

CHANUKAH: A POSTSCRIPT

by Rabbi Yehudah Prero

One year, on a Friday afternoon during Chanukah, Rav Shmuel from Slonim decided that he was going to be at his teacher's house for the lighting of the Menorah. Being that it was a Friday afternoon and the Menorah had to be lit before the onset of Shabbos, Rav Shmuel made all the preparations for his own Menorah at home before he left. That way, he figured, he would have just enough time to rush home from his teacher's house and light the Menorah before Shabbos.

Rav Shmuel, however, was not the only one rushing that Friday afternoon. Rav Shmuel, known for his hospitality, had invited many guests to spend that Shabbos with him. One of these guests was running late, and arrived at Rav Shmuel's house with only minutes to spare before Shabbos. He dropped his bags, and looked around, hoping to find a place where he could light his Menorah. Not only did he find a place to light, but he found a Menorah that was all set to be lit: wicks and oil were already in the cups, and the Menorah was in a place where it could be seen! He assumed that Rav Shmuel must have realized he was running late, and prepared the Menorah for him. Quickly, he made the blessings, lit the Menorah, and rushed up to his room.

A few seconds later, Rav Shmuel arrived back at home. Upon entering the room where he had placed his Menorah, he was faced with a surprise: his Menorah was already lit! He had no time to prepare another Menorah before Shabbos, and he was unable to light the Chanukah Menorah. One might expect that Rav Shmuel was a bit upset, to say the least. He had missed an opportunity to perform this Mitzvah for which he had taken extra efforts to be sure it would happen. However, Rav Shmuel's response was just the opposite. He said "When we make the blessing on lighting the Menorah, we bless G-d, who has commanded us to light the Chanukah lights. This is not the only thing G-d has commanded us! He commanded us to control our anger and be happy as well!" Rav Shmuel then went to the synagogue as happy as can be, entering the Shabbos day with the proper frame of mind.

Holidays present us all with special opportunities. There is increased social interaction, and therefore more opportunity to improve our interpersonal relationships. There are extra mitzvos and observances, and therefore more opportunities to improve our relationship with G-d. What we must not forget, however, is that the special opportunities the holiday presents are in no way a substitute for how we are supposed to act normally. We light the Menorah, but it should not be at the expense

of someone else's feelings. The holidays are a time when we can take our everyday lives and imbue them with a new level of spirituality that will carry us higher and higher. If we can light the Menorah and act kindly to others at the same time, can't we just act kindly to others year round? If we can be inspired by the devotion of the Macabees on Chanukah, can't we carry this inspiration with us once the holiday ends?

May the lights of Chanukah burn brightly within us all throughout the entire year!

Chag Sameyach!

For questions, comments, and topic requests, please write to [Rabbi Yehudah Prero](#).
