



Mark Twain had something there

A number of years ago, a quote from Mark Twain went viral - as we would say today. Not sure if that term was used back then, but Jewish organizations were printing the quote up in large quantities and distributing it all over.

Skeptics would question the sincerity of his statement. It appears to be only grudgingly stated, but that might make it even more powerful.

Here's what he said about the Jews, in September 1897:

"If the statistics are right, the Jews constitute but one quarter of one percent of the human race. It suggests a nebulous puff of star dust lost in the blaze of the Milky Way. Properly, the Jew ought hardly to be heard of, but he is heard of, has always been heard of. He is as prominent on the planet as any other people, and his importance is extravagantly out of proportion to the smallness of his bulk.

His contributions to the world's list of great names in literature, science, art, music, finance, medicine and abstruse learning are also very out of proportion to the weakness of his numbers. He has made a marvelous fight in this world in all ages; and has done it with his hands tied behind him. He could be vain of himself and be excused for it. The Egyptians, the Babylonians and the Persians rose, filled the planet with sound and splendor, then faded to dream-stuff and passed away; the Greeks and Romans followed and made a vast noise, and they were gone; other people have sprung up and held their torch high for a time but it burned out, and they sit in twilight now, and have vanished.

The Jew saw them all, survived them all, and is now what he always was, exhibiting no

decadence, no infirmities, of age, no weakening of his parts, no slowing of his energies, no dulling of his alert but aggressive mind. All things are mortal but the Jews; all other forces pass, but he remains. What is the secret of his immortality?"

Whatever you feel about Mark Twain's quote, here's what we should be thinking this 3-Kugel Shabbat.

We, the Jewish People, faced spiritual annihilation at the hands of the Greeks a long time ago. What's worse, is that many of our fellow Jews were willing to go along with the planned Hellenization of the Jewish People - with smiles on their faces.

But guess what. This Shabbat and all the others before it and after it - we are proudly observing that special day that the Greeks banned us from keeping under pain of death. They aren't here any more. We are!

And we celebrate Rosh Chodesh - that's aspect of our nationhood that the Greeks attempted to snuff out. They aren't here. We are and we proudly hold our calendar high, with all of its holidays.

And this Shabbat Rosh Chodesh is Chanuka - of course, which we joyously celebrate and thank HKB"H that the Greeks are not here anymore. But we still are!

Is everything perfect? Not yet. But with G-d's help and our continued efforts, we'll get closer and closer.

To the People of Israel, the Torah of Israel, and the Land of Israel - Forever!