

The Chosen: Discussion Questions

1. Describe the two ways to study the Talmud presented in the story. Which method does Reuven use and why?
2. In what way does Reuven begin to mature after nearly losing the sight in one eye?
3. Define Zionism. How do the activities of the Zionists impact Danny and Reuven's friendship?
4. Why does Reuven change his mind about Danny's culpability in causing Reuven's injury?
5. Since Danny has a photographic mind, why does he have trouble reading Freud?
6. Why is Danny concerned about his brother's health?
7. What are the two things the Talmud says a man must do for himself? How does Reuven accomplish each of these things in this story?
8. For what reasons does Reb Saunders decide to accept Reuven as Danny's friend?
9. Briefly describe Reb Saunders. Include the kind of man he appears to be to Reuven, to David Malter, and to Danny.
10. In what ways is Reb Saunders' Hasidic community different from the way of life urged by Israel (Ba'al Shem Tov)?
11. Define "tzaddik." Why does Danny at the end of the story believe his son is a tzaddik even though Danny has decided to become a psychologist?
12. What is Reb Saunders' opinion of the world outside the Hasidic community?
13. Why is it ironic that Reuven is planning to become a rabbi?
14. In the end, Danny says he would raise his own son in silence if it were necessary. Why do you think he would put his own child through the same pain he endured while growing up?
15. Discuss blindness as a possible symbol, standing for the limitations in people's lives.
16. What is ironic about Reb Saunders' refusal to let Danny associate with Reuven after David Malter goes public with his Zionist views?
17. Briefly outline Freud's view of human nature. How does this view contradict the teaching of the Talmud?
18. Relate one incident from the story to support this theme: Things and people are not always what they seem to be.
19. Relate one incident from the story to support this theme: Sometimes the important things in life come about as a result of ordinary things.
20. Relate one incident to support this theme: If a person has a contribution to make, it must be made in public.
21. Relate one incident from the story to support this theme: The quality of life is more important than the length of it.
22. Why does Reb Saunders raise Danny in Silence.
23. Discuss Hasidism as presented in this story by defining its mission and describing the men's physical appearance.
23. Contrast the way Reb Saunders and David Malter react to the news that six million Jews were killed in concentration camps.