

CURRENT TALMUD PASSAGE

"A TALMUD TALE" PREMIERED FEBRUARY IN HOUSTON, TX!

The musical was an enormous hit! If you'd like a dvd of the show, please send a [contribution](#) of \$18 for an enjoyable, entertaining and inspiring look at the world of the Talmud!

Posted November 15, 2007, by Rabbi Judy Abrams. Please refer to Maqom's home page for information about previous passages.

BH

ONCE HOLY ... ALWAYS HOLY

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Even though the mitzvah of lighting the Hannukkah menorah is a fairly simple one, it can teach us some important principles. In this case, we learn that once you've designated something as holy, it can't go back to being non-holy.

Suppose a Hanukkah lamp has oil left over in it, what is to be done with the oil?...If it has oil left over from the first day, one adds oil to the lamp and lights it on the second day.

If oil is left after the second day, one adds more oil to the lamp and lights it on the third day, and so on for the successive days.

But if, on the eighth day, some oil is still left, one makes a fire of the oil and burns it by itself. Why so? Because oil was set aside for a religious purpose and hence it is forbidden to make use of it for any other purpose. (Pesikta Rabbati 3:1)

This rule applies not just here but in many other cases. For example, if an animal is set aside for sacrifice, it cannot be used for any other purpose. In a more modern example, we could say that once you make a pledge to charity, that money can no longer be used for secular purposes.

Discussion Questions:

1. Having learned this text, what will you do with the candle drippings from your Channukkah menorah now?
2. How can you put this principle to use in your everyday life? For example, how can you bring more holiness into your life by devoting an hour a day, for example, to some holy purpose?