



SMILING FACES OF TOMORROWS HOPE

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Somehow each generation finds it, they shlep it down and blow off the dust. It's an old and well-worn suitcase, the old kind with those shiny locks that snap open with a sturdy "Clink!". It holds a cornucopia of memories by way of hundreds of pictures and every new generation is drawn by its emotional gravitational pull. There are myriads of these snapshots, taken well over a half century, and in each one there are faces smiling out from somewhere in the past. Most of these pictures are just thrown together, mixing the generations and occasions, into one gold mine of nostalgia, others have been put together in books with titles such as, "Our Trip To Israel 1985". No matter whatever their place in that stuffed suitcase, each picture calls forth magic moments of time spent together. Hardly any are posed, it's all so natural, just unguarded moments when life is truly real.

In a world where so much is contrived and rehearsed these snapshots of life actually lived are reminders of love shared. Those pictures represent a reality that goes beyond the facade that many of us walk through, the one created by others diktats.

Every neshoma is pure and individual. There has never been one like it before nor will there be one like it ever gain. This "stage" we call life, challenges us to to be true to that uniqueness and it takes great effort to nourish and guide it. Parents are gifted with much of this responsibility and we each need great siata dishmaya in doing so. Towards this end I often find myself begging parents to go with their kids out for some unstructured, unscripted time together. In my personal experience I am amazed at what my children and their children remember of such shared forays. When they see a picture of that old car, or the front of their first holiday home, out rushes warm memories that speak to who they really are.

So much is asked of today's young, and many get so lost in others' expectations that they have no real inkling of who they actually are. They fall into the cultural magnet that forces them to conform to extraneous standards, and lose the inner nugget of their uniqueness. Such a child can build a certain resentment in his heart. He feels deprived without understanding why, hurt when asked to conform in ways that run against his true tikun.

A whole year most of our kids are in large classrooms being given an

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לזכר ולעילוי נשמת
כ"ק מרן אדמו"ר מפיאסצנה
הרב קלונימוס קלמן שפירא
זצוקלה"ה



לזכר ולעילוי נשמת
הרבנית הצדקנית
חיה שרה בת הרב שלמה
יחיאל רובין ז"ל



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education created to standards not necessarily geared to their particular needs. I often hear the lament from younger marrieds that they “went through the system” and are happy that it didn't destroy them altogether.

How then can we give our children the tools to find success in such circumstances. One powerful way is to nurture who they truly are in an individual setting. No where is this more possible than shared time on holiday, when kids can just be with parents without the stress of having to perform to others preconceptions. Large schools often can't do this, yet we ask them to do our work and blame them if they fail. Only a parent has entree to the facets of their child's gifts, and only a parent has the holy responsibility to cherish their uniqueness.

Going on a trip, or just staying home with time to be together is a wondrous opportunity to build on those particular needs that a child can't have served in school. With you he or she can be allowed to shine in ways they can't do otherwise, and can be allowed to be loved as they need. This treasured time is not to be measured in minutes and hours, rather in quality of focus.

Holidays are the potential pictures that will form their true awareness. The bond will be created with those snapshots, and not with moments write large. It will always be the small things, the fresh aroma's, the new sights shared that will be the tapestry of future self-awareness.

In the busy world of schooling, the child must solve problems with many different stresses to his individualism. With Mom or Tatty they can find someone who kvells over those unique gifts that just may not find their way into the school curriculum. It is those gifts that make the unique individual, and when shared with an understanding parent, create the ambiance for future success.

By the way, the sharing of time with children has another bonus that is actually part of Hashem's plan for our own growth. When we learn to connect with our child, we are also learning much about ourselves. Parenting is a divine gift that teaches us to think beyond self and fine tune our inner sensitivities.

I would plead that every parent just think into the matters these brief words have raised. We are all rushed and hassled in so many ways, and although we want to give our children everything and then some, stuff just seems to get in the way. Take your holiday moments and make them building blocks of future strength. Our children are holy and carry neshomos that are pure. Spend time with them, lift up those sparks of uniqueness up so that they learn to trust who they are. Allow that the suitcase of their memories will always bring reminders of wonderful shared growth.

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