

Talk to Parents of Semikhah I Students

The Talmud (*Shab.*, chap. II) teaches us that הרגיל בנר חנוכה. הויין ליה בנין תלמידי חכמים. In other words, parents--and not only teachers and yeshiva environment--have a key role in the development of their sons as ת"ח.

But why did the Sages specify נ"ח, and not, for instance, *tallit* or *tefillin*?

I suggest: because Hanukkah comprehends two complementary principles:

a) The Spiritual. As Zechariah proclaims in the Haftorah for Hanukkah, ברוחי. כי לא בחיל ולא בכח כי אם ברוחי אמר ה' צ. This element is expressed in ת"ח.

b) Leadership. The victory of the Hasmoneans over the Hellenists... The נס מלחמה (as in על הנסים ובהפסיקתא) and not only in the נס שמן (as in גמרא במה מדליקין).

Your sons are getting both here--talmudic scholarship as budding ת"ח, and training as future leaders of the Jewish community. Thus, when parents understand and practice נ"ח, they are blessed with children who are ת"ח in the broadest sense--leaders as well as scholars.

This requires parents to be role models, if possible--"learners" and "doers" or leaders; failing that, but equally effective in creating the environment for our future scholar-leaders, is the sense of values you implant in them: respecting and reverencing ת"ח, and admiring and following authentic leaders of the community.

למחרת א' חנוכה
נ"ח
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