

The Weekly Daf



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Menachos 86-92

Week of 13-19 Av 5756 / 29 July-4 August 1996

Rav Weinbach's insights, explanations and comments for the 7 pages of Talmud studied in the course of the worldwide Daf Yomi cycle

This issue is dedicated in memory of Chava Leah bas Yosef Yitzchak, Eve Lynn Koppelle, on her second Yahrzeit 19 Av 5756

For Whom The Light Shines

Two features of the Beis Hamikdash combined to communicate the important message that light in the Holy Temple was not for Hashem's sake but for the sake of Israel and the world.

First of all there was the Menorah whose lamps were daily lit to burn through the night. Lest we misinterpret the purpose of the Menorah as a source of light for Hashem, we are reminded that it was Hashem who led us with His pillar of fire through the wilderness for 40 years. He that provided light for our ancestors to brighten the desert darkness certainly is not dependent on us for light.

To bring this message home, along with the message that the Table in the sanctuary, with its showbread, was not to provide Hashem with food, we were commanded to place the Menorah by the southern wall of the Sanctuary and the Table by the northern wall with the golden Incense Altar in between. Illumination is normally provided at the place of dining. This obvious separation of Menorah from Table demonstrated that Hashem received neither light nor food from us but rather channeled light and food to the world via these sacred vessels.

In the same vein King Solomon made windows for the Beis Hamikdash with the narrow part facing inward and the wide part facing out. Had the purpose of the windows been to bring exterior light into the Holy Temple the opposite should have been the case. The paradoxical shape of the windows communicated the message that the House of Hashem required no light from the world but rather provided light for the universe.

Menachos 86b

Two Ways to Experiment

The Torah commanded the kohanim to put enough oil in each lamp of the Menorah in the Beis Hamikdash that it would burn from the beginning of the evening until the morning. They were aware that this amount had to suffice even for the longest winter night but they did not know how much oil was needed for this purpose.

How did they determine that this amount was half a *lug*?

Two opinions are offered:

- 1) They first tried with an amount less than half a *lug* and kept increasing the amount until they arrived at the precise measure of half a *lug*.
- 2) They started off with a whole *lug* and when they saw that oil remained in the morning they kept decreasing the amount until they determined that half a *lug* was sufficient.

The logic behind the two opinions:

- 1) If they would start with an excess amount all of the leftover oil would have to be discarded in the morning and the Torah is considerate not to cause waste of Jewish money.
- 2) The Beis Hamikdash was a place of divine grandeur and to take pains to save money would be improperly pauperish for "in a place of wealth there is no place for poverty."

But when did they conduct this test? It is unlikely that they waited for the longest night in the month of Teves when the Mishkan was already functioning in Nissan.

The Talmud Yerushalmi quoted by Tosefos states that the half *lug* was standard for all nights of the year but the thickness of the wick changed. For short summer nights a thicker wick was used in order to consume the oil in less time. For long winter nights a thin wick was used to make it through the night.

We can therefore assume that the experimenting was done in the medium nights of Nissan with a medium wick.

Menachos 89a

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