

## Appendix C

**RABBI'S WRITE WHICH WICK IS RIGHT**

The prolific writer of all things dealing with Oak Island and the man who penned the No.#2 Best Theory on Oak Island, James A. McQuiston, FSA Scot, brilliantly stated – *“History is a fuzzy thing.”* When it comes to the topic of wicks for the Jewish Menorah from the period of Moses to Solomon, he may be onto something.

Dates are often hard to come by as well, but history does say King Solomons’ Temple and Tabernacle were destroyed in 587 BC, by the Neo-Babylonian Empire King, Nebuchadnezzar II. As for an official chronology when Moses was given the construction notes to build the Menorah, then passed to Bezaleel who was the craftsman of such an object, a factual estimation is offered by all, but confirmed by none.

There is little known which is provable without the weight of voluminous opinions by very learned men. No menorah, no lamps, no wicks and the tidbits told in the bible, only “fuzzy up” this topic even further.

What is opined comes from an extensive development of Rabbinical commentary created over the following 1000 years. Yet this body of doctrine is subject to continual modification, interpretation, argumentation, and still further interpretation. It can be concise, detailed, expressive, and provides everyday answers. Which may in fact, change every day. It does promote a deeper look at many things.

For those old enough who can fondly recall the movie *“Fiddler on the Roof,”* within it, is a running gag which embellishes townsfolk needing to stop every few feet, to inquire from the town Rabbi, as what is proper and approved of, before taking the next step. Each and every condition in life – had a rabbinical law or dictate which must be consulted before arguments and commentary could possibly alter the law or protocol even further.

Providing a “fair and balanced” approach to the *Thesis* which has been proffered here in this book, this appendix posts some official, authentic, and illuminated thinking by those rabbinical interpretations of their conception of how best to deal with the commandment to honor the Sabbath, and therefore, light the Menorah and its wicks. If these instructions applied to Sabbath candle lighting, you can be assured it would have applied to the original Menorah in the Tabernacle and Solomon’s Temple.

There is no disrespect meant or even a challenge to what is said regarding the protocols, rules and reasonings why these dictates and holy announcements were made regarding the wicks of antiquity. I would just ask the reader to imagine yourself wandering around in the desert, or even on the verge of entering Jericho and the Promised Land, if you think these rules were in force during this period between Moses to Solomon. Or, perhaps, these holy announcements were developed over those following 1000 years; as rabbis would opine like lawyers seeking consensus on what should now apply culturally, as well as attempting to fill old historical holes in a period of antiquity.

In offering my inconsequential opinion on the official Judaic commentary promulgated in the Mishnah, Gemara and Talmud, is admittedly, abit assuming. Yet clearly this is an example where the level of micromanagement in a macroenvironment can manifest into a burning issue; built on a false premise or protocol which did not exist back in time. Yet, to apply standards built around other potentially fluid narratives frequently leads leaders to install evermore complications. Here, Appendix C provides insights into thinking centuries after the fact, which highlights when history is written by future analysts - *it all becomes fuzzy*.

We could invoke Occam’s razor to help untangle this fibrosity, but availing yourself to this unique historic commentary is perhaps a better tonic to reason why our assessment of the logistical and symbolic use of date palm fiber, up to and prior to Solomon’s Temple, answers why the Knights Templar felt obligated to bring it to Oak Island. Unfortunately, this is why a *Thesis* is tendered here at the end of the forensic evidence.

## Mishnah's Musings

The following pages are taken directly from the Mishnah Torah Sabbath, Chapter 5, on the Sefaria website. They are found at [https://www.sefaria.org/Mishneh\\_Torah%2C\\_Sabbath.5.5?lang=bi](https://www.sefaria.org/Mishneh_Torah%2C_Sabbath.5.5?lang=bi)

Mishnah was the first major work of rabbinic literature, compiled around AD 200, documenting a multiplicity of legal opinions in the oral tradition. Talmud comprises generations of rabbinic debate about law, ethics, and Bible, structured as commentary on the Mishnah with stories interwoven. The dictate is in red, historic Rabbis are referenced and highlighted in blue.

### **Mishnah Torah, Sabbath 5**

The wick used for the Sabbath lights should not be made from a substance that causes the light to flicker - e.g., wool, goat's hair, silk, cedar fiber, uncarded flax, palm bast, various types of soft trees, \*The definition of the last five substances is dependent on the Rambam's (Maimonides, 1138-1204) interpretation of the Mishnah, Shabbat 2:1. See his Commentary on the Mishnah and the like. Instead, [we should use] a substance that burns steadily - e.g., carded flax, [remnants of] linen clothes, cotton, \*Although Rashi (R. Yitzchaki 1040-1105 CE), Shabbat 27b, excludes cotton, the Rambam's view is accepted by most authorities including the Shulchan Aruch (R. Karo, 1488-1575 CE) (Orach Chayim 264:1).

Note the gloss of the Ramah (loc. cit.) which states that if a person used any of these substances for a wick he is forbidden to benefit from the light, lest he tilt it to cause it to burn brighter. He does, however, also mention the possibility of leniency in certain instances and the like.

The person kindling [the lamp] should make sure that the fire has caught on the major portion of the wick that emerges [from the lamp].

### **Shabbat 20b:5**

This Mishnah cites a list of fuels and wicks that one may not use in kindling the Shabbat lights, either because their use might induce one to perform a prohibited labor on Shabbat or because they are not in keeping with the deference due Shabbat. The Mishnah begins by listing the materials that one may not use as wicks. That is followed by a list of the substances that one may not use as fuel.

#### **MISHNAH:**

With what may one light the Shabbat lamp, and with what may one not light it? With regard to types of prohibited wicks, one may light neither with cedar bast [lekhes], nor with uncombed flax [hosen], nor with raw silk [kalakh], nor with willow bast [petilat ha'idan], nor with desert weed [petilat hamidbar], nor with green moss that is on the surface of the water. With regard to types of prohibited oils, one may light neither with

pitch [zefet], nor with wax [sha'ava], nor with castor oil [shemen kik], nor with burnt oil [shemen sereifa], nor with fat from a sheep's tail [alya], nor with tallow [helev]. **Naḥum the Mede** says: One may light with boiled tallow. And the Rabbis say: **Both tallow that was boiled and tallow that was not boiled, one may not light with them.**

### Shabbat 20b:13

It was taught in a baraita: **The Sages (Oral Tradition) added to the list of prohibited wicks in the Mishnah those made of wool and hair as well.** *The Gemara* remarks: And our tanna did not consider it necessary to enumerate these because it is virtually impossible to fashion wicks from these materials, as, when they burn, wool shrinks and hair is scorched. Consequently, they are unsuitable for use as wicks.

### Shabbat 21a:4

**Rabba[h] (405-494 CE)** said: Those wicks about which the **Sages** said one may not light with them on Shabbat, the reason is: **Because the fire flickers on them. It sputters on the wick and does not burn well.** Those oils with which the **Sages** said that one may not light on Shabbat, the reason is: **Because they are not drawn effectively by the wick.**

### Shabbat 27b:7

#### MISHNAH:

**Of all substances that emerge from the tree, one may light only with flax on Shabbat (Tosafot) because the other substances do not burn well.** And of all substances that emerge from the tree, the only substance that becomes ritually impure with impurity transmitted by tents over a corpse is flax. If there is a dead body inside a house or a tent that is made from any materials that originate from a tree, everything in the house becomes ritually impure. However, only in the case of flax does the tent itself become impure.

### Shabbat 28b:10

However, with regard to lighting on Shabbat what is at the crux of their dispute? **Rabbi Elazar** said that **Rav Oshaya (200-220 CE)** said, and **Rav Adda bar Ahava (250-290 CE)** said likewise: **Here we are dealing with a cloth that is precisely three by three fingerbreadths and we are dealing with a Festival that occurred on Shabbat eve.** And everyone is of the opinion that the halakha is in accordance with the opinion of **Rabbi Yehuda (250-290 CE)**, who said that on a Festival one may only kindle a fire with whole vessels, as it is permitted to carry them and they do not have set-aside [muktze] status; however, one may not kindle a fire using broken vessels, i.e., vessels that broke on the Festival. Since they broke on the Festival itself, they are classified as an entity that came into being [nolad] on the Festival, and the halakha prohibits moving them. And, similarly, everyone is of the opinion that the halakha is in accordance with the opinion of **Ulla (250-320 CE)**, as **Ulla** said: **One who lights a lamp must light most of the wick that protrudes from the lamp. Based on these assumptions, the dispute in the Mishnah can be understood as follows: Rabbi Eliezer holds that folding alone is ineffective in negating the wick's vessel status, and once**

one lights only a small part of it, it thereby becomes a broken vessel, as part of it burns and the remainder is less than three by three fingerbreadths. A smaller cloth is no longer considered significant. Since he is required to light most of the protruding wick and, as mentioned above, it is prohibited to light broken vessels, he may not light the folded garment. And [Rabbi Akiva \(110-135 CE\)](#) held that folding is effective and, immediately when he folded it, the garment no longer has the status of a vessel. It was not considered a vessel even before he lit it, and when he lights it, it is as if he were lighting plain wood, not a vessel that broke on the Festival.

[The following rules apply when] one winds a substance that one may use as a wick around a substance that one should not use as a wick: **If one's intent was to make the wick thicker and thus increase its light, it is forbidden.** \*[Rabbenu Asher](#) in his gloss to Shabbat 21a explains that this was prohibited lest this leniency cause one to think that one may light a Shabbos lamp with the forbidden substances alone at a later date. **If one's intent was to make the wick firmer so that it will stand erect and not hang downward, it is permitted.** \*Shabbat 21a relates that in [Rabban Gamliel's](#) household a wick was wound around a portion of a nut shell.

### Shabbat 21a:7

Rabba said to him: Before you raise an objection to my opinion from the statement of [Rabban Shimon ben Gamliel \(AD 40-80\)](#), support it from the statement of the first tanna, who said that it is prohibited to light in that case. *The Gemara answers:* This is not difficult, as it is preferable to challenge from the statement of [Rabban Gamliel](#) with regard to the custom in his father's house. There is a principle that proof cited from an action is great, i.e., a practical precedent is more substantial than a theoretical halakha. Nevertheless, the difficulty from the statement of [Rabban Shimon ben Gamliel](#) remains: Is he not speaking of a case where he combined the wick and the nut to light them together? If so, one is permitted to combine the prohibited and the permitted. *The Gemara answers:* No, it is speaking in a case where he combined them to float the wick on the oil with the help of the nut. *The Gemara asks:* If it is speaking only with regard to a case of floating the wick, what is the reason that the first tanna prohibits doing so? *The Gemara answers:* The entire baraita is the opinion of [Rabban Shimon ben Gamliel](#), and it is incomplete, and it teaches the following: One who wrapped a material with which one may light around a material with which one may not light, may not light with it. In what case is this statement said? When he combines the materials to light them together. However, if he utilizes that with which one may not light merely in order to float the wick, it is permitted, as we learned that [Rabban Shimon ben Gamliel](#) says: In the ancestral house of my father, they would wrap a wick with which one is permitted to light around a nut. That was how they would light.

One may place a grain of salt \*[Rashi](#), Shabbat 67b, explains that this makes the oil burn brighter or a bean. \**The Tosefta*, Shabbat 2:6, explains that this will cause the wick to burn slower. At the opening of a lamp on Friday so that it will burn [better] on Sabbath.

All [the substances] that may not be used as wicks on the Sabbath may be used in a large fire [that was kindled] either for warmth or for the purpose of light whether the fire is within a holder or on the ground. The prohibition against using them applies

solely in regard to their use as wicks for a candle. **\*These substances were prohibited to be used as wicks unless one tilt the candle to produce a better light.** When they are being used in a larger fire, the quantity of fuel will produce a steady light and there is no reason to suspect that one might tilt the fire. See Chapter 3, Halachah 19.

The fuel **\*We have used a non-literal translation for the Hebrew שמן, which literally means "oil,"** since some of the substances mentioned in this halachah are not oils used for kindling a Sabbath lamp must be drawn after the wick. Fuels that are not drawn after the wick may not be used. [These include] [molten] tar, [molten] **\*The word "molten" was added in both these instances on the basis of Shabbat 20b which notes that candles made of beeswax are acceptable. Rabbenu Asher states that the same principle applies regarding tar. The prohibition against using them applies only when they are molten and used as fuel for a lamp in the place of oil. Beeswax, gourd oil, \*In his Commentary on the Mishnah (Shabbat 2:1, based on one of the opinion's in Shabbat 21a), the Rambam identifies kik oil with the kikayon plant mentioned in the Book of Yonah. [fat from a] sheep's tail, or tallow.**

Why may we not kindle with wicks that do not catch the fire well and with fuels that are not drawn after the wick? This is a decree [enacted] lest **\*Significantly, in his Commentary on the Mishnah (loc. cit.), the Rambam mentions a different reason, lest one be dissatisfied with the light and leave the room where it is burning the light of the candle be dim and one tilt it in order to carry out an activity by its light. Gemara answers: It was necessary for the Mishnah to mention wax, lest you say that it is also unfit for use as a coating for wicks, in the manner that wicks are usually made. Therefore, it teaches us that even though wax is unfit for use as oil, it is fit for use as coating for wicks.**

One may use tallow or fish entrails that have been boiled [as fuel for a Sabbath lamp] provided that one mixes a minimal amount of oil with them. **\*Shabbat 21a explains that these two fuels are fit to use for a Sabbath light when they are in a liquid state. Nevertheless, the Sages forbid their use lest one use them as fuel when they were solid. Accordingly, when another fuel is mixed together with them, there is no necessity for a further safeguard.**

**Rav Kapach** explains the reason for the **Sages'** decree as follows: Although tallow and fish entrails are acceptable as fuels when they are in a liquid state, the possibility exists that they will harden as the lamp is burning. Hence, it is prohibited to use them alone. In contrast, when other fuels are mixed with these substances, they prevent them from hardening and therefore, such a mixture may be used for the Sabbath lights. [Other] fuels that may not be used [as fuel for a Sabbath lamp] may not be used even when they are mixed with fuels that may be used, since they are not drawn [after the wick]. **\*The Rambam implies that even when these fuels are mixed with acceptable fuels they do not burn well. In contrast, Rashi, Shabbat 21a explains that when they were mixed with other fuels, they would burn well, the Sages, however, forbid the use of such mixtures, lest one use the unacceptable fuels alone.**

**Shabbat 21a:8**

In any case, to this point the conclusion is that one may not light with a mixture of permitted and prohibited oils. *The Gemara asks*: Is that so? Didn't [Rav Beruna](#) say that [Rav](#) said: With regard to molten fat or fish innards that dissolved and became like oil, a person may place any amount of oil fit for lighting into it and light. Apparently, one may light with a mixture of permitted and prohibited oils. [Rabba](#) answers: These, the fat and the fish innards, are drawn by the wick even in their natural state, and those, the prohibited oils, are not drawn in their natural state. Originally, the [Sages](#) issued a decree to prohibit molten fat due to unmolten fat and to prohibit dissolved fish innards due to undissolved fish innards; however, the [Sages](#) did not issue a decree in a case where one added to them any amount of oil suitable for lighting and permitted lighting with it. *The Gemara asks*: Let them also issue a decree to prohibit molten fat and dissolved fish innards to which he added oil due to molten fat and dissolved fish innards to which he did not add permitted oil. *The Gemara rejects this*: That prohibition with regard to molten fat and dissolved fish innards itself is based on a decree. And will we arise and issue one decree to prevent violation of another decree? The [Sages](#) do not issue decrees under those circumstances. Therefore, there is no reason to prohibit their use.

We may not use pine sap \*Our translation is based on [Rav Kapach's](#) version of the [Rambam's](#) Commentary on the Mishnah (Shabbat 2:2). A similar interpretation is attributed to [Rav Sa'adiah Gaon](#). As fuel [for the Sabbath lamp] because it produces an unpleasant fragrance, lest one leave [the room] and [on the Sabbath,] there is an obligation to sit [in a room] illuminated by the light of a lamp. Similarly, we may not use balsam oil, because it is very fragrant and it is possible that one will take some of the oil in the lamp [for use as perfume]. \***Removing fuel from a lamp is forbidden, for by doing, one causes the lamp to be extinguished sooner.** This is included in the forbidden labor of extinguishing [[Rav Kapach's](#) translation of the [Rambam's](#) Commentary on the Mishnah (Shabbat 2:2,4); see also [Shulchan Aruch](#), Orach Chayim 264:3 and Beitzah 22a]. [Significantly, as [Rav Kapach](#) comments in his notes, the [Rambam](#) changed his mind concerning this matter several times (and thus there is a discrepancy between his version and the ordinary printed text of this work). Also, [balsam oil] is extremely flammable. For the latter reason, one may not use white naphtha [as fuel for a lamp] even during the week. It is extremely flammable and may cause a danger.

**Shabbat 24b:5****MISHNAH:**

In continuation of the previous Mishnah, this Mishnah adds that one may not light with burnt oil on a Festival, as the Gemara will explain below. With regard to lighting Shabbat lamps, there were [Sages](#) who prohibited the use of specific oils. [Rabbi Yishmael](#) says that one may not light with tar [itrān] in deference to Shabbat because tar smells bad and disturbs those in the house. **And the Rabbis permit lighting with all oils for lamps as long as they burn properly; with sesame oil, with nut oil, with turnip oil, with fish oil, with gourd oil, with tar, and even with naphtha [neft].** [Rabbi Tarfon](#) says: **One may light only with olive oil in deference to Shabbat, as it is the choicest and most pleasant of the oils.**

**Shabbat 25b:7**

It was taught in a baraita that **Rabbi Shimon ben Elazar** says: One may not light on Shabbat with sap from balsam trees [tzori]. *The Gemara asks*: What is the reason for this? **Rabba** said: Since its pleasant smell diffuses, the **Sages** were concerned lest one forget and come to take some sap from it on Shabbat. That is tantamount to extinguishing the lamp, as removing oil from a burning lamp curtails the amount of time that it will burn. **Abaye** said to him:

**Shabbat 26a:4**

The **Sages** taught: **One may not light with ritually impure untithed produce [tevel] during the week, and needless to say one may not light with it on Shabbat.** On a similar note, one may not light with white naphtha during the week, and needless to say one may not light with it on Shabbat. Granted, with regard to white naphtha, its prohibition is understandable because it is volatile and potentially dangerous. However, with regard to ritually impure level, what is the reason that the **Sages** prohibited lighting with it?

At the outset, one is permitted to use other oils - e.g., radish oil, sesame oil, turnip oil, or the like. \*The Mishnah (Shabbat 2:2) relates that **Rabbi Tarfon** stated that olive oil is the only fuel acceptable for use in the Sabbath lamp. The Talmud (Shabbat 26a) relates that **Rabbi Yochanan ben Nuri** protested this statement, "What shall the Babylonians do, for they have only sesame oil? What shall the Medians do, for they have nothing but nut oil? What shall the Alexandrians do, for they have nothing but radish oil?" The **Sages** accepted **Rabbi Yochanan ben Nuri's** view and accepted the possibility of using other oils. It is not merely after the fact that they are acceptable, but ab initio, they may be used. Nevertheless, the **Shulchan Aruch** (Orach Chayim 264:6) **states that it is most desirable to use olive oil for this purpose. It is forbidden to use only those which were explicitly mentioned by our Sages.**

**Shabbat 23a:4**

**Rabbi Yehoshua ben Levi** said: **All the oils are suitable for the Hanukkah lamp, and olive oil is the most select of the oils.** **Abaye** said: At first, my Master, **Rabba**, would seek sesame oil, as he said: **The light of sesame oil lasts longer and does not burn as quickly as olive oil. Once he heard that statement of Rabbi Yehoshua ben Levi, he sought olive oil because he said: Its light is clearer.**

**Shabbat 24b:5****MISHNAH:**

In continuation of the previous Mishnah, this Mishnah adds that one may not light with burnt oil on a Festival, as the Gemara will explain below. With regard to lighting Shabbat lamps, there were **Sages** who prohibited the use of specific oils. **Rabbi Yishmael** says that one may not light with tar [itrn] in deference to Shabbat because tar smells bad and disturbs those in the house. **And the Rabbis permit lighting with all oils for lamps as long as they burn properly; with sesame oil, with nut oil, with turnip oil, with fish oil, with gourd oil, with tar, and**



even with naphtha [neft]. Rabbi Tarfon says: One may light only with olive oil in deference to Shabbat, as it is the choicest and most pleasant of the oils.

### Shabbat 26a:7

*The Gemara relates:* Rabbi Yochanan ben Nuri stood on his feet and, contrary to this statement, said: And what shall the people of Babylonia, who have only sesame oil, do? And what shall the people of Media, who have only nut oil, do? And what shall the people of Alexandria, who have only radish oil, do? And what shall the people of Cappadocia, who have neither this nor that but only naphtha, do? Rather, you have a prohibition only with regard to those substances with regard to which the Sages said: One may not light with them. All other oils are permitted.

### Shabbat 26a:9

It was taught in a baraita that Rabbi Shimon ben Elazar says: **Anything that emerges from the tree does not have the legal status of an area of three by three fingerbreadths. Even if it is three by three fingerbreadths, it is not considered sufficiently large to become ritually impure. And, therefore, one may roof his sukkah with it, as the roofing of his sukkah may not be made from any material that can become ritually impure. This is the case for everything that originates from a tree with the exception of linen, which has a unique legal status.** Abaye said: A person should not place a container with a hole filled with oil above the opening of a lamp so that the oil will drip in. \*Lamps would be constructed in the following manner to prevent the flame from consuming a large quantity of oil. The wick would be placed inside a shallow dish that contained a minimal amount of oil. A container would be placed above the dish from which oil would flow into the dish (Shabbat 2:4). The Sages forbade using such a lamp on the Sabbath, even if the oil was placed in it before nightfall. Similarly, he should not fill a bowl with oil, put it next to a lamp, and place the end of the wick in it so that it will draw oil. \*This instance is also mentioned in the Mishnah (Shabbat 2:4). The Talmud (Shabbat 29a) explains why it is necessary to cite both instances. [These were both forbidden as] a decree lest one remove the oil in the vessel \*As mentioned in the notes to Halachah 10, removing oil designated to be used for a lamp from the lamp is forbidden and is considered equivalent to the forbidden labor of extinguishing a flame. which has not become repugnant in the lamp. \*Were the oil to be in the lamp itself, there would be no worry that one would use it, the smut from the wick would cause it to become repugnant. Since, however, it is in a container separate from the lamp, there is the need for a Rabbinic decree.

It is forbidden to derive benefit on the Sabbath from oil that was used for kindling, even when the lamp has become extinguished or it has dripped from the lamp [into another container]. \*In these instances, there is no connection between using the oil and the forbidden labor of extinguishing a flame. Nevertheless, doing so is forbidden, because of the prohibition of muktzeh. [This is forbidden,] because the [oil] is considered muktzeh because it was set aside to be used for a forbidden [labor]. \*As will be explained in Chapters 24-26, the Sages forbade the handling of certain objects on the Sabbath because they were muktzeh, designated not to be used on the Sabbath. Among the

categories of muktzeh are objects that are involved with a forbidden labor at the commencement of the Sabbath. [In the instance mentioned in the first clause,] if one attached the container to the lamp with cement, clay, or the like, it is permissible [to be used]. \*The fact that the container is attached to the lamp will cause a person to remember the prohibition and refrain from taking oil from it on the Sabbath [Shulchan Aruch (Orach Chayim 265:1)].

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The purpose of this appendix, besides its inclusion as required by the Forensic Scientific Method modality employed to validate this research, was to demonstrate how the labyrinth of opinion may have acted like a thousand year-long game of “Telephone.” With personalities and biblical schisms being shuffled and tailored to the thinking of learned men of reputation, this process more likely colored and manipulated the real facts and evidence, rather than having clarified and codified policies and procedures of sacred processes.

Clearly this list of seven forbidden wick materials was made up 2100 years after the fact, by **Rambam (Maimonides)** [silk, cedar fiber, uncarded flax, palm bast, various types of soft trees] and the **Sages**, who logically argued to forbid [hair and wool which shrink and scorch]. Ironically, the Mishnah goes on to clarify what was finally determined (see **20b:5**) and palm bast (fiber) was not among them.

[With regard to types of prohibited wicks, one may light neither with cedar bast [lekhesh], nor with uncombed flax [hosen], nor with raw silk [kalakh], nor with willow bast [petilat ha’idan], nor with desert weed [petilat hamidbar], nor with green moss that is on the surface of the water.]

A recent conversation with a renown Historian of Jewish and Israel-related culture and Judaica in general, and who is cited elsewhere in this book, said the wick’s used in lighting the original Menorah lamps and on other menorot in Solomon’s Temple, were made from linen robes and clothing worn-out by Temple priests. Another researcher in the conversation asked for proof for such a statement; but that response has yet to be made available at time of publication. Without further investigation, one could wonder if the priests within the Temple back in antiquity, could wear out enough sacred garments to meet those lighting needs of 79 lamps.

As stated in the Mishnah, those wicks were reported to be a square patch shape - 3 fingerbreadths wide by 3 fingerbreadths long (3.5" x 3.5"). Perhaps the measurement was more likely a single 'Tefah' at a 4" square? Needing 79 wicks, equates to a daily sheet of linen, 2 ft x 3.5 ft in length. Note, 'fingerbreadths' is a measurement which originally came from 'Daktylonomy,' a measurement created by pre-dynastic Egyptian date palm worshipping! See Appendix B, "*Date Palm Deity.*"

As it turns out, the Old testament (Exodus 28.42) tells us exactly what the priestly garments were to be worn, and from that information, we can understand the volume of "worn-out" robes and linen it would take to keep those wicks lit.

The High Priest wore eight garments: white linen tunic, a Robe of "ephod material" with bells and pomegranates, a breastplate of gems, white linen turban, a sash of ephod, white linen britches (to knee), the ephod and a gold head plate. The "ephod" was an embroidered woven textile made up of different colored fabrics, interwoven with gold filigree (string).

The team of Temple (tabernacle area) Priests wore only four garments, which were the same as the High Priest, minus the breastplate of gems, gold head plate, sash, and Robe of ephod with bells and pomegranates.

The only clothing worn by the Priestly class in and around the tabernacle which could have been used for lamp wicks, would have been the items made of white linen such as the tunic, britches and turban.

This hypothetical equation shows to fashion a tunic and britches set, one would generally require 3.5 yards of white linen material. A talented seamstress could eek out no more than 330-360 usable wicks, each a square fingerbreadth in size, from such an ensemble. Thus, the priestly class would have to wear out a tunic and britches every four days to keep up a supply of sacred wick material.

These Rabbinical commentaries continue and the pertinent issues discussed in each identified subsection, are shown below. Since those ancient issues discussed are not germane to the topic of this appendix, only their primary comments are provided to further the readers

understanding of how micromanaged those topics had become. These interpretations of Oral Tradition based on understandings hundreds or even thousands of years later, and at times when technological understanding had advanced, sets these protocols, bans and dictates into question at the very least. Toward the end of these abbreviated subsections, the topic of the date palm tree returns in this Mishnah Torah section. See **Shabbat 45a:1**.

### **Shabbat 29b:3**

#### **MISHNAH:**

“[The Rabbis decreed that a person may not fill a bowl with oil, and place it beside the lamp, and place the unlit head of the wick into the bowl so that it draws additional oil from the bowl and thereby extend the time that the lamp burns.]”

### **Shabbat 29b:5**

“[And we also learned in our Mishnah that if the craftsman attached the tube to the lamp from the outset, it is permitted to fill it with oil and use it.]”

### **Shabbat 44a:2**

“[The remaining oil that is in the lamp or in a bowl in which a wick was burning is prohibited for use on Shabbat.]”

“[\*In Chapter 25, Halachah 23, the [Rambam](#) explains the reason for this prohibition. Nullifying the potential to use a utensil is tantamount to breaking it and is, hence, forbidden on the Sabbath. It is forbidden, however, to place water within it, even if one does so on Friday, since by doing so, one causes the sparks to be extinguished sooner.]”

### **Shabbat 42b:6**

#### **MISHNAH:**

“[One may not place a vessel beneath the oil lamp, the vessel containing the oil and the wick, on Shabbat in order to receive the oil that drips from the wick. And if one placed the vessel on Friday while it was still day, it is permitted. However, in any case, one may not make use of the oil on Shabbat because it is not from the oil prepared from Shabbat eve for use on Shabbat.]”

### **Shabbat 47b:3**

#### **MISHNAH:**

“[One may place a vessel beneath the oil lamp in order to receive burning sparks of oil that fall from the lamp so that they will not cause a fire. And he may not place water into the vessel because he thereby extinguishes the sparks.]”

“[\*The Shulchan Aruch (loc. cit.) states that this prohibition applies even when the lamp is fixed in the wall. Even when there are ten stories one on top of another, a person living in the bottom story should not read or check his garments for lice by the light [of a lamp] in the highest story, lest one forget and tilt the lamp.]”

**Shabbat 12a:7**

“[One may not shake clothing by the light of the lamp and one may not read by the light of the lamp.]”

**Shabbat 12b:4**

“[We learned in the Mishnah, that one may not read a book by candlelight on Shabbat. We learned in the Mishnah that one may not read, and the Gemara infers: One may not read, but for two, apparently, he may well do so.]”

**Shabbat 12b:8**

“[We learned in the Mishnah that in truth they said that the attendant sees where in the book the children under his supervision are reading, but he himself should not read.]”

**Shabbat 13a:1**

“[Apparently, it is permitted to read by candlelight on Shabbat. One may not take articles that resemble each other and can be discerned from each other only after careful inspection to the light of a lamp to identify them, lest one forget and tilt the lamp.]”

**Shabbat 12a:8**

“[It is prohibited to use candlelight even to distinguish between his garments and the garments of his wife.]”

**Shabbat 12b:6**

“[And that baraita, which permitted examining the dishes, is referring to a naphtha [nafta] lamp. Since the naphtha lamp is dirty, the servant certainly will not touch it while checking the cups and dishes.]”

**Shabbat 12b:7**

“[A dilemma was raised before the Sages: What is the ruling with regard to a servant who is not regularly employed in terms of examining cups and dishes by the light of an oil lamp? Is he permitted to examine the cups by candlelight, or not?]”

“[It is forbidden to open and close the door in one's ordinary manner, because one [might] extinguish it [flame]. The laws in the first clause also apply on the festivals, while the laws in the second clause apply only on the Sabbath. So that the wind will blow upon it [and fan the fire], even if there is only an ordinary wind. Therefore, it is forbidden to place a lamp in a tree, lest one make use of the tree. Since moving a lamp on the Sabbath is forbidden, there is no need to worry that one will make use of the tree.]”

**Shabbat 45a:1**

“[One may place a lamp atop a palm tree on Shabbat eve to burn on Shabbat, and one may not place a lamp atop a palm tree on a Festival. Since one is permitted to carry a lamp on a Festival, there is concern that one might climb the palm tree or make use of the tree on the Festival and thereby transgress the rabbinic prohibition against making use of something connected to the ground on a Festival.]”

**Shabbat 120b:4**

“[Rav would curse one who did so. Ravina said to Rav Aḥa, son of Rava, and some say that Rav Aḥa, son of Rava, said to Rav Ashi: What is the reason that Rav cursed and reprimanded one who did so?]”



**Image:** Courtesy L. Yarden. Described as the earliest Jewish lamp found in Athens with date palm. Fig. 168, pg. 28.

**Finding the Truth**

This debate by rabbinic leaders centuries ago reveals very little information which could let one understand the basis for such a severe consensus, other than that of politics. No useful practical understanding, other than concern of flickering, has been successfully argued. Even flickering is not a reason to forbid date palm fiber as a wick material, for it has a stellar reputation for providing a slower, brighter, and cleaner burn, throughout history... whether you tilt the lamp or not.

Without further rationale as to why this certain material is forbidden and based on the somewhat irrational tone of discussion in this Mishnah, one could be left to discard the determinations altogether. Since those debates, archaeological and paleoethnobotanical research has provided many insights on ancient textiles and fiber sources in the Levant, as well as the common and successful application of olive oil lamps with date palm fiber wicks, throughout the ages. Clearly, as this biblical history was unfolding for future commentary to shape, the archaeological record, though not always properly documented, offers an evidence-based variation to this scenario.

Researchers unearthed an extensive fabric collection in the south of Israel dating back some 3000 years to the biblical era of King David and King Solomon. The 2016 discovery was located in Arava Valley, not far from where the Judean Date Palm had been reintroduced from extinction by botanists. The site appears to have been a way-station on Location to Nahal 'Omer and nearby the north-south 'Arava route and on the Spice Route joining Petra and Gaza (Negev 1966; Cohen 1982; 1991).<sup>1</sup> Here, the Solomonic Timma copper mine area was the site of this textile cache.<sup>2</sup> Dr. Erez Ben-Yosef, of Tel Aviv University said, “the find was the first discovery of textiles dating from that era and included cloth of diverse color, design and origin.” Dr. Yosef also stated...

*“No textiles from this period have ever been found at any excavation sites in Jerusalem, Megiddo and Hazor, providing a unique window into an entire aspect of life in Israel, which we’ve never had physical evidence before. We found fragments of textiles that originated from bags, clothing, tents, ropes and cords.”*

“we found simply woven, elaborately decorated fabrics worn by the upper echelon of their stratified society. Luxury grade fabric adorned with highly skilled, highly respected crafts, including linen, which was not produced locally. It was most likely from the Jordan Valley or Northern Israel. The majority of the fabrics were made of sheep’s wool, a cloth that is seldom found in this ancient period,”

They found thick goat hair cord, fine wool textiles dyed in elaborate patterns, and ropes and fabric made from the date palm tree. Tel Aviv University searcher, Vanessa Workman added, “This tells us how developed and sophisticated both their textile craft and trade networks must have been.” These artifacts were dated to the 10<sup>th</sup> century BC – the time during which, according to the Bible, King Solomon ruled ancient Israel. No flax or silk textiles were found, and neither fiber were grown or produced in Israel, requiring those textiles to be imported.<sup>3</sup>

Further archaeological evidence, already presented in this volume, includes a 1<sup>st</sup> century BC – 1<sup>st</sup> century AD, oil lamp associated with King Herod’s reign (37-4 BC), which still contained its date palm fiber wick.<sup>4</sup> A similar lamp was uncovered in the Jewish Quarter of Jerusalem, in a

strata relating to the time period of the destruction of the Second Temple (70 AD). Traces of date palm fiber wick were also found in its nozzle.

The history of olive oil lamp operation and wick requirements during the time the Knights Templar were in Jerusalem, is completely absent of any indication that any sacred lighting policy existed, especially with no temple available in which to conduct such a ritual. However, at the Church of the Holy Sepulchre and specifically during the “Miracle of the Holy Fire” there was no sacral decree restricting the use of date palm fiber wick when venerating the lamps flame.<sup>5</sup> Whether linen or date palm fiber was the wick of choice, had more to do with access thru the nozzle and the size of the lamp used. The Christian community used slipper Lamps of that era, or the Darom (South lamps) which also had small wick openings. Folded cloth or linen wick would be problematic when stuffing such a sized wick into such small lamps. And yet these slipper lamps were almost identical to the size available on the Menorahs seven lamp stands. Furthermore, Jerusalem, through the archaeological excavations, has proven to be one of the larger lamp manufacturing locations at that time.<sup>6</sup> And, since these lamps were eulogia in nature (an object that carried a blessing),<sup>7</sup> impure or restricted use would be counterintuitive, if not outright economic heresy.

It should be ‘highlighted’ (pun intended), Knights Templar did not bring tons of worn-out priestly robes and pure linens from the Temple, Tabernacle or other sacred venue, to Oak Island. Only to then have the requirement to cut up that tonnage into 3 fingerbreadths dimensional squares for future wicks? No such artifact has been found on the island as of now. Furthermore, the Templars had 70+ years to acquire such used royal lineage linen while milling sugarcane into money in Jericho,<sup>8</sup> as they operated in the midst of the Judean Date Palm Plantations, they must have had inside knowledge of what the wick of the week was. Hence, the mesh/sheath trunk fiber from the Judean Date Palm Tree, easily acquired in Jericho, was the mystery fiber which littered the entrances to those sacred holdings placed there by our ancient voyagers, deep inside Oak Island.



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