

Holidays: Should People of Color Participate or Celebrate?

Rashaki Maskani Perspective

I'm of African descent and a descendant of African Slaves and my ancestors upon arrival via slave ships in the concept called the United States were stripped of all of their humanity through a process called de-humanization. This process involves taking away your language, self-dignity, your diet, your spirituality, names, basically every thing you were was stripped. For survival purposes Slaves had to adapt to their new reality and basically develop a new way of living under constant assault from a brutal slave system that valued slaves as a commodity and not human. As a result of this harsh new reality, Slaves began to adapt values similar to their capturers which resulted in them having a desire to celebrate their "Holidays" which in my opinion is "Horridays"!

When I was a child growing up in the inner-city of Compton in the County of Los Angeles, holiday celebrations meant no school, special menus, special wearing of attire, and sometimes gifts of some sort. As a child I looked forward to most of the holidays but there was one that I could leave somewhere else and it was Easter. Easter would start with getting up early in the morning getting ready for a church service called "Sun Rise Service". I did not want to get up early and get dress to attend church. Our family consisting of mostly the children going to church with my Grandmother, in which this was one of the two days out of the year we would spend with her and the other event was a work-related picnic, which I enjoyed. Easter was basically the only time I went to church during the year and sparingly we attended church through out my youth years. Our mother took us to church but our father never attended and as a family we never talked about church and its significance or lack thereof.

The other major holiday I looked forward to was Christmas, which was in the middle of winter break from school. Christmas was most kids favorite holiday because of the receiving of gifts. The day was filled with fun and play.

After Christmas came New Years Eve and Day, this was a day of celebration and noise due to the shooting of guns at twelve midnight. Also, people adapted a habit of setting new goals, called "new years resolutions". This is not a bad thing to do, but I always say goals can be set any time of the year, so therefore don't procrastinate. For example someone may say, I need to lose weight and stop eating so many fatty foods, but that will be my new years resolution so therefore I'm going to enjoy these desserts during the holidays.

The only other holiday most children and I looked forward to participating in was Halloween. At school we would dress up in costumes and have a parade in the courtyard, and eat candy. In the evening we would wear our costumes to go trick or treating throughout the neighborhood knocking on doors to collect more candy to eat.

When it came to Holidays as a child the above mentioned was the extent. As far as other official Holidays it meant time out of school, in which most children looked forward to. To evaluate my experience related to Holidays as a child, what was the significance? Pros; family and friends having fun, eating special meals, time off from work and school to break the routine to recharge. Cons; are the people interactions positive and healthy, are the meals revitalizing and healthy, the time off from work and school, is it earned and deserved? In most cases these question's answers are not positive responses. In most cases for inner-city children Holidays can lead to a tremendous amount of discomfort especially when expectations are not met. As an adult in my twenties I can recall doing illegal things just to get Christmas gifts (one of the many flaws I acquired during my formative years growing up in this sick system). I also can recall having unpleasant interactions with family members at the root of spite and jealousy. For parents who have low incomes think that Christmas is a requirement and gifts are mandatory, so they go to extremes to attempt to provide for their children. Opportunist systematic producers offer credit to desperate low-income consumers to further indebt them to continue the never-ending misery of monetary entrapment. I have a question to all who celebrate or observe these Holidays, what are the meaning of them and how have they positively benefited you and your environment? I know that Christmas and Easter have religious meanings but ultimately financial gain is at the root of all Holidays in Capitalism. I always tell people; "if you want a good Christmas, develop a product that many people want and you will get lots of money", and if I'm correct that's what this society is all about and people are insignificant.

In conclusion, I don't celebrate Holidays, I just look for time off to recharge and specific meals of interest. I mentioned the term "Horridays", I came across this term from an educator who is a system of racism opponent, like myself and thought it was appropriate due to the fact that they are monetary base entities. I think a system that focuses on money as the essential value which places people in a devalued position is horrifying. I listen to Neely Fuller Jr. on weekly basis and his analysis of Holidays are interesting. He says that they are Holy days and translate it to whole days which is what every entire day is, just like any other day. Mr. Fuller said that since people of color are subjected to the system of white supremacy racism, which is a system that should not exist due to mistreatment of people based on color, gives us an assignment to eliminate it, therefore we should not be celebrating anything until the system is eliminated. I agree with his analyses and I say that our celebration is the enjoyment of eliminating this system, which gives us intrinsic worth of existing. Last point I will share from Mr. Fuller is that if people of color concludes that they should not be celebrating these so-called Holidays, they should replace the events with education, and I definitely agree with that premise. An example of that would be practicing Kwanzaa in place of Christmas. Also, people who are in to giving, they should not focus on a specific day to give, we should always give on any day. Since people of color has been stripped of their culture and assumed a make shift culture out of tragedy and imitating the incorrect behavior of demonic system personalities translate to us needing to reforming our persons (it is my opinion that we have learned how not to be and a drastic change should be wanted and pursued, "Mental Revolution").