



# חנוכה



## “Thirty-six” Questions

Rabbi Y.C. Schwab

1) These Hebrew words also are Roshey Teivos / Acrostics for which concepts:

ח נ ו כ ה •  
 מ כ ב י •  
 ח ש מ נ א י ם •

2) Why do we light from left to right?

3) What do the following represent?

יפת

גוג מלך מגוג

עמלק

רם

4) If the Jewish army rested on the 25<sup>th</sup> of Kislev (Chanu kah), shouldn't it be called Nochu cha (“Noch” to rest)?

5) What are the 9 רמזים of חנוכה in the Torah (4 are from פ” מקץ; 5 are from the rest of the Torah)? FYI: חנוכה occurred about 1,170 years after מתן תורה.

6) What is the only custom (Minhag), in all of שלחן ערוך, where the Ashkenazim follow the Rambam and the Sephardim follow Tosefos?

7) Is there any significance in the use of the dreidel for חנוכה and the grager used for פורים?

8) Three famous “חנוכה” women ... what did they do?

- Yehudis
- Miriam bas Bilgah
- Chanah

9) Why are women obligated in the lighting of the חנוכה menorah; isn't it a time-sensitive mitzvah from which women are פטור / exempt?

10) Why don't we have nine (9) days of חנוכה, like all other s'fakah d'yomas?

11) Why is there no ספר in תנ"ך or מסכתא in the Gemara, concerning חנוכה, as is the case with פורים?

12) Why do we have the custom of eating cheese blintzes on חנוכה?

13) How long did the revolution of Matisyahu take?

14) What do the 36 (1+2+3+4+5+6+7+8) total lights of חנוכה represent?

15) The gematria of חנוכה and פורים (2 Rabbinical Holidays) = 425. Does this number have any significance at all in Jewish history?

16) What is the:

- a) Megillas Yivonis,                      b) Megillas Antiochus,                      c) Megillas Chanukah,  
 d) Megillas Chashmonaim, e) Megillas Yehudis

- 17) What do the towns of Modiin, Chashmon and T'koah have to do with חנוכה?
- 18) a) How many Chasmonaim were there? b) Where did they come from? c) Who was the Kohen Godol in the family? d) What was Yochanan's father famous for?
- 19) Who were worse – the Syrian-Greeks (Yivonim) or the Hellenists/Assimilated "Modern" Jews (Misyavnim)?
- 20) The lighting of the menorah in shul is only a minhag (not a mitzvah). We do not make brochos on minhagim! **Explain** why we make a brochoh on it?
- 21) The two brothers, descendants of one of the original Chasmonaim (Yochanan Hurkinos) were Hurkinos II and Aristubolus III. What were they famous for?
- 22) How long did it take until Eliezer, the youngest of the 12 (See Rashi – ללוי אמר – וזאת הברכה) Chasmonaim to become king of Yisroel? Was this good or bad for Klal Yisroel?
- 23) There were two (2) Nikonors—one was a rasha and one was a צדיק—explain who they were.
- 24) If the Gemorah (Shabbos 21b) says that the main miracle of חנוכה was the פך השמן (jug of oil), why then do we **not** mention a word about it in הנרות הללו (at the lighting) and in על הנסים (in שמונה עשרה and bentching)?
- 25) If there was enough oil for one night, why is the holiday eight nights?
- 26) Philosophically, what do פורים and חנוכה represent?
- 27) What do ארבע כוסות and נר חנוכה have in common?
- 28) In how many ways is our Menorah lighting different than in the בית המקדש?
- 29) Where does the ברורה משנה ברורה say: "If you listen to the גר"א, sometimes you are not yotzeh with חנוכה lights, and you could also be Mechallel Shabbos?"
- 30) If one lights right at שקיעה, is he yotzeh?
- 31) Where is there a posuk that hints to the fact that we say full הלל 21 times a year on: the first 2 days of פסח, 2 days of שבועות, 9 days of סכות and all 8 days of חנוכה?
- 32) How does the Alef Bais teach us the halochos and history of חנוכה?
- 33) A) Why is it correct, on the first night, to say הנרות (plural) הללו?; and B) why is it not incorrect, on the second and following nights, to say להדליק נר (singular)?
- 34) The menorah of the בית המקדש had seven branches. A) Why does our חנוכה menorah have eight?; and B) What are the seven wisdoms hinted to by the seven branches of the menorah of the בית המקדש?
- 35) (A) Why do we mention (during מוסף of שבת and ראש חודש) על הנסים when there is no קרבן מוסף for חנוכה?; and (B) How many times (minimum and maximum) is it possible to say מוסף on חנוכה?
- 36) Which takes precedence if you only have enough money to afford for one of them:
- נר שבת ... נר חנוכה
  - יין לקידוש ... נר חנוכה
  - יין הבדלה ... נר חנוכה
  - נר שבת, נר חנוכה, יין, Dessert,

## **BONUS QUESTIONS**

1. What do the Menorah, the Dreidel and Moshiach have in common?
2. What does יוסף הצדיק and the פך השמן have in common?
3. A poor person is yotzei the mitzvah of נר חנוכה by lighting 1 candle/light each night. If he wishes to light more than one, the number of candles/lights must correspond to that day of חנוכה (4 candles for the 4<sup>th</sup> night, etc). Dilemma: You have only 15 candles available for the 8 days of חנוכה; you must use all of them and have no candles left over. Give 5 possible combinations in which one can be yotzei the mitzvah.
4. How many times in a lunar year do we express thanksgiving to הקב"ה for his chesed?



# The 36 Answers

## Of חנוכה

Rabbi Y.C. Schwab

1. Roshey Teivos & translation:

- Ches Naros v'Halocho k'Bais Hillel / They rested on the 25<sup>th</sup>.
- Mi Chamocho Boailim HaShem; also Mattisyahu Kohain ben Yochanon / Maccabee = Hammer.
- Chodesh, Shabbos, Milah, Nidah, Arusin, Yichud HaShem, Moadim (Mezuzah) / Chashmonaim (from the town of Chashmon) – the followers of Mattisyahu.

2. For all things of קדושה, we start on the right or go towards the right, and then circle or go to the left; i.e. הקפות, and the כלה walking around the חתן under the חופה, and the writing of the Hebrew language. The miracle of חנוכה was also a very high spiritual experience. We also start out at the left and then go to the right each night. Also, the כהן each morning circles the מזבח from right to left, counter-clockwise. And also, some put the תפלין של יד on the right side of the bag to be mekayim the dictum of starting on the right and elevating in קדושה.

3. The four (4) enemies of HaShem.

- יפת – Son of נח, is the progenitor of the Greeks, Persians and the Aryans.
- גוג – the descendents of יפת, will attack ארץ ישראל and be destroyed by אדום (Edom). during סוכות (תשרי). {גוג ומגוג = 70; יפת = 490; 490 ÷ 70 = 7}. The Yom Hadin for the רשעי העולם (of the 70 nations) is הושענא רבה (which is the 7<sup>th</sup> day of סוכות).
- מגוג – Caucasia – located between Black and Caspian Sea in Southeast Russia.
- עמלק – Esav's (אדום) grandson - Will be destroyed by HaShem. עמלק = 240.
- ר'ם = 240: Rome/Christianity, just like עמלק (which = 240) will also cease to exist.

4. If it would be Nochu Cha, one might think he must rest (Noch) as on a Yom Tov. This is the question and the answer of the Ben Ish Chai.

5. In פ' מקץ, we have 4 of the 9 רמזים, which are:

- Pharaoh had a חנוכה-type dream (the weak swallow the mighty);
- It is the only parasha of the Torah where the total number of words is calculated at the end, which are 2,025. This represents חנוכה because נר = 250 and we use eight (8) lights (8 x 250 = 2,000) and it starts on the 25<sup>th</sup> of כסלו (2,000 + 25 = 2,025).
- ויאמר יהודה ... ונלכה ונחיה (בראשית מ"ג:ח). חנוכה = 89 = 17 = 8. This Mispar Koton hints to the 8 days of חנוכה found in this sedrah, which is read on חנוכה.
- The following posuk is also found in the sedrah:

וטבח טב(ח והכין). רמז לגיד הנשא שאין בי טעם ואעפ"כ אסור הטבשיל שנפל בתוכו (מדרבנן). Since טבח טב = 36, and ח(ח והכין) = חנוכה, this indicates that חנוכה, which has a total of 36 lights, is a "Yom Tov" celebrating the power of תורה שבעל פה. This is also learned from this

“בראשית מ'ג:ט"ז) (sedrah חנוכה” FYI: Also, the milui of זך וזת = שמן חנוכה. And also the milui of the word הלל = חנוכה.

V) The 25<sup>th</sup> word in the Torah is אור. Similarly, חנוכה starts on the 25<sup>th</sup> of Kislev.

VI) In the last parshah of the Torah (וזאת הברכה), it says “מחץ מתנייים קומיור”. This is Shevet Levi (Chashmonaim), who alone defeated the Syrian-Greeks (יונים) in the חנוכה Story. This is the only time (besides the war against Midyanim during the 40 years in the Midbar) that the Leviim went to war.

VII) Parshas Emor, after listing all the Yomim Tovim (ending with סכות), the Torah writes about the inyan of the Menorah, which is out of place, except that it hints to the “Yom Tov” of חנוכה, which follows all of the Yomim Tovim (סכות).

VIII) In Parshas Masei (ויקרא כ"ד:ב), the 25<sup>th</sup> camp, of B'nei Yisroel in the Midbar, was a place called Chashmonah (חנוכה on the 25<sup>th</sup> via the Chashmonaim).

IX) In Parshas Vayeishev, it says, they through יוסף in a pit whose depth was 20 amos (which no eye will notice anything at this depth). Similarly, a menorah of over 20 amos (which is above eye level), nobody will notice. Therefore, there is no פרסומי ניסא, and the mitzvah of חנוכה has not been fulfilled. This parshah is also the חנוכה parshah when there is 2 Shabbosos of חנוכה.

6. The חנוכה custom of **who** in the household lights, and **how many** you light each night (see S.A. #671(2) באר היטב). Minhag Ashkenaz (Rambam): everyone lights and in increasing amounts (מוסיף והולך), while for the original Minhag Sefard (Tosefos) only the father does this.
7. Yes. The dreidel is spun from above; the grager is shook from the bottom. This means that on חנוכה there was a miraculous salvation from heaven (above), and on פורים the Jews did T'Shuvah, which is a motivation from below. We do not hear of a T'Shuvah on חנוכה. Therefore, the Chashmonaim dynasty after 200 years met a horrible end.
8. What did they do?
  - Yehudis – sister of Mattisyahu covertly executed Greek General Holifernes; a great צדקה.
  - Miriam bas Bilgah – A wicked Kohen's daughter who banged on the Mizbayach with her shoe, shouting Lukis, Lukis (Greek) (Lupis, Lupis) (Latin) which means “wolf” – HaShem consumes the meat of the Korbanos, but does not help his people; a great רשעה.
  - Chanah – Her seven children were executed one-by-one for not bowing down to an idol of the Greeks. She then committed suicide by jumping of a roof, which is permissible under certain conditions; she was one of the greatest צדקניות of all time.
9. Because Yehudis was the primary operative in the story, as Esther was in the Megillah. Therefore, women are also obligated in all the mitzvahs of the Megillah and חנוכה.
10. An extra day is only obligated for Yomim Tovim of the Torah. חנוכה is one of the seven (7) mitzvot D'Rabbanon. Two days Yom Kippur would be too much for the average person.
11. Rebbe, the editor of the Mishnah, took umbrage against the Chashmonaim (Levites) who usurped the Malchus, which belongs only to Rebe's Sheivet, which is Yehudah. Therefore, Rebe did not include them in the Mishnah. At this time, תנ"ך was closed.
12. Because Yehudis fed General Holifernes cheese & wine, then decapitated him.
13. 3 years. It took another 25 years until Eliezer Chashmonai became king. It was down hill from there until the destruction of the 2<sup>nd</sup> בית המקדש in 3828 (70 C.E. – 1938 years ago).

14. There are 36 mesechtos of enlightenment in שם (it was 33). Also, the 36 original hours of the "Special Light" during the first 3 days of creation (12 hours of daylight for 3 days). On חנוכה you must use fire for light; on שבת electric is ok, under certain conditions.
15. Yes. On these two holidays the Jews had miraculous victories over their enemies. 425=תכה meaning "to smite." For this we thank HaShem. תכה is the Roshey Teivos of **Kol Haneshomah T'Hallal** (הלל on חנוכה, אסתר on מגילת אסתר, פורים on פורים). Also, הכה hints to the 3 times a year we beat/smite something: (1) המן (2) כפרת (3) הושענות
16. All the same thing: the story of חנוכה – its Apocrypha (a human narrative).
17. Modiin – the home town of the Chashmonaim.  
Chashmon –the acrostic of the anti-Jewish decrees; also this family name represents the followers of Shimon Hatzadik, Mattisyahu's grandfather (HaShimonim). The "ח" is often switched for a "ה" (HaShimonim/Chashmonaim). Also it was the 25<sup>th</sup> camp in the Midbar (דברים ל"ב:כ"ט).  
T'koah—an oil-rich town in the section of Osher from which the menorah oil came.
18. a) 12 (דברום ל"ג י"א [רש"י]).                      b) Modiin.                      c) Yochanan.  
d) Shimon Hatzaddik, famous for being bowed down to by Alexander the Great, the Greek Emperor.
19. Hellenists (Misyavnim) – Intentional Jewish traitors. These Zaidim – "intellectuals" / Apikorsim who openly "practiced" authentic Judaism, but had heretical ideas. These hybrids could be compared to "androgynists."
20. Lighting a menorah in our homes was originally given as one of the seven mitzvos D'Rabbanon. Lighting in shul, however, is for pirsum hanais only. Therefore, it requires a brocho at night, which is a birchas hashevach, because of pirsum hanais. (Note: the Chazan does not repeat שעשה נסים or שהחינו at home, unless his family has not lit). Authentic Minhagim were instituted only as Minhagim, for which we make no brachos. Therefore, you are not Yotzei in shul, not even the Chazan. It is an offshoot of the mitzvah of the Jewish home.
21. Fighting each other. Hurkinos II, oldest son of Alexander Yanai, was a meshumod, and joined the Roman legion, where Aristubolus III, his older brother, fought against the Romans on the side of the Jews, but against the wishes of the מנהיגי הדור. They were both resho-im.
22. 28 years in total (3 yrs+25 yrs). This was very bad for Klal Yisroel. The last 175 years of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Bayis was nothing but an internal Chashmonaim family feud of intrigue, murder and assassination by the likes of Aristubolus I, II and III, Hurkinos I and II, Hordos I through Hordos V, Agrippus, Ptolemy I through Ptolemy IX, to name just a few.
23. Nikonor the rasha was a Greek general; Nikonor the Tzaddik was the one who gave the copper doors to the בית המקדש.
24. We publicize the פך השמן via the lighting the menorah, because the Gemora (Shabbos 21b) cites the oil as the main theme of חנוכה. On the other hand, the Anshey K'Nesess HaGedolah, inserted על הנסים in our שמונה עשרה and bentshing and in הנרות הללו at the lighting, which speaks of the military victory (and does not mention a word about the oil). Also each night only the first light represents the miracle of the oil, while all the rest are for the military victory (מעין בית (השואבה), and we must mention this fact in these two tefillos; otherwise it would go lost. The mention of נרות at the end of הנרות הללו refers to the lights of חצר of each Jewish house. It also refers to the lights of the בית השואבה celebration of סכות the following year.

25. The oil was divided in eighths (1/8's), and it still burned for 12 hours. The wicks were also divided in 1/8's. b) The first night was for the military defeat. It took seven days to go and return from Tekoah (where the oil came from) to Yerushalayim, and be tovel on the 8<sup>th</sup> to be pure to make holy oil. The פך miraculously filled itself. The sefer "Ohr Lamaiyah" has 100 answers to this question.
26. פורים represents racism against the Jewish body, like Haman and Hitler. It is a physical attack, therefore in opposition we celebrate by eating a seudah, a physical event. חנוכה represents religious intolerance; they wanted us to assimilate into Greek culture, just like Antiochus and Marx/Lenin (Communism) wanted; it was a spiritual attack. Therefore, we celebrate with the lights of חנוכה, a non-tangible spiritual method. At חנוכה and פורים great נסים occurred. חנוכה + פורים = 425. הכה-תכה (2 beatings) = 425.
27. They are "פרסומי ניסא," the only two mitzvos for which one must sell everything he owns, or beg in order to acquire the necessary money to fulfill these mitzvos.
28. A) They lit inside; we light outside or towards the outside at the window. B) They lit a seven (7) branch Menorah; we light an eight (8) branch Menorah. C) They lit while it was still day; we light at night. D) Their Mitzvah is to use a gold Menorah; we use any (other) material.
29. באור הלכה – Siman 293 ... at the end, ד"ה ג' כוכבים. However, it only applies on מוצאי שבת right after shkiah before the appearance of three little stars.
30. According to the משנה ברורה (672:1) – absolutely not. See 1<sup>st</sup> באור הלכה.
31. It says about נה... "שנים | שנים | באו | אל | נה |". This means 2+2+9+8=21 (שנים = 2+2). The Gematria of the third word (באו) is 9, of the fourth and fifth (אל נה) is 89, and its mispar koton is 17 (8+9), which is 8 (1+7). Similarly, the gematria of חנוכה is also = 89 = 17 = 8.
32. The gematria of the letters Aleph through Ches (1<sup>st</sup> through 8<sup>th</sup>) = 36, which equals the 36 lights of חנוכה (1+2+3+ ... 7+8). "ט" means that in front of the door it (the menorah) can't be higher than 9 tefochim. "י" means inside the house the height of the menorah must be above 10 (י) tefochim. "כ"ל"מ" means [ל(מעלה) מ(י) כ(ף)] "higher than 20 amos." These following 3 things are no good; they are "נ'ס'ע'פ", which means נר חנוכה of a סכה, and the top bar of an עירוב are פסול. "צ'ק'ר'ש'ת" = Tzadikim Kadoshim (the Chashmonaim) Rotzchu Soney Torah (These Tzadikim pursued and defeated the enemies of the Torah).
33. A) Yes, because all Jews are lighting tonight one light, and also because it represents the military victory. However, on all the other nights following the 1<sup>st</sup> night, the first light still represents the menorah, and the additional lights represent the פרסומי ניסא the miraculous ניס the military victory (see the מעין בית השואבה). You are Yotzei with one light each night. This proves that the additional lights represent the פרסומי ניסא of the military victory, and we also mention it in "those two tefillos". B) No, because you are Yotzei with one light each night.
34. (A) In the בית המקדש it represented the 7 chochmos of wisdom, all stemming from the center shaft (TORAH), and ours represents the 8 days of the חנוכה ניס;
34. (B) The center shaft called menorah represents Torah – the ultimate knowledge. The seven branches of this shaft represent the following:
- i). הגויין – Deductive reasoning; intellectual analysis; i.e. philosophy;
  - ii). חשבון – Mathematics; algebra, geometry, physics, statistics & gematria;

- iii). שיעור – Time (aging, motion & speed); gravity, acceleration, geology, astronomy;
- iv). אלהות – G-dlyness; the invisible spiritual prime and primeval force;
- v). רפואה – Medicine; biology, anatomy, chemistry, herbal remedies/natural cures & healing, surgery & drugs, dissection, organ transplant;
- vi). ניגון - Music; science of harmonics, blending of sound waves, musical instruments;
- vii). כישוף – Power of sorcery; voodoo, black magic, spirits, demons, microbes, nether-world communication. (ע"ן מדבר קדמות מחיד"א – "חנוכה" );

35. (A) It is not in the middle of the עשרה... it is in the מודים/הודעה section. And there we always mention (each day of the year) על הניסים שבכל יום אמנו. So we also add פרסומי ניסא because of ניסא; and (B) 2 minimum (1 שבת & 1 ר"ח) and 4 maximum (2 שבתות & 2 ר"ח).

36. (A) שבת, because of Shalom Bayis, and also because it is more תדיר; (B) חנוכה, because קידוש can be made on the חלה; חלה קידוש is a mitzvah מדרבנן, while יין is only a זכר (See S.A. 678); (C) חנוכה, because חומר מדליה can be made on חנוכה; (D) שבת. If one is able to afford more, חנוכה. If one is able to afford more, יין. Dessert is unnecessary (no mitzvah).

## BONUS ANSWER

1. The victories of Moshiach (משיח=358) will be greater than the victory of חנוכה that is inscribed acrostically on the dreidel (נ'ג'ה'ש=358), as well as the victory of חנוכה hinted to by the 8 lights of the menorah (מנורה [ת] [ית] [נ] [רות] { על חד לא דק } =358).

2. Yosef, who caused Yetzias Mitzrayim (Pesach), and the פך השמן (which caused חנוכה), were both pure and untouched by others.

3. (i); 1,1,1...4,5...1,1,1 (ii); 1,2,3,1,5,1,1,1 (iii); 1,1,1,1,1,1,1,8 (iv); 1,1,3,1,1,6,1,1 & (v) 1,2,1,1,1,1,7,1.

4. 354 days/yr x 8 = 2,832.

← מודים: בשחרית וחזרת הש"ץ=2, במנחה וחזרת הש"ץ=2 ומעריב=1, מודה אני=1, מזמור לתודה=1, →and 1=והודו for a total of 8/day.

→Also, 50 שבתות (מוסף + חזרת הש"ץ), and 18 days of ראש חדש/year (מוסף + חזרת הש"ץ), and 22 Yomim Tovim (מוסף+חזרת הש"ץ) comes to an additional 180; giving us a total of 3,012. This all assumes that ראש חדש & the Yomim Tovim do not fall on Shabbos.

SO WHY DO WE NEED A "ONE-TIME" THANKSGIVING DAY, 1 DAY/YEAR???

# חנוכה מאירה !