



בימים ההם בזמן הזה

Living with the times

Sixth night of Chanukah

Questions to Ponder

In the Beis Hamikdash there were Kohanim assigned to the special task of oil making. It was not the responsibility of the Kohen Gadol to make oil. If so, why did the oiled flask found by the chashmoanim bare the seal of the Kohen Gadol?

1. The Kohen Gadol was required to bring a daily Korban consisting of flour and oil, known as the Chavitin of the Kohen Gadol.

Although lower quality oil would have been sufficient for this purpose (but not for lighting the Menora), the Kohen Gadol observed a personal stringency to use only the purest olive oil, making it fitting for the Menora as well.

It was a flask of this oil which they found on Chanukah bearing the seal of the Kohen Gadol.

2. The Gemora writes that the flask of oil was lying with the seal of the Kohen Gadol. It does say that the oil was sealed with the seal of the Kohen Gadol.

Rather this refers to a valuable golden signet ring that belonged to the Kohen Gadol that was lying together with the oil which was found.

This is how they knew that the oil was pure and fitting for use. The Greeks would surely have stolen the ring if they had noticed it. The fact that they did not find the ring is proof that they were not able to access the oil to defile it. It proved they had not defiled the oil nearby.



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

A Vort: Chanukah Inspiration

The story of Chanukah is a battle over oil. The Yevanim made a concerted effort to defile all of the oil stores in the Beis Hamikdash. The Chashmonaim made their first objective to find pure oil with which to relight the Menora. Why the focus on oil?

Oil is symbolic of Torah wisdom, particularly the esoteric inner teachings of the Torah (Kabbalah and Chassidus). The Greeks in their campaign against the Jewish people sought to defile the oil, to corrupt the teachings of the Torah and rob them of their inherent sanctity and Divinity.

This is why the Talmud describes the day on which the Torah was translated into Greek as being as difficult as the day on which Bnei Yisroel worshipped the golden calf. The Greeks were a nation of intellectuals; philosophers, astronomers, mathematicians and scientists. Without the Mesorah and sacred belief in the Torah's supernal origin, this translation (and its aftermath) was more harmful to our people and our beliefs than the swords and spears of the Greek armies. The Greeks, so to speak, took the Torah out of the Yeshiva and into

the universities and the realm of the academic. There Torah would be learned as history and philosophy but not as the G-dly wisdom that it truly is.

The Chashmonaim were fully aware of the Greek's plans and realized that finding and rekindling pure oil was integral in the fight against Jewish assimilation to the Hellenistic movement. The Menora too represents the Torah. The Menora comprises 6 branches which come out from a central body. So too the Torah comprises the 6 sections of the Oral Law as they emerge and expound on the central *Torah Shebichsav*, the Written Law.

With the one small remaining cruse of oil, they were able to rekindle the Menora. When the teachings of the Torah are studied as Divine wisdom (the seal of authentic tradition), we connect with the infinity of the One who gave the Torah to us. Even one dose of Torah studied with this approach can generate radiance and blessing far beyond what we could ever expect, illuminating our hearts, minds and souls with its light and connection to Hashem.

Halocha: Laws and Customs

When electricity came on the scene, it presented numerous Halachic questions. One of the questions raised was the permissibility of using electric lights to fulfill the Mitzvah of Chanukah candles. Most of the authorities have concluded that one cannot use electric lights for the Menorah, below are some of the reasons that they offer:

1. Electricity may not constitute fire and therefore we treat it stringently in all halachic cases i.e. one may not turn on a light bulb on Shabbos when we do consider it as fire, yet on Chanukah we do not treat electricity as fire for the purpose of lighting the Menora.
2. The filament of a light bulb is curved. The Talmud says that one may not arrange Chanukah candles in a circle (since this would resemble a torch rather than an individual candle).
3. The Chanukah candles were established to resemble the Menora in the Temple on which the miracle occurred. Electric lights do not match this criteria since they do not utilize a fuel, wick and flame.
4. At the moment we light Chanukah candles there must be enough fuel (oil, wax, etc.) so that the candle could burn for at least half an hour uninterrupted. The nature of electricity is that the energy source is not entirely present at the moment of lighting but is fed subsequently through the wires.

