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The chosen chaim potok full book pdf

Chaim Potok was born in New York in 1929. He graduated from Yeshiva University and Jewish Theological Seminary in America, was ordained a rabbi, and earned his Doctorate in Philosophy from the University of Pennsylvania. He was also editor of the Jewish Publication Society of America. Potok's first novel, *The Chosen*, published in 1967, received the Edward Lewis Wallant Memorial Book Award and was nominated for the National Book Award. He is the author of eight novels, including *In the Beginning* and *My Name Is Asher Lev*, and *Wanderings*, a *History of the Jews*. He died in 2002. Chaim Potok was born in New York in 1929. He graduated summa cum laude (with the highest honors) from Yeshiva University in 1950 and obtained an advanced degree from the Jewish Theological Seminary in 1954, when he also became an ordained conservative rabbi. After two years of military service as a priest in Korea, Potok married Dena Sarah Mosevitsky in 1958. The couple had three children. Potok eventually returned to school and received his Doctorate from the University of Pennsylvania in 1965. Potok held a variety of positions within the Jewish community, including running a camp in Los Angeles, teaching at the University of Judaism in Los Angeles at a Jewish Theological Seminary in New York, and working as editor of various religious publications. Potok's first novel, *The Chosen*, was published in 1967, and quickly gained acclaim for this best-selling book on tensions within Orthodox and Hasidic Jewish communities. This and later books were both critical and popularly successful. Many of them explore the meaning of Judaism in the modern era, focusing on the conflict between traditional teachings and the pressures of modern life. *The Chosen* was nominated for the National Book Prize in 1967 and became a successful film in 1982. Its sequel, *The Promise* (1969) was the winner of the Athenaeum Prize. Potok is also the author of a nonfiction volume, *Wanderings: Chaim Potok's History of the Jews* (1978), as well as several stories and articles that have been published in both religious and secular journals. © 1996-2014, Amazon.com, Inc. or its affiliates NOTE FOR PROFESSORSachers: If you want a printable version of this guide, click the PDF link at the bottom of this page. About the BookIt is the now classic story of two fathers and two sons and the pressures on everyone to follow the religion they share in the way that is most appropriate for everyone. And as the boys become young, they discover in the other a lost spiritual brother, and a connection to an unexplored world that none had ever considered before. In fact, they exchange places, and find peace from which none will ever withdraw... Summary PlotIn Elected, Saunders, a young Hasidic Jew, struggles to free himself from his inherited position as the eventual leader of a whose opinions and customs he cannot sustain. Because Hasidic traditions carry a great spiritual, moral and intellectual force for Danny, and because he loves deeply and admires his father, Reb Saunders, who dedicated his life to teaching him to carry on these traditions, Danny's struggle to free himself is a heart-beatry one. Because his father's beliefs seem inapplicable to America in 1940, in which Danny comes into manhood, the struggle is also a cultural one – a matter of replacing the answers that his ancestors developed to defend themselves against centuries of European persecution with those suitable for a tolerant, potely-rich society; in America, the open world. The Chosen One's action takes place in the immigrant community of Williamsburg, Brooklyn, against the backdrop of World War II. It is seen through the eyes of Reuven Malter, a boy who seems to have much in common with Danny, because they are both brilliant, Jewish, closely related to their parents, and close neighbors who live just five blocks away. However, they attend separate yeshivas (parochial schools) and inhabit very different worlds. Reuven's Yeshiva, where his father's teachers, prides himself on being emancipated from the ghetto mentality fenced-off typical of other parish schools. Danny, on the other hand, was established by his father, a rabbi and leader of a small sect that follows strict Hasidic traditions. Isolated and suspicious of foreigners, including members of rival neighboring sects, hasids of Williamsburg come from southern Poland, but they walk the streets of Brooklyn as the spectre of their black hats, long black clothes, black beards, and earlocks. Hasids are also contemptuous of Jews who ignore the traditions of clothing and study to which they scrupulously adhere and have a special name that marks these Jews as second-rate apikorsim. Since World War II is raging in Europe, some of the teachers who are in charge of English subjects at Yeshivas Williamsburg have drawn up a plan to demonstrate to the Gentiles (non-Jews) world that yeshiva students are as physically fit, despite their long hours of study, as American students. He started a baseball league. When Danny Saunders' school plays Reuven Malter, the Hasids family is determined to show the apikorsim a thing or two, and the competition is fierce. Danny's murderous throw is particularly intimidating, but when Reuven gets into a fight, he doesn't back down. A hard one breaks his glasses and breaks his eye, sending him to the hospital for a week. At his father's insistence, Reuven allows Danny to visit him, and they become friends. Danny amazes Reuven with demonstrations of his photographic mind, with the amount of scholarly work on carries it every day, and with the intellectual skill of the English and Hebrew Hebrew language highly revered in traditional Jewish culture. Danny's revelations scare Reuven; confesses that he would rather be a psychologist than accept his inherited role as spiritual leader of his father's sect. Reuven's confessions surprise Danny; he reveals his desire to become a rabbi, although his scholar-father would prefer that he follow his talent and become a mathematician. Danny can't understand someone would choose the position he wants to reject in secret. At a time when conflicts are churning into him, Danny finds a necessary confidant in Reuven, an empathetic listener who is very intelligent but safe, not a Hasid, but a Jew who follows Orthodox religious traditions without rejecting secular possibilities in the world around them. As the boys become friends, Reuven begins to learn about hasidism. Although she mocks her narrowness, her father tells her that she must understand her origins if she is to appreciate the turbulence her new friend experiences. Because in the Slavic countries of Eastern Europe, Mr. Malter explains to Reuven that his friend's soul was born. First there were centuries of persecution-Jews fleeing from Germany to Poland in the 13th century, the academies established, an economy built-up until the 17th century the Jewish community in Poland began to flourish. But a hundred years later it was almost destroyed by the Polish Cossacks, and it was at this point that Hasidism began. Hasidim lived shouting off from the rest of the world; which was not Jewish and Hasidic was forbidden. Many separate sects appeared, each with its own spiritual leaders whose word was considered holy. These leaders, or tzaddiks, were considered to be superhuman bonds between people and God. In some sects it was believed that a leader should take upon himself the sufferings of the Jewish people, for their sufferings were so great that it would be indomitable if their leaders did not somehow absorb them into themselves. One such leader is Reb Saunders. His ways and his teachings are the ways of 17th century Hasids and it is this role that Danny is expected to fulfill when he becomes tzaddik. In the long and uncomfortable initial visits that Reuven pays to Reb Saundera's congregation to be approved as the right company for Danny, Reuven observes how Hasidic philosophy permeates his friend's life: "The world is killing us!" Reb Saunders instructs his congregation, "The world laughs at the Torah! And if they don't kill us, they tempt us! He's misleading us! They're infecting us! He asks us to join his ugliness, his impurities, his abominations! It is not the world that is commanded to study the Torah, but the people of Israel! We're only half alive in this world! Half alive!" While Reuven listens overflow, he believes: I did not agree at all with his notions of the world. World. contaminated. Albert Einstein is part of the world... President Roosevelt is part of the world. The millions of soldiers fighting Hitler are part of the world. But this view is the one that Danny, with all his brilliance and all his intellectual curiosity, will have to promulgate when he becomes the leader of a congregation. Reuven's father finds this worldview equally appalling. A few weeks before the accident that brings the two boys together, Mr. Malter meets Danny in the public library and begins to guide him in search of the world through the forbidden books prescribed by his father. Mr. Malter tells Reuven about Danny's brilliant mind, his insatiable appetite for learning, the amazing speed with which he digests information. "It's a shame that a mind like Danny's will be shut down by the world," he complains, and justifies giving Danny books to read behind his father's back, explaining, "Danny would have continued to read anyway on his own. At least that's how it has a direction from an adult. Mr. Malter and Reb Saunders are, in a way, antithetic characters. Involved passionately in the world, the Hasid defines him as the killing world, Mr. Malter's widely published articles, his commitment to teaching, his political activism in the name of establishing a Jewish state in Palestine, and his continued discussions with his son are in direct opposition to Reb Saunders' sanction against writing (publishing is forbidden to a Hasid, only talking to the Talmud is allowed); his opposition to the State of Israel, a state that does not follow God or the Torah, and therefore a desecration; and his method of raising his son in silence, speaking only when he studies the Talmud. When the Germans surrender and the existence of concentration camps becomes known for the first time, the reactions of the two men are characteristic. For Mr Malter, the overwhelming pain is followed by the determination to counteract the senseless suffering of the millions of people who died with something significant: the creation of the State of Israel. There's so much pain in the world. What does it mean to suffer so much if our lives are nothing but a blink? A man must fill his life with meaning; meaning is not automatically given to life. His life revolves around two ideas: educating American Jews and helping to make a Jewish state a reality. We have a terrible responsibility, Mr. Malter tells Reuven: We must replace the treasures we have lost... Six million of our men were slaughtered. It'll only make sense if we give it some sense." Ah, people are killing us!" Reb Saunders exclaims when he learns of concentration camps, "How the world drinks our blood. It's God's will. We must accept God's will!" Anguish and are his response to the holocaust. Accepting God's will is the only action he knows how to take. While Reb Saunders suffers, Danny struggles to educate himself in Freud's ideas and the problems of contemporary Judaism. He combines the double task of the school and the rigorous study of the Talmud, which forms the basis of his relationship with his father, with his own attempts to educate himself in search of identity. Reuven is also seen to spend many hours of his day in the study. There is a passion for learning in these two characters, one that is shaped by religion itself. To study Talmud is to engage in academic works, the novel shows. There are lines of religious text and there are comments written by different rabbis whose opinions are included in the Talmud. Often these opinions contradict each other; it is not a matter of finding the right answer, but of asking the right questions. Each father tests his son's acuity through a series of questions that require careful answers and a lot of preparation. Each father, Hasidic rabbi or free-thinking scholar, finds joy in the knowledge that his son will surpass him in scholarly achievements. His passion is to know the world and to know himself, which leads Danny to reject Hasidism. He comes to see that his father's world is too small; begins to feel trapped. At the same time, the respect and love he feels makes it terribly difficult for Danny to ignore the bonds that bind him to his father's way of life. I don't know what he's trying to do to me with this weird silence he's set between us, but I admire him. I think he's a big man. I respect him and I have total confidence in him, which is why I think I can live with his silence. And I feel sorry for him. Intellectually, he's trapped. He was born trapped. I don't want to get trapped so he's trapped... It's the most infernal sense of suffocation and constriction in the world. I'm stalking every bone in my body to get out of it. My mind is crying to get out of it. The novel begins with Danny and Reuven as high school boys and ends with their graduation from college. Danny decided to get out of the life that shuts him down; he will take off his clothes and stay away from the pitfalls of the Hasid, go to school and become a psychologist. When he decided to do so, Mr. Malter tells him that he must carefully prepare the things he will say to his father because Danny's decision has profound repercussions: an arranged marriage will have to be broken, the legacy of spiritual leadership will go to Danny's younger brother, the tradition of the six generations will have been broken, and Reb Saunders will be lost to the world he hates and fears the son he values most. Before Danny can face his father, his father confronts him. Use as a foil through which to talk to his son, Reb Saunders reveals that he knows that his son will not become a rabbi. "I know... I've known her a long time. This is America, explains Reb Saunders, not Europe, but an open world. Here are libraries, books and schools. There are big universities here that don't care about how many Jewish students they have. I already knew that I couldn't prevent [Danny's] mind from going into the world for knowledge. I knew in my heart that it might prevent him from taking my place. I had to make sure that his would be the soul of a tzaddik, no matter what he did with his life. And so Reb Saunders reveals his plan was not only to instruct Danny to take his inherited position, but rather to pass along the tzaddik tradition, so that if Danny chose to reject the old world, he would be prepared to enter the new one with a compassionate soul, not just with a brilliant lymaning intellect. Someone learns the pain of others by suffering their own pain, explains Reb Saunders, turning upside down... finding his own soul. And it's important to know the pain... It destroys our self-pride, our arrogance, our indifference to others. And of all people a tzaddik especially needs to know about the pain. A tzaddik must know how to suffer for his people. He must take the pain from them and carry it on his shoulders. It is for this purpose that Danny was raised in silence. And although Danny has decided to reject many aspects of his education, he tells them that he is ready to raise his own son in silence. If I can't find another way." Reb Saunders' pain is evident at the novel's conclusion. He recognized his own limitations as Danny's teacher and saw Malter's, both father and son, as a blessing: worthy guides to Danny in his time of crisis, able to integrate Danny into America himself is cut off from, and compassionate people in their right, an essential feature in a teacher. He can accept his son's decision after seeing the agony Danny experienced in his choice. Don't I see his books? Haven't I seen the letters from the universities? Can't I see his eyes? Can't I hear his soul crying? Let my Daniel become a psychologist. I'm not afraid right now. His whole life will be a tzaddik. He will be a tzaddik to the world. And the world needs a tzaddik."In the younger chosen readers they will naturally identify with Danny's struggle; they will celebrate his festival of freedom, with all his accompanying pains. With the narrator, Reuven Malter, it will be difficult, if not impossible, for them to understand Reb Saunders' methods or goals, but it is interesting and very emotional to read the last chapter in which so much of Reb Saunders' conflict and pain is given voice. In a we have come to see how much the two fathers of this novel share; how they value similar qualities to their sons: intelligence, intellectual achievement, compassion. And although for Reb Saunders compassion is seen as the ability to suffer, to internalize the pain that has always surrounded Jews in the world, for Mr. Malter's it is not enough to suffer; suffering must be married at work, at action, which will redeem the senselessness of evil that is always in the world. It is this work that Danny comes to seek, which he chooses, not freely, but with great suffering as he violates the tradition that demands he become a tzaddik for a small Jewish community and establishes a new role for himself as tzaddik for the world. DISCUSSION AND SCRITION & Discussion Questions Book IChapter 1.1. Identify the time and place of the novel's action and the circumstances that cause Reuven and Danny to meet. 2. Why does Danny consider Reuven and his apikorsim colleagues? Chapter 2.1. What are some of the things Reuven learns about Danny during his hospital visit? What aspects of Danny Reuven's personality find surprising? 2. Why doesn't Danny's father write or talk too much, apart from his talk of Talmud? Chapter 4.1. What does the reader learn about Mr. Malter's previous relationship with Danny? does that clarify the reasons why he wants Reuven to become friends with Danny? 2. What does Danny reveal to Reuven that he's never told anyone before? Why do you think he feels able to do that? 3. What explains Reuven's reaction to this revelation? Book IChapter 6.1. What Reuven learns from his father about the following aspects of Jewish history: *how Jews came to function as tampons in 17th century Poland *Cossack uprising of 1648 and its impact on the Jewish community *Ahabtai Svi *Israel and his teachings *Hasidim and their faith in a superman 2. Why do some Hasian people believe that their rulers should take the suffering suthing of the Jewish people upon themselves? 3. Why does Mr Malter think it is natural for Danny to break his father's rules and read forbidden books? 4. What does Mr. Malter tell Reuven about Danny's need to have a friend? Chapter 7.1. does the author demonstrate how the Hasidic community worships Danny? 2. What are Reb Saunders' views on: A) the world and what does it do for Jews, B) life on earth, and C) the study of the Torah? 3. Explain Reb Saunders' assertion that we are only half alive in this world. 4. Determines Reb Saunders whether Reuven is fit to be his son's friend? Chapter 8.1. justifies Mr. Malter to offer books for Danny that his father and Hasidim forbid him to read? 2. Under what circumstances does Danny and his father communicate? explanation for this aspect of their relationship? 3. is the study study Did the Talmud turn out to be a central activity in Reuven and Danny's lives? Chapter 10.1. What's the subject of Danny's forbidden interest? What is he trying to learn about in this study? Chapter 11.1. does the author convey the information that the Americans did not know about the German concentration camps until after Germany surrendered? 2. What is Reb Saunders' reaction to this terrible revelation? Compare it to Mr. Malter's. conveys to the author Danny's growing feeling of being caught

up in his father's way of life? Book IIIChapter 13 1. Discuss the reactions of Mr. Malter and Reb Saunders to the establishment of a Jewish country in Palestine. Say what everyone does and say with his pain. 2. Discuss Mr. Malter's statement, A man must fill his life with meaning. 3. What makes Reuven and his father excommunicated from the Saunders family? is Danny reacting? Chapter 14 1. What does Reuven understand about his teacher, Rev. Gershenson, when he can't find his last name in the Hebrew or English catalogues of his college library? 2. Why does Reuven and his father cry with joy when the United Nations votes to accept the Division Plan? What does this mean for Mr Malter in particular? 3. Describe the method Reuven uses to study the nine lines of text that Rev Gershenson is sure will interrogate. 4. What does Rev. Gershenson add about the passage of the Talmud that he asked Reuven to explain and how Reuben tried to explain? Chapter 15 1. Why is Danny resuming his friendship with Reuven? What does this show about his ties to his father? 2. What advice does Mr. Malter give Danny about telling his father that he has decided to become a psychologist? Why is this such a significant decision? What are its possible consequences? Chapter 18 1. What do you learn about Reb Saunders' childhood and his goal of raising Danny? 2. Why does Reb Saunders accept his son's decision without fear? 3. What does it mean that Danny's whole life will be a tzaddik... a tzaddik for the world? 4. For what and by whom does Reb Saunders ask forgiveness? How does Reb Saunder's reaction surprise you? did you expect him to react? 5. What does it reveal about Danny that he has decided to raise his own son in silence? 6. What is it that Reb Saunders says he always understood about Danny? What does that have to do with his gratitude to Reuven and his father? Composition1. Compare and compare the characters of Reb Saunders and Mr. Malter: -as fathers -as teachers and in terms of: -their views on the world -their views on Judaism -their views on Zionism Use meaningful quotes from the book to support your judgments. 2. . Keep a record of all significant historical events that unfold during the action of the novel. Discuss the meaning of the book's title. Brainstorming to discover how many ways the title of characters and situations can be applied in Potok's novel. 4. Analyze hasidic practice of bringing a child into silence. What is the purpose and effect of this practice? Discuss its effect on Danny and divide the class into two groups: one that is meant to defend Danny's education; the other whose role it is to criticize him. He's debating the issue this way reb Saunders and Mr Malter might have gone face-to-face if he'd come face to face. Use the text as a reference. 5. Discuss the role of female characters in The Chosen. What explains their lack of visible influence in the book? Was it deliberate on Potok's part? Use evidence from the novel to support your view on this question. 6. Although both are practicing Jews, there is much in Danny Reuven's education not understanding or approving. Associate the class in sets of Reuven's and Danny's. Each Reuven to elaborate all his questions and objections to the way his friend is raised. Have every Danny give him an answer. Then arrange a whole class forum where both objections and responses can be broadcast. 7. Talk about the identification process that takes place between the reader and the character. Ask the class to talk about how they could identify with the characters in The Chosen. Discuss the universal nature of the conflict between parent and child and its role in literature. Ask for books that students have read in which this conflict is obvious. 8. What do you think are the three most important ideas contained in the Chosen One? In an essay, discuss each of them referring directly to the courts in the book to support your beliefs. After doing so, rank each idea in order of importance. 9. Identify the speakers of the following quotes. Then explain their significance to the novel, referring to characters and incidents throughout your discussion:-A father can bring a child any way he wants... -What a price to pay for a soul! 10. As an essay, discuss five significant historical events that take place during the Chosen One's action and show their effect on the Malter and Saunders families. 11. Write a character study of Reb Saunders using evidence from the book to discuss his childhood; adult age; his identity as a rabbi; a tzaddik, a father. 12. Did he add the Reading of the Chosen One to the knowledge of Judaism, its history, religious beliefs and practices, its cultural values? Write quickly, listing everything you can remember. Then discuss in detail how the book clarified or corrected your previous beliefs about Judaism and include any surprised you derived. 13. Suppose you're Danny Sanders a private journal. Select four key crisis moments that cover the novel's time frame and write an entry for each of these dates. Use your own experience of it feels to be in conflict with yourself, with your parents or with your society to fuel your memory, but keep to Danny's beliefs and values while writing. 14. In an essay, discuss the values and beliefs of Reb Saunders and Mr. Malter, and show how the novel dramatizes affects they had on the development of Danny and Reuven. Then analyze your parents' values and beliefs, exploring how they shaped, and continue to shape, your identity. 15. Reuven's father tells him: The Talmud says that a person should do two things for him. It's one thing to acquire a teacher. Danny remembers that the other is to choose a friend. How did Danny and Reuven do these things for themselves? What did every boy derive from the teacher? &From friend? VOCABULAR Defines and discusses the following term: Hasid: Member of a Jewish sect that follows the religious and social precepts established in the 17th century. Yidiş: A language spoken by Jews since the Middle Ages. Its components are Hebrew, German and Slavic. assimilation: One that adopts the practice of a predominant culture. Fanatic: Rigorous believer. Talmud: In Hebrew, the word for teachings. Applied to the collection of academic discussions and judicial administration of Jewish law written by generations of scholars over hundreds of years. apikorsim: An unbeliever or skeptic. One that does not adhere to Jewish religious faith or practice. rabbi: religious leader and head of a congregation. Cossacks: Polish soldiers who, under Chmielnicki's leadership, annihilated hundreds of Jewish communities in 1648, killing hundreds of thousands of people. Tallit: Hebrew prayer saddle worn by adult men. tefilledlin: Two small black boxes fastened to the leather straps, containing parts of the Torah and worn during the morning prayer. Shofar: Ram's horn blown at various religious services. Kaballah: Books of Jewish mysticism. tzaddik: According to Hasidism, a pious leader who is the intermediary between God and man, the soul of the world. Torah: The written law given to Moses at Mount Sinai, including the Talmud and related comments. gemadiya: A method of interpreting a biblical word based on the numerical value of its letters in the Hebrew alphabet. misnaged: Opponents of the Hasidic movement that criticizes faith in tzaddik. Teresienstadt: Name of a German concentration camp. goyim: The Hebrew word for non-Jews. Zionism: The movement to ensure the return of the Jewish people to Palestine. bar mitzvah: The ceremony marking the initiation of a 13-year-old boy into adulthood and the Jewish religious community. ABOUT THIS GUIDE Professor Rosalyn McPherson Andrews. Ms Andrews is the founder of McPherson Andrews Marketing, an educational marketing consulting firm. In addition to research and school materials, she taught at high school college level. Learn more about the chosen one

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