



# בימים ההם בזמן הזה

## Living with the times

Fifth night of Chanukah



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

*~ Prepared for you by the Kollel ~*

### 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.

#### Another answer

The Medrash relates that the construction of the Mishkan was completed on the 25th day of the month of Kislev. However, the Mishkan was not "dedicated" until the month of Nissan, the month in which the Avos were born.

In order to "make up" the loss of a holiday to the month of Kislev, Hashem caused the miracle of Chanukah and the rededication of the Beis Hamikdash to occur in Kislev.

As the dedication of the Mishkan and the beginning of the service lasted eight days (7 days of preparation and the first day of Service), we too celebrate for eight days.

In fact, the name "Chanukah" means "dedication," to allude to this aspect of the celebration.

## A Vort: Chanukah Inspiration

Many of the Talmudic commentators discuss the origin of the name *Chanukah*.

Some explain it to be a composite of the words *Chanu – KaH*, meaning they rested on the 25<sup>th</sup>. Usually this is understood as a reference to the Jewish army who having defeated the Greeks were finally able to rest on the 25<sup>th</sup> day of Kislev. Others understand this 'resting' as a reference to 'resting' from doing work. Whilst working on Chanukah is allowed, the custom is to abstain from work activities while the candles are burning, specifically women.

The Maharsha explains that the name *Chanukah* is from the word meaning to dedicate or inaugurate. This refers to the rededication of the Altar and Temple vessels, which had been defiled or broken by the Greeks, rendering them unfit for use.

The word Chanukah is also an acronym for **Ches Neros Vehalacha K'Beis Hillel - Eight candles, and the Halacha is like Beis Hillel** - i.e. The candles are lit in an ascending manner each night in accordance the opinion of Beis Hillel.

The word Chanukah can also be related to the word *Chinuch* - Torah education. Chanukah serves as a lesson for us in the proper approach to Chinuch:

The oil used in the Menorah had to be 100% pure without any compromise to its quality. So too the Torah education that we give to our children must be pure, unadulterated and certainly uncompromised. Halachically, under the circumstances, the Chashmonaim could have used the ample supply of inferior or impure oils. But they would not compromise the Mitzvah. To repay their devotion Hashem performed a miracle and the oil lasted for 8 days.

Raising children and educating them to remain firm in the way of Torah is no easy task. There are challenges and pressures to dilute or compromise on the quality and quantity of their Torah learning.

When we approach our Chinuch responsibilities without compromise, we too can hope to see miraculous results: generations of descendants who will continue to burn with the light and passion of Torah.

## Halacha: Laws and Customs

Chanukah and Purim are both Rabbinic festivals, but the way in which they are celebrated is very different. Purim was established as days of *Mishteh veSimcha*, of feasting and rejoicing. One of the central Mitzvos is the eating of a Seudah. Chanukah on the other hand was established *behallel ubehodaa*, as days of praise and thanksgiving. We celebrate through saying Hallel and the *Al Hanissim* prayer of thanks, and the lighting of candles. There is no requirement to eat a festive meal on Chanukah.

The reason for the difference is that Purim celebrates the victory over Haman's attempt to annihilate the Jewish people in the physical sense. The Greeks on the other hand sought to destroy the Jewish people spiritually. Purim is a celebration of the body, Chanukah is a celebration of the soul.

The Ram"o in his glosses to the Shulchan Oruch writes that it is nonetheless customary to eat festive meals during Chanukah since these days celebrate the dedication of the Beis Hamikdash. When words and songs of praise to Hashem are recited at this meal it takes on the status of a *seudas Mitzvah*.

It is customary to eat dairy foods in remembrance of the actions of Yehudis. The daughter of the Kohein Gadol fed cheese to the general of the Greek army. She then gave him wine to quench his thirst. After he passed out, intoxicated, she slew him. When the Greek army saw that their leader had been killed, they fled. Of course it is also tradition to eat foods fried in oil to remember the miracle of the oil.

For Divrei Torah for the remaining days of Chanukah visit  
[www.kollelmenachem.com.au/chanukah](http://www.kollelmenachem.com.au/chanukah)

