

פרשת וישב-שבת חנוכה

The Rabbi asked the famous question of the Beit Yosef and gave 21 answers! As we all know the miracle of Hanukah was, that the oil was only enough for one day, but it miraculously lasted for 8 days. For this reason we celebrate 8 days of Hanukah. The question is, why are we celebrating 8 days? After all, there **was** enough oil for one day, so the first day was not a miracle. The miracle was that it lasted an additional 7 days. So we should really be celebrating 7 days of Hanukah to commemorate the 7 days that the Menorah miraculously stayed lit? Why do we celebrate 8 days? The first three answers are given by the Beit Yosef.

- 1) They only poured an 1/8 of the normal measure of oil in the Menorah and it miraculously lasted all night. So even the first night was a miracle.(The question on this answer is that we know that we are not supposed to rely on miracles, אין סומכין על הנס , so why would they initially pour only an 1/8 expecting that to last all night ? Another question is, that there is a rule תן לה כמדתה - you have to initially pour the proper measure in the Menorah, so how could they only pour an 1/8 of the required measure?)
- 2) In the morning, the **cup** of oil miraculously remained full, so even on the first night there was a miracle. (The question on this answer is if so, then what was the miracle on the last night?)
- 3) After they poured the oil into the Menorah, the **container** of oil miraculously remained full with oil, so even on the first night it was a miracle. (The question on this answer is, if so what was the miracle on the last night?)
- 4) As they poured a little oil into the menorah it miraculously filled up to the top, so there was a miracle on every night.
- 5) On the first night, even though they poured in the full measure, only an 1/8 of oil burnt and an 1/8 burnt on each subsequent night, so even on the first night there was a miracle. This explains Beit Shammai (that says you start with 8 candles than decrease) since the earlier the night, the greater the miracle (because the earlier the night, the more oil there was that miraculously did not burn).
- 6) It is forbidden to copy the utensils of the Beit Hamikdash, and the Menorah in the Beit Hamikdash had 7 lights. So if Hanukah were 7 nights than our Menorah would look like the Menorah of the Beit Hamikdash, because of this the Rabbis made it an 8 day holiday.

- 7) In order for a miracle to take place, we need something for it to start with, for example there is the story of Elisha Hanavi, when he asked the poor woman what she had in the house, and she said only a little oil. So Elisha told her to go borrow all the utensils you can, and from that little oil all the utensils filled up with oil. So we see she needed a little oil to start the miracle, so to we **needed** the first night's measure of oil in order to start the 7 day miracle. So we celebrate all 8 days, like it says in the song מעוז צור ... -ומנותר קנקנים נעשה גם... **from** the leftover oil we had a miracle, therefore בני בינה ימי שמונה קבעו that is why the Rabbis made it 8 days.
- 8) The oil had the seal of the Kohen Gadol on it. Why did it have a seal? Since this oil was actually the oil of the Kohen Gadol's personal Minhat Havitin that had to be brought with his own oil, and the measurement of oil he needed to bring was 3 Lugin as opposed to the 3 ½ Lugin needed to light the Menorah. So the jug of oil they found was actually short a ½ Lug- so even on the first night there was a miracle that the oil lasted all night.
- 9) The Greeks tried to stop the Jews from performing Brit Milah, so to commemorate the victory over the Greeks that enabled the Jews to once again perform the Brit Milah that is done on the 8th day, we celebrate an 8 day holiday.
- 10) The Beit Hamikdash was defiled by the Greeks, so the Jews had to purify it and reinaugurate it. The word Hanukah is from the lashon "Hinuch' -to inaugurate (like "Hinuch Habayit). So we celebrate the first day, to commemorate the reinauguration of the Beit Hamikdash. It was fitting that this was done on the first day of Hanukah כה' כסלו, since the original Mishkan built by Moshe was actually completed and ready to be inaugurated on כה' כסלו, but Hashem told Moshe to wait until the month of Nissan to do so. So Hashem "compensated" that day by making it the first day of Hanukah and reinaugurating the Temple on that day.
- 11) Since the Beit Hamikdash was defiled, they moved the Menorah outside to the courtyard, as it says והדליקו נרות בחצרות קדשך. So the oil that they found was enough to last for one night **indoors**, not outdoors where there is wind that causes the oil to burn faster. So even the first night was a miracle.
- 12) When you empty a jug of oil there is always some residual oil that is left in the jug. So if the jug contained one night's measure of oil, when it was emptied in the Menorah there was still some leftover in the jug. So even the first night was a miracle, since the full measure of the oil did not get into the Menorah. (Question on this is, that didn't the one who filled the jug with the proper measurements factor the residual into account and put a little extra oil into the jug?)

- 13) The jug itself magically expanded into a larger size, large enough to hold the measurements of oil for 8 nights. This explains the Gemara Shabbat that says about the jug: **נעשת בו נס**. **בו** means **in it** showing that the miracle happened to the jug itself. Shaul Dagmy added that **בו** is numerically 8 hinting to how much the jug expanded (enough for 8 days).
- 14) We celebrate one extra day to commemorate the war that we won. (that's why the Ashkenazim say **ועל המלחמות - על הניסים**)
- 15) The year that the miracle of Hanukah occurred, the month of Kislev was only 29 days, so the miracle was from the 25th of Kislev till the 2nd of Tevet which totals 7 days. Therefore even nowadays, when the month of Kislev is a full 30 days, we celebrate from the 25th of Kislev till the 2nd of Tevet, even though it is 8 days.
- 16) They thinned the wicks that it should be a smaller flame and use less oil to make it last longer, but the flame was still strong as if they hadn't thinned it. So it was a miracle on all 8 nights.
- 17) We take for granted the fact that oil itself is able to light! Even "nature" is a miracle from Hashem, so we celebrate 8 days in order to recognize that in general, the fact that oil fuels a flame is a miracle!
- 18) There is a Machloket between Beit Shammai and Beit Hillel, how we are to light the Menorah. Beit Hillel says we start with one and add a candle each night till we have 8 candles on the eighth night. Beit Shammai says we start with eight and end up on the last night with one candle. If Hanukah was a 7 day holiday, then on the fourth night according to both Beit Shammai and Beit Hillel we would light four candles, and it would not be discernable that the Halacha goes according to Beit Hillel. So the Rabbis made the holiday 8 days so that there would not be a night that we would light an equal amount of candles according to both opinions. The word **חנוכה** stands for **ח' נירות והלכה כבית הלל** (eight candles and the Halachah like Beit Hillel!)
- 19) The Macabeem in battle used a shield that said on it: **מי מכבי** which stands for **מי כמוכה באלים ה'** - the numerical value of **מי כמוכה באלים ה'** = 250 and the numerical value of **נר** = 250. So we light one extra candle to remember this concept that Hashem fights all our wars **מי כמוכה באלים ה'**.
- 20) The seal of the Kohen Gadol was the letter "ח". Why? Since he wore 8 garments during his service in the Beit Hamikdash. This is why we celebrate 8 nights to commemorate the miracle that we found sealed oil, sealed with the letter "ח" (which is numerically the number 8). This is also why we light the Menorah in the doorway which is shaped like the letter "ח". The letter "ח" is comprised of two

letters, 'ו' and 'ז' (when we put together a 'ו' and 'ז' it forms the letter 'ח'). 'ו' and 'ז' = 13 hinting to the 13 attributes of mercy, and there are 13 words in the Berachah of להדליק נר חנוכה, and 13 in the Berachah of שעשה ניסים, corresponding to the יג' - 13 attributes of mercy. (Mr. Jack Kassin added that the 2 Berachot total 26 words corresponding to the גמט' of the name of Hashem of יהוה.)

21) There are 22 letters in the Hebrew Alphabet that correspond to 22 חסידים (kindness). There are 5 letters that are סופי תיבות (the letters that words can only end with). They are מ, נ, צ, פ, ק these letters correspond to 5 דינים (strict judgement). This is seen in the fact that they "constrict" a word- disabling the word to continue after them. We see this alluded to in the prayer וידוי when we repent based on the letters of the א, ב (אשמנו בגדנו). The letters of מנצפך-דינים are doubled (ex: מרדנו מרדנו נאצנו נאצנו נאצנו נאצנו) showing the strictness of these letters. The total numerical value of these letters מנצפך equal = 280. They are therefore called the 280 דינים. Each one of the 5 סופי תיבות letters represents 56 out of the 280 (280 divided by 5 = 56). So the number 56 corresponds to דין (strict judgment), this is why before doing certain Mitzvot we say the Pasuk: ויהי נועם ה' אלקינו עלינו ומעשה ידינו כוננה עלינו. which has in it 5 "נו"s (נו=56) to sweeten the 5 times 56 contained in the 280 דינים.

In order to sweeten the 56 we "need" 57. The numerical value of the names of Hashem of אל ה' = 57, so they sweeten the דינים of 56. That's why it says in Tehilim ויאר לנו אל ה' that אל ה' (57) "lights up" לנו - the 56. The Greeks attacked us using 100 out of the 280 דינים. This is alluded to in the story of Yaakov's fight against the angel of Eisav. The angel hit Yaakov in his כף - his thigh, the word כף is numerically 100, hinting that the שטן will "hit" the Jews with 100 דינים in the times of the יונים. The miracle of Hanukah was done with a פך שמן (a jug of oil). The word פך has the same letters as כף and equals 100, hinting to the sweetening of the 100 דינים of the Greeks. This is also alluded to in the last letter of the עשרת הדברות, since there are 613 Mitzvot from the Torah and 7 from the Rabbis totaling 620. There are 620 letters in the עשרת הדברות, each letter corresponding to another Mitzvah. (an example of this is the first Mitzvah in the Torah which is פרו ורבו - to have children. The 552nd Mitzvah is to get married - קידושין - the first letter in the עשרת הדברות is the 'א' of the word אנכי, and the 552nd letter is the 'ל' from the word לא. This hints that in order to have a fruitful and successful marriage the couple has to have the attitude of אנכי לא, there is no "I" in the marriage. No one can be selfish, a couple must always be considering the needs of their spouse.) The last Mitzvah is the Mitzvah of Hanukah, which is the final Mitzvah from רבנו. So the last letter of עשרת הדברות is the letter 'כ', alluding to the 100 דינים we overcome on

Hanukah. (The letter כ' spelled out is: כף which equals 100) So the extra day of Hanukah is celebrated to commemorate the overcoming of the 100 דינים, with which the יונים attacked us with.

The Rabbi later added that in the Beit Hamikdash the Menorah that was lit daily had seven lamps. So on the eight nights of Hanukah they lit a total of 56 lights (7 candles per day for 8 days total 56) to nullify the דין.

We also see in Tehilim perek 23 מזמור לדוד ה' רועי has 57 words to "sweeten" the דין.