



**RABBI JUDAH**

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Dedicated L'IluY Nishmas HaChaver  
Shlomo Michael ben Meir z'l

## Keep Your Eye on the Light

**R**av Dovid Trenk zt'l, the legendary educator, mentor and Rosh Yeshivah was a passionate *eved Hashem* and a *gadol* in *chinuch* and *ahavas Yisrael*. Before founding his own Yeshiva, Rav Dovid was a beloved educator and *mashgiach* at Adelphia, a Yeshiva renowned for helping talmidim grow and reach their potential.

A frum passenger riding the South Jersey bus to Brooklyn was sitting behind two talmidim from Adelphia, and overheard their conversation, about a

small television they were hiding in the dormitory. Imagining that the Yeshiva administration would want to know this piece of information, the fellow hurried to call Rav Trenk to inform him.

"Tell me," said Rav Trenk, "do you know what *masechta*, which tractate, they're learning?" The well-meaning passenger admitted that he did not know, and he had not spoken with the boys.

"Everyone makes mistakes, is working through challenges, hiding something, or fighting the *yetzer hara*. The place where they are struggling, that you caught. But the main thing to look at is what they're learning, in what areas in *Avodas Hashem* are they *shteiging*, growing. What makes them great you somehow missed. My friend, you didn't see those boys at all."

In our *sedra* this Shabbos Chanukah, a tragic drama unfolds in the house of Yaakov Avinu. No stranger to strife between brothers, Yaakov Avinu is aware of the tension between his sons, and encourages a meeting between them:

"And Yisrael said to Yosef, 'Are your brothers not pasturing in Shechem? Come, and I will send you to them.... *Lech na re'eh es sh'lom achecha*, go now and seek your brothers' welfare... and bring me back

In loving memory of our honored  
husband, father, grandfather  
and great grandfather

**Mr. J Jerry Schechter z"l**

משה יוסף בן יהודה וציזא ז"ל  
in honor of his second *yahrzeit*  
כ"ט כסלו

*From Mimi & Mike Green and family*

word” (Bereishis, 37:14).

The Tiferes Shlomo, Rebbe Shlomo haKohen of Radomsk, zy’a, makes a beautiful *diyuk* in Yaakov’s language, as he begs Yosef: *na*, please, *re’eh sh’lom achecha*, proactively search out the part of your brothers that is *shaleim*, whole. He is saying, ‘Please go out of your previous experiences and actively see the good in your brothers!’ Though things may be difficult and your relationship tense, *‘na’*, please, focus on their *nekudos tovot*; strive to see the positive in them by focusing on their good points.

Yaakov wants his family to remain intact and to thrive — and to reveal the secret of happiness, as hinted in the verse, “Who is the man who desires life, who loves days? *Liros tov, see goodness*” (interpretive translation of Tehillim, 34:13).

How careful we must be, concludes the Tiferes Shlomo, to protect ourselves from the downward pull of seeing negativity: *Rak yistakeil b’maalas chaveiro v’yaalim einav m’chesrono*. “One should only look at the positive qualities of his fellow, and remove his eyes from his deficiency.”

.....

Chanukah celebrates our liberation from our oppressors and the renewal of the *avoda*, the holy service in the Beis haMikdash, after decades of Greek rule, impurity and defilement. During these eight days we relive *chanukas mizbeach*, the rededication of the altar, and the reestablishment of the Temple as the center of our lives.

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Chanukah shares the root of the word *chinuch*, meaning alternately ‘inauguration’ or ‘education’. Contemplating the narrative and traditions of Chanukah provides insightful lessons and important instruction in the ways of education. For example:

*Believe in ‘a little bit’.* Just as lighting a little bit of oil became the basis of a miracle, recognizing a little bit of merit or talent in a student can become the basis of wondrous growth.

*Light is stronger than darkness.* Negative behavior is superficial. When inner light is revealed, the negativity will be dispelled, and the essence of the individual will continue to shine, unimpeded.

Eminah and optimism are transformative. While criticism and punishment may seem to temporarily motivate people, such strategies will not *transform* them. Having faith in others, and envisioning the best they can be, allows them to change from within.

Tragically, it was not long after the miraculous Maccabean victory and miracle of the Menorah light that the leadership of Klal Yisrael unravelled,

and the Greeks re-asserted control over the Beis haMikdash. The reprieve from Greek oppression was short lived, and controversy and corruption ultimately drove us from Yerushalayim once again. However, more than two millennia later, we continue to kindle Chanukah lights, to relive and remember the sweetness of the *emunah* we tasted as we reconsecrated our Temple and celebrated a powerful victory of light over darkness.

Chanukah is a reminder to focus on the *nekudos tovos*, the good points, that which is whole; to keep our eyes on the light, and define ourselves and each other by our strengths, victories and successes.

This Chanukah may we commit ourselves to positive *chinuch*, and re-dedicate ourselves to seeking out *sh’lom acheinu* — focusing on what is whole in our children, students, friends, family members and all of Klal Yisrael.

(Please note: it is really challenging to not share stories from *Just Love Them: The Life and Legacy of Rabbi Dovid Trenk EVERY* week. I nominate *yedidi* Reb Yisroel Besser for a Nobel Prize in Literature for authoring this masterpiece!) ■



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