

LIGHTING THE MENORAH

by Joshua Kruger

Our story deals with the holiday of Chanukah. What connection could there be between the story of Chanukah and our parsha?:

Parshas Miketz deals with the sad story of brothers fighting with each other. Yosef had been forced into slavery by his brothers. After he discovered them in Egypt, he placed Shimon in jail until the others satisfied his demands. The brothers struggle at first, but through the leadership of Yehuda they succeed. The story of Chanukah is also a story of brothers, among them a Shimon and a leader named Yehuda. This time however, the brothers were united. Instead of fighting with each other, they worked together to fight the *Yevani* army.

The silly people in the following story make ten mistakes. Can you find them?

The Story:

In the city of Balagan, on a street named Gevalt, lived a couple named Mr. and Mrs. Mebulbal. This family was nice and funny and very very very mixed up.

"It's time to light the candles" called out Mrs. Mebulbal.

"Are you sure?" asked Mr. Mebulbal.

"Yes" insisted Mrs. Mebulbal. "I can see that 5 street lights have turned on outside".

"I guess you're right then" said Mr. Mebulbal, but he had already decided that he must finish off organizing his sock drawer before lighting. Once he was done, he came downstairs and saw his wife setting up the *chanukios* by the front door.

"I thought I'd put both of our *chanukios* on this side of the door" she explained, "because it's nice for them to be right next to the *mezuzah*!"

"Great idea," said Mr. Mebulbal. "I like how both of our *menoras* will make bright light if they're standing close to one another. Where is the olive oil? I need to check that it has the seal of the king of Israel"

"Oh I decided that it would be better to light with wax candles" said Mrs. Mebulbal. "They are tall and it will be easier for people on the street to see the flames. Besides I will use the olive oil to make my famous *Pirumei Pizza* for dinner." said Mrs. Mebulbal.

"Great. I see you bought the candles that are guaranteed to last at least 20 minutes" said Mr. Mebulbal. "Please remember my custom not to eat Romaine lettuce on Chanukah. The Romans were the one who destroyed the First Temple! They're the enemies that the Maccabim fought on Chanukah, remember? And Romaine sounds like Roman!"

Mrs Mebulbal had a good laugh, "You're very clever! Let's start our meal out here on the front porch. It's cold tonight and the chanukah lights will keep us warm".

Answers:

-The prevalent custom is to light the *chanukiya* (*Menorah*) immediately after *Tzes Hachochavim*, the appearance of 3 stars in the sky (*Kitzur Shulchan Aruch* 139:10). Others light following sunset.

-Mr Mebulbal insisted on finishing to organize his socks instead of rushing to light the candles when it was the appropriate time. While a drawer full of neat socks is wonderful, we are not allowed to delay lighting the *chanukiya* once *tzet hakochavim* has occurred (*Kitzur Shulchan Aruch* 139:10).

-One should try to place the *chanukiya* on the opposite side of the doorway from the *mezuzah* in order to be surrounded by *mitzvos* (*Kitzur Shulchan Aruch* 139:7).

-If we crowd *chanukias* together it becomes confusing what night of Chanukah it is. Three *chanukiyas* placed right next to each other on the third night would have a total of 9 candles and that might give the impression that it is the last night of chanukah (8 candles + 1 shamash). The *chanukiyas* need to be spaced far enough apart that a person walking by will clearly know what night of Chanukah it is (*Kitzur Shulchan Aruch* 139:7).

-At the time of the *Beis Hamikdash* a flask of olive oil had to have the seal of the Kohen Gadol, not the King of Israel, in order to be fit for use in the lighting of the *menorah*.

-Lighting a *chanukiya* is best performed with using pure olive oil, and not the pretty colourful wax candles that Mrs Mebulbal preferred. It would've been wiser for her to hold off on oil for her pizza dough, and to use it for the mitzvah of lighting the *chanukiya* instead (*Kitzur Shulchan Aruch* 139:4).

-The term for spreading the miracle is not "pirsumei pizza" no matter how delicious it sounds. It is "pirsumei nisa". The Mebulbals were correct in that lighting the *chanukiya* outdoors, in sight of passers-by, is definitely a great way to do '*pirseumei nisa*'. So they did get something right!

-The flames of the *chanukiya* must burn for at least 30 minutes

-The enemies of the Jews during the Chanukah story was not the Romans! It was the *Yevanim*! Poor Mr. Mebulbal is confusing the two enemies! Also, the story of Chanukah happened during the time of the second *Beis Hamikdash*, not the first.

-We are forbidden to use the candles for any purpose other than to look at them. It is therefore not permitted to use them for their heat. (*Kitzur Shulchan Aruch* 139:14)