

“A Childhood Snapshot”

By Rabbi David Wolpe

I knew nothing of his family, or his associations, or his character. As children will, I created an imaginary world around him that probably bore little resemblance to the real world of his daily life. Yet week after week I watched Mr. Nathan stand at a small lectern in the synagogue, rocking back and forth and praying to God.

What was so powerful to my young eyes? Before me was someone at ease with the Ultimate; I watched an adult be a child, acknowledging a reality greater than us both. To my five year old eyes his was the piety and the intimacy with God that I sought.

When we wonder about how to educate our children, what will make them honest and faithful, we focus on schools and parents. Yet I venture to say that little influenced me more than a man whom I never knew, whose name evokes a simple, vivid image in my mind. Do we take our children places where they will see reverence? Have they witnessed men and women in prayer? If not, they are missing one of the profound and lasting impressions life has to offer.