

**The Chashmonoim saw through the Or Hagonuz
the 18 decrees that were made 100 years latter!**

The Gemore (Shabbos 21B) teaches us 3 ways to perform the mitzvah of Chanukah. **1)** The basic Mitzvah is to light one candle per household. **2)** The "**Mehadrin**" Mitzvah is to light a separate candle for each individual of the household. **3)** The "**Mehadrin min hamehadrin**" Mitzvah is to light multiple candles based on the day of Chanukah. Bais Shamai says we start with 8 candles and reduce it by one each day and Bais Hillel says we start with one candle and add one for each day of Chanuka. The Halocho is like Bais Hilel, we begin with one and end with eight, like the beautiful remez of the "Avudraham" - ח' ג'רות ו'הלכה - חנוכה is the abbreviation: **ח' ג'רות ו'הלכה ב'בית ה'לל**.

The well known question is what is so special about Chanukah, that to the basic Mitzvah we are offered 2 more alternatives how to perform the mitzvah: "**Mehadrin**" and "**Mehadrin min hamehadrin**", which we don't find in any of the other Mitzvos?

In honor of the upcoming Chanukah I want to offer a new insight, by looking at the Gemore in Shabbos who explains, that after the great victory of the Chashmonoim over the Yevonim – Greeks, they found that all of the oil in the Bais Hamikdash had been made tomech, (had been defiled). Then they found one jug of oil that still had the seal of the Kohen Godel and although it was only enough oil for one day, it burned for eight. So to commemorate this miracle we celebrate the Yom Tov of Chanukah.

The Pri Chodsh (O.C. 427) asks how could the Yevonim have been considered to have defiled the oil, since from a Torah perspective a non Jew cannot make something tomech. It's true that the gemore (Shabbes 17a) says that Beis Shamai and Bais Hillel made 18 decrees relating to the fact that a non Jew could also make things tomech, but the problem is that these 18 decrees were made over 100 years after the miracle of Chanukah, so how could the Yevonim have made the oil tomech?

We can attempt to answer this question using a thought developed by the Bnai Yisoschor that with the miracle of Chanuka, Hashem revealed the "**אור הגנוז**" – the light that was hidden since the 6 days of creation, which will be revealed only when Moshiach comes.

The Bnai Yisoschor says based on the Rokayach that the 36 lights of Chanukah from day one until day eight correspond to the 36 hours that Adam horishon was able to use this special light to see from one end of the world to the other. A similar point is made by Rav Pinchas Koritzer ZT"l who says that on Chanukah when we light the candles, this hidden light, the light of Mashiach, is revealed.

This concept that this light allows one to see from one end of the world to the other is explained by the Degel Machane Ephraim (Breishis) in the name of his grandfather the Bal Shem Tov, that the light was hidden but could be used by the Tzadikim of each generation to see from one end of the world to the other, past, present and future. He cites amazing stories from the Bal Shem Tov illustrating his ability to know what was happening in the other end of the world to his uncle Rav Gershon Kotiver Zt"l.

Using this idea we can venture to say that in reality at the time of the nes of Chanukah, a non Jew could not make something to meh , but when Hashem revealed the Or Haganuz at the time of the nes Chanukah, the Chashmonoim saw that in the future there would be decrees that made something defiled by a non Jew, to meh. They understood that if Hashem revealed this to them, it was a sign that they should adopt this decree of the future not to use the oil defiled by the Yevonim. To reward them Hashem helped them find a one day supply of oil which miraculously burned for 8 days.

We need to be like olive oil that can't blend with other liquids

But now we need to understand, why did Hashem show them that in the future a non Jew would make things to meh? Why was it so important that they adopt this decree before it's time? We can understand it based on the "Levush" who explains the haloche that unlike Purim, Chanukah was not a Yom Tov celebrated with happy meals. The reason is that Purim commemorates the celebration of the defeat of Haman's plan to physically kill the Jews, so we celebrate with physical pleasures. Chanukah commemorates defeat of the Yevonim who wanted to force the Jews to stop learning Torah and doing mitzvos and hoping that we would assimilate into their culture. Therefore we celebrate our victory on Chanukah with a spiritual celebration.

This is the reason why the Yevonim made such an effort to be metamey all the oils for the lighting of the Menorah. The Medrash in Shmos explains a possuk in Yirmiah (11:16) comparing Klal Yisroel to olive oil. All other liquids can be mixed, but olive oil does not blend with other liquids and in fact will always float above other liquids. Similarly, Klal Yisrael when they do Hashem's will, rise above the nations of the world.

This gives us a hint to the awesome power of the lighting of the Menorah in the Bais Hamikdosh, because the kedusha of the olive oil symbolizes how we must separate from the other nations like oil from other liquids, and this is exactly why the Yevonim wanted to defile the oil, because they thought that by doing so the Jews would assimilate into the Greek culture.

This is perhaps why Hashem revealed the hidden light to the Chashmonoim, so that they would be able to understand the impact of the 18 decrees which included that

even a child could be metamey so that Jewish children should not associate with them. The light was revealed to them to strengthen them in their fight against the Yevonim.

Now we can understand why we are offered to do the mitzvah of Chanukah "**Mehadrin**" and "**Mehadrin min hamehadrin**" which we don't see by any other mitzvah. Because the decree that a non Jew can be metamey the oil is in itself is a "**Mehadrin**" since min Hatorah it is not to'meh at all, but on Chanukah there was an additional "Mehadrin", because the Chashmonoim used the Or Hagonuz - Eternal Light to see the future, thus accepting the decree of non Jews making things to'meh even before the decrees were enacted. Therefore the Chachomim gave us the Mitzvah of Chanukah with the alternative of "**Mehadrin**" and "**Mehadrin min hamehadrin**" to commemorate this great miracle.

Dear Chaveirim,

To some it all up. While we are sitting near the Chanukah candles, enjoying the awesome spiritual power of the Chanukah light, that is roaming the house, filling and warming our hearts with its holy glow; let us pay attention to the whisper of the candles, who are urging us to focus on the victory of the Chashmonoim over the Yevonim, reminding us the great fight not to adopt non Jewish customs, but rather to bring into our house the dazzling light of Torah and Mitzvos and all Jewish customs, because they are the greatest proof of our victory over the Yevonim in their continuing war against us.

Let us all have a lechtiken Chanukah.