



News Letter 5856-017

The 4th Year of the 4th Sabbatical Cycle

The 25th year of the 120th Jubilee Cycle

The 20th day of the 4th month 5856 years after the creation of Adam

The 4th Sabbatical Cycle after the 119th Jubilee Cycle

The Middle of the 70th Jubilee Since Yehovah told Moses To go Get His People

The Sabbatical Cycle of Sword, Famines, and Pestilence

June 13, 2020

Shabbat Shalom to the Royal Family of Yehovah,

Shabbat Zoom Meeting

From now on we are going to use this same meeting room id below for all our meetings each Shabbat. Keep it and save it. Should I forget to announce the meeting then the information will remain the same from week to week. The room will be open at 12:30 PM for chatting and socializing. The meeting will begin at 1:15 and then the room will remain open for chatting and discussions after the teaching.

Joseph Dumond is inviting you to a scheduled Zoom meeting.

Topic: Joseph Dumond's Personal Meeting Room

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/3505855877>

Meeting ID: 350 585 5877

One tap mobile

+13017158592,,3505855877# US (Germantown)

+13126266799,,3505855877# US (Chicago)

Dial by your location

+1 301 715 8592 US (Germantown)

+1 312 626 6799 US (Chicago)

+1 346 248 7799 US (Houston)

+1 669 900 6833 US (San Jose)

+1 929 436 2866 US (New York)

+1 253 215 8782 US (Tacoma)

Meeting ID: 350 585 5877

Find your local number: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/3505855877>

The World Has Gone Crazy

This week the Trumpet.com magazine posted the following introduction to the current events on the nightly news.

The world around us has gone insane. News media are pushing a plan to defund the police. Winston Churchill is coming under attack for being “racist.” Big businesses are cheering on the Marxist movement behind it all. And the police simply walk away—as police chiefs and mayors decide that upholding the rule of law isn’t worth the effort.

How did the world get so crazy? It almost defies understanding.

Mainstream politicians and businesses pledge support and donate to Black Lives Matter (BLM), an organization that claims to protest the “state-sanctioned violence and anti-black racism” present in America and Britain. Its website states that they “disrupt the Western-prescribed nuclear family.” Their leaders encourage people to resist “white capitalism.”

“We have to not only disrupt the systems of policing that literally kill our people, but we have to disrupt the white supremacist, capitalistic, patriarchal, heteronormative system that is really the root cause of these police killings,” said California State University professor Melina Abdullah, a BLM leader.

Yet this wildly radical movement is being supported by Disney, Facebook, Lego and dozens of other major companies. Cisco, Microsoft and Intel have all donated to BLM. Barclays, JP Morgan Chase, Deloitte and others have supported the movement.

On top of this, I also saw this week a white woman kissing the feet of a whole crew of Black Hebrews. Governments seriously discussing defunding the police departments and giving those billions of taxpayers money to Black Lives Matter and those things they are demanding.

Last week I posted the following in [that News Letter](#).

Mayhem!

The 1st day of the 4th month was May 25, 2020. Cyrus Harding told us in our interview with him and in our News Letter last week, Phase III = May 23 – June 13. How much = 50%. He was telling us how the crazy cycle was increasing. Boy did he nail this one. We did [that interview on May 25, 2020](#). Let me remind you of what he said.

- Phase I = April 23 – May 1. How much (intensity) = 30%.
- Phase II = May 2 – May 22. How much = 40%.
- Phase III = May 23 – June 13. How much = 50%.
- Phase IV = June 14 – July 4. How much = 75%.
- Phase V = July 5 – July 25. How much = 50%.
- Phase VI = July 26 – August 18. How much = 30%.

According to Cyrus, we are now about to enter the 4th part of this crazy cycle over the next two weeks.

Phase IV = June 14 – July 4. How much = 75%.

What is about to happen now?

Last week we had the dark moon or the lunar eclipse take place over Asia, India, the Middle East and Africa. This coming week on June 21, 2020, will be part two of our planetary events. The Solar Eclipse which you can see at this link will take place again over Asia, India, The Middle East and Africa.

Are you watching events in the South China Sea?

China is facing major backlash for stepping up its illegal claims in the South China Sea after it announced the establishment of two new administrative districts on the Paracel and Spratly Islands, to which it unlawfully claims control.

“On the one hand [China] is engaging in face mask diplomacy [providing medical supplies to other countries] but on the other hand it’s on the offensive,” said Richard Heydarian, an academic and former Philippine government adviser.

“All of them should be seen as part of one package in which China seizes the strategic opportunity of not only its neighbouring countries scrambling to deal with the coronavirus outbreak, but also the US Navy’s suspension of overseas appointments,” he added.

Vietnam’s Foreign Ministry has called out China’s announcement as an act of aggression and a serious violation of the country’s sovereignty.

Here is what has been going on in the Philippines as of June 9, 2020.

Back in February, President Rodrigo Duterte suddenly announced he intended to cancel the Philippines-United States Visiting Forces Agreement, or VFA, a defense pact that has facilitated comprehensive security and humanitarian cooperation between the allies over two decades.

“No more [American] bases” in the Philippines, Duterte demanded. “They have to start to talk to us because they have to go.” He also called on the U.S. to “correct” travel bans and sanctions imposed on his inner circle, which seemed in part to be motivating his anger. His move outraged the Philippine defense establishment.

But then, last week, Duterte staged a dramatic reversal: recognizing the importance of a century-old relationship, the Philippine government suspended its decision to cancel the VFA. A formal letter by the Philippine Department of Foreign Affairs vaguely cited “political and other developments in the region” as the basis for the decision.

Those geostrategic “developments,” revolving around China and COVID-19, are far more important than Duterte’s government has let on, but the move also tells us much about how the fiery president has strategically matured in office.

Also in the news, this past Monday was the death of Burundi’s President Peter

Nkurunziza. It was this man that James and I flew over to meet in 2017. We sat in the front row next to the Cardinal of Burundi who sat next to the President. We were given very prestigious seats and the News cameras were videoing us as we listened to the President. That day he gave a sermon to about 5000 Burundians in the hot sun. We did not have time to meet him that weekend but we did meet with the Vice President twice while we were there.

Burundi President Pierre Nkurunziza dies of ‘cardiac arrest’ at 55

He was admitted to hospital on Saturday after feeling unwell, his condition improved but on Monday he had a cardiac arrest and efforts to revive him were unsuccessful, officials say.

After 15 years in power, Mr Nkurunziza was due to step down in August.



And on the 17th of the 4th month, the stock market began to fall once again.

I do hope you are all recording all of these events on your monthly perpetual calendars so that when you look back you can see all the many things that has happened this year of 2020. I actually printed [out this page of news events for 2020](#). And they did not have the UN warning of the famine nor the meat processing plants closing down.

What Does The Torah Teach About Parenting?

A Guide To Parenting – Pt1

One of the problems with having children is that they do not come with instruction manuals. The Torah is a great instruction manual for life. So we might ask, is there an instruction manual within it for parenting? I want to suggest that in this week's Parsha, there is a parenting manual. It's only three verses long and in those three verses is just about everything that you need to know, to parent your child, or at least the seeds of everything you need to know.

What are the three verses and how do they instruct us? I would like to suggest that they are the verses of birchat kohanim, the blessing of the kohanim are meant to bestow upon the people of Israel. That blessing was first commanded to Aaron and his sons and in this week's parsha at the conclusion of the dedication of the tabernacle, the kohanim were meant to convey a blessing, a blessing from God to the Jewish people. Since that time, parents have adopted that blessing, traditionally on Friday night when we bless our children with those three verses of the kohanim blessed us as a nation with.

I would like to suggest that those three verses, the three verses that we parents say weekly to our children is not just a blessing. As to how God should treat them but by extension, a kind of manual as to how we should treat our children. Let's jump in now.

Here are the verses,

yevarechecha Hashem v'yishmerecha,

we usually translate this 'may God bless you, keep you and may he watch over you'.

Yaer Hashem panav eleicha vihunecha,

'let God shine his face upon you and grant you grace'.

Yisa Hashem panav eleicha

'let God lift his face towards you',

v'yasem lecha shalom,

'and grant you peace'.

Now when we think about these three verses, they kind of strike us as biblical poetry. Biblical poetry is hard to understand even under the best of circumstances. Its poetry first of all, it is written in another language, second of all and in very general overarching terms, these verses seem to be suggesting or praying that God should have some sort of positive influence and involvement in our lives but can we nail it down a little bit more specifically than that?

So let's try it and let's begin with some very basic questions.

For example, how do each of these verses differ from each other, are they just kind of saying the same things in different words or are they saying three different things and if so, what are they? Notice for example that the expression, panim, appears often but it appears only in the second two verses, panim means face, it does not appear in the first verse. Is there a reason for that?

And if we can discern a difference between the three different verses, is there a progression between them? Does verse one lead to verse two in any kind of way, does verse two lead to verse three, how do the verses connect? These are the questions I want to focus on with you.

We answer those questions effectively, we will not just find windows into the textual problems here with how the blessings hang together but we will also understand how they guide us as parents.

Here's blessing number one,

yevarechecha Hashem v'yishmerecha,
'may God bless you and keep you'.

The first question you have to ask is what does the word 'Bless' really mean? It is a nice spiritual sounding word, can we pin it down?

Rabbi Chaim of Volozhin, a principle student of the Gra, the Vilna Gaon, lived a few centuries ago. He writes about this in his classic work Nefesh HaChayim. He argues that the word blessing doesn't just sort of have vague, spiritual qualities but has a very concrete meaning in the sense of increase.

The word 'Blessing' is associated with the idea of multiplying, increasing something. When we ask God to bless something, we are asking him to increase it. So for example, in Deuteronomy chapter 7:13, when it says,

uberach pri-betnecha upri-admatecha,
that God will bless the fruit of your womb, will bless the fruit of the earth,

it means that he will increase these things. You will have lots of children, you will have plenty of food coming from crops and indeed that notion of blessing has been associated with increase is actually hinted at in the very letters that comprise the word.

H1288 (Strong)

בָּרַךְ

bârak

baw-rak'

A primitive root; to *kneel*; by implication to *bless* God (as an act of adoration), and (vice-versa) man (as a benefit); also (by euphemism) to *curse* (God or the king, as treason): – X abundantly, X altogether, X at all, blaspheme, bless, congratulate, curse, X greatly, X indeed, kneel (down), praise, salute, X still, thank.

The word bracha comes from the three letter root, barech, bet, resh, chaf. And you may be familiar with the notion that the various letters of the Hebrew alphabet are associated with numeric values; aleph associated with one, bet associated with two, gimmel three and so on, and if you follow these numerical values known as gamatria you can see kind of a pattern here in this word bet numerical value as two, resh, the numerical value is 200, chaf, the numerical value is 20. They are all about two's, two's are the numbers of multiplicity increasing, increasing in the ones, increasing in the tens, increasing in the hundreds, it s all about increase.

So if you think about this word in the context of the blessing of the kohanim and on the context of parenting, you might say that we are asking God to be a wonderful parent to

us. What does it mean to be a wonderful parent? Very first thing, it means is to bless your child, to seek to multiply their strength, to build them up in whatever ways we can. It is the fundamental obligation of parenthood. To build up a child's physical strength, to nourish that by feeding them, to build up their emotional strength, to give them resilience, to build up their intellectual strength or education, to build up their moral strength by helping them to discern right from wrong in all sorts of ways, to build up their own power to provide, to provide for their families by giving them the tools to learn a trade, to learn a profession.

Our fundamental job as a parent is to increase our children in all sorts of ways and whatever ways we can, to help them grow but that's not the only obligation we have because it is coupled with another one,

Yevarechecha Hashem v'yishmerecha,
'may God bless you and keep you'.

Yishmerecha means to watch over you, to guard you.

The second fundamental obligation of parents which goes intendment with blessing is watching over them, ensuring their safety, keeping them from harm. Sometimes that harm can come from the outside. You give your kid rules, only cross at the crosswalks. Look both ways. Sometimes the harm can come from the inside, children can veer off in irresponsible directions and there the need to discipline the child emerges, to protect them, sometimes from themselves. But discipline is always a function of keeping the child safe in some way or another. It is really the only rational for discipline, you don't discipline a child for your needs as a parent, you don't discipline them because they make you look funny in front of them all or what will the neighbors say if junior acts out like this? That is not for the kid, that's for you. The rational for discipline is to watch over them, so that they can grow.

Yevarechecha v'yishmerecha,
'Bless and watch over'.

So these are the first two fundamental obligations of parenting but they are not the last. The rest of birkat kohanim outlines the rest of the parenting package, what else it is that we are required to do with respect to our child.

What are the next two fundamental phages of parenting,

'Let God shine his face upon you and grant you grace',

how is it different from what comes next,

'Let God lift up his face towards you and grant you peace'.

The theory that I would like to suggest to you is that hidden within birkat kohanim,

expressed within these words, are three different aspects of parenting that build on each other. You can't get to the second phase without doing the first and you can't get to the third without doing the first two. The fundamentals are blessing and watching over you but that opens up a door. It gives you the ability to move on to the next stage of parenting and once you get there and you master stage number two, it gives you the ability to achieve the third level and to integrate with that to relate with your child as well.

Each of these three phases of parenting, I want to suggest to you is associated with a certain phase in the child's life. At different phases, different kinds of parenting are more appropriate than the others. So if blessing a child and guarding over them is something we must do as parents throughout a child's life, is there a particular phase within a child's life when those obligations are most prevalent. Let me ask you this, when do they begin these obligations, to bless and to guard over? Many of us might say that they begin at birth but I would like to argue that, that's wrong. They actually begin before birth, they begin in the womb. Indeed that's what a womb does. The fundamental job of the womb is to increase a child to literally physically build them up to build the child. That is the source of the idea of blessing and the womb is also the source for the idea of guarding, of watching over because the other thing the womb does is it provides a pristine environment that protects the child from all sorts of harm. It gives them a place, a safe place in which they can grow.

Throughout a child's life we have those two obligations to provide a safe place for our children and help to build them but those obligations start in the womb and in fact if you think about it deeply, those two obligations,

| yevarechecha v'yishmerecha
| to bless and to guard,

actually boil down to one Hebrew word, a word that is derivative from the word for womb.

What is the word for womb in Hebrew? It is rechem. There's a quality that parents evince towards the child and we call it rachamim. Rachamim is compassion.

Compassion has two sub-categories, what does it mean to have compassion upon someone? It means to nurture them, to help them grow and to keep them safe so that they can grow. That's what the womb does, that's what compassion is. But compassion is not the only thing that we do as parents. A good parent does more, because if compassion is the fundamental building block of parenthood, you can build on those blocks. And that brings us to the next two parts of birkat kohanim.

So, what are they about? I'd like you to think about that.

A Guide To Parenting – Pt2

In this week's parsha, we read of a command to Aaron to tend to the lighting of the candles of the Menorah in the Mishkan, in the Tabernacle. This command I think elegantly interweaves with an idea that we began discussing last week, an idea concerning the priestly blessing, birkat kohanim. I suggested to you last week that birkat kohanim can be seen as a kind of parenting manual, as it were. It is a prayer in which we relate to G-d as a parent, a heavenly parent, and it provides a paradigm, as it were, for what it means to be a good parent in one's child's life.

I left you with a puzzle last week: what are the last two verses of the priestly blessing about? The first one,

“yevarechecha Hashem v'yishmerecha”,

I suggested deals with the idea of compassion, that a parent has two fundamental obligations towards a child: to build that child, to increase his or her strength, and to safeguard that child. This obligation is a lifetime obligation, but it begins when the child is in the womb. Indeed, the womb is the paradigmatic case of building and sheltering a child.

These two things, sheltering and building, which we sometimes call compassion, rachamim, these are not the only obligations that a parent has. They open the door for a new way that a parent can relate to a child, a new way that a parent can bestow love. In fact, love really, I want to argue, is what birkat kohanim is all about. All three verses are really about three different kinds of love that a parent can express to a child, the very first of which we can call rachamim. But there are two others as well.

You know, by the way, that it's love from the blessing that the kohanim themselves make when they bestow the birkat kohanim upon Israel. They say,

“asher kid'shanu bikedushato shel Aharon, levarech et amo Yisrael b'ahavah”.

That G-d has commanded us to bless the people of Israel with love.

In the past, I sometimes thought that meant that the kohanim are meant to have a loving kind of disposition when they bless Israel. But I don't think it means that. I think what it really means is that that which they are asking G-d to bestow is love. G-d commanded us

“levarech et amo Yisrael”,

to bless His people by bestowing G-d's love upon them.

The three kinds of love encased in birkat kohanim itself. The first kind, rachamim, compassion. What is the second kind?

“Ya’eir Hashem panav eilecha v’yechuneka”,

how should we translate those words? Ya’eir means to shine or to illuminate. Now a little puzzle presents itself. Ya’eir is a verb; what is the direct object of the verb? One way to read the verse is that the direct object is eilecha, you, which is to say let G-d shine His face upon you. But there is another possible way to read the verse, a way suggested by Rashi. What if the direct object of the verb was not you, but is panav, G-d’s face? What if you read the verse this way,

“ya’eir Hashem panav”,
let G-d illuminate His own face towards you.

It means, let G-d light up His face when He sees you. He can’t help but being, His whole face lights up. This, in fact, is how Rashi asks us to translate this phrase.

“Yir’eh lecha panim sochkot”,

Rashi says. Let G-d smile, let Him show you a beautiful, happy disposition.

“V’yechuneka”,
let Him grant you grace.

What does grace mean? The Hebrew word chein comes from the word lechanein, also related to chinam, for free; to give for free. It’s completely undeserved love. It’s what we might call unconditional love. It’s different than rachamim, compassion. Compassion is the love that I bestow in order to attain something. It is conditional. I’m trying to build you up. I have a goal. Theoretically, if a parent would see that a child has absolutely no potential, there would be no room for compassion kind of love. It’s impossible to build. Indeed, a womb is very discerning about the rachamim that it bestows. It bestows this compassion, this nurturing, only if it perceives potential. If it does not perceive potential, there will be a miscarriage.

Rachamim is not unconditional love, but chein, grace, that is unconditional. It’s love that has no goal. It’s love for its own sake. It’s love because you are my child, and I can’t help but smile when I look at you. It’s the kind of love that every father and mother knows, when their eyes meet the eyes of their child, and they can’t help but smile.

Now, if you think deeply about this, chein doesn’t really come from nowhere. It comes not from the future, goals that I will achieve by virtue of bestowing this upon you. It comes from the past, by what I’ve already put into you. I built you up, I safeguarded you nine months in the womb. Here you are, and I can’t help but smile. The moment, the paradigmatic moment of chein, is the moment after birth, the moment when parent

holds child, looks down at child, meets eyes of child, and can't help but smile. It's unconditional love. That unconditional love, that meeting of the eyes, ironically is the greatest nourishment that a child's soul can ever get.

Ironically, this kind of love truly fuels the child's growth. It's what a child lives on. Once you have bestowed rachamim, once you've bestowed compassion, once you've cared for your child, safeguarded them, invested in them, built them up, then you can't help but feel chein. The giving of chein is the second kind of love that a parent gives a child.

There's a third kind of love, too, and it appears on the last of the verses of birkat kohanim. The third kind of love is built on the first two. Once you have invested in your child with rachamim, with compassion; once you have spent years bestowing chein, grace upon him, just enjoying the child; you are finally in a position to be able to offer a third kind of love, a much more difficult kind of love to offer.

“Yisa Hashem panav eilecha v'yaseim lecha shalom”,
let G-d lift up His face towards you, and let Him grant you peace.

Interesting. The last two verses of birkat kohanim speak of G-d's face; the first did not.

The paradigmatic moment of the first type of love, rachamim, compassion, the love of the womb, in the womb the child cannot see the face of the mother. After birth, then the child can see the face of mother. Then what is the job of a parent? TheParent only has one job at that point: to meet the gaze of their child.

There are two kinds of ways to meet the gaze of their child. The first one,

“ya'eir Hashem panav eilecha v'yechuneka”,

that we just discussed, is unconditional love. It is top-down love. It is when I gaze upon my child vertically, I, the parent, am above, the child is below. The child is defenceless. He can do nothing. Indeed, this love is undeserved. It comes completely from the parent. It is truly top-down love. But there is another kind of love, too, another way to meet the gaze of your child. It's not when you look down at your child; it's when you look across at him and you meet his gaze.

“Yisa Hashem panav eilecha”,
let G-d pick up His face.

It's as if G-d's face is downcast. Why would G-d's face be downcast? It's a moment later in life, after child has become someone that I can look across at horizontally, equal to me. Someone who can choose just like I, parent, can choose. There is, of course, the possibility then that he will choose differently than me.

The parent, in those moments, has a choice to make, a choice whether to avert their eyes or a choice to meet the gaze of their child. If the child tries to reconcile with me, to

reason with me, to try to explain themselves and I refuse to meet their gaze; if I keep my eyes downcast, what am I really doing? I'm playing with you. I'm keeping you tethered to me. Don't do that, birkat kohanim says. The blessing that G-d teaches us to ask of G-d is G-d, when we make choices and those choices are not, perhaps, the choices that You would have wanted us to make, allow us the chance to truly reconcile with You, and grant us peace. Look us in the eye. Rashi, "yichbosh kaaso", sublimate your anger. Don't keep us in the state of guilt forever. Meet our eyes.

“Veyaseim lecha shalom”,
and grant us peace.

When we are separate from G-d, even when we have sinned before G-d, at the end of the day when all the words have been spoken, let G-d lift His eyes from the floor and meet our gaze as equals look across at us. When our eyes meet, again it's a moment of love. It's a much more difficult love for a parent to give, but to truly be a parent, it means to be able to let go. It means able to accept your child, even in moments when they disappoint us. It is one thing to look down at a child and to meet his gaze; that is chein. It is a much harder thing to look across at a child and meet his gaze and give him shalom, give him peace.

What gives me the strength to do that, what gives me the strength to accept a child's separateness, whether that separateness is good or even, sometimes, when it's bad? The answer is, the past. If I've given the child rachamim, if I've invested in them, if I built them up, if I protected them, and I've smiled at them in delight, I have the wellsprings of love in the past to be able to draw from. I can remember all those good times and draw strength from them when the time comes, to give them one last gift: the gift of peace. It's the greatest gift that a parent can give.

In the end, the birkat kohanim is a feature of last week's parsha, is a feature of Naso. But how does this week's parsha begin? It begins with the command of the priests to take care of the Menorah, to ensure that the Menorah is lit all night long in the Temple. I'd like to suggest that if Naso is about the theory of birkat kohanim, the beginning of Behaalotecha, our parsha, is about its practice.

If you go back to our earlier parsha videos, [Terumah](#) and [Tetzaveh](#), we talked about the Mishkan as an embodiment, as it were, of G-d's face. It's how G-d comes to express Himself in the world, the way a human being expresses himself through his face. If the Mishkan is G-d's face, as it were, in the world, then the Menorah is the light, the light that G-d shines towards us. "Ya'eir Hashem panav eilecha v'yechuneka", it's the grace that G-d bestows, the unconditional love. There are three kinds of love that birkat kohanim speaks of: rachamim, compassion; chein, unconditional love; and then love between equals. Love when I let you go your separate way, when I grant you the gift of peace with me. It is no coincidence that the children of Aaron first gave this blessing

upon the completion of the Mishkan, G-d's face in the world. Once the Mishkan was complete, the blessing of Aaron's children was that G-d's love should continue forever to radiate into our lives.

I want to end with a short, kind of personal suggestion. Birkat kohanim is something which I would say to my children every Friday night. This understanding gives me personally more of a handle on what it is that I'm saying. It makes those moments with my children more meaningful to me. If you don't bless your children on Friday nights or any other time regularly, consider doing so. Consider using these precious words of birkat kohanim, and bestowing them upon your child. Children love it. They're so delighted to be blessed by their parents.

As your child comes over to you, use those few moments to think about these three kinds of parental love and ask yourself, at this stage in my child's life, which one of those kinds does this child use? Do they need to be built up? Do they need to be guarded? Maybe they need the smile that says I'm just so delighted with them. Maybe they need to see more chein. Or maybe they need peace. Maybe they need me to pick up their chin, to look them in the eye and to tell them that I can go forward with them in love, even when they've chosen differently than I have.

I wish you a good Shabbos.

Letting Our Children Go

A Guide To Parenting – Pt3

Today we are going to try something a little different. We are going to try a little bit of a tag team version of our Parsha video. I have here with me Tamar – Tamar, say hi.

Tamar Katz: Hi everybody.

Rabbi Fohrman: Tamar works with us here at Aleph Beta, and I'm going to go through something with her and kind of have you guys listen in. We're sort of going to pick up in a way where we left off, Tamar, last year. Okay, so I'm going to start with a quick recap of what we talked about last year, but I also encourage everybody at home to kind of check out the original if you can, right over here.

So the truth is we look to the Torah for all sorts of guidance on things but it's not like you can thumb through the Torah and say, hmm, where's the parenting section? But wouldn't it be neat if there was like a three-verse section of the Torah that actually is a parenting guide? So it turns out that I think there is one, I think it can be seen in the Birkhat Kohanim of all things – the Priestly Blessing.

Last year we talked about three basic stages of parenting which is signified by each of these three verses. Just to quickly review, those are basically the following ideas. As a

parent you're really trying to do three things. The first thing you're trying to do is you're trying to safeguard your child and you're trying to nurture them. In a way those are two different energies, because when I safeguard a child, I'm trying to keep them safe, so really that's a negative energy, I'm just putting up barriers so that they don't get hurt. But the second kind of energy is much more positive, which is nurturing energy, I'm just trying to give them everything they need to make them grow. I give them love, I give them education, I nurture them with food, all of that kind of energy. That's really;

| Yevarechecha Hashem v'yishmerecha
| – may God bless you –

blessing is that nurturing kind of energy;

| V'yishmerecha –
| and safeguard you.

If you would take a paradigmatic moment in the life of a child, of when that would that be, that's really the womb. The womb safeguards and it also nurtures. So that is piece number 1, to nurture and safeguard a child.

Now the next piece is what we call Chen.

| Ya'er Hashem panav eilecha vichuneka

– the prayer that God should just look at you and smile and see how good you are. The paradigmatic moment here is really birth. Imagine a mother, she has a new child, the first thing you do is you look at the child and you can't help but smile. That smile is not like so that you can nurture the child so that the child grows, you're just happy with the child, just because you love them. So whereas Rachamim – Rachamim is associated with Rechem, compassion is associated with the womb – that's kind of like a very calculated kind of love, I'm trying to love you so that in the future you can become. Here I'm not focused on the future, I'm just focused on the present, I like you just the way you are, you don't have to do anything, you're just totally perfect. That is stage 2.

Throughout life we do this with a child all the time. Whenever you look in on your child and she's three years old, four years old, and you just can't help but smile, that sort of grace that you give a child is the kind of love that is a very important part of parenting. Because even though you're not trying to fuel the child's growth, the fact is love just for the sake of who they are does fuel the child's growth, it's a great effect...

Tamar Katz: Because you give them the confidence in that it's not contingent on anything.

Rabbi Fohrman: Exactly, it really is unconditional love. In a certain strange way, Rachamim is actually conditional. I'm loving you because...

Tamar Katz: So that you'll be good in the future...

Rabbi Fohrman: So that – right, I'm giving you an education so that, right. Because the kind of love so that nothing, I just love you, you're great, and that is just the best thing for a kid, and that is sort of stage 2. It's something you also have got to do

Stage 3. In stage 1 and 2 the kid hasn't done anything yet, the kid is in the womb, what did the kid do? Stage 2, the kid has doesn't anything yet, they've just gotten born. But there will come a time where kids do things and when they do things, one thing is absolutely sure, they will disappoint you. They do something you disapprove of, or they just differentiate themselves from you and they choose a different path, and at that point the parent tends to feel a little bit of a sense of loss. The challenge at that point is to really let the kid go, but let the kid go in peace. That's really the final stage. The final stage is that;

Yisah Hashem panav eilecha

– let God lift up His face towards you;

V'yasem lecha shalom

– and grant you peace.

What's interesting is that the stage 2 also involves a sort of meeting of eyes of parents and child;

Ya'er Hashem panav eilecha vichuneka

is let God shine His face down towards you. But if you would imagine a mother beaming down towards her cradled child, there's something vertical about that relationship, I'm looking down towards the child. But then the next stage is a horizontal kind of looking where I meet your eyes when you are an equal to me. You are a person who can choose just like I can, and I have to accept your choices. But if I wanted to be mean about it I could pull the guilt card, where I just continue looking downcast.

So imagine Tamar, if you're my child and you've done something that I don't like, you've chosen a path in school, you're differentiating yourself in this certain kind of way and I have this conversation and I say I don't like what you've done. But at the end of the conversation imagine that I never meet your gaze?

Tamar Katz: Right, so there's like no mutual respect, it's kind of like a disappointment and that's it.

Rabbi Fohrman: The word for that is guilt. I can pull this how-could-you-do-this-to-me business...

Tamar Katz: Right, so hoping that the kid will see your disappointment and then change course...

Rabbi Fohrman: Come back, that's right. And that's illegitimate. The final gift that you in the end give your child is that at the end of the conversation you look at them across now, not down, but you look at them across and that meeting of the eyes is giving them the gift of peace. That is so totally easier said than done.

Okay, so all of that, that was background, but the challenge I want to discuss this week is this. Let's say I'm a parent. So imagine you just got married. Let's say it's like, oh my gosh, Tamar keeps such a messy house, or something like that. Like, the parent tells themselves 100 times I'm going to be silent, I'm not going to say anything, I'm not going to say anything. Then it just doesn't work. One way or the other it slips, and how do you even do this? So great, the Torah gives you this parenting manual and says at the end of it all pull away and give them peace, but how do you do it? So many people fail. Does the Torah not just tell us what to do but explains to us how you can actually do it? That's the challenge.

I think there actually is a model for how to do this effectively. The model actually is God – God is the creator of the whole world; six days that's the womb, He is doing two things, the same two things of Yevarechecha and V'yishmerecha, He is nurturing and he is safeguarding. Nurturing is He's creating all this stuff and then the other verb that you get over and over again in the creation process is Vayavdel Elokim, Vayavdel Elokim – God separated between this and that. That's like safeguarding, that this goes over here and that goes over here and that can't interfere with this. So these are the two great energies of creation, the great energies of the womb, which is building and safeguarding, and that's totally what God is doing for the first six days of creation.

So let's go on. Does God do anything else after that? Is there the next stage of Birkhat Kohanim, which is just the love of the thing for what it is?

Tamar Katz: Well doesn't it say; And God saw that His creation was good?

Rabbi Fohrman: Excellent, that's exactly what it says. And at the very end of it all, six days;

| |
|---|
| Va'yar Elokim |
| – God looked at everything that He did; |
| V'hinei tov me'od |

– that's Chen, that's it, I just love it because it's Mine, I did it, it's done. It hasn't done anything yet, it's just good because I'm the creator and I love it. I'm not even thinking about the future anymore. So it's exactly the same so far. So now if we're right the next stage should be separation and peace, right?

Tamar Katz: Right so that should be Shabbos?

Rabbi Fohrman: Right, Shabbos is when God says, okay I'm done, I'm separating,

peace. Right? Okay so those are the three stages, and fascinatingly we see it with God too. But something else happens after stage 3 which shows you how God succeeds at stage 3, and the crazy thing is, the secret to succeeding in stage 3 and letting go and granting peace, is stage 1.

Let me take you back into these verses. Here we are stage 2, God looks at everything and it's good and then it's all finished, God lets it go;

| Vayishbos bayom hashevi'i mikol melachto asher asah.

Okay, look at the next thing, remember the stage 1;

| Yevarechecha ... v'yishmerecha
| – to bless and to safeguard?

Look at the next words;

| Vayevarech Elokim

– there it is, that's the energy of blessing, of nurturing, God blesses the seventh day;

| Vayekadesh oto.

What is Vayekadesh oto? Vayekadesh oto means He sets it aside, He safeguards its integrity and says, no, no, no, this is a day unto itself. So these two energies of blessing and safeguarding come back after stage 3. It's crazy, it's like we're going back to stage 1, what happened, we already did stage 1?

Now here is the cool thing. Look at the direct object of the stage. In stage 1 what's the direct object?

| Yevarechecha Hashem v'yishmerecha
| – let God bless you and keep you.

What's the object of the verb?

Tamar Katz: You.

Rabbi Fohrman: You. Look what the object is this time. When you have the last stage God blesses something and keeps it, but it is not you, what is God blessing and keeping this time around?

Tamar Katz: The day itself.

Rabbi Fohrman: The day itself. So God has taken all the energies which in the beginning He poured into creating the world and now He's pouring those two distinct energies, one positive, one negative, into the day, the day of pulling back. Here's the key. You see

what happens on this day of pulling back? I finally have a relationship with that which I've created. You see as long as I am engaged in making something, making creation, or fixing and building my child, in a deep way I don't really have a relationship with them yet, they're just an extension of me. When I'm done something magical happens, I separate myself from them and then creation is an independent thing. Yeah, they're imperfect but they'll take care of that, I'm done. When that happens, what I've created is finally at rest. And me? I'm finally at rest too, I can finally appreciate and relate to that which I've created. This is what God does on Shabbos.

But now here's the question. What are the prerequisites to make Shabbos work? A relationship doesn't just happen, there's a sacred space in which a relationship happens. There's a new thing that needs to be nurtured, a new thing that needs to be safeguarded, it's no longer about protecting and building up the integrity of the child, it's about protecting and building up the integrity of our relationship.

God is Mevarech the day – He blesses the day, He nurtures the day. What does that mean? So here's the funny thing. You know as a parent what's the impetus to never let go? You think you're losing your relationship with the child, you think it's over. If I can't keep on fixing them then we're not going to be relating to each other. In fact though, the opposite is the case. I am going to connect to the child, but my connection is not going coming through fixing, it's coming through relating. Relating to an independent being. That's what I nurture, I nurture our relationship, I sit back and I enjoy it, then my appreciation of it is full. That's what I pour my nurturing energy into. Having done so this relationship is special to me, I have to safeguard it also, I have to make sure not to overstep my boundaries, not to try fixing you when you shouldn't be fixed, it's up to me to appreciate, to appreciate us.

There's a positive aspect of Shabbos and there's a negative aspect too. The day needs to be guarded, God sets aside the day, He commits Himself not to tinker anymore; the inverse square law of gravity is the inverse square law of gravity, I'm not going to change it even if I can come up with a better formula now. In the case of a parent that's the committing yourself not to get involved illegitimately, to do so is to destroy now, you destroy the Sabbath through Melacha. If you work on the Sabbath there aint no Sabbath anymore. If you meddle with your independent child you destroy the independence. What gives you the strength to do that, to safeguard those boundaries of the relationship? Your appreciation of its richness, that's what gives you the strength.

God was Mevarech the day, God poured His parental energy of nurturing, not into child this time but into the day. Understanding that you've invested in that richness, that's what gives you the strength. So when you walk into your kid's home you don't comment on how messy it is, you don't even raise your eyebrows as the mess, you accept that they're different, you see the independence and you realize that it's only the fact that they have that independence with all their imperfections that allows for this relationship you can have. You enrich your enjoyment of that and that gives you the strength to maintain the boundaries that protect the sacred space of that relationship, to make sure that it's always there for both of you.

