

From: [David Kraemer](#)
To: [Covid Affiliate Archives](#)
Subject: FW: One Person's Response to Communal Fear 6.1.20
Date: Wednesday, July 15, 2020 9:48:28 AM

From: Morris Allen <mojo210al@icloud.com>
Sent: Monday, June 1, 2020 2:57 PM
To: David Kraemer <DAKRAEMER@JTSA.EDU>
Cc: Phyllis Gorin <DocGorin@gmail.com>
Subject: Re: One Person's Response to Communal Fear 6.1.20

Did not get message. Mazel tov. So exciting. Bris next Monday!! Hope everyone is healthy (all things being equal about a c-section) and total hoots and hollers. As long as you note that they are not edited and were simply the product of what we were once taught to be "drafts not finished projects". Sure.

Sent from my iPhone

On Jun 1, 2020, at 1:53 PM, David Kraemer <dakraemer@jtsa.edu> wrote:

Morris, we (the JTS Library) are creating an archive of JTS and conservative movement responses to COVID-19. Would you allow us to include your daily reflections in our archive?

Did you my message yesterday about our new grandchild? I sent it last night. Talia gave birth (c-section, after pushing unsuccessfully for nearly 6 hours!) at about 9 PM. Baby boy, 9 lbs, mother and baby are well!

On Jun 1, 2020, at 9:32 AM, Morris Allen <mojo210al@icloud.com> wrote:

WAGON WHEEL CENSUS 2 Cars 2 Trucks 2 Walkers 1 person fishing
1 ISD#197 School Bus #1916 (walk took place minutes after our curfew was lifted)

Long before this happened and long after her own death, the Israeli poet Zelda captured the past week perfectly with her poem, "Every Person has a Name." well, almost perfectly, but I imagine I will address that as I write. George Floyd's name will long be remembered along with Emmitt Till, James Chaney, Andrew Goodman, Michael Schwerner, Philando

Castile, Michael Brown, Addie Mae Collins, Cynthia Wesley, Carol Robertson, Carol McNair all of blessed memory. Their names form a type of Hall of Shame of American racism and callous disregard for human dignity and common decency. They, along with many more, are the names of those who have died as a result of an inability to ever fully come to grips with a founding document that is aspirational on so many levels but is damaged by its inability to imagine that people with a different color of skin could or would ever become full citizens of this country. Each of them had a name, but for too many they only saw a religion or a skin color and couldn't ever imagine that these were people deserving of the same opportunities in life that they themselves supposedly cherish.

I kept thinking about these names all weekend, and in truth, was angry at myself that I had forgotten one of the names of the young girls killed in the Birmingham church bombing. Of course, these names are but a tip of the iceberg, but long ago I made a vow to remember those girls' names and I was distressed that in this hall of shame new names had begun to push out old names. These names of course are the more familiar ones—but there are all too many who died as a result of heartless racism and whose names are not known by us at all. Unless and until we decide that we must change our narrative, that we will not accept the notion that there are good people on both sides, that we will not accept code words and code gestures as acceptable forms of behavior—these names will continue to be added to and our aspirational goals will be pushed further away. But in the midst of all of this, yesterday gave me a glimpse of what is truly at the core of our country and that we should not let go of.

[Saturday night](#), after Shabbat and Shavuot were over, we looked to see what it was that we could do to participate in the healing process. Since both of us are in the demographic that is to remain socially distant, our desire to work on Lake Street in cleaning up the damage seemed out of the question. And so we thought we could take a small step and participate in a food drive for those who were in a deeper food desert as a result of the destruction that closed their corner stores and access to groceries. [At 10 AM](#), we were told, Sanford School in Minneapolis would need 85 bags of groceries for children and families in the neighborhood. At 9:40 we drove up to the school with 8 bags of groceries—as if it were a type of tithing, and were shocked to see hundreds of cars lined up waiting to bring their food. And in addition to the cars lined up to drop off bags of food, people were walking with their children, pulling wagons, pushing strollers all filled with bags of groceries. Having just completed the pilgrimage festival of Shavuot, it was as if the cities of St Paul and Minneapolis were engaged in their own pilgrimage and were bringing their own offerings. Maybe they were guilt offerings, maybe they were offerings of thanksgiving, and maybe they were sin offerings—but in a

manner of speaking one could imagine what the ancient form of pilgrimage to the Temple looked like. All because we knew a name—George Floyd.

And in knowing that name, we were moved to act. The question we must ask, is simply this. How long will Floyd's name remain on the tip of our tongue? Will it simply become another name that we vaguely remember, and we hardly are stirred by? I had a brief exchange with a dear friend who felt an understandable sense of hopelessness as a result of his death and the continuing outcomes of racism inside this country. He was taken aback by my reluctance (THIS TIME) to embrace his sense of hopelessness. I simply cannot give into despair—even when it is ever present and hovering in the air itself. There are too many names, and too many others whose names we don't know, and yet despair is not the road to travel. We must reframe what we see before we can begin to change the narrative of who we are. Those images of Minnesotans bringing their offerings is but one image to hold onto. Another is the image of police around this country who knelt on their knees with protestors to show solidarity with their concerns. I want to shout out two such folks—and encourage you to learn their names as well-- Jack Kamerick and Irvin Franklin. These two police officers in Des Moines, Iowa deescalated a crowd that was increasingly heading towards violence by simply kneeling and taking a knee. We needn't get into a side conversation about the significance of that action and the power it portrays. What we do need to say is that the death of George Floyd, coming after three years of divisive politics and lack of national leadership, has not destroyed the desire of many to repair the breach, to address the root causes and to forge a new path. It will not be easy—but perhaps it is Zelda's words that capture the opportunity before us: *Every person has a name given by the seasons and given by their blindness/Every person has a name given by the sea and given by their death.* May the death of George Floyd become the name associated with healing and may his memory only bring blessing.

Morris

(For new readers, I walk every day and come home and just write. I don't edit and just spew out my feelings and thoughts. I don't reread these after I finish. They are what they are—One Person's Response to Communal Fear)

Sent by my iPad