

D'var Torah by Rabbi M. Jaroslawicz for Parshas Miketz 5775 (2014)

Some things in history just don't change. In this week's Parshas Mikeitz, the Torah tells us: "The seven years of abundance that came to pass in the land of Egypt ended. And the seven years of famine began approaching just as Joseph had said; and there was famine in all the lands, but in all the land of Egypt there was bread." (Bereishis 41: 93-94).

Did you catch the slight difference in terminology between these two sentences? When the Passuk discusses the years of abundance, no mention whatsoever is made of Joseph's name. However, when we begin to discuss the seven years of the famine, the Torah quotes the Egyptians as having proclaimed, "Just as Joseph had said."

Throughout history, when it comes to any positive event that involves the Jew, credit is rarely given – even where credit is due. In contrast, when it comes to assigning blame for difficult moments, the Jew is the first one to be offered up for slaughter.

Even today, the accepted ideology is, "Blame the Jew".

Just look at any news report. When a mosque caught fire on November 12th in the Arab town of Mughayer (near Ramallah) and was seriously damaged, the Jews were immediately blamed in front-page headlines. Even the Associated Press helped pick up on the reports, although unverified, and accused Jewish settlers for starting the fire. When the truth was finally released this week after the fire department investigations were completed (and the cause turned out to be an electrical fire caused from within), very few of the media offered same-sized coverage or -- Heaven forbid! -- a retraction. Of course not! I expected nothing different. Because nothing has changed.

I don't have to quote other specific occurrences. It happens every single day. Warn civilians that you are about to bomb – and receive no acknowledgement. Unavoidable deaths when returning defensive fire against terrorists hiding behind and amid civilians ... and guess who gets called out?

I think that, since this attitude dates back as far as Yosef in Mitzrayim, we need to stop expecting anything to change in that regard. We will always be on the receiving end of blame. We need to stay strong, continue to do the right thing even without appreciation, and trust that Hashem will allow for the true Jewish light to be revealed to the world when the time is right.

Chanukah is proof that there are occasional moments in history where our light shines through endless layers of darkness. Our light is our power source, our secret weapon, and our best chance for success. If we spend our time concerned with bringing more light into the world, and we spend less time on trying to battle the mainstream injustices over which we have very little control anyway, those changes will happen automatically as a reaction to our united spirit.

Torah Ohr. Torah is our light. Midos, honesty and decent behavior, time set aside for learning, davening with a Minyan, not disturbing others by talking during davening, supporting your Shul both financially and by participating, these are all things that will bring about world change. World change. From right here in Delray Beach.

There are eight days of Chanukah. The world and nature as we know it were created in seven days. The number "eight" represents, "outside of the realm of nature."

These Hebrew words, when brought down to a single digit all equal to 8:

"Neirot," spelled Nun, Resh, Vov and Taf, has a numeric value of 656, when you add the digits, 6+5+6 equals 17 and then down to a single digit, 1+7 equals 8.

"Chanukah," spelled Chet, Nun, Vov, Kaf, Hey = 89 = 8+9=17, = 1+7 = 8.

"Yevanim," Yud, Vov, Nun, Yud and Mem = 116= 8.

"Lehadlik," Lamed, Hey Daleth, Lamed, Yud, Kof = 179 = 17 = 8.

"Bayamim Haheim," = 26=8

"Ches Nairos, V'halacha K'Bais Hillel," = 71 = 8

"Giborim B'yad Chalashim," = 44 = 8

"Timayim B'yad Tehorim," = 53 = 8.

"Reshayim B'yad Tzaddikim," = 44 = 8

"Zaydim B'yad Oskei Torasecha." = 62 = 8

"Hanayros Halalu Kodesh Heim," = 62 = 8.

We need to start looking outside of the realm of nature, which may perhaps be the only way to make universal changes. Chanukah sets the example. Miracles do happen. Now it's time for us to bring the light of G-d back to shatter the pitch darkness that threatens our very existence. If each of us reveals just a drop more light this Chanukah and continues to do so afterwards as well, there is no question in my mind that we will be able to greet the Moshiach in our current lifetime.

Good Shabbos, Chag Samayach, and Bring on the Light!