



Kislev 22, 5780
December 20, 2019

Chanukah

It is written in the holy Zohar that from Shabbat all of the days of the coming week are blessed. This coming Shabbat is the Shabbat before Chanukah and therefore this coming Shabbat provides blessings and strength to each and every Jew to help him or her properly and enthusiastically observe, celebrate, and internalize the theme and message of Chanukah.

In the story of Chanukah we learn that after the Maccabees miraculously defeated the Yevanim, they entered the Bet HaMikdash to clean it, purify it, and prepare it for use again. With tremendous heartache they discovered that the Bet HaMikdash had been badly vandalized and all of the jars of pure olive oil needed to light the Menorah had been purposely defiled by the Yevanim. The seals of purity of the Kohen Gadol had been purposely broken and all of the oil was therefore Tameh, impure, and could therefore not be used to light the Menorah.

But then a miracle occurred! One jar of oil that had not been touched by the Yevanim was found! The seal of the Kohen Gadol was intact and the oil was therefore tahor, pure, and could therefore be used to light the Menorah! The Jewish People very happily and very gratefully lit the Menorah and, even though there was only enough oil to last for one day, another miracle occurred and the oil miraculously lasted for eight days!

One of the very important lessons we can learn from the holiday of Chanukah is that every Jewish person is like a Bet HaMikdash. Just as the Shechinah shined inside the Bet HaMikdash, so too each one of us has a Neshama, a G-dly soul that is literally a part of G-d above, that shines within us. And just like the Yevanim tried to defile the Bet HaMikdash, so too does each one of us have a Yetzer HaRa, an evil inclination that diligently and tirelessly tries its best to get us to do the wrong thing and to, Chas V'Shalom, thereby defile ourselves and make ourselves tameh, impure.

We must always remember that even if we have made mistakes in the past and even if, in moments of perceived weakness, we have given in to and listened to our Yetzer Hara, there is always a part of our Neshamot that can never become tameh! This deepest part of our selves always remains faithful to Hashem and always remains holy and pure. It's exactly like the jar of pure olive oil, sealed with the seal of the Kohen Gadol.

We only need to look for it; it's always ready to shine!

Shabbat Shalom!
Chanukah Sameach!

Rabbi David