

# HUMBLE LIGHTS

*by Torah.org*

Velvel, a simple townsman, had the opportunity to visit the King a number of times for various communal affairs. Despite their obvious social and financial differences, Velvel and the King discovered they had much in common and became close friends. One day Velvel received word that the King would be passing through Velvel's town, and would like to visit him and his family at their home.

Velvel and his family prepared their humble home as best they could. They polished their candlesticks, set the table with their finest cloths, and prepared delicacies and drinks to the best of their ability.

Hours before the King's visit, a team of his servants entered the town to prepare the streets for the royal visit. Velvel and his family stood on their front lawn, watching in awe as the servants attached golden lamps to the trees lining the street and hung fine silk tapestries. Never had they seen such a display of wealth and honor. When the servants finally came to Velvel's home, they rolled out a purple carpet with a fine gold trim, running from where the king would descend from his carriage up to Velvel's front door.

The eyes of Velvel's children shined with excitement. Velvel, however, ran into the house, consumed with sudden panic. "Quick! Clear the table and hide all the food. Put away the candles and remove the tablecloth!" Velvel's wife didn't have time to question her husband, as he cleared the table and moved the tablecloth and all the prepared food into their bedroom. As they finished gutting the dining room of the preparations, the trumpets announced the King's arrival. Just a moment later, the horses stopped before Velvel's front door. The king, full of joy, descended from his carriage to meet Velvel and his family.

The two men embraced, and Velvel welcomed his royal friend into his home. The king was dismayed, for he was now standing in a dark, bare room. "Velvel, my dear friend," said the king, "You knew I was coming. Your whole town knew. Why does it look like you didn't prepare anything for my visit? Please explain!"

"Your majesty," answered Velvel, "I actually did prepare. We polished our silver, we cooked delicious food, and the tables were beautifully adorned with our best tablecloths. But when I saw how your servants prepared the streets with gold and finery, I suddenly realized that what I prepared was worth nothing compared to what a King of your stature deserves. I recognized that I would only

insult you with my simple preparations, so I quickly stowed them away just before you came."

"My dear friend, I didn't expect you to prepare a welcome fit for my castle! I know what you are capable of, and that's all I wanted. You are my friend, and I just wanted to spend time with you and your family, in your home, with your food and your preparations. From a friend like you, that is the greatest honor."

With this parable, the Medrash explains the purpose of the Menorah in the Temple. The holy Menorah was not intended to provide light in G-d's home. G-d Created light itself; He is the embodiment of light and has no need for the small light that the Menorah provides. Rather, its purpose is to lift those who prepare the light.

The greatest honor we can give to our Creator is to serve Him with the best of our abilities. He has angels in heaven to sing His praises and honor Him. All He lacks in Heaven is the type of honor that far exceeds the abilities of the angels – man's humble efforts to serve Him despite our personal challenges.