**Chanukah: Miracle of the Oil**
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[](http://www.judaism.com/holiday/chanukah/menorahs.asp?aref=isolomon)According to the Talmud (Shabbat 21b), once the victorious Maccabees reached the Temple, they could only find one oil jug with the high priest’s seal intact. Worse still, the oil in the jug was only enough to last one day. A great miracle occurred and the light lasted for eight days.

The Talmud does not emphasize the miraculous victory as the reason for celebrating Chanukah but focuses on the long-burning oil as the basis for the holiday. **What the Miracle Signified**
When the Greeks plundered the Temple, they defiled the holy oil, an act that is explained by Rabbi Menachem Mendel Schneerson (1903-1995). The notion that oil could be pure or impure just because someone touched did not make sense to the Greeks. And the Jewish tendency to imbue physical matter with spiritual qualities was offensive to logical Greek sensibilities. Like a younger brother who brushes his younger sister’s shoulder with his pinky after his sister cries, “Don’t touch me!” the Greeks took special measures to spoil the Temple oil.

The Maccabees found one oil flagon with its seal of purity untouched and used it to light the menorah. And with that, the victorious Jews resumed their mission of bringing spiritual light to the darkness around them.