining moment (phrase readily available this year as a result of no NCAA basketball tournament), the story of Passover in ancient times is the story of Passover in the moment. A good Seder is one in which, for at least that fleeting moment, we are able to see ourselves as if we ourselves left Egypt. That is the requirement placed upon us by RF and the sweep of Jewish tradition. And while I am much less familiar with Christian theology and

the role that its rituals play in the life of a Christian, the Easter call of “He is risen” is a form of their RF cast in terms of their own faith. And if that is the case, then in some manner even those of us who believe we have subdued MT and live with RF, entered into our Holidays with a sense that today would be different.

And it was. It was cold when I left for my walk and it was cold when I returned. Just two days ago, we ventured outside without a jacket and reveled in the full arrival of Spring. Our own governor had used the heartiness of Minnesotans in describing how we would overcome Covid-19 and its impact on us. He reminded us that we are a hearty bunch and are comfortable in facing difficult winters. But, he said, we all know that to be a Minnesotan is to embrace the fleeting but beautiful Spring that arrives each year. It would not have been really possible to know if it was MT or RF that provided us on Saturday(Shabbat) a brief opening to a world renewed. Today, blowing in my face, the wind and the temperature reminded me that winter is still here.

And yet, when embracing my RF, I can tell you that the world has changed. It has changed in real ways My nephew, a congregational rabbi in New York, suggested that this year more homes than ever before celebrated and “made” Passover. He said, think of this. Many people usually go to their parents or family’s home for Seder. This year, even if they attended by Zoom, they probably had to have some wine, some matza, some bitter herbs and other symbols on their table in order to fully participate. Indeed, there were articles written about people who had never made Charoset (a special Passover treat that is sweet and tasty but is to remind us of the mortar that we made in Egypt in the building process). They wrote about how they had become intrigued by making Passover dishes and feeling themselves newly a part of the unfolding tradition of our people. Their homes were ones in which they realized they too could make Seder—if not this year then next year in... And so too, I imagine, the same is true for those who were celebrating Easter. A friend of mine excitedly texted me that her father-in-law was leading an Easter service from another state this year and they were going—by sitting in their living room at home. I have to believe that homes that had never been seen as churches, became the latter yesterday morning. And when placed in that context, I know that our souls have been touched once again by the gift of RF.

For us, the Passover Seder reminds us of the presence of both MT and RF. Towards the close of the Seder ritual, we open the door for Elijah. Elijah is the prophet who is the harbinger of the coming of the Messiah. While this ritual may have been born of a certain desire to engage in Polemic with the non-Jewish neighbors around us, as a little boy it was a time when my parents gifted me the presence of both a dose of MT and a couple of doses of RF. You see, there is a Cup of Elijah that contains the fifth of the four cups of wine which we are to drink. The fifth cup will be tasted only when the Prophet arrives. When I was younger, and I believe when many of us were younger, our parents would say— “look closely, I think Elijah is drinking from the cup.” A talented parent would discreetly shake the table and make it look like the wine was being consumed. MT at its best. But even as we were looking at that cup, we were singing a song about Elijah: “that even though he may tarry, I still believe with perfect faith that soon he will arrive with the Messiah the Son of David”. The world may not have changed over the weekend, but I daresay that for me—I changed. Was it RF, is it MT? That remains the enduring question from Passover.

Morris

Sent by my iPad