



## Oily Foods on Chanukah?

There clearly is a craze about eating doughnuts amongst Jewish people on Chanukah. The largest bakery in Israel, Angel's, reportedly fries up 250,000 *every day* of Chanukah, and a reported total of 32 million are consumed in Israel alone – just a few calories! The explanation given for the doughnut feast is that they are fried in oil, reminding us of the miracle of the oil that miraculously lasted for eight days upon the re-dedication of the Temple by the Hasmoneans. And there we could leave it. But in reality, there is so much more to the message of the miracle of Chanukah that they form an enjoyable way of telling. A message that transcends the story itself, and is as relevant now to our own lives as it was then.

One of the key aspects of the mitzvah of Chanukah is to 'publicise the miracle'. Yet the way we do it is without any fanfare, noise, shofar-blowing or public readings. We do it by lighting a few simple candles – reminding us that however much darkness there is in the world – it cannot put out the light of one small candle.

And that candle, according to our tradition, represents the soul of man itself – 'the candle of God is the soul of man' (Proverbs 20:27). Or as Rabbi Samson Raphael Hirsch put it, 'One single Jew, one single Jewish house, is ultimately in itself sufficient to serve as the foundation for the re-erection of the entire Jewish sanctuary'.

When we light candles in our own homes, or even eat a doughnut on Chanukah – we remind ourselves not just of the miracles of our history – but the miracles of our present, and most importantly, the ***potential we have to create the miracles of the future.***

Chanukah reminds each and every one of us that it is not just the transmission of the *mesorah*, tradition, itself to the next generation that is critical – but it is the brightness of hope, the shining candle of optimism in a wonderful Jewish future that we invest it with that makes all the difference.

May we all merit to hold that flame high – and celebrate together the fact that it still burns just as brightly today as it did in ancient times.



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