

RABBI'S MESSAGE

Our last service held at a small church on (appropriately) Church Lane was spiritually rewarding. However, not too many congregants attended as there were no parking spaces (although, we were told, there would be) for our members due to their regular Friday night, AA meeting. Cars came and went back home due to the scarcity of space – and, for that I apologize profusely.

At this moment we are looking for a large room that can accommodate a Shabbat service. I have been calling around town receiving a lot of rejections.

It is interesting that our quest is for our annual Chanukah service.

“Not by power, nor by might, but by My spirit, says the Lord of Hosts (Zechariah, 4:6). So, why did the rabbis choose this verse to epitomize Chanukah? Well, Judah Maccabee was a war hero and most believe that the Maccabees won by force. However, if we delve a bit further, we will find that ‘spirit’ not ‘force’ was the determining factor. If the Maccabees had not been infused with the spirit of freedom and dedication to Judaism, they never would have had the courage and strength to keep fighting against insurmountable odds.

When there is spirit, there is strength; when there is no spirit, a cause vanishes like smoke on a windy day. There is the story of a religious group that frowned upon the use of liquor. A congregant, knowing that his minister liked an occasional glass of brandy sent his clergyman a bottle of apple brandy at Christmas. The minister was pleased but did not know exactly how to respond. He sent the following note.

“Thank you for the apples and the spirit in which they were given.”

Yes, spirits stimulate us physically and spirit lifts us up, emotionally.

It is our emotional spirit that keeps us going against all odds. We are the classic wandering Jews without a place of our own. We keep on trudging along step by step until we find a place to hang our yarmulkas. When we do, the spirit of our n'shomo (our souls) binds us as one and we give thanks to thousands of years of history guided by the spirituality of our forefathers and their teachings. “Not by power, nor by might, but My spirit, says the Lord of Hosts.” Happy Chanukah everyone and may the bright lights of our Menorahs continue to guide us for many years to come.

Amen

Rabbi Jake