

## D'var Torah by Rabbi M. Jaroslawicz for Chanukah 5776 (2015)

I intentionally waited until after the Shul's Chanukah dinner party to write this week's D'var Torah. I was hoping to be inspired, and inspired I was.

Seeing over one hundred members and friends celebrating the miracles of Chanukah together at a DOS event re-'KINDLED' within me at an even higher level the warmth that the Rebbitzin and I feel for our entire congregation.

The Simcha that permeated around the room was tangible. Younger and older participants alike, nobody felt left out.

This is the final blow that we deal out to the Greeks every single year. Jewish Achdus, Jewish Unity, Jewish Simcha!

Over 2,100 years ago, the Greeks tried to wipe out our religion; they tried to make us question and compromise our love of Hashem. Every time that we get together in celebration of a Jewish event or moment in history, we reaffirm our victory over the Greek culture and over their heretical philosophies.

There were basically three things that the Greeks desperately wanted to stop us from doing: Blessing the new moon, keeping Shabbos and performing Bris Milah. These three commandments openly challenged their entire philosophic beliefs.

Rav Shamshon Rephael Hirsch zt"l (Bamidbar 28:11) points out that the first communal mitzvah with which we are charged in the Torah is to sanctify the new moon, because the concept of renewal goes to the heart of what it means to be a Jew. Unlike many of the ancients, who believed that man was doomed to his destiny and mired in his evil traits, Judaism teaches that man can always change, always discover hidden recesses of greatness, and always strive and reach higher goals and aspirations. This was despicable to the Greeks, who believed in a steady-state universe and a steady-state of man. Thus, they had to fight Rosh Chodesh with every weapon and decree they could invent.

So, too, it was with Shabbos.

Rav Eliyahu Eliezer Dessler zt"l (Michtav M'Eliyahu 2:13) concludes that Shabbos, "comes to free us from the negativity of the purely physical...so that one can arrive at the profound understanding that can only come from tranquility of the soul" (2:295). The Greeks not only opposed all of this, but they were threatened by it to the point that they had to ban what they could not begin to fathom.

And finally, Bris Milah.

The Greeks believed in the tyranny of the Sevens and did not recognize the primacy of the Eights. The Maharal (Ner Mitzvah) explains that the seven days of creation represent the visible physical world. The Eights represent everything holy, which transcend the bonds of this world. Thus, Bris Milah on the eighth day represents the triumph of Torah over the bodily desires that can destroy a person.

When you take the first letter of each of these three Mitzvos you get the letter 'Shin' from Shabbos, the letter 'Mem' from Milah, and the letter 'Ches' from Chodesh. Together these three letters spell the word "SAMAYACH," as in the root of the word "Simcha," to rejoice.

Hence, every time that we achieve a state of Simcha in our service of Hashem, we hammer another spike into the coffins of the Greeks and their philosophical gibberish.

This Shabbos we will be taking out three Torahs. In the first we read the portion of the week; "Shabbos."

In the second Torah we read the portion of Rosh Chodesh; "Chodesh."

And in the third Torah we read about the eight-day miracle of Chanukah. The number eight in Chanukah is the spiritual equivalent to the number eight in Bris Milah.

Thus, this Shabbos represents a microcosm of the Big Three that the Greek's worked so hard to uproot. It is incumbent upon us to live this Shabbos at the greatest level of Simcha, thus once again defeating those who would try and destroy Klal Yisroel.

Have a Frailichin Chanuka and

a great Shabbos!