

Richmond April 16 1841

To His Excellency

John Tyler, President of the United States,

Esteemed, and Respected Friend!

I being by birth an American and one who loves his country, but by the will of Him who is the Most High reared up, strictly to the observances of the Mosaic dispensations, and in common with our fellow citizens know no distinction of Sect or Creed in the Observances of any day set apart for a National Thanksgiving to our Maker for the manifold blessings he has bestowed on us as an American People, in a country like this, famed throughout the known world for its liberal toleration of Religious sentiments, for the protection of which, the wise framers of our Glorious Constitution have guaranteed unto all who seek its refuge,

I as well as others were somewhat surprised to find in the columns of our Journals, as in the age in which we live, that the Chief Magistrate of this Union should by an Official recommendation to the People of the United States, address a "Christian People as being overtaken by a great public calamity," no doubt forgetting that during the Revolution of this Country ~~that~~ blood of all denominations was shed for its freedom, in those days there was no distinction it was not asked whether it was Christian, Jewish, or Pagan, blood that flowed freely for the liberty we all now possess,

I am fully conscious that a denomination of a "Christian People" exists in this Country as in others, and no doubt you are aware that there exists a Jewish People also "that have been overtaken by this great public calamity," ^{which} ~~that~~ has befallen our country, as well as a People who neither profess Judaism or Christianity but believers in a Supreme Being and Creator of the universe whom they adore,

The demise of our late Chief Magistrate William H. Harrison is an heavy affliction cast upon us, under the dispensations of an All Wise Providence, for which, we dare not even murmur, Although it is a duty incumbent on us as a Nation to implore a continuance of His Mercy and Gracious favour upon our Government and Country,

Not considering Myself as numbering with a "Christian People" in matters of a National Character although ever ready to recognize them as Brethren, and Children of One God, believe, that all Sectional prejudices should subside in an enlightened country like this, and that not especially in the affairs of our Governments, under that firm impression respectfully ask (with all due deference to your own private opinions) in behalf of our Common Country that such Modification or explanation be made in Your late recommendation to the People of the United States, as may meet the views of those who do not profess Christianity though believes in the Supreme Being of the world and wish to participate in the fast which you have most properly recommended to be observed on the 14th of May next by the People of the United States,

I remain Your humble Servant

and fellow Citizen

Jacob Ezekiel

1841

This letter is in reply to a letter addressed to John Tyler
President of the U. S. by Jacob Eastel dated April 16th 1841, rela-
tive to the phraseology used in a proclamation issued by John Tyler
after the death of President Harrison, to the people of the U. S.
The letter addressed to President Tyler is on the back of this. &c.

Washington April 19. 1841

Sir,

I beg you to be perfectly assured that in using the
language in my recommendation to the people of the United States
to observe the 14th of May as a day for religious exercises, in con-
sequence of the bereavement which the country has sustained in
the death of the late President, I designed in nothing to exclude any
portion of my fellow Citizens from a cordial union in the solemn-
ities of that occasion - In speaking, in the first paragraph
of the duties of a Christian people, I meant in no way to
imply that similar duties should not be performed by all
mankind - The last paragraph is an invitation to all,
and excludes the idea of any especial invocation - For the
people of whom you are one, I can feel none other than pro-
found respect - The wisdom which flowed from the lips of
your prophets, has in times past, and will continue
for all time to come, to be a refreshing fountain of
moral instruction to mankind - while holy records bear
witness ~~to~~ ^{to} the many instances of di-
vine favours and protection, of the God of Abraham and
of Isaac and of Jacob, ~~the~~ God of the Christian and
the Israelite, to his chosen people - May I then
hope Sir, that this explanation will remove all dif-
ficulties, and that your voice and the voices of all
your brethren will ascend to our common Father
in supplication and prayer on the day which I have
suggested -

I tender you assurances of great respect

Wm. Eastel -

John Tyler