

THE MIRACULOUS JAR

by Rabbi Label Lam

When the Greeks entered the Sanctuary **they defiled all the oils that were in the Sanctuary** by touching them. And when the Chashmonaim overcame them and emerged victorious over them, **they searched** and found **only one jar of oil that was placed with the seal of the Kohain Gadol...**

There is an inherent and glaring contradiction in this part of the eight line account of the Talmudic telling of the story of Chanukah. If the Greeks contaminated **all** the oil then how were the Chashmonaim able to find one jar with the seal of the Kohen Gadol still intact? Then they did not contaminate **all** the oil!? Not less than the Sefas Emes asks this question.

Sometimes I have the opportunity to speak to American college students. I have often asked them, "What percentage of the Jewish people, do you believe, believe in HASHEM?" I get low numbers. Then I wave my hand up and I tell them, "I know the exact number", which really awakens their curiosity. How can anyone know the exact number? That is an invitation to share something I heard from Rabbi Dovid Ordman, who I met at a seminar more than 22 years ago. There he told me a story about how he had failed 14 times where an elderly Jew in England succeeded once.

Any elderly Jew in England migrated from Eastern Europe and opened a dry goods store. Into his shop would enter a Russian Jew from the old days. He was raised, like a whole few generations, on an heavy dose of atheism. He was not able to hold back his comments or hide his antipathy for this old religious looking Jew. Business is business and he tolerated his verbal barbs and harsh looks for a while. One day this Boris entered the store and the old Jew propositioned him with a strange offer. "I would like to buy something from you today!" Boris was confused, "I don't have store Rabbi. You have store!" The old Jew explained that business is based on the disagreement about the value of a thing. He told him, "I gather from the looks you give and the comments you make that you don't believe in G-d!"

The Russian affirmed his assumption. "Then you probably do not believe in the Next World where we take our strivings to come close to G-d and there we revel in the accomplishment and the closeness achieved in this world!" The Russian agreed. The old Jew went on to explain that the Next World is the payload of his existence. He lives for it all day every day and that for his Russian customer it was like the ashes on the edge of a cigarette. He offered then \$300 for his portion in the next world. Boris agreed but the old Jew would not give it until a legal contract was drawn up and locked in the safe.

Boris walked out with a winning smile on his face. Three days later he comes back to the store blinking and twitching and looking like he has not slept a wink. He had the money in his hand. The elder Jew knew what had happened. He tortured him by pretending not to know what he wanted until he forced the Russian Jew to admit with his own mouth that he wished to return the money and void the agreement in the safe. That was the teachable moment. "You see beneath all those layers of contrary training there beats a heart that can't sleep a night knowing you've forfeited your eternal relationship with a living G-d!"

Now Rabbi Ordman has been called dozens of times to hotels in the far-east where thousands of wandering Israelis are willing to gather for a weekend of sunflower seeds and familiar company even if they have to listen to lectures about how the Torah is undeniably true. He reports that it only happened 14 times in all the years that in the final session there was someone so oppositional that he declared boldly his lack of belief in G-d. Each of those times he pulled out \$300 and offered them a contract to sell their portion in the next world. He was never able to make that sale!

What percentage of the Jewish People believe in HASHEM? 100%. That doesn't mean we all believe with 100% of our being. "We are believers the sons of believers!" There is always a jar of oil within that can never become defiled. One must first search for **the miraculous jar**.