

Pure Olive Oil

Beaten For the Menorah

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In Exodus 27:20, Elohim speaking to Moshe says, “Now you shall command the Children of Israel that they shall take for you pure olive oil beaten [or pressed] for the light, to cause the menorah to burn always.”

Background Information On Olive Oil Production

(from the *Worldbook Encyclopedia*)

Olive oil is made by crushing and pressing ripe olives. Whole olive fruit consists of 10 to 40 percent oil, and the fruit pulp is 60 to 80 percent oil. Producers use hydraulic presses to squeeze the oil out of the fruit under low pressure. This technique, called cold pressing, generates little heat, and so the oil retains its flavor, color, and nutritional value.

Cold-pressing commonly is carried out in several stages, with only some of the oil being extracted at each stage. The process remains basically the same throughout, but the quality of the oil declines with each pressing. In most cases, olives are cold-pressed at 40 °F (4 °C).

The first pressing gives the highest quality oil, which is usually called virgin olive oil. Virgin olive oil is more expensive than other vegetable oils, so it often is considered a gourmet item. The lower-quality oils from later pressings are often blended in small amounts with such refined oils as soybean or cottonseed oil. Olive oil that comes from the final pressing is inedible. This oil, called olive residue or olive foots, is used in cosmetics, detergents, soap, medicines, and textiles.

The fruit may be oval or oblong. As it matures, it turns from green to yellow to red to purple-black. It has a smooth skin, and its flesh surrounds a hard pit. Both the flesh and the seed in the pit contain oil, which makes up 10 to 40 percent of the mature fresh fruit's weight. Fresh olives contain oleuropein, a bitter substance that makes them unpleasant to eat before processing. During processing, this substance is largely or entirely removed.

The olive tree's bark and leaves are a soft gray-green, and its trunk becomes gnarled as it ages. Olive trees live longer than most other fruit trees. There are olive trees in [Israel] that may be more than 2,000 years old.

A mature olive tree may have as many as 500,000 small flowers. Most of the flowers are imperfect, and fruit cannot grow from them. They give off pollen, which is usually carried from flower to flower by the wind. Most varieties of olive trees bear a large crop one season and a small crop the next.

Cultivation. Parts cut off from an olive tree may take root and grow into new trees. The trees will grow in many types of soil but need good drainage. To produce large fruit, the grower must irrigate and prune the trees, and thin the fruit. Fertilizers that add nitrogen to the soil can increase yields. The olive tree will grow where the climate is hot and dry. But for bearing good fruit, the tree needs a moderate supply of water. The fruit matures from October to January and is injured if the temperature falls below 26 °F (-3 °C).

Harvesting olives requires careful handling. Olives grown for their oil may be mechanically harvested. Olives grown for eating must be picked by hand. Workers place the fruit in small boxes and haul it to the processing plant.

Most green olives are prepared by the Spanish process. In this process, unripe, yellowish-green olives are placed in lye solution. The lye removes most of the bitter taste of the oleuropein. The olives are washed and then fermented in brine.

Adam Clarke, in his biblical commentary, says regarding Exodus 27:20 that the very ripe and oil-filled olives, after having been picked, when slightly bruised or pressed (before being crushed by mortar stones in a mill) will express the purest, most flavorful and highest quality oil. This oil that flows spontaneously with little or no

application of force is called the *mother drop*.

According to the *Stone Edition Chumash*, only the purest oil could be used for the lamp (menorah)—the purest of the pure! This was obtained by slightly pressing the very ripe olives, but without crushing them. A minute quantity of oil would be squeezed out—only a drop or so—from each olive. This oil was more pure than any of the other oil subsequently obtained via crushing.

Spiritual Parallels

The word *oil* in Hebrew is *shemen* (שֶׁמֶן). In the ancient paleo-hebraic letters the letter *shin* שׁ is shaped like a tooth and means, *to consume, to destroy*. The letter *mem* מ resembles water and means “liquid, massive, chaos.” The letter *nun* נ or ן is shaped like a fish and means “activity, life.” Therefore, the word *oil* in light of Hebrew word pictures means “to destroy chaos [resulting in] life.” What does this have to do with you and me? In other-words, the olive in its natural state is useless and bitter, but when that bitterness is destroyed, or when the olive is crushed to extract the oil it becomes a source of life (nutrition) and light. Is this not the case with men? With you and me? *Elohim needs to crush or refine us so to squeeze out of us the bitter residue of the old man so that the spiritually regenerated and born-from-above-man, which is the image of Messiah – the Living Torah, may radiate and flow from us to the glory of Elohim.*

Here are some other parallels between an olive tree and its oil and a child of YHVH:

- In their unrefined state both the olive fruit and man are initially bitter and need to be washed via lye (the main cleansing ingredient in soap) to be acceptable to the eater, or to Elohim.
- Both the olive tree and man are difficult to grow and temperamental when it comes to producing fruit; they both require careful attention. Many factors are involved and great care must be exercised on the part of the cultivator to ensure a good crop yield.
- The olive fruit and man needs to be crushed to bring out the precious oil. A stone mortar or mill was used in times past to crush olives to produce oil. Similarly, Scripture likens Messiah to a stone who must crush all who come to him (Luke 20:18; Matt 21:44).

Our time on earth is but a proving ground where Elohim is trying, testing, crushing, refining and purifying his chosen vessels in preparation for them to be his kings and priests to rule with him during his earthly, Millennial kingdom. This process involves crucifying the flesh, dying to self with its lust, pride, covetousness, fear, hatred, envying, bitterness, strife, selfishness and everything else that is of the world, flesh and the devil and that is contrary to the character, nature and Spirit of YHVH.

Matthew Henry says in his biblical commentary on Exodus 27:20 that the pure oil signifies the gifts and fruits of the Set-apart Spirit which all Believers receive from Messiah/*Mashiach* – the oil-anointed One. *Mashiach* is the vine to which we are attached, for we are the arms and branches (John 15:1–2) and the branches are attached to the sustenance-carrying vascular system of the main trunk (as pictured by the hollow-tubed seven-branched gold menorah). Only then will we be lights shining into the darkness of men’s lives as Yeshua commanded us to be (i.e. menorahs on a hill).

The *ArtScroll Stone Edition Chumash* goes on to say about Exodus 27:20 and the following verses that the instructions regarding the oil is followed by YHVH choosing Aaron’s sons to minister as priests in the Mishkan (Tabernacle). This underscores the fact that the priests were to be absolutely pure (without admixture of any foreign substance) and were to remain pure and separate from the rest of the nation—reserved for YHVH’s very special and set-apart service.

With regard to the pressing of the olives to produce the purest oil, it must be noted that our Heavenly Father prefers to use a light touch/hand on us rather than a heavy one, to motivate us to do his will and to achieve our highest potential and fruitfulness in his kingdom. You don’t spank your kids when a quiet word will do. But if they don’t obey your quiet instruction, then you turn up the heat on them (see Ps 32:8–9 and Isa 30:21). Similarly, if a slight pressing or crushing of the olive doesn’t achieve the results in us for which our Father is looking—the expressing out of us of the pure drops of fine and pure oil, he will be forced to begin crushing us more vigorously—pits, skins and all (our body, soul and spirit). The oil from the full crushing will contain some sediment which will later have to be filtered out (through the trials, adversities and refining fires of life). This oil will be of a lesser quality.

Please read and prayerfully meditate on 2 Corinthians 4:6–18 and Colossians 3:1–10.