



# בימים ההם בזמן הזה

## Living with the times

Second night of Chanukah

### קושיית הבית יוסף

#### Question of the Beis Yosef

Since the flask oil that was found would have naturally burned for one of the days, the miraculous component of the oil burning was only for the remaining seven days. If so, why was the festival of Chanukah established for 8 days?

This is known as קושיית הבית יוסף - the Question of the Beis Yosef. It is named after Rabbi Yosef Karo, author of the Shulchan Oruch, who raises this question in his work; the Beis Yosef.

#### Three answers from the Beis Yosef

On finding the oil it was immediately divided into eight portions. Each night, one of these small portions of oil was placed in the Menorah to be lit. Miraculously this 1/8<sup>th</sup> of the usual amount of oil still burned for the entire night. This miracle took place on each of the 8 nights.

After filling the lamps of the Menorah with oil each afternoon, the flask of oil miraculously remained full. This flask held just enough to fill all of the oil cups of the Menorah. Remaining full was a miracle which took place on each of the eight days.

The entire contents of the flask of oil was poured into the Menorah. On the following morning, the cups of the Menorah remained full despite having burned throughout the night.



*A collection of short Chanukah Divrei Torah to share with your family when sitting by the Chanukah candles*

## A Vort: Chanukah Inspiration

Yesterday we learned about the argument between Beis Shammai and Beis Hillel whether we light the Chanukah candles by increasing or by decreasing the number of candles each night.

From this argument, the Rebbe learns an insight for our Avodas Hashem. The lighting of Chanukah candles represents the idea of spreading light and chasing away the darkness. In Avodas Hashem this is achieved through keeping the Mitzvos which are referred to as a candle.

Through the *Mitzvos Lo Taaseh* - the negative commandments, we push away the darkness. This Avodah is known as *Sur Mera*, to turn away from doing bad. The positive Mitzvos - *Mitzvos Aseh*, serve to increase light. This is the Avodah of *Aseh Tov*, of doing good.

We have to keep all of the Mitzvos, whether positive or negative, but which do we emphasise? There are some Yidden who focus more on being careful in avoiding the negative - *Sur Mera*, and

there are those who focus more on *Aseh Tov*, doing more and more positive Mitzvos.

When fighting the darkness through *Sur Mera*, we have to come out strong in fighting the temptation. For example, when the Yetzer Hora has a desire to do something which is *Ossur*, we need to be strong to resist the temptation. After we succeed the first time, the power of the Yetzer Hora's desire is weakened and so the effort needed can be reduced.

In the Avodah of *Aseh Tov*, we can start with one single Mitzvah, but this Mitzvah is *Goreres Mitzvah*, it brings us to want to do more and increase in doing good and increasing light, which automatically chases away the dark

Beis Shammai comes from the aspect of *Gevurah* and therefore emphasizes the approach of *Sur Mera* and so we decrease in the number of candles. Beis Hillel comes from the attribute of *Chessed* and emphasises dispelling the darkness through bringing light, through positive deeds which only increases.

## Halocha: Laws and Customs

The Mitzvah of lighting Chanukah candles is to publicise the miracle of Chanukah. This affects many of the halachos concerning the lighting of the Menorah, including its location and the time and manner of lighting.

The Menorah may not be lit higher than 20 amos (approximately 10 meters) above ground level i.e. the flames must be below this height. Were the candles to be any higher they would not be able to publicise the miracle since they would be out of normal eyesight. Therefore people living in high-rise buildings must light indoors and not by the window. The candles may also not be placed on the ground. In Halocha the ground includes the 3 tefachim (approx. 24cm) of airspace directly above the ground. As such, the Menorah should not be lower than this height. The Gemora states that the ideal height for lighting the Chanukah candles (provided there is no fire hazard or danger) is between 3 and 10 tefachim (approx. 80cm) above the ground.

When the Chanukah candles were lit outdoors and the publicising of the miracle was to passers by, the Chanukah candles could only be lit within a limited time period to fulfill the Mitzvah. This timeframe extended from sunset until the last of the people would leave the marketplace. Now that we light the candles inside the home, the publicising of the miracle is to the members of the household. As long as some members of the home are awake and present, one can light the Chanukah candles with the blessings at anytime of night.

The candles must be recognised as being lit for Chanukah lights and should be lit in a place where they will be recognised as such. Therefore one may not carry the Menorah around and one should not leave them on a table where one is eating lest people think that they were lit to be used as a light source, rather than in fulfillment of the Mitzvah and publicising the miracle.

